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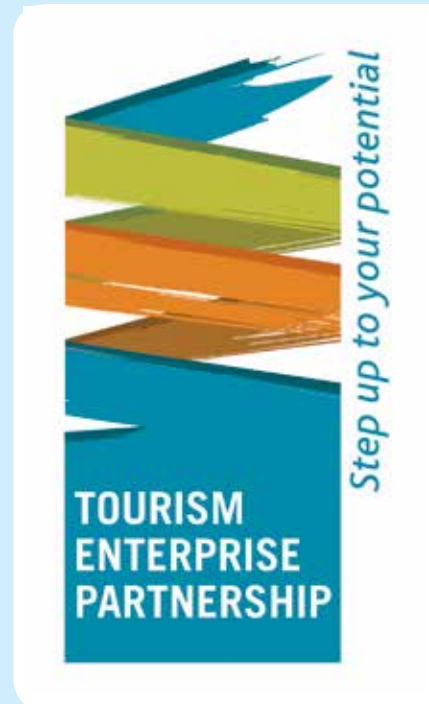
GEARING UP
FOR THE GLOBAL ARENA

Felicity Meyer tackles new challenges abroad

Revised B-BBEE Framework effective May



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Editor's note

The spotlight is on the SA government as citizens feel the effects of mismanaged state entities. The Eskom power crisis is burdening business, with no relief from load shedding in sight.

SAA's financial results, reported at the end of January, were grim. The airline more than doubled its nett loss for the 2014 financial year to R2,5bn. But, unlike Eskom, there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. SAA's 90-Day Action Plan is in full effect, to put the airline back on track for its 'Long Term Turnaround Strategy'. It will cut two of its loss-making direct international routes – Beijing and India – from April. SAA plans to service these destinations, and more, through its strengthened codeshare with Etihad Airways when it launches daily flights to Abu Dhabi on March 29.

SAA also launched its new Voyager programme on February 1, which took some members by surprise as they saw their miles devalue drastically overnight. Ultimately, the new system is good news for members though, as it is – according to SAA – more transparent, enabling members to earn miles on the base fare

and fuel levy, among other benefits.

New immigration regulations are creating confusion among corporates. Reports are circulating that some expatriates with permanent residency in South Africa are being stopped at airports when travelling back into the country and asked to produce residency certificates. *Travel Buyer* speaks to an immigration expert to help clarify the situation (see page 10).

For those things that are in the travel manager's control, we bring you the latest trends and news in the hi-tech world of payment systems.

In our SME feature we look at how travel buyers in smaller companies can take advantage of programmes and tools offered by TMCs and associations to grow their expertise.

On the meetings side of things, we look at how buyers and organisers can plan smarter events. We also take a close look at Zanzibar as a MICE destination, as demand for the destination grows.

Keep reading!

Natasha Schmidt
(natashas@nowmedia.co.za)

COVER

Travel manager for Massmart, **Felicity Meyer**, is blazing new trails with a new global appointment. *Travel Buyer* finds out more. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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SAA cuts Beijing and Mumbai

SAA will axe its direct routes to China and India from April.

The airline revealed further details of changes to its loss-making international routes at its AGM. For the year ending March 2014, SAA's international routes recorded a R235 million increase in operating losses to R1,6bn.

The Beijing route will be serviced by Air China as part of

a codeshare agreement, with the airline due to begin direct services to South Africa in May.

From April 1, SAA will redirect its flights to all Indian destinations via Abu Dhabi, through its new direct service, with onward codeshare agreement connections with Etihad and Jet Airways into the subcontinent.

Passengers booked on flights departing after the end date

of the direct service will be accommodated on the reconfigured network.

SAA's recently announced partnership with Etihad Airways offers travellers a broader choice of destinations within India, says **Rod Rutter**, ceo of XL Travel.

New destinations in India include Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Madras among others.

Celebrating more collaboration



*SAA and Etihad Airways celebrated their new codeshare service at a special event held at the Four Seasons The Westcliff, which will come into effect on March 29 when SAA launches daily flights to the UAE. From March 29, SA travellers will have access to 49 new codeshare destinations, connecting through Abu Dhabi to Europe, SE Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and Australia. Pictured at the event is new Cummins Africa travel manager, **Nikki Fonzari**, who has taken over from **Kovilan Naidoo**, who has moved into a new position at Cummins.*

Avis takes over Budget brand

AVIS Southern Africa has been granted the Budget Car Rental brand for Southern Africa effective March 1. Under the license agreement, Barloworld will operate the Budget brand in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as

South Africa.

"Barloworld has a 45-year history of partnership with Avis Budget Group, and proven experience in successfully operating the Avis brand in Southern Africa. We are thrilled to add the Budget brand to our portfolio as part of Avis Budget Group's multi-brand strategy," said **Keith Rankin**,

chief executive of Avis Rent a Car Southern Africa.

The news comes after Bidvest cut ties with the Avis Budget Group (ABG) on February 28 after having managed the Budget car and van rental franchise in South Africa for more than 20 years. The business and its assets have been rebranded as Bidvest Car Rental.

SAA revalidations – beware new regulations

SAA has introduced new regulations regarding the revalidation of unused SAA, SA Express and SA Airlink tickets. If a traveller cancels a flight or the return portion of a ticket, travel agents need to rebook and re-issue the ticket before the original flight was due to depart or within 24 hours of the client cancelling the

flight, whichever is soonest.

The new policy came into effect at the end of last year but until January 15, SAA had an auto suspension policy in place for previously issued tickets. Now, previously issued tickets that still have 'open' sector coupons with no corresponding reserved flights will be affected.

Rachael Penaluna, business

manager of Sure Maritime Travel, explains that agents often 'kept' tickets with unused dates for further use for their clients, for up to six months. This is a thing of the past as these 'unused' tickets will now be tracked and the agency issued an ADM for the unused portion that was not re-issued or refunded immediately.

FlySafair calls Mango out on fare reductions

FLYSAFAIR has called Mango out on its decision to "reduce fares across the board, following [the] fuel price benefit" starting with Cape Town-Port Elizabeth, as a tactic to compete with the newcomer in the market.

Mango said in a statement: "The airline will reduce its fares on all routes, rolling out with immediate effect. The move comes as the airline passes on benefits to travellers following a recent reduction in the cost of fuel, despite currency weakness continuing to impact input costs.

"Travellers should expect to pay from R395 [excluding taxes] one way between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth."

Dave Andrew, ceo of FlySafair, has commented on the announcement, saying Mango's attempt points to FlySafair's success. "The decision by Mango to copy our lowest pricing of R399, to within R5, on the Cape Town to Port Elizabeth route is the perfect illustration of how FlySafair is fast becoming the consumer's champion by driving the cost of air travel down in South Africa."

Mango spokesperson, **Hein Kaiser**, insists the current price reduction is in response to the dropping fuel price. "We are reducing fares across all classes and all routes. Several flights between JNB and CPT are priced well below R1 000 [excluding taxes] too and this is possible due to Mango's unhedged fuel position."

Airlines across the board have begun slashing their fuel surcharges as pressure mounts from international governments to drop these charges due to lower oil prices. At the time of going to print, airlines that had reduced charges were: Qantas, Mango, SA Airlink and Air Asia. Emirates, Japan Airlines, Qatar Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways and Virgin Atlantic said they would consider reductions.

Need to earn BEE points?

WITH the May 1 deadline for the implementation of new BEE codes fast approaching, corporates will be seeking ways to ensure their scorecards are up to scratch. As travel constitutes a significant amount of most companies' travel spend, the travel programme is a good place to start.

The Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP) has developed a new database of tourism suppliers with a view to enabling companies to comply easily with the amended B-BBEE codes.

TEP chief executive, Dr **Salifou Siddo**, told *Travel Buyer* that TEP would offer companies enterprise and supplier development (ESD) services that would help businesses comply with the requirement to invest in the development of suppliers from which they procured goods and services. "We are looking to position TEP as the one-stop shop for enterprise and supply development in the tourism industry."

Siddo explains that, under the new codes, businesses will be required to invest 2% of their nett profit after tax into developing an SMME from

which they procure goods and services. This is in addition to investing 1% on enterprise development. The requirement is also punitive and companies can drop a level on their B-BBEE if they do not comply. ESD will account for 40 points on the new B-BBEE scorecard.

To help corporates meet this challenge, Siddo says, TEP has developed a database of tourism suppliers, or indirect tourism businesses. Ten categories of tourism suppliers have been identified by TEP for this database, including linen providers, fruit and vegetable suppliers, garden services and

dairy products.

TEP will provide solutions that enable businesses to procure from the SMMEs and to also invest in the development of these SMMEs. TEP will use this investment to develop these SMMEs through a mentorship programme as well as the provision of skills development and business support.

"Businesses will have access at every point to find out exactly how much of their budget has been spent and to what effect," says Siddo. He adds that TEP will provide companies with detailed reports that are externally audited.

Quick turnaround for French visas

THE French Consulate authority has updated its short-stay Schengen visa policy for South African passport holders applying at Capago centres in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

All short-stay Schengen visas – including business, tourist and family visits of up to 90 days – will be issued within two working days of application, provided all the necessary documentation is provided. Previously, approval could take up to five days.

For the Durban office, the 48-hour period does not include transfer time from Johannesburg to Durban.

Applicants should also note that they will now be required to undergo a security search at Capago premises, following a request by the French Consular Authority.

SAA launches new Voyager

SAA Voyager's new value proposition enables members to earn miles at 1 mile for every R1,60 spend on the base fare and fuel levy paid when travelling on SAA-operated flights. "The redemption value for SAA-operated flights is transparent, whereby members are assured by SAA Voyager of a 5% return. In

other words, for R5 000 spent on SAA-operated flights, a member will have R250 to spend towards future travel on SAA-operated flights," says **Suretha Cruse**, SAA executive of customer loyalty. These redemption seats will not be capacity controlled and miles will be converted as form of full payment for the base fare and fuel levy with a set conversion.

Furthermore, SAA has negotiated discounted fares for its Voyager members compared with the available fares to revenue passengers.

Do you have any questions about the new Voyager programme that you would like SAA to respond to? Let us know by emailing natashas@nowmedia.co.za.

CemAir reveals new route

CEMAIR has announced a new scheduled service between Johannesburg and Bloemfontein.

The airline offers 12 return flights a week between OR Tambo International Airport and Bram Fischer Airport. Weekday flight times are geared towards business travellers with a morning and evening return flight. An afternoon flight will be offered on weekends.

The route will be operated by a Bombardier CRJ aircraft.

SA scraps yellow fever requirement for several African countries

SOUTH Africa has removed the requirement for travellers to produce proof of a yellow fever vaccination for travel between South Africa and several African countries.

The removal of the requirement applies to travel between South Africa and Tanzania, Zambia, Eritrea, Somalia and São Tomé and Príncipe.



The announcement was made at the end of January, with immediate effect. ■

2 New Routes

Cape Town to Walvis Bay from R3060*
Johannesburg to Walvis Bay from R3476*

*Rates per person, inclusive of an indication on taxes. Subject to change without prior notice. Subject to availability in G-booking class, limited seats per flight available. T&C Apply contact us for full conditions.

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Gearing up for the global arena

A well-known figure within the South African corporate travel industry, **Felicity Meyer** is blazing new trails, with a new global appointment. **Debbie Badham** reports.



LOCAL travel manager for Massmart, **Felicity Meyer**, is moving on to new and exciting things. Walmart has presented her with the opportunity to join its global travel procurement team, which is based in the USA.

A seasoned travel professional, Meyer started her career on the supplier side of the travel industry, predominantly working for airlines. She also spent time gaining invaluable experience working for Wings Travel Management before starting her own strategic consultancy business. Thereafter, she was contracted by Ernst & Young, before joining Massmart on a three-month consultancy basis, ultimately taking up the role of the company's travel manager and launching its own travel division, Massmart Travel Services.

Given her history of making waves within the corporate travel management space, both through her involvement in the GBTA and the launch of new initiatives such as Massmart Travel Services, it comes as no surprise that Meyer continues to shake things up on the local travel management scene with her achievements on the global playing field.

Currently the Walmart travel team consists of a number of different directors responsible for different regions and global hotel sourcing and airline sourcing functions. Meyer will join the team, providing support in terms of integration and communication. "Ultimately the company is trying to integrate its global travel management programme and improve efficiencies through technology," she says. "It's still very early days but I think the company

will try to break free from the traditional business travel mould and do things differently – they are looking for out-of-the-box thinking."

Meyer describes her new role as a "space in which just about anything can happen" because the Walmart team is geared for innovations. While, this will likely create challenges in terms of what to expect, she is enthusiastic about the position's free structure which is not hemmed in by traditional thinking. "I find it incredibly exciting that we will be looking to do things differently to how they have ever been done before. I will be joining a great team with really interesting views on travel and have the opportunity to work on best practice and improved efficiencies."

While the local industry often assumes that its global counterparts have corporate travel well under wraps, there are still many issues to be ironed out from a global perspective, Meyer says. "They are also still trying to improve efficiencies through the use of technology.

"Two of the requisite attributes listed on the job description were courage and a sense of humour," she notes, saying that this really caught her attention.

South Africans are tough; we are not afraid of a challenge and are always ready to make a plan," she says. A case in point is the latest issue with Eskom and loadshedding. "We simply adapt and find a new way of coping. This makes us incredibly valuable on the world stage."

Meyer believes the key to building a successful career in travel management is to build a good reputation and have integrity. "It is really all you have at the end of the day."

A significant part of this is to respect each and every link within the travel management chain, she says. "It's about demonstrating respect for all the collective parts of the travel programme, showing people that you value them and thanking them for everything that they do."

Equally important is the ability to remain abreast of industry developments. Meyer stresses the importance of networking with peers and remaining open to sharing with and learning from others.

SA's first GTP graduate

Meyer has also recently gained accreditation with the GBTA's Global Travel Professional (GTP) certification. Notably, she becomes the first travel buyer in South Africa, as well as Africa, to receive this accreditation.

"I consider this to be the greatest achievement of my career," she enthuses, explaining that travel managers in the South African market have little to benchmark their success against. "In this country, travel managers tend to determine their own sense of direction, but this makes it difficult to truly know whether you are doing a good job or not. The GTP really helps to set a benchmark for professional excellence."

The primary problem with the GTP is that it is not currently easily accessible to travel managers. Buyers are first required to submit their CV and work experience to the GBTA to gain approval to write the exam. The gruelling exam which consists of more than 200 hundred different questions can then only be written overseas – a task that requires significant time

and money.

Meyer took the test in Berlin. "The study material for the exam was incredibly comprehensive, and while in South Africa we often make the assumption that international practice is not always relevant to our context, I did not find this to be the case at all. This very fact gave me confidence that we are on the right track."

She believes that travel managers need more benchmarking tools like the GTP to ensure they are on the right path and constantly improving. While the GBTA Southern Africa is working to bring the GTP exam to local travel managers, this remains a challenge.

Meyer's call up to the international arena came before she wrote the exam. However, she says that is was great to have the certification behind her name as she takes this next big step.

Ground-breaking technology

Massmart Travel Services has implemented a new online booking system for its travellers – the first of its kind not only in South Africa but the world, according to Meyer. The team has

been working with Travellinck to scope out new development requirements to improve service and create greater efficiencies.

Meyer says what is special about the new system is its ability to link seamlessly with the Tourvest Travel Services ticketing system. The system can book tickets using the Mass Travel pseudo city code and then jump to the Tourvest pseudo city code to book tickets. All at the touch of a button. Massmart opted not to apply for its own Iata licence to avoid all the complications and liabilities attached to conducting its own ticketing, hence the company still does all its ticketing through Tourvest. Now, with its new technology, the company enables travellers to purchase their tickets in real time through a robotic ticketing mechanism that does not require any human intervention whatsoever. "Most corporate booking tools claim to be automated but they aren't truly fully automated. Thanks to this new technology we now have something that is genuinely automated."

The system was introduced for the primary purpose of alleviating Massmart's consultants. Now that the company's travel can be booked online, the consultants will be

free to deal with the more high-touch travel issues.

The system has been designed to be highly intuitive, such that there is no need to spend a great deal of time and effort educating travellers on how to use the new system. "When you as an online user do Internet banking or book your flights online, you don't first receive a tutorial from the relevant service provider. Our thinking was that our booking system should be completely intuitive in much the same way," explains Meyer.

In terms of compliance, she notes that while the system is there to help communicate the organisation's travel policy, it is not there to police compliance. "Our travellers are still able to book outside of policy; however, they are cautioned to please be aware that they are so doing."

Interestingly, the company's travellers will not be "forced" to make use of the new booking system and can still seek assistance from Massmart's consultants should they prefer. Meyer notes that this is a great way to achieve buy-in from travellers as they have time to become comfortable with and be excited about the new system without feeling they are being forced into change.



Massmart Travel Services and Travellinck celebrate their first online booking using ground-breaking technology. Pictured (from back left) are Nelly Nyathi; Felicity Meyer; Karen Strydom; Brett McDougall along with (from left) Lynelle Davids; Khanyisa Mtiya; Marcelle Ross.

PHOTOS: SHANNON VAN ZYL

Add some magic to your next event

Magical and mysterious, the Zanzibar archipelago has far more to offer business travellers than pristine beaches and warm tropical waters. **Liesl Venter** finds out more.

Demand is rising

"SUGAR and spice and all things nice" is a phrase that could well be used to describe Zanzibar. From its intriguing history involving sultans and slaves to its crystal-clear waters it is easy to understand the destination's allure. "There is no denying that Zanzibar is the perfect holiday destination for someone wanting a tropical getaway experience," says **Hafsa Mbambo**, ceo of Grassroots Traveller, a destination management company in the heart of the Stone Town that has been appointed by Zanzibar authorities to drive the promotional campaign directed at the MICE industry.

The DMC's message is simple: Zanzibar goes beyond the sun, sand and sea concept. "The island is globally known as an idyllic beach destination. However, Zanzibar is more than able to service the business traveller."

With the island having identified the MICE sector as a top priority, investment has been on the increase, says Mbambo. "Investors are recognising the potential of Zanzibar as a conference

and events destination and are therefore willing to invest in the island to ensure we are able to establish the necessary facilities to compete with other Indian Ocean island destinations."

"We still have a long way to go before we reach the likes of other islands in the region, but the interest in the island as a conference venue has definitely increased. We are seeing more enquiries than ever before, but at the same time we have also seen a definite increase in the number of conferences taking place," says Mbambo.

Mbambo maintains growth in the conferencing arena is necessary to ensure the island remains current and provides the necessary development for its people. "Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries on the archipelago," She says. "Granted if one were to compare Zanzibar to other more established Indian Ocean islands we are not as developed in terms of infrastructure and facilities, but we are fast becoming a serious contender to reckon with."

Authenticity is key

Authenticity is what makes this island stand out. "We are not Mauritius or the Seychelles and we are not trying to be," says Mbambo. "We are taking what is essential about Zanzibar and promoting that rather than trying to imitate something that already exists."

In terms of unique selling points, Zanzibar offers a far more rural and authentic experience for the



Hafsa Mbambo says Grassroots Traveller has been appointed by Zanzibar authorities to promote the island's MICE offering.

traveller. At the same time, most venues on the island target the smaller more intimate conferencing sector.

"Our niche is to service small intimate groups in a highly authentic fashion giving them very real insight into this destination – not just the sun, sea and sand – but the culture, the history, the trade. Most venues are in agreement with this strategy and one will find they cater for anything from 1 to 200 people," says Mbambo.

She believes this is a key advantage for the island. "It offers delegates a cost effective option in an exotic destination which is mostly all inclusive and still authentic. There is nothing commercial about the island," she says. "So we are not 'top-notch', but that is not necessarily a disadvantage. We believe by showcasing the essence of Zanzibar we can create a very unique destination for our business visitors."

World-class convenience

Hotels on the island have been improving conference facilities extensively over the past few years with new venues opening as well.

"The conference centres are all state-of-the-art and geared to host world-class conferences. Most are luxury venues, enabling them to meet the the needs of conference organisers, tailor-making packages and providing variety."

The island is also easily accessible with direct flights from both South Africa and Dubai now available. "Both the Gulf area and Southern Africa are targeted to consider Zanzibar as a business destination. In this regard much work has been done to ensure it is accessible and flights are in place. The South African flight is only three and a half hours and there is a regular schedule in place."

Most venues are a significant drive from the local airport; however the necessary logistics are in place. What's more, the distance can also serve as an advantage.

"It allows our visitors to get a real glimpse of the island and when they leave they are doing so with a better understanding of what Zanzibar is all about." She believes there is very real benefit in hosting conferences, meetings, events and incentives in Zanzibar. "It offers all of which is considered idyllic – sun, sea, sand, but also authenticity, culture, history and world class venues."

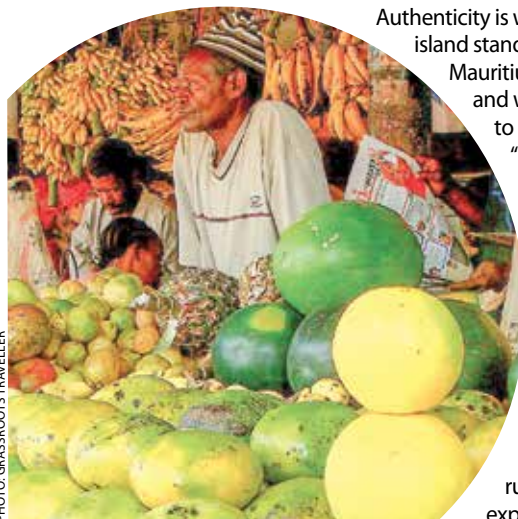


PHOTO: GRASSROOTS TRAVELLER



5 meeting hotspots in ZANZIBAR

Mecca of sun, sea and sand, Zanzibar is fast attracting the attention of the corporate world. **Liesl Venter** speaks to **Margaret Park**, product manager of The Holiday Club, about some of the top venues available to conference organisers.

La Gemma Dell'Est

ARGUABLY one of the best conferencing venues on the island, this luxury hotel is set within exotic tropical gardens and water features on the northwestern shores of Zanzibar. Offering guests the traditional Zanzibar experience, the conference centre is state of the art and can easily accommodate up to 160 people for a sit-down function and 220 for a cocktail reception. According to Park the hotel, like several others on the island, is working hard to ensure it has world-class conference facilities. The upmarket venue also offers breakaway rooms. "The venue is completely geared to meet the needs of most conference organisers," says Park.

Zanzibar Serena Hotel

Another leading luxury hotel on the island, the Zanzibar Serena Hotel, has an idyllic setting on the seafloor of ancient Stone Town, a World Heritage Site. Conference room facilities are not very large, but the hotel can easily accommodate up to 40 participants at any given stage. "This is the norm on the island," explains Park. "Most venues are ideally positioned to cater for small to medium-sized conferences." Decorated in traditional Zanzibar style, the conference centre is modern and flexible. Its location provides conference goers with a great introduction to Zanzibar's rich history.

Sea Cliff Resort & Spa

Much as the name implies, this resort is situated on a cliff overlooking the Indian Ocean, offering panoramic views. Located on the northwestern side of the island, the Sea Cliff Resort & Spa is

fast gaining popularity, especially since it has just opened the first golf course on the island. "This is going to be a definite advantage, especially for the business traveller," says Park. The hotel has also continuously invested in its conference facilities and currently boasts three meeting rooms that can host groups of ten to 120 delegates. A private boma, located a distance from the rest of the resort on the cliffs overlooking the ocean, adds that extra bit of spark to any conference.

Hideaway of Nungwi Resort & Spa

Mere steps away from a pristine beach, this resort is located on over ten hectares of virgin land and has been designed to make the most of its splendid African surroundings and warm Indian Ocean waters. "It offers guests a highly authentic experience," says Park. Conference facilities include two boardrooms as well as a ballroom that can accommodate up to 140 people.

Ocean Paradise Resort & Spa

Mixing business with pleasure is made easy at this seaside resort overlooking the ocean. Coconut palms, white sandy beaches and an azure blue sea are just part of the allure.

Boasting one of the largest conference facilities on the island, the resort's conference venue can seat up to 180 delegates and is equipped with state of the art equipment. "Conference venues across Zanzibar are well equipped and venues are able to tailor-make packages to suit needs, offering the conference organiser a variety of options," says Park.



How to plan smarter events



Ocean Basket recently embarked on a campaign to strengthen its position in the sushi market while significantly upskilling its staff at the same time. How did the group significantly further this objective through one major event? **Anton Marsh** reports.

The strategy

ACCORDING to brand manager, **Corne van Straaten**, Ocean Basket analysed multiple aspects of its business when determining how to strengthen its position within the sushi market. He reveals that the group determined it needed to build a significant amount of trust amongst local consumers, who were relatively unaware that the franchise provided quality sushi. At the same time it wanted to invest in upskilling its staff.

To achieve all this, Ocean Basket decided to host a sushi master class seminar to help upskill local sushi chefs. Together with their soy sauce provider, Yamasa, they brought the high-profile Japanese sushi chef, **Masayoshi Kazato**, to South Africa. Kazato is a director of the All Japan Sushi Association (AJSA) and

executive director of the AJSA Sushi Skills Institute and is so well known as an authority in sushi that he has his own anime character. As he does not speak English, a translator was needed.

The event was very well attended by sushi enthusiasts and media alike. What's more, ten of Ocean Basket's top sushi chefs were given a one-on-one training session with Kazato, providing them with an invaluable opportunity to enhance their skills. These sessions were also filmed, creating useful future training material.

The outcome

While significant cost was involved in the event, the returns were far greater. The considerable benefits included:

1. From significant press coverage (around R2 million worth of

exposure) a stronger link between sushi and the Ocean Basket brand was created with the public, enhancing its brand equity in the product category.

2. Within larger dispersed companies it can be difficult to develop motivational opportunities. This event created a great motivational opportunity. By having a focused expert event, with a speaker at the top of the industry, staff enthusiasm was grown.
3. By opening up the seminar to the industry, Ocean Basket positioned itself within the industry as a good company to work for in the sushi arena – hopefully helping it to attract good sushi chefs when needed.
4. The most basic benefit was the improvement in the quality of product through training. This should flow through to more

satisfied clients and more sushi sales.

Applying the concept

Van Straaten says the best way to use events to produce significant results is to begin with what you want to achieve and work backwards. "First determine what the best possible result would be and then clearly define your scope and objectives."

The event received a significant amount of print and media exposure and proved to be a clever way of creating the significant exposure that Ocean Basket required without their having to incur the cost of an ongoing TV campaign. This is of particular interest to event organisers, who constantly find themselves under pressure to cut budgets and prove that events add value to the bottom line. Says Van Straaten: "We definitely saw significant returns on the initial investment."

As a large producer of soy sauce in Japan and internationally, Yamasa's participation in this particular event was key as it was actively involved in contacting and bringing **Masayoshi Kazato** to South Africa. It's therefore important for event organisers to note that, should they be keen on hosting an event like this, they should consider involving suppliers – they could help and are a good starting point to find experts and potentially share costs. ■



(Above) Masayoshi Kazato trains the group's staff. (Pictured here) The high profile sushi chef hosts Ocean Basket's sushi master class.



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New expat immigration policy creates *confusion*



A new immigration policy that may require foreign travellers to rely on their permanent residency certificates to re-enter South Africa is causing uncertainty in the corporate travel sector. **Debbie Badham** sheds some light on the situation.

REPORTS are circulating that some expatriates with permanent residency in South Africa are being stopped at airports when travelling back into the country and asked to produce residency certificates.

There is a great deal of hearsay surrounding the matter, says ceo of the Association of South African travel agents (Asata), **Otto de Vries**. "Some sources say the

ruling was already in place and others say it came into effect from January 1."

Meanwhile, Home Affairs has failed to respond to enquiries around the new policy, leaving travellers in the dark. The department did not respond to numerous requests sent by *Travel Buyer* to comment on the situation.

Immigration expert and director for InterGate Immigration, **Monya Flier**, says Home Affairs informally announced a change in policy more than six months ago. The announcement stated that Home Affairs would no longer issue permanent residence stamps in passports moving forward, requiring travellers to rely on their permanent residency certificates.

Flier says the new policy was implemented without notice or proper communication – it was simply displayed as a notice on the walls of the Home Affairs building, she says.

For the moment, while Home Affairs no longer issues residence stamps, it seems travellers are allowed to use the old stamps as a

form of verification, Flier says. "We have had no reported incidents on this account yet."

However, the issue remains murky and travellers should not rely on their old stamps continuing to be accepted, she says. "I strongly advise permanent residents to travel with their certificates."

In situations where a permanent resident tries to re-enter South Africa without proof of their residency, officials at the point of entry will have every right to assess that traveller as a temporary visitor, Flier says. "For non-visa exempt individuals, their immigration is highly controlled. It is highly likely that should they fail to produce the necessary proof, they will not even be allowed to board the plane."

"Also very worrying is the fact that these stories all relate to the original certificate, and not a copy, which most travellers would be uncomfortable travelling

with," de Vries says.

Flier adds that permanent residency certificates are not easy to replace. "Historically, these certificates have taken about a year to replace by means of a Proof of Permanent Residence application." As such she strongly recommends that travellers check with immigration officials whether or not they are able to travel with a South African ID book instead. "The

notice didn't provide any clarity on whether or not this would be possible, however an ID book is far easier to replace."

De Vries says that the deafening silence emanating from Home Affairs concerning clarification around the issue is perhaps an indication that the department itself is uncertain of the ins and outs of the new policy. In general, all the new changes around South African immigration policies have created massive uncertainty, he says. "Quite frankly this is a mess." ■

I strongly advise permanent residents to travel with their certificates.



Otto de Vries, ceo of asata

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Does Southern Africa need a stronger regional network?

Dorine Reinstein talks to local airlines, gauging opinion on the need for more regional options and whether this could bring prices down.

SOME of South Africa's smaller airports are seeking new regional status that would allow them to operate larger networks in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

According to **Susan van der Ryst**, corporate communications manager for Comair, South Africa had 47 international airports prior to 1995, which increased the risk for illegal entry into the country. "To tighten the borders and have proper customs facilities in place, the government imposed legislation to allow no more than 10 international airports in South Africa," she says.

She points out that while charter airlines may benefit from having more international airports in South Africa, for commercial scheduled airlines, half the demand for regional flights comes from the long-haul international markets.

Nico Bezuidenhout, acting ceo of SAA, is also not convinced South Africa needs regional gateways. "The use of secondary airports remains a worldwide trend, but South Africa's market is relatively small and the world-class infrastructure at our major centres fulfils the majority of market need at this time."



Nico Bezuidenhout, acting ceo, SAA

Bezuidenhout adds that, while secondary airports have a proven track record in terms of effect on market stimulation, there are many factors that affect the outcome. "Regionally, bilateral regulations manage capacity between markets while international flights are unlikely to shift from existing infrastructure," he says.

A potential increase in airports catering for regional flights will not necessarily create an environment in which LCCs flourish, as is the case in Europe. Van der Ryst says: "To operate a sustainable LCC, you need the critical mass. Short- and medium-term passenger volumes will not support a sustainable LCC service."

Bezuidenhout agrees, pointing out that, although it has been proved internationally that regional airports stimulate the market, in smaller markets such as SA there may not be the demand to match this additional capacity.

LCCs already operating in the South African market dispute this, taking the view that the opening of new regional gateways would be welcome. For **Oliver Wigdahl**, vp commercial FlySafair, any degree of liberalisation would encourage more competition.

Wigdahl believes more regional gateways would provide increased options for flight connections closer to a higher number of densely populated areas. "This has to be good for the South African travelling public, who will benefit from more convenient departure and arrival points, and keener airport charges, which translate into lower airfares and, in turn, more demand. This would boost national and local economies."

Bezuidenhout warns, however, that although new regional airports in SA may lower operating costs and have a beneficial effect on passenger service charges, this is only a small portion of input

cost when compared with fuel and maintenance. "In a market that is managed by bilaterals with limited capacity, demand often exceeds capacity and thus natural movement of pricing," he comments.

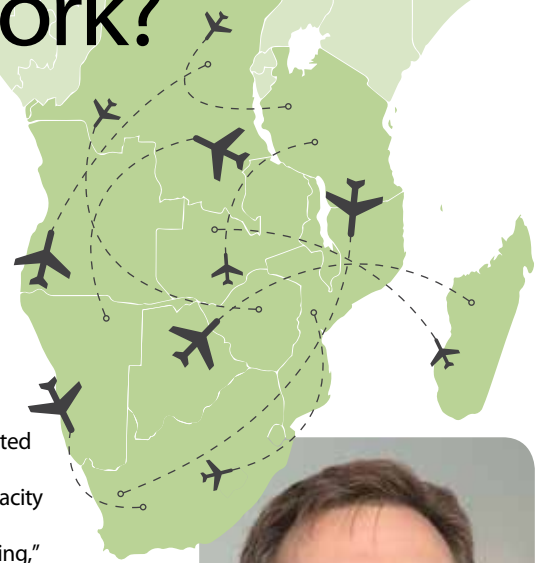
Rodger Foster, ceo and md of SA Airlink, believes the introduction of smaller airports will not necessarily bring down prices. "Hubs, such as OR Tambo, offer point-to-point travel as well as connectivity and bring economies of scale and purchasing power, which are not easily achievable at smaller regional airports."

He says the reason why regional flights are often quite pricey is because the unit costs associated with smaller markets, and commensurately smaller aircraft, are far higher, as are operating costs at many over-border regional destinations.

Van der Ryst agrees that prices for regional flights are unlikely to decrease with more airports. "Prices could even increase due to the additional airport infrastructure and operating costs. The burden of increased operating costs will be placed on the airline and ultimately the fare price," she says.

Wigdahl admits that, while smaller regional airports might charge lower passenger charges, limited local demand will determine the use of smaller aircraft with inferior economies of scale to match supply with demand. "With such aircraft, the costs are amortised over a smaller number of passengers, so costs, and therefore fares, will remain high."

According to Wigdahl, regional airports would have to offer competitive charges. "They must ensure their facilities are able to accommodate larger aircraft and



Oliver Wigdahl, vp commercial, FlySafair

they must entice the larger aircraft operators to start services by recognising that part of the airport revenue stream must come from passenger revenues on-airport (retail, parking), rather than pushing all the cost on to airlines bringing the footfall to the airport."

Despite differences in opinion on the need for additional regional gateways, all airlines agree that the SADC offers unparalleled potential for growth. **Richard Bodin**, fastjet's chief commercial officer, says currently Africa only represents 3% of world aviation, allowing for huge opportunities. He believes the main hurdle for Africa is currently still the lack of liberalisation of the skies.

Bezuidenhout says bilateral agreements governing capacity, number of flights and number of carriers, continue to close out markets to competitors. "The Yamoussoukro Declaration, Africa's open skies initiative, held the key to opening up markets. However it remains in initial stages of implementation." ■

How to master your trade

Travel buyers in smaller companies can take advantage of programmes and tools offered by TMCs and associations to grow their expertise. By **Michelle Colman**

IN TERMS of training, travel buyers in small and medium-size businesses are something of a Cinderella. While there is training out there, there's a lack of awareness of, and thus demand for, such opportunities. This could well stem from a number of misconceptions that hold SMEs back from formulating relationships with TMCs. SMEs are inclined to doubt their need for a TMC, believing that their budgets are too small and the services too costly, or that going it alone is simple.

Jim Weighell, director of operations Southern Africa for the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), points out some of these misconceptions. To start with, the role of the travel buyer in a smaller company is often undefined, and forms part of the multi-functional role of a PA or administrator. This is fuelled by the common notion that travel can easily be managed online through supplier portals, and by travel policies that are dominated by 'lowest fare'



Jim Weighell, GBTA director of operations Southern Africa



principles and little else.

Not always aware of the specialist services offered by TMCs, SMEs often patronise the wrong type of travel agency, or flounder under the false impression that their business is too small to warrant the attention of a TMC. These are largely fallacies, as TMCs surveyed for this article point out.

Mike Gray, managing director of Uniglobe Travel Solutions, claims that there is a huge need for educating buyers in SMEs. While they tend to be extremely cost conscious, he says, they often fall foul of the small print in the rules belonging to all types of suppliers. Effecting changes, upgrades and cancellations without the

necessary knowledge can prove unnecessarily expensive.

Claude Vankeirsbilck, chief sales and marketing officer for Tourvest Travel Services, says SMEs who go it alone are missing out on TMC-developed technology that can make their buying more efficient, cost effective and simple. He adds that programmes developed by Tourvest are not complex and require minimal training.

Both Gray and Vankeirsbilck believe SMEs have a greater need for a TMC than do large corporates, as smaller businesses with limited staff resources need to spend all their time on managing their core business. Gray says travel buyers in smaller businesses tend to be very much on their own with no guiding travel policies, procurement systems, or HR infrastructure.

Shelley Fourie, retail manager of Thompsons Travel in Durban, points out another benefit of the SME-TMC relationship. SMEs can leverage off of the TMC's corporate deals and discounted rates for volume-based deals. There are other advantages, too, such as emergency after-hours assistance and duty of care measures. Says **Marco Cristofoli**, md of Harvey World Travel, a group that is itself made up of small franchise businesses that resonate with the needs of SMEs:

"We can really assist SMEs with saving time and money, while offering them peace of mind, knowing refunds, travel assistance, advice and reporting are all taken care of."

Weighell claims there is a noticeable trend among SMEs to develop their expertise in travel management, particularly as businesses expand. "This is particularly apparent where SMEs are showing organic growth with an equal growth in their travel spend and human resource factors. In addition, the increased focus on cost savings is directly supported by increased knowledge of available options in travel, be they air, car or hotel related."

Monique Swart, founder of the African Business Travel Association (ABTA), also notes growing demand for travel buyer training across the board, including in the SME arena. "Our experience is that as our buyers across Africa engage more with ABTA and our education programme, they become very aware of the efficiencies that can be obtained through a well-managed travel programme." She finds that the rewards of some training lead to demand for even more knowledge, as travel buyer performance is enhanced and best practice standards become a goal for smaller businesses.



Mike Gray, md of Uniglobe Travel Solutions

~~PROBLEM~~ SOLUTION



6 tailored solutions for SMEs

Focus on fundamentals

IN SOUTH AFRICA, the GBTA offers the 'Fundamentals of Business Travel Management' programme aimed at SME and corporate travel buyers. The course is presented locally, in classroom, over two days, with an emphasis on interaction and discussion. It culminates in an examination.

The core curriculum encompasses:

- Overview of Travel Management
- Supplier Relationships
- Security and Risk Management
- Travel Technology Basics
- Measuring Success: Trends, Forecasting and Reporting Value

The course offers globally recognised certification from the association's most senior executives.

In conjunction with Wharton University in the United States, GBTA runs the Certificate in Professional Development and Global Leadership programmes. The association also offers the Certificate in Meeting Management for meetings and events managers. Further, membership of the GBTA comes with access to a wide range of online resources, webinars and forums aimed at the advancement of business travel management.

Benchmark best practice

At present, ABTA offers non-formalised workshop and discussion sessions across Africa, where members come together and share their experiences and best practices.

However, in the second quarter of this year, the association will release details of an international collaboration to offer certified training for the business travel industry, with a recognised accreditation. This will take place together

with education events, but online options will also be available. The training will include three tiers of focus:

- Operational training (such as customer service, conflict resolution and managing bookings)
- Sales training (including sales effectiveness and sales strategies)
- Procurement (covering requests for proposal, negotiations and more).

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Weekly webinars

Club Travel undertakes weekly product webinars for independent travel consultants which contain material of interest to travel buyers in SMEs. Says md, **Wally Gaynor**: "We are busy relaunching our intranet and websites that would give us the opportunity to record and distribute our webinars to a wider audience." He further advises that Club Travel is launching a Business Travel Online system aimed at SMEs. It will be available at a minimal fee and will provide access to TMC-negotiated supplier deals and infrastructure.



Simplicity and flexibility

Tourvest has developed a comprehensive Travel Management Solution with the SME in mind that is flexible enough to meet any specific

travel-buying need. The product is simple to use and is developed locally with the benefit of an understanding of local buying nuances.

Personalised relationships

"Training is a great idea, although it needs to be balanced with the constraints of SMEs, which are time-challenged and resource light as they focus on growing their business," says md of Harvey World Travel, **Marco Cristofoli**. The group finds that its SME base prefers to talk directly to a consultant rather than using a booking tool. "This complements our service ethos in terms of building personal relationships and getting the customer 'in store'," he comments.



Detailed guidance

Uniglobe offers detailed online training on utilising the company's travel portal to manage travel arrangements. It covers actions from requisitioning to quoting, ticketing and effecting changes. Uniglobe also produces travel arranger booklets and 'cheat sheets' to guide travel

buyers through the rules and regulations around fares and ticketing. From time to time, Uniglobe and its suppliers hold workshops for travel arrangers to help them improve their travel management skills. The company's sales team double up as support and advisers to travel arrangers. All training is free. ■





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OPERATING BRANDS



How practical are emerging payment systems?

The hi-tech world of payment systems continues to evolve with mobile solutions set to lead the way. But is this the best option for travel buyers and their travellers?

Debbie Badham investigates.

EMERGING payment systems present South African travel buyers with a considerable challenge as more options are rapidly becoming available. While the adoption of virtual card payments is slowly starting to gain traction, corporates have shown little demand for mobile payment solutions.

Mobile payment solutions are starting to catch on in the consumer space. MasterCard launched MasterPass in South Africa last year. Geared towards consumers, the technology is designed to provide South African shoppers with a more seamless, speedy and secure checkout process. However, experts agree that mobile is not the most viable method of payment for corporate travellers in South Africa at this point in time. "We still consider our Diners Club Corporate Card to be the best option for corporates for the foreseeable future," says **Kevin Lomax**, head of commercial card for Diners Club and Standard Bank South Africa. This is largely because the solution is compatible with existing travel management systems and point of sale infrastructure.

"Most corporates are still making use of their lodge cards," agrees chief financial officer for Tourvest Travel Services, **Lidia Folli**. "At the moment mobile is used to confirm itineraries and check-ins but there has not been a lot of uptake in the corporate space in terms of payments." She believes that when comparing the emerging payment options available to travel buyers, virtual card payment solutions offer the



Standard Bank's **Andrew Wilson** (left) and **Andrew Wilmot** (right) with Diners Club's **Kevin Lomax**.

greatest benefits to travel buyers.

In a nutshell, corporates are able to issue virtual cards, which are sent to their travellers electronically when they make a booking. The card is issued for a very specific amount, for use at a specific time. Any difference in expenditure is then settled by the traveller on their own card. "To provide the property with peace of mind, a virtual voucher is sent through to them as well," explains Folli.

Andrew Shaw, online business solution manager for Amadeus, agrees that virtual cards are a more viable form

of payment. "Virtual card payments are not yet common in South Africa but they are starting to gain traction."

Lomax believes that virtual cards will go a long way to solving the issue of bill backs. However, he adds that travel spend in Africa is still mostly in cash, which creates challenges. Standard Bank's head of card acquiring for South Africa, **Andrew Wilmot**, says "It becomes a question of whether or not the Hilton in Nigeria is likely to accept your virtual card. I would think not."

But does this mean that travel buyers should allow emerging payment solutions to

fall by the wayside? Can travel buyers afford to ignore mobile and virtual card payments, taking into consideration the broader payment sector? Lomax believes this would be a mistake. "Any organisation which is not thinking about where mobile fits into their travel policy is missing something," he says.

Beyond corporate travel, the payment industry is starting to look very different and mobile solutions in particular are at the heart of it all. Travel buyers need to make sure they understand where the industry is headed and which technologies are going to

benefit them in the long run, industry leaders say.

Wilmot says that payment systems must be viewed as part of a much broader technological eco-system. "Think of it as plumbing. Travel buyers can implement whichever technology they like as long as it fits in with the rest of the infrastructure they have in place." This is exactly why service providers in the payment arena are focusing their attention on incorporating vendors into the virtual eco-system.

Andrew Wilson, head of business development and mobile for Standard Bank Group Mobile, adds: "Some corporates may simply prefer not to engage with vendors who aren't working with these kinds of payment systems."

When mobile payments are functioning as part of a broader technological ecosystem, the advantages are endless. Buyers would have the ability to tailor their mobile payment solution to suit their particular

needs as long as it is able to be fully integrated into their current corporate booking tool. Comments **Anthony Hynes**, CEO of eNett: "Ultimately, it all comes down to integration. Travel buyers should look holistically at their corporate travel process and determine which solutions are able to be integrated into that process."

The situation can quickly become highly complex.

To keep things simple, Lomax advises that buyers do the following:

1. Buyers first need to revisit the broader world of technology beyond payment systems.
2. They then need to ask themselves what ultimately they are trying to achieve in terms of payments.
3. Thereafter, they need to identify partners who can assist with the right solution to meet these requirements.
4. Whatever the resulting solution, it must be flexible. Adds Wilmot: "Buyers should actively question what mobile solutions can

bring to their systems and processes, asking themselves what efficiencies could be introduced. At the end of the day, this technology has the power to completely transform what we do and how we do it."



Why go the mobile route?

TRAVEL buyers who see room to begin implementing a mobile solution as part of their broader booking processes and systems should take note of some of the advantages and challenges.

Mark Elliott, division president for MasterCard South Africa, summarises by saying that mobile functionality in the hands of the traveller will facilitate greater convenience and smarter purchasing choices, as well as real-time data visibility, process efficiencies and greater programme control for travel managers.

Anthony Hynes agrees, saying that the most significant advantage of a mobile payment system lies in dynamic data and dynamic pricing. "Hoteliers are moving away from fixed rates and having a secure and integrated form of payment that is able to be accepted by any merchant leaves greater

room for negotiations," he maintains. "Not only does a mobile solution offer ease of use for the traveller but it also makes data collection easier for the travel buyer, providing them with significant insights."

According to Elliott, mobile



Mark Elliott, division president, Mastercard SA

solutions enable real-time payment data capture, which, in turn, enables faster decision making. What's more, they provide travel managers with "pocket-sized compliance managers" thanks to their transaction alert functionality.

Reconciliation is another powerful component of the mobile proposition. "It makes things very simple and cost-effective for the travel buyer as well as the supplier and the merchant," says Hynes.

While security issues are sometimes raised as a concern when it comes to mobile, **Andrew Wilson** explains that mobile solutions are in fact a great deal more secure than other payment systems as they make use of biometrics as a form of authentication.

He points out that advantages that come with adopting a mobile solution are endless. For example, in the forex space, travellers can make

use of apps that enable them to see the rates they are paying.

"Mobile solutions are invaluable from a duty-of-care perspective," adds Lomax, noting that travel managers would have instant access to data and support.

However, the implementation of a mobile solution still presents major challenges, which is perhaps why corporates are demonstrating little demand at this point. Folli says the biggest problem with mobile solutions is that they are available through solution-specific apps. This would mean that travellers would have to download a different app for each new venue, depending on that particular merchant's technological preference.

"Travel is mostly booked through a central travel agent where there is often little need – or incentive – to make payments via mobile solutions," adds Elliott.

Why go the virtual route?

WHILE virtual card payments are not yet common in the corporate environment, they are beginning to gain traction. The advantages associated with virtual card payments are considerable. Most significant, is the solution's ability to alleviate the bill back process as bill backs are charged against the virtual card. "It eliminates a great deal of the back and forth that takes place, and hotels get their money upfront," explains **Lidia Folli**. "Virtual vouchers can be sent to the property in question, granting them the security they require and helping to improve cash flow."

According to **Andrew Shaw**, more detailed information and data are a significant part of the virtual proposition. "When an expense is charged, the corporate will know immediately," he adds.

Amadeus has plans to launch a virtual card payment solution this year, which Shaw says will



Lidia Folli, cfo, Tourvest Travel Services

alleviate admin and cost for both the corporate and the TMC.

"Virtual card payment systems are so much simpler and more cost-effective," agrees **Anthony Hynes**. "It is also a highly secure form of payment as it does not allow for misuse by the traveller,



Andrew Shaw, online business solution manager, Amadeus

merchant or other third parties."

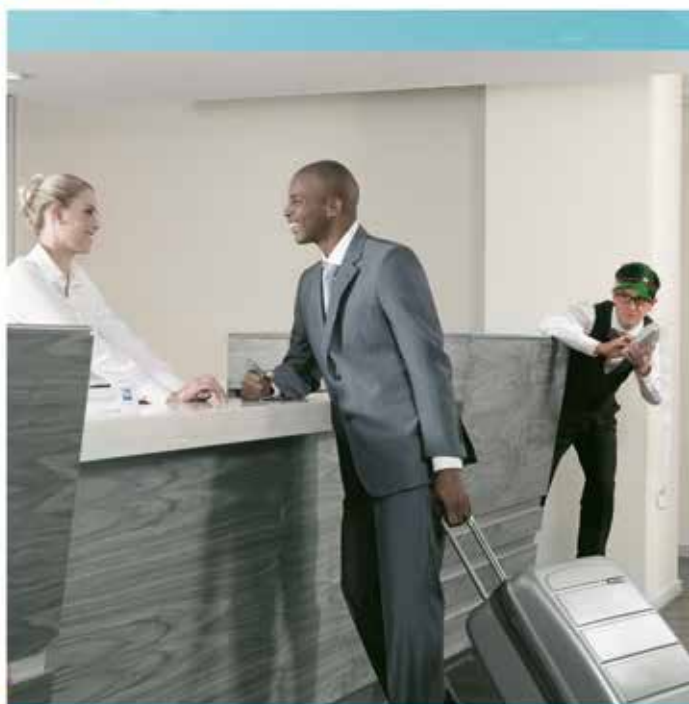
According to **Mark Elliott**, single-use virtual cards are the most popular form of payment. "These expire once used, providing greater protection from hackers and fraudsters," he adds.

In terms of the initial challenges that corporates should prepare for, Elliott pinpoints the education of merchants. He explains that use of virtual cards in the physical environment will require merchants to process their virtual card number as a card-not-present transaction into their point of sale devices.

For the traveller, challenges are few. While Shaw notes that there would be an education process involved, for the most part it is as simple as being handed a voucher. It is also relatively simple for travel buyers to implement virtual payment technology. "Basically, it would be very similar to applying for a normal credit card," says Shaw. "A virtual account number needs to be set up with the buyer's agency and the corporate then needs to decide when and how the card will be used, and what information is needed in terms of their reporting requirements." ■



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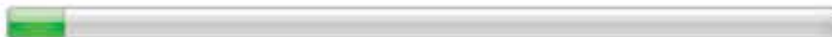
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Are you prepared for the next crisis?

Recent global events – including terrorist attacks, airplane crashes and the outbreak of Ebola – have drawn attention to the importance of duty-of-care programmes, but a surprising number of SMEs in South Africa are lagging behind in implementing efficient policies. **Dorine Reinstein** reports.



THE concept of corporate Travel Risk management is in its infancy in South Africa, says HRG Rennies Travel md, **Bronwyn Philipps**. “Some companies overlook the importance of the travel element within their duty-of-care programmes. As such, the approach to managing travellers who have to visit areas experiencing unrest is still very reactive. We’ve learnt that the need for companies to address this gap within their business prior to engaging with third-party suppliers is critical.”

Maria Martins, director of Programme Management at CWT South Africa, expands on this: “The travel policy document allows for effective communication of safety guidelines to airlines, hotels and

car rentals. Such specifications can include banned airlines, risk destinations, preferred hotel suppliers that promote safety as well as acceptable comfort levels, and car-rental suppliers that provide ABS braking systems, air bags, etc.”

She notes that organisations should conduct more comprehensive research on duty-of-care issues applicable to their operations and geographic regions of interest. Trends should also be monitored to establish a greater understanding of current duty-of-care standards, both in terms of legal obligations and industry best practice.

Seek reliable sources

Effective communication and reliable information are key elements of a solid duty-of-care programme, says **Monique Swart**, founder of the African Business Travel Association. She says it is important for companies to be well informed as to what the situation and geographical impact are, and then decide on their way forward. “With the Ebola virus, for instance, we still find companies imposing blanket travel bans, or bans into regions where terror threats have been reported, without having much of a clue as to the actual situation. I feel knee-jerk reactions such as these can sometimes be as dangerous and detrimental as having no plan in place.”

Jim Weighell, director of Operations Southern Africa for GBTA, agrees, adding that relying on TV news channels is not recommended when seeking a balanced assessment of the evolving situation. “The key lesson is: don’t let your guard drop and keep your crisis assessment and management plan up to date.”

However, placing a comprehensive plan on paper is not enough, according to Swart. “Companies often have what looks to be a strong policy on paper but very few actually test these policies regularly – ensuring they know where travellers are and so on. As such, even those corporates with policies in place can find practical implementation and staff extraction a challenge.”

Select the right partners

According to Swart, many buyers are gradually starting to understand the importance of having specialist security partners in place who can guide them and assist in emergency situations. “More companies are realising that most emergencies have far more elements and complications involved than they would have thought.”

Wally Gaynor, md of Club Travel, says he is seeing more and more international procurement and HR departments enlisting the services of duty-of-care providers and subscribing to companies such as International SOS. He adds, however: “It would seem that duty of care is more prevalent with our internationally based clients than our locally based clients, where the policy is enforced by their international head office.”

Travel buyers should select their TMC based on their ability to partner with external risk management companies, as well as their ability to hand over live booking data in the format and time frames that they require, advises Philipps. “More clients are consolidating their travel through TMCs with the aim of having fewer service points, making it easier to track and control travellers, as this provides a single source of data and programme management.”



Bronwyn Philipps, md, Rennies



Maria Martins, director, Programme Management at CWT SA

6 helpful tech solutions

TRAVELLER tracking has become critical for companies during the current global unrest and TMCs and travel managers are increasingly relying on innovative technology to assist with this difficult task.

Bronwyn Philipps says there are a wide range of mobile applications available to assist with travel tracking. "Online GPS-based reporting has greatly enhanced a company's ability to keep abreast of travellers' travel plans prior to travel as well as their whereabouts during travel. These reports are often customised to accommodate the company's most important needs. Pre-trip reporting enables them to make the right decisions from a risk-avoidance perspective, while booked data enables them to swiftly locate travellers."

However, technology cannot be the sole answer to travellers' safety, argues **Wally Gaynor**. "While cellphone technology

allows for easier and immediate communication with our travellers, they often use in-country SIM cards, meaning they are not available on their SA numbers when travelling."

Monique Swart agrees. "Ensuring strong and regular contact with travellers is still of vital importance, tracking tool or not. It's also important to ensure that whichever app is in use, it is likely to continue working – those based on phone and network coverage could experience issues when networks go down." She advises travel managers to speak to their TMC partner for guidance on what kinds of apps and technology work best, which are least intrusive but most effective.

1. Amadeus Mobile Messenger

Amadeus Mobile Messenger provides professional assistance for handling disruptive incidents such

as weather events, political unrest or natural disasters, and allows communication with travellers at any time.

The product's main interface is a map on which travellers are represented by pushpins that indicate their location according to their travel plans. This allows the travel manager to locate travellers according to their booking data or GPS location and feed them real-time information about disruptions or other events that require their attention. The app works both ways and travellers can also ask for support or react to communication that is sent to them.

The information from Amadeus Mobile Messenger can be received either in a smartphone application or via SMS, whichever is more appropriate in the given situation.

2. CWT To Go

This mobile travel services app released by Carlson Wagonlit

Travel, provides travellers with the itinerary, security messaging, destination intelligence, flight status information, calendar sync and destination services: taxi, parking, restaurants, etc.

3. CWT Aqua

CWT Aqua is a traveller-tracking tool that will locate travellers, enable communication and provide assistance to travellers and travel managers by sending relevant tracking information such as booking information and client contact details to third party security companies.

4. CWT Messenger

To ensure compliance, CWT launched the CWT Messenger App, which offers pre-trip monitoring of travel policy compliance. The app communicates with the traveller and travel manager where policy has not been followed.

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5. Travelport's Agentivity

Agentivity, Travelport's business intelligence tool, provides various reports that can easily be compiled to quickly and accurately locate passengers at any given moment. The report offers the user a search by airport, city, country, or combination of items like airline and city (e.g. where there is a strike on a specific airline but only in a certain city).

Travelport also offers variations of these reports to include items like a mini itinerary and, as usual, they are all downloadable via Excel. One version of the report can be used to produce a passenger list categorised according to specific flight numbers (for the agency/TMC), which comes in handy during airline disasters.

6. Sabre Traveler Security

Sabre Traveler Security allows travel managers and TMCs to instantly

pinpoint travellers' locations and contact info during Sabre-booked trips. When users log in they will see a world map, which they can drill down to find the number of travellers in a specific locale and grab detailed contact and reservation information. It also allows managers to quickly identify those who have plans to travel to volatile or disrupted areas in the future, and make necessary last-minute itinerary changes.

Travel managers will also receive alerts when key personnel are all booked on the same flight, exceeding the corporation's maximum number allowed. They can then make the necessary changes.

The technology further allows users to generate reports on corporate travel trends and provide data when negotiating preferred rates. These reports can be scheduled to run daily, weekly or monthly to meet a variety of operational or business data needs.

Question your cover

IT HAS become increasingly important for travel managers to select the right insurance product for their particular duty-of-care requirements.

Simmy Micheli, manager sales and marketing for Travel Insurance Consultants (TIC), says recent terrorism-related events have led to an immediate increased awareness or increased consideration regarding travel insurance. "We are also beginning to have more specific queries, sometimes related to the most recent and top-of-mind event."

What's more, employers are starting to ask more relevant questions with regard to health, safety and procedures to follow in case of emergency events, says **Wybrandt Lubbe**, travel manager

for Bidvest Insurance. "The majority of corporate companies no longer base their decision on price alone but rather on the availability of comprehensive benefits and assistance services as part of their Corporate Travel Insurance Policy."

According to Lubbe, companies are increasingly realising that medical costs have the potential to run into exorbitant amounts, which would have a far more substantial financial impact on the business than the cost of an annual corporate policy.

When it comes to selecting cover options, Micheli advises travel managers to observe the terms of cover closely to ensure employees are travelling with the widest cover possible.

Passport to 'peace of mind'

BIDVEST Insurance will be placing greater focus on its corporate offering starting this month, with plans to announce a revamp of corporate products towards the middle of the year. With Bidvest Insurance travel managers can expect great

value for money, top-quality cover and professional service," comments **Hanri Pretorius**, gm for Bidvest Travel Insurance. "We are a passport to peace of mind for corporates and employees who travel the world performing their daily duties." ■



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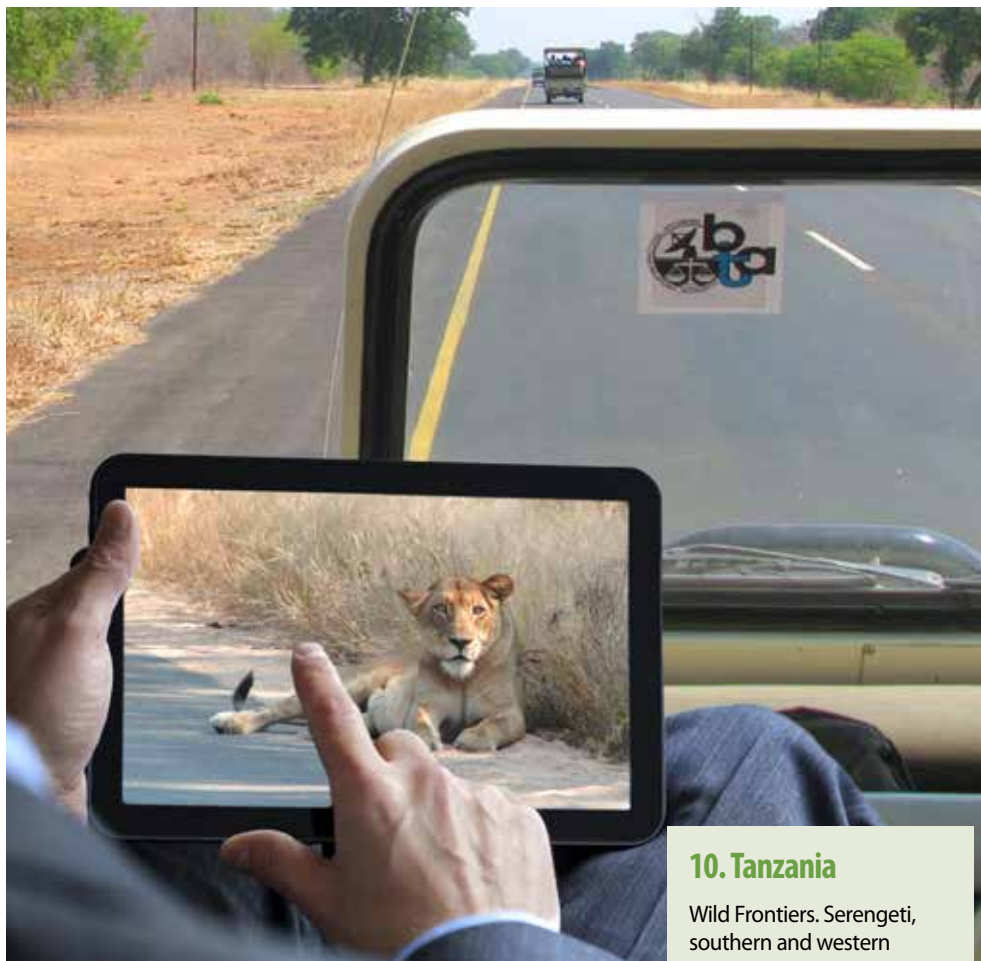
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Top 10 specials

Linda van der Pol,

Travelinfo's editor, is our Deal Detective, bringing you great specials from Travelinfo, the online travel information system in daily use by travel agents all over SA. Just book through your TMC and tell the consultant it's a Travelinfo special. To get connected, e-mail lindav@nowmedia.co.za.



1. Zanzibar

Holiday Tours. Six-night packages are from R13 500 per person sharing. Offer includes return airfare ex-Johannesburg, approximate pre-payable airport taxes, return airport-resort transfers, four-star accommodation in a superior room with all meals and selected drinks. Rate expires June 30.

2. Mediterranean

Thompsons Holidays. Italy, Croatia, Greece and Turkey cruise. Prices are R16 837 ex-Johannesburg, R18 814 ex-Durban and R19 614 ex-Cape Town per person sharing. Offer is valid for travel from April 20 to 27. Package includes return flights to Venice, seven nights' on-board Costa neoClassica, all meals and on-board entertainment.

3. Greece

Azure Travel. Island hopping packages are from R13 830 (three-star) and R14 995 (four-star) per person sharing. Rates include return flights from Johannesburg, one night in Athens, two nights in Paros,

two nights in Mykonos, two nights in Santorini, one night Athens, daily breakfast, all relevant airport and port transfers and hydrofoils between islands. Valid for travel in May only. Excludes airline levies of approximately R5 690 per person.

4. Mauritius

Air Mauritius. Special offer of R2 600 to Mauritius. Sales period valid until March 31. Valid for travel ex-Johannesburg from April 14 to June 20, July 21 to September 26 and October 13 to November 30. Fare excludes taxes.

5. Gauteng

Faircity Hotels and Apartments. Easter promotion at Roodevallei Conference and Meeting Hotel – 20% off all rates between March 12 and April 30.

6. Dubai

Avocatur Wholesale Tour Operator. Five-day packages are from R7 500 per person sharing. Offer includes return flights ex-Johannesburg, airport taxes, four-

star accommodation, daily buffet breakfast, shuttle to Jumeirah Beach and free WiFi. Valid for travel from May 15 until September 30.

7. Phuket

Checkout Tours. Seven night package at Sunset Beach from R9 250 per person sharing. Package includes return flights ex-Johannesburg, taxes, airport hotel transfers and accommodation with breakfast. Special is available from April 1 to October 31.

8. Botswana

Flame of Africa. Special rates at Mowana Safari Lodge. Rates are from R6 342 per person sharing. Offer includes return Kasane airport transfers, three nights' accommodation with breakfast, two Chobe game drives, two Chobe river cruises plus park fees. Excludes flights. Rate is valid until June 30.

9. Mauritius

Beachcomber Tours. Early bird rates at a 30-35% discount. Five-night

10. Tanzania

Wild Frontiers. Serengeti, southern and western Tanzania: eight-day packages are from R17 065 per person sharing. Rate excludes flights and park fees from R3 910 per person. Offer includes return airport transfers, two nights at Arusha, one night at Lake Manyara, two nights at Serengeti and two nights at Ngorongoro, 4x4 throughout with guide and game drives plus all meals except in Arusha, which includes breakfast only. Offer is valid from April 1 to May 31.

packages are from R10 260 per person sharing. Add airport taxes of R3 550 per person. Special includes airfares ex-Johannesburg, return airport-hotel transfers, four-star accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily plus free land and motorised water sports as per the brochure. 30-day advance purchase required. ■

DISCLAIMER: All specials are subject to availability, currency fluctuations and seasonal surcharges.

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