

NOVEMBER 2015

# TRAVEL BUYER

FOR SA CORPORATE

**Government  
procurement**  
– *will the new  
framework be  
effective?*

## +Meet

The secret behind  
*effective*  
loyalty programmes

Meeting spots that spell  
**SPECTACULAR**

**5** HOT  
NEW  
*resorts for meetings*

## LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION

*Smollan's Linda Druckman on putting effective procedures in place*



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## Editor's note

**A**nd the winner is... A truly effective travel manager is the one who remains invisible; the one who remains behind the scenes, ensuring operations run smoothly. When travel managers do things well, they make it look easy. But we know it certainly is not. Travel buyers have huge portfolios and control spends in the millions. They use their expertise and knowledge to achieve massive cost-savings, but never at the expense of operational efficiencies. They often sit in the wings, unacknowledged.

The GBTA, in association with *Travel Buyer*, resurrected the *Travel Buyer of the Year Award* to acknowledge those travel managers – the unsung heroes – that often don't receive the credit they deserve.

Corporate procurement managers, TMCs and suppliers were asked to nominate those individuals that demonstrated leadership, innovation, creativity and a serious commitment to their travel buying roles over the last 12 months. We then asked these nominees for feedback on certain criteria, which were submitted, without names, to an expert panel of judges.

The winner was announced at a

gala dinner at the annual Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Conference, which was held at the Protea Hotel Fire & Ice! Menlyn in Pretoria on October 21.

Congratulations to **Elsa Silva** of FNB, who won the award. Look out for more on this and the GBTA conference in the next issue of *Travel Buyer*.

But for now, there's plenty to read in this month's issue – the spotlight is on government travel, and the work that the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (Asata) is doing with Treasury to manage expenditure issues. When deciding on a TMC partner, BBBEE ratings are an important consideration. *Travel Buyer* looks at how local companies are adjusting to the new codes and how they are achieving successful transformation.

Our loyalty programmes feature delves into what makes a rewards programme effective in a world where customers' loyalties are fickle.

On the meetings side, we highlight some spectacular spots and new resorts to consider.

Keep reading!

**Natasha Schmidt**  
(natashas@nowmedia.co.za)

## COVER

Recently tasked with heading up travel management for field marketing company, Smollan Group SA (Pty) Ltd, **Linda Druckman** has focused on building a solid foundation for the development of future efficiencies. She speaks to *Travel Buyer*. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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# Skywise suspension lifted – for now

**T**HE suspension of Skywise flights by Airports Company South Africa has been temporarily lifted. Several flights were grounded last month as a result of a delay in payments to suppliers Acsa and ATNS.

Skywise stakeholders told the press at a hastily convened media briefing on October 13 that Acsa and ATNS had given Skywise “unreasonable” payment deadlines. The airline argued that payment was not possible at such short notice. Stakeholders added that they were in negotiations with Acsa and ATNS so that “hopefully this would not happen again”.

Acsa has responded, saying the decision to suspend Skywise Airlines from landing or departing from Acsa’s airports was taken after numerous efforts were made to recover outstanding debt from the airline, dating back to August.

Meanwhile, Skywise revealed at the press briefing that financial administration was the crux of the situation. “We had some financial miscommunications internally, which are all being resolved,” said Skywise president, **Tabassum Qadir**. “We are seeking to employ a full-time financial manager to replace the person who is currently only contracting financial services to Skywise,” added co-ceo, **Irfan Pardesi**.

Meanwhile, Skywise has introduced an ‘unlimited flying’ option that enables passengers to fly as many times as they want in a month between Johannesburg and Cape Town for a once-off payment of R7 999.

**J. Malik**, Skywise co-chairperson, told *Travel Buyer* the voucher was valid for 30 days from the date of payment.

Travel agents must contact the airline in order to receive a special

login for the website’s travel agent portal. The login was used only for booking flights on the ‘unlimited flights’ offer, Malik said.

Alternatively, passengers can purchase the voucher on the airline’s website by clicking on the ‘unlimited flights’ logo and following the prompts. Once payment is completed, an email will be sent with a reference number, which must be used when making bookings during the course of the voucher’s validity.

Malik added that customers with a voucher were guaranteed a seat, as long as there was space on the flight.

Those who pay the monthly fee will also have access to VIP services, such as additional baggage, up to 25kg; snacks on board, special check-in and assistance from a ‘personal travel manager’.

## Airlink to launch new route

**A**IRLINK will launch flights between Cape Town and Maun from March 11.

Flights will initially operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The flight will depart Cape Town at 10h35 and arrive in Maun at 13h05. The return flight departs Maun at 13h35 and arrives in Cape Town at 16h10.

## Mango cuts CPT-PLZ

**M**ANGO has cut flights between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, effective October 15. Its aircraft have been redeployed to bulk up flights between Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. Existing bookings will be re-accommodated on SA Express.

“At this time the route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth is overtraded and instead of incurring possible losses, it is more commercially prudent to redeploy our assets at this time,” says spokesperson, **Hein Kaiser**.

## Emirates and fastjet join forces

**E**MIRATES plans to expand its footprint in Africa by partnering with low-cost carrier, fastjet. The airlines have announced a sales and distribution agreement, which allows Emirates’ passengers to book fastjet tickets through Emirates’ sales channels.

“This agreement will give Emirates’ customers access to onward points in fastjet’s Africa network, such as Lilongwe, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza and Mbeya, amongst others,” a spokesperson for Emirates told *Travel Buyer*.

Chief commercial officer of Fastjet, **Richard Bodin**, says he is delighted that a company of the calibre and size of Emirates has looked to fastjet as a partner. “We’re really pleased to have achieved that level of understanding in the market. Not only will it allow us access to the millions of passengers that Emirates carries, it is also a significant validation of our operation, service and proven low-cost model.”



PHOTO: DEBBIE BADHAM

## Spotlight on SMEs

*ABTA hosted a workshop tailored specifically for SME travel management at the DaVinci Hotel and Suites on September 17. The forum facilitated some robust discussion around the frameworks and policies required to more effectively manage travel in the SME environment. A number of interesting topics were raised, including the difficulties*

*surrounding the compliance of ‘middle management’ to travel policy, with a number of travel managers commenting that often this eager group of new travellers were the most likely group within a company to stray beyond budget. Joining in the discussion are (from left): **Corné de Jager** (Boxmore) and **Monique Swart** (ABTA).*

## Wings acquires prize TMC

**W**INGS Travel Management has acquired Michelle’s Travel, previously part of the XL Group.

Founded in 1973, Michelle’s Travel is based in Boksburg with 50 staff members who handle the business travel requirements for clients operating predominantly in the engineering, construction and manufacturing industries. The company will rebrand as Wings Travel Management. All staff have been retained.





PHOTO: KATENATHAN

## Industry calls for set standards

The 2015 Event Industry Summit was held at Hackle Brooke Conference Centre in Johannesburg on October 1. The focus was on standards in the industry, and various panels discussed issues around the lack of defined standards in the industry. There seems to be a great need for a set of standards

among professional planners, and for planners to convey their own standards to both venues and clients as a way to differentiate themselves. Here, at tea time, from left: **Thuli Mahonga**, senior events planner at Nedbank shoots the breeze with **Imogen Mackie**, **Irene Venter** and **Andrew Millar**, all of Micemaster.

## Misperceptions around conferencing in Africa

On August 28, the third annual Site Summit, held at the Radisson Blu Gautrain in Sandton, revealed how many South African conferencing companies shy away from utilising the resources that the rest of Africa has to offer.

Speaking at the summit, author and guest speaker **Victor Kgomoewana** revealed there is a perception that the rest of Africa cannot cater to meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE). "Because of ignorance, poor interaction and a lack of information on what is available in Africa, many planners shy away from organising within most of the continent."

Kgomoewana said that the issue is that South Africans have the perception that they are separate to the rest of Africa. "The mentality of the majority of South Africans as well as our conduct or attitude, suggests that we think we are not all Africans," said Kgomoewana, who notes that this is the result of years of isolation during apartheid, and the continued proximity of South Africa to Europe, North America and now its fellow BRICS countries, noting that the

commercial interests of investors from these countries make it difficult to forge new relations with the rest of the continent, "unless the purpose is to serve the interests of multinationals domiciled in South Africa."

Meanwhile, travel within the continent is still not being promoted as a viable tourism option, and the poor infrastructure and impervious border posts make it worse.

Kgomoewana highlighted that within the limitations of the size of their economies, many African countries do have adequate facilities to host world-class MICE. He noted that these include Ghana and Kenya among a few others.

"East Africa is surely the most imposing alternative to South Africa. Kenya, Rwanda, even Tanzania, have superior WiFi facilities and ICT infrastructure. They also boast economic growth figures that make them attractive," said Kgomoewana. He also said that Ghana is an impressive West African hub; however, Nigeria is likely to continue commanding larger traffic because of its size and entrepreneurial culture.

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## More currencies on one card

**B**IDVEST Bank and MasterCard have launched a prepaid travel card that allows cardholders to load up to 17 currencies on the same card at any time.

The Multi-Currency World Currency Card can be loaded both before departure and while travelling, with any or all of the 17 available currencies: the US dollar, British pound, euro, Australian dollar, Thai baht, Canadian dollar, Argentinian peso, Brazilian real, Indian rupee, Chinese yuan, Israeli shekel, United Arab Emirates dirham, Mauritian rupee, Saudi riyal, Japanese yen, Swiss franc and New Zealand dollar.

Travellers can also lock in the exchange rate on the local

currency of their destination ahead of time and decide exactly how much they want to spend in a particular foreign currency without having to think about conversion rates. The card then matches the relevant currency loaded on to the card with that of the country they are in. For example, if both pounds and euros are loaded on to the card at the same time and the cardholder is in London, the card will automatically default to the pound wallet to avoid additional foreign exchange fees. "Cardholders can make instant transfers between the various currencies on the card if, for example, a specific currency is depleted," says **Japie van Niekerk**, md of Bidvest Bank.

## Applying for passports just got easier

**S**OUTH Africans will soon be able to apply for their passports and Smart IDs at their nearest bank.

The project is currently being piloted with bank employees until the end of November and, based on the results, a national roll-out will commence at certain FNB, Standard Bank and Nedbank branches. Consultations with

Absa are at an advanced stage.

Home Affairs spokesperson, **Mayihlome Tshwete**, told *Travel Buyer* the department was completely responsible for the safe keeping of all documentation. "The banks will simply be granting us space within their branches but Home Affairs will be running the entire process and using its current system of application and delivery."

## Air France to scrap some long-haul flights

**A**NUMBER of Air France's long-haul flights and frequencies are under threat as labour disputes continue to impact on the airline's bottom line.

To restore long-term profitability after four years of losses, the airline said it would need to launch a drastic restructuring plan of its long-haul network. This will see the airline close five routes as well as substantially reduce long-haul frequencies

by 2017.

The schedule modifications will focus primarily on routes where losses are the highest, such as Asia and the Middle East. Spokesperson for Air France, **Ulli Gendrot**, told *Travel Buyer* she couldn't give any information as to whether South African routes would be affected by the restructuring plan. Details of which destinations will suffer a drop in frequencies will only be communicated over the next few months.



PHOTO: DEBBIE BADHAM

## What is the true cost of travel?

At a recent ABTA Buyers' Breakfast, eight different travel buyers were tasked with sharing their most important lessons learned for the year. The forum provided travel managers with valuable insight into the best practice implemented by their peers within the industry. **Howard Stephens**, ex-CPO of Nedbank, gave a particularly interesting presentation about the true

cost of travel, questioning whether companies truly understood the business reason behind travel. "Assess whether you can replace unnecessary travel with necessary travel and understand that, in cases where travel brings in additional revenue, it is worth additional cost," he said. Pictured here, Stephens (right) is joined by **John Gawler** (Kansai Plascon) and **Merrill Isherwood** (SARS).

## FlySafair introduces priority boarding

**F**LYSAFAIR has launched a new ancillary product – Priority Boarding – that allows passengers to board the aircraft first.

"People looking to fly from Cape Town or Johannesburg after October 31 will have the option to add Priority Boarding to their bookings for a R50 premium," the airline said in a statement.

The first 40 people to book and pay for Priority Boarding on a flight are afforded the benefit. Only passengers with a pre-allocated seat booked on the

website can qualify for Priority Boarding. Passengers wishing to book their seat pay an additional fee. "We decided to keep the cost of Priority Boarding lower but to only make it available as an option for passengers with a pre-selected seat," says FlySafair ceo, **Elmar Conradie**.

FlySafair will initially offer the service on its Johannesburg and Cape Town route, with plans to roll the product out on other routes. Passengers have the option of choosing Priority Boarding for a one-way or return flight. ■



# 5 GREAT WAYS to balance work with play in KZN

With its sunny beaches, culture and cuisine, KwaZulu Natal aptly holds the title of South Africa's playground. **Liesl Venter** asks **Diane Watson** of Adventure Realm about the top activities meeting planners can consider when conferencing in the province.



## uShaka Marine World

ASK anyone in Durban and they will tell you that a visit to uShaka Marine World is a must on any to-do list. According to Watson it offers a host of opportunities for planners thanks to the wide array of things to do. "There is a variety of activities to choose from at uShaka," she says. "This might come in the form of a

simple visit to the fifth-largest aquarium in the world or lunch on board a 1920s cargo ship."

With dolphin shows, snorkelling among a thousand tame fish or scuba diving, the visits can be as action-packed as required. Scuba diving, says Watson, is one activity that continues to attract, whether delegates are divers or not. "It is a unique experience to be on the other side of the glass," she says.



## Tala Game Reserve

South Africa's wildlife remains one of its biggest draw cards and KwaZulu Natal has several game reserves to choose from. The Tala Game Reserve is easy to access from Durban and is home to rhinos, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, hippo and many antelope species. Watson says game reserve visits are easily partnered with culture, allowing delegates to learn more about the Zulu culture and even learn some traditional dances.

## Luxury cruises

A luxury harbour cruise on board a private yacht is another popular activity that can be tailored to meet specific needs. "From a luxury cruise with champagne around the harbour to actually helping to crew the vessel, there are a variety of options available."

## The Valley of a Thousand Hills

The versatility of activities in KZN is one of its major attractions, says Watson. The province not only caters for the adventurous of spirit but also has much to offer in the way of culture. The Valley of a Thousand Hills culture tour takes delegates into another world where they will experience pulsating tribal rhythms and the mysterious rituals of sangomas.

## Trees, gorges and all that is wild

Further west toward the scenic Natal Midlands, adventurous delegates can enjoy half a day zip wiring from tree to tree under the careful eye of qualified guides. Coupled with a lazy lunch and a meander through the Midlands' quaint farm stalls, arts and crafts, this is the perfect outing in KZN.

"The wonderful thing about the province is that one does not have to travel very far to enjoy action-packed fun," says Watson. "Within 45 minutes one is able to take part in some of the most amazing activities, which range from mild to very extreme."

For those wanting something more adventurous than treetop zipping, Watson recommends the Wild Gorge swing, an experience that will leave most breathless. Only an hour and a half from Durban, this activity is not for the faint-hearted. Standing at the top of the Lehr's waterfall, you have to leap off the edge and dive into the depths of this 165-metre gorge, where you will swing from one side to the other. This is the highest swing in the world and is equivalent to launching off a 55-storey building. On the descent you can reach a speed of 120 kilometres an hour.

Other action-packed activities including swinging 120 metres along a steel cable above the ground, giving participants a unique view of the Oribi Gorge and the Lehr's falls. There are also abseiling packages as well as river rafting across some memorable rapids.



# Meeting spots that spell SPECTACULAR

Resorts by their very nature are meccas of entertainment, offering planners the opportunity to create extraordinary events. **Liesl Venter** reports.

CONFERENCE organisers looking to create something truly special for their next event should consider one of the diverse resort options available. Resorts are well positioned to host events of a spectacular nature. Indeed, they are the perfect venue choice for those occasions when ordinary simply won't do, says **Charl van Wyk**, group operations director at BON Hotels.

"An out-of-the ordinary event is relative to the expectations of the client," he comments. "However, more often than not a resort is the final destination rather than just a means. In other words, the venue already has that something special or unique that goes a long way toward creating that spectacular element, whether the setting is

beach, river or mountains."

**Deon Viljoen**, director of operations at Southern Sun Resorts, agrees, saying that resorts stand out because of their unique locations. "By incorporating key destination features, resorts have the ability to offer something very different."

"At a resort you have a captive audience, so it is easier to keep delegates engaged. Also the sheer variety of activities at a resort means meeting planners are not necessarily dependent on one attraction only," says **Catherine Larkin** of CLVC Communications, a Johannesburg-based conference organiser and communications specialist that annually organises a range of conferences at resorts across the country.

At the same time, says Larkin, the atmosphere at a resort is usually relaxing –

which translates into delegates becoming more inclined to participate and enjoy the event.

Resorts provide most, if not all, ancillary facilities as well as access to a number of recreational or leisure spaces, for example, a spa and wellness centre, golf, horse riding, tennis, bowls etc, says Van Wyk. "Properties generally have facilities for functions and conferences with two or more food and beverage outlets. All of which assist management in tailoring an event that eliminates boredom and repetition and gives the client an endless list of options."

## The sky is the limit

When organising an event at a resort, the sky is the limit. From a beach or a pool party to themed evenings and gala dinners – anything can be created. Whether it is roof-top dinners, surprise lunches in the middle of the bush or luxury picnics on a secluded beach, there is not much a resort cannot create.

At Legend Golf & Safari Resort near the Entabeni nature reserve, some amazing events have taken place, including the hosting of the Miss World finalists two years in a row.

"We have seen everything from our shebeen venue transformed into a Martian landscape for a party on

Mars, to gala events hosted in our Queen of Sheba Hall," says **Rina Cilliers**, gm sales and marketing for Legend Resorts.

"A venue can literally be used for a gala dinner for one event and then be transformed into a beach party for the next event," she says.

The right choice of resort depends on what your needs are and what you want to create, says Larkin. "Having a healthy budget goes a long way to creating the spectacular and out of the ordinary."

"A challenge, however, is to harness the essence of the client's brief for a particular event and ensure that this is carried out through all the arranged group activities and meal functions," says Van Wyk.

He says the other major challenge that a resort needs to overcome is the seamless transition from one area to the next and ensuring that guests at one function are not negatively impacted by guests attending other functions.

For Viljoen there is no doubt that events are more memorable for their participants when hosted at resorts. "It is crucial, though, to source the right suppliers of added services, décor, audio visual, connectivity and travel."

His advice for planners wanting to create something different at a resort is first to find that unique destination that meets their needs and then to engage with resort management. "Budget is important but also a willingness to break the mould and experiment with what is available."

Larkin maintains that extraordinary happens only after very firm goals have been set and a strategy is in place. "If you don't have measurable goals, how will you know when your event is out of the ordinary? At the same time you have to make sure it is engaging and constantly keeps the target audience in mind."



The Shebeen room at Legend Golf & Safari Resort



# 5 hot new resorts for meetings

**Liesl Venter** consults the experts about ideas for some hot new resorts to consider for meetings and events in the region.



PHOTO: SHANNON VAN ZYL

## The Sabi River Sun

THIS Tsogo Sun resort on the banks of the Sabi River in the Mpumalanga lowveld could hardly be described as new, with the first rondavels opened for visitors back in 1932.

It was, however, in need of transformation. After close to 50 years' operation under the Southern Sun/Tsogo Sun banner, a refurbishment programme kicked off in June this year.

Having just completed the extensive work to its interior and exterior the resort not only boasts a brand new façade but has also been updated significantly.

It comprises 80 hectares, 104 timeshare chalets and 60 hotel rooms in addition to conferencing facilities, a championship golf course, a bowling green, tennis and squash courts, five swimming pools as well as a hippo and crocodile dam.

## The Radisson Blu Poste Lafayette Resort & Spa, Mauritius

This stunning facility places guests in the heart of an island paradise and is an adults-only resort. The minimalist-styled guest rooms are set amidst manicured gardens and provide uninterrupted views of the garden, mountains or the ocean. All rooms feature floor-to-ceiling glass with large sliding doors that lead to a small terrace or Juliet balcony. Guests can choose to relax in the spa with its holistic experiences and relaxing journeys, or take part in recreational activities such as beach volleyball, beach badminton, bocce balls and darts.

The meeting room is ideal for board meetings or small gatherings of up to 16 people. Offering a magnificent view of the lagoon, the space is stylish and sophisticated and a range of amenities such as high-speed wireless Internet is included.

## The Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa, Mauritius

The opening of this new resort on the north-eastern coast of Mauritius marks an important milestone for Radisson Blu, which has for several years been committed to expanding its footprint across Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Set on a serene beach on the edge of the village of Azuri, the Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa

## Diamonds Mequfi Beach Resort, Mozambique

Meeting planners looking for something truly special will find it in the latest offering from the Planhotel Hospitality Group. The five-star Diamonds Mequfi Beach Resort in Mozambique opened its doors in May this year on the southern Pemba peninsula, close to the Quirimbas National Park.

The accommodation comprises 40 deluxe beach bungalows and 10 beach suites. All rooms have private verandas with ocean views and outdoor showers.

The resort offers a variety of services including an in-house clinic with doctor on call. It also has a business centre as well as meeting and conference facilities.

A variety of restaurants, two bars and a spa and wellness centre complete the offering in this unspoiled Mozambican environment.

## Umodzi Park in Lilongwe, Malawi

Comprising Malawi's first five-star hotel, the President Walmont, the Bingu Wa Mutharika International Convention Centre (BICC) and the Presidential Villas, this new offering from South African-based hotel and casino group, Peermont Hotels Casinos and Resorts, is a world-class facility.

Located in the central business district of the capital city, Lilongwe, the property features African flair at its best. It offers 2 500 secure parking bays for the BICC, which is set to draw conferences and events from around the world. Facilities include the Lilongwe Auditorium, which seats 1 500 delegates, and is accessed by a large-volume foyer, which can accommodate the same number of guests. The Heron, Ibis, Pelican, Sparrowhawk and Sandpiper conference rooms can be combined or used individually to cater for up to 70 delegates each, and are perfect for company meetings or plenary sessions.

Njobvu (Elephant), Mbidzi (Zebra) and Mvu (Hippo) are banqueting halls that can be used individually to house 200 delegates, or combined to cater for over 1 000 guests. A further four multifunctional venues, Mphasa, Mbuna, Chambo and Usipa, offer varying configurations, each catering for 15 people in an executive boardroom set-up, or up to 60 people in cinema-style set-up. There is also an exclusive VIP boardroom, lounge and holding room.

The President Walmont Hotel boasts a spa and wellness centre, a lobby bar and restaurant and 130 rooms and suites. ■



# Laying a firm foundation

Recently tasked with heading up travel management for field marketing company, Smollan Group SA (Pty) Ltd, **Linda Druckman** has focused on building a solid foundation for the development of future efficiencies. **Debbie Badham** finds out more.



**D**ESCRIBING her first year in the role of travel liaison officer for Smollan as an incredible, but challenging experience, **Linda Druckman** is forging a way forward in terms of new travel management developments and procedures at the field marketing company.

Druckman worked as a personal assistant at the company for 19 years before being offered the job of travel liaison officer. She began as Doug Smollan's PA in 1995 and over the years has worked for various directors in the company. However, she says that having handled travel for the company's executive team over the years, travel is not by any means new to her.

Since being in her new position, Druckman has enjoyed the opportunity to show initiative and start putting new procedures in place.

While the basic elements of a travel policy

already existed, a significant number of changes have been made.

In February, Smollan changed its Travel Management Company to XL Sandown Travel. Currently all the company's travel is booked through the TMC, which has a dedicated team of travel consultants. "For the first few months the process of changing TMC was extremely hectic as travel consultants and travel bookers had to get used to working together. Workshops were held around the country to introduce all travel bookers to the XL Sandown Travel Key Account Manager who explained the systems and procedures that would be used at the TMC."

Smollan has 122 dedicated travel bookers whose job it is to fill in travel request forms and forward these to the TMC for booking. Druckman explains that, for now, the company has elected not to introduce an online booking tool because of frequent changes to itineraries, which become a complex affair to manage from an online portal.

She notes that communication has been an extremely important part of her strategy to more effectively manage Smollan's travel and, to this end, she has spent a significant amount of time going over the important points of the company's travel policy with the new TMC as well as the travel bookers. "I have also arranged to have a number of suppliers present and provide travel bookers with more information on their products."

The nature of Smollan's travel is diverse, with needs ranging across everything from overseas and local travel to executive meetings as well as to field marketers travelling into relatively secluded areas where they typically need to stay in B&Bs. Workshops and



training also comprise a significant component of the company's travel.

## Relationships are key

A significant part of Linda's role involves negotiating corporate rates with suppliers. Smollan has rate caps for all hotels booked, as stated in company travel policy and, as a result, Druckman often finds it necessary to negotiate with accommodation providers around this. "When it comes to hotels with rates that exceed our cap, I find that they are often willing to reduce rates if it means they can secure our business," she says. She highlights the importance of being open with suppliers in an effort to build sound relationships.

## Detailed policy curbs costs

According to Druckman, the most definitive feature of Smollan's travel policy is its detail and the way in which this assists with cost savings. Various elements such as the accommodation rate caps and stipulation that consultants must get at least three quotes from airlines in search of the cheapest fare of the day before booking a flight all help to drive savings.

The policy also states that travel must be booked in advance. However, she notes

that compliance can sometimes be a challenge. "I plan to increase communication with management around the drive towards increased compliance."

## Reliable databases

With travellers required to work throughout the country, sometimes in more secluded areas, the regulation of reputable B&B establishments can be a challenge, notes Druckman. She says, at the moment, most travellers will either ask the TMC for a recommendation or search the Internet to find a potential place to stay. "When a traveller returns having had a negative experience, we make a note of this and so are building a database as we go." She notes, however, that this has proved to be a time-consuming process. "Our TMC is in the process of compiling a database of all B&Bs booked by Smollan."

## Education a challenge

Druckman says one of the biggest challenges in the travel management space at the moment is the education of travel consultants. "Our bookers rely heavily on consultants to guide them in the decisions they make. It is, therefore, important that TMCs allocate time and sufficient budget for the education of their travel consultants."

## Meaningful data

Smollan receives monthly travel reports from the TMC and so Druckman points out that the accumulation of relevant data has not been a problem for the company. "Sometimes additional reports have to be requested from the TMC, but the general reports that we receive are able to be translated in a meaningful way."

She explains that the company's travellers are generally not required to travel into high-risk areas, consequently duty of care has not presented a major challenge for Smollan. The company's primary focus in this regard is on travel insurance and knowing where travellers are headed.

## Consolidating suppliers

While much of Druckman's role over the past year has involved the laying of groundwork and getting the entire travel system up and running, she had already made significant strides when it comes to the development of a reliable database of suppliers. Indeed, she feels that this has probably been her most significant achievement thus far.

"I have spent a great deal of time negotiating rates and putting together an Excel workbook that lists suppliers in alphabetical

order," she explains.

Employees are allowed to book travel with any supplier they choose as long as the service provider in question falls within the stipulated rate cap. However, the database acts as a convenient guideline for travellers who require assistance in putting together a travel itinerary.

## Regular engagement

For Druckman, success as a travel manager relies heavily on engaging regularly with the travel industry. "It's really important to build relationships with all stakeholders involved in the travel booking process, including the TMC, suppliers and travel bookers themselves," she says.

She further notes the importance of attending industry events to network with other professionals in the travel management space. "Other delegates might have ideas that you haven't even thought of and might be able to help provide a solution to the particular challenge you are facing. It's equally important to remain abreast of industry developments," she maintains.

Druckman's goal is to build on the foundations laid over the past year. "Ultimately, my aim is to streamline processes and make things simpler and more efficient," she concludes. ■

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# Popular programmes – what is the secret?

Loyalty membership is on the rise but how effective are these reward programmes really?

**Dorine Reinstein** investigates.

**L**OYALTY programmes have been a great success story across every sector of the travel industry, from airlines to hotels and car-rental companies. Every year membership increases, with more and more travellers signing up for multiple programmes.

Despite the undeniable popularity of loyalty programmes, their effectiveness has been questioned by travellers and travel agents alike. "Hardly any loyalty programme providers keep all of their promises, the price of which can be high, sometimes leading to the exact opposite of the intended effect, actually creating dissuasive behaviour and making customers turn away," says **Ravindra Bhagwanani**, md of frequent flyer programme management company, Global Flight.



**Wouter Nel**, head of sales and marketing for SA, Air Mauritius

To be successful, loyalty programme providers must possess a good understanding of the end user and their needs.

"Important is not to offer a long list of benefits that the average traveller is not going to use," says **Wilma Van Vuuren**, head of yield management for Wings Travel Management. She says the average traveller should be able to appreciate each benefit, examples of which include private lounge access, extra baggage allowance and preferred seating.

"Loyalty programme providers differentiate themselves through their ability to go the extra mile in ensuring that travellers' unique preferences are met, which means that concierge services are invaluable," adds Van Vuuren. "They also need to cater for unforeseen circumstances such as flight cancellations, as a result of which members need to be advanced to the top of waiting lists, or emergency

situations during which they need to depart quickly."

## Airline strategies for success

Airlines around the globe are trying to come up with relevant and engaging loyalty propositions in an over-crowded loyalty environment, says **Suretha Cruse**, SAA executive of customer loyalty.

To achieve this, Bhagwanani maintains that transparency is key. "Aside from the basic requirements such as accurate crediting of miles, I believe the two factors critical to success are transparency of the programme rules and the ease with which miles can be redeemed for flights and other awards."

**Wouter Nel**, head of sales and

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TB2022SD



# LOYALTY

marketing for Southern Africa at Air Mauritius, agrees, saying that Air Mauritius has made redemption as easy as possible through a dedicated Customer Loyalty Centre as well as an easy-to-use online system.

"Technology plays a significant role in loyalty programmes," he says. "Customers would like access to their miles and redemption process online in a seamless manner that they can control. Air Mauritius does not have a select few 'miles' seats like other carriers; instead a passenger who qualifies for a free ticket will receive their free ticket based on availability."

Cruse maintains that there is a growing awareness of the limitations of the legacy mileage-based FFP models due to an increase in the line-up of partners promoting greater customer

participation, which then puts more pressure on the limited award seat inventory of airlines that was initially intended to fill empty seats.

The SAA Voyager programme changed from a mileage-based to a fully fledged revenue-based FFP in February this year. "The move was geared towards becoming more generous and enabling transparency and fairness in the accumulation of miles (1 mile for every R1,60 spent). In other words, for R10 000 spent on an SAA-operated flight, members will earn R500 (6 250 miles) to spend on a future SAA-operated flight."

**Customers would like access to their miles and redemption process online in a seamless manner that they can control.**

Cruse admits that moving from an 'instant gratification' model (accrual of miles/points based on distance travelled) to a 'delayed gratification' model (accrual of miles/points based on uplifted pro-rated sectors flown) has necessitated a significant mind-

set change for mileage junkies. She says the most frequently asked question is if customers are benefiting from a revenue-based FFP model. "The short answer is 'yes and no'," says Cruse, explaining

that high-yield customers will praise you for rewarding them equitably, whereas low-yield customers will feel deprived.

In South Africa, SAA's revenue-

based programme seems to have been widely accepted. In a recent survey run by *Travel Buyer's* sister publication *eTNW*, over 120 agents voted that SAA had the most effective loyalty programme, followed by Emirates and British Airways; 36% of agents voted for SAA, claiming the programme was popular with clients as it offered a considerable number of partner airlines through which points could be redeemed. This, in turn, makes finding seats hassle-free when using miles.

Emirates received 32% of the votes, with agents saying the programme allowed travellers to accumulate points more quickly than other programmes. The ease of use of the online system was also a big advantage for agents.

► Article continues on p16

The Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel, iconic business hotel in the heart of Port Louis, has recently been renovated to offer an even more exclusive experience. Distinctive restaurants and bars, state-of-the-art conference facilities, impressive executive benefits and exceptional efficiency make this 5\* venue, the ultimate lifestyle destination in Mauritius.

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Airlines				
Programme	Mileage expiry	Partners	Non-related point accrual	Unique selling features
<b>Air Austral</b> Capricorne	Three years	Codeshare flights carrying UU numbers	Bonus points earned when joining and through promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level three members get one free annual upgrade, one free companion ticket and free insurance</li> <li>A subscription loyalty card can be purchased, entitling holder to fare discounts of 5%-10% in addition to normal level-two benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Air Botswana</b> Teemane Club	Three years. Status is evaluated towards end of every second year		Cresta Marakanelo Group and Peermont Hotels in Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of Pula Lounge at Gaborone and Shongololo &amp; Mashonja at OR Tambo for Gold and Diamond members. Diamond members can invite one guest</li> </ul>
<b>Air France</b> <b>KLM</b> <b>Kenya Airways</b> Flying Blue	20 months. Might be extended indefinitely depending on activity	SkyTeam members, Alaska Airlines, Aircalin, Air Mauritius, BA Comair, Bangkok Airways, Air Corsica, Copa Airlines, GOL, Japan Airlines, Jet Airways, Ukraine International Airlines, Hop!	Hyatt, Best Western, Hilton, Accor, Starwood, Radisson, Avis, Hertz, Budget, Europcar. Flying Blue store for online shopping using miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free or discounted seats plus economy comfort seats as well as business-class lounge access</li> </ul>
<b>Air Madagascar</b> Namako	Three years			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free tickets (on accruing a certain number of points, members are eligible for free tickets)</li> </ul>
<b>Air Mauritius</b> Kestrel Flyer	Three years		Car rental, hotels, duty-free outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Golf bag flies free</li> <li>Free tickets and upgrades to business class, 50% of miles earned in economy class for Gold members</li> </ul>
<b>Air Namibia</b> Reward\$	Five years. Awards requested before expiry must be used within 12 months			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transferable to family or friends</li> <li>Free flights and upgrades</li> <li>Corporate enrolment plan</li> </ul>
<b>Air Zimbabwe</b> Rainbow Club	Miles expire after two years if member has not used Air Zimbabwe services			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free use of business class lounge (Premium)</li> <li>Miles can be redeemed for travel or upgrades to business class</li> </ul>
<b>Arik Air</b> Affinity Wings	Affinity points are valid for three years			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recording of personal preferences</li> <li>Free upgrades</li> <li>Use of business-class lounge</li> </ul>
<b>British Airways/</b> <b>BA Comair</b> Executive Club	Avios points valid as long as customer collects, spends or purchases at least one Avios point every 36 months	Aer Lingus, Alaska Airlines, Open Skies, oneworld alliance members	Hotels, car rental, foreign currency, credit card companies, BA and other retail outlets, airport and valet parking, household accounts, petrol and supermarket purchases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reward Flight Saver allows members to fly JNB-MRU for a R700 flat fee return</li> <li>Over 170 lounges worldwide</li> <li>Flight upgrades for two and two additional bags when travelling in World Traveller/economy class or Euro Traveller on any route (Gold members)</li> </ul>
<b>Cathay Pacific</b> The Marco Polo Club	Three years	oneworld alliance members	Travel, leisure, hotel, dining, retail, telecoms, finance and insurance	<p>For Diamond Marco Polo members (top tier):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lounge access</li> <li>Two miles earned for every HK\$5 spent on in-flight duty free</li> </ul>
<b>Delta Air Lines</b> SkyMiles	No expiry	SkyTeam alliance partners, Air Tahiti Nui, Alaska Airlines, GOL, Great Lakes, Hawaiian Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia	Car rental, entertainment, wireless, financial, travel, dining, retail, hotels and shopping, partner points to miles conversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher tier Medallion members: unlimited upgrades on domestic flights, discounts or free seats, same-day stand-by, same-day confirmed</li> <li>Diamond and Platinum members: upgrade certificates, Delta Sky Club one-day passes</li> </ul>
<b>EgyptAir</b> EgyptAir Plus	Three years	Star Alliance members	Hotels, cruises, car rental, restaurants, shopping, financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrades, lounge access</li> <li>Membership for up to five family members</li> </ul>
<b>El Al</b> Matmid	Three years	jetBlue, American Airlines, SWISS, S7 Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines	Hotels, car rental, restaurants and shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bonus tickets valid for one year</li> <li>Purchase of upgrades, economy class plus seats and extra bag for TL (first tier) members</li> </ul>
<b>Emirates</b> Skywards	Three years	Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Qantas, SAA, Alaska Airlines, easyJet, Jet Airways, jetBlue, Jetstar, S7 Airlines, TAP Portugal, Virgin America	Hotel partners, car rental, financial, retail, leisure and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instant upgrades at check-in</li> <li>Lounge access for Platinum, Gold and Silver members travelling onwards in any cabin on Emirates flights</li> </ul>
<b>Ethiopian Airlines</b> Sheba Miles	Members need to re-qualify for their tier status annually	Star Alliance members, ASKY Airlines, TACA Airlines	Shopping, lifestyle, car rental, hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lounge access (Star Alliance members)</li> <li>Rebooking free of charge</li> </ul>



Airlines				
Programme	Mileage expiry	Partners	Non-related point accrual	Unique selling features
<b>Etihad Airways</b> <b>Air Seychelles</b> Etihad Guest	Three years	Brussels Airlines, Oman Air, Jet Airways, Sri Lankan Airlines, Virgin Australia, American Airlines, airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Air New Zealand, Alitalia, ANA, Asiana Airways, Bangkok Airways, Czech Airlines, Garuda Indonesia, Hainan Airlines, Korean Air, Malaysia Airlines, Royal Air Maroc, Ukraine International Airlines	Car rental, hotels, telecommunications, shopping, financial partners, leisure and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Mile Redemption: fly once and enjoy instant rewards</li> <li>• Earn one mile for every mile flown, even on promotional or discounted tickets</li> <li>• Redeem miles on flights, upgrades, products and services using the exclusive Reward Shop</li> </ul>
<b>LAM</b> Flamingo Club	Three years		Hotels, car rental, fuel products, telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive desk check-in</li> </ul>
<b>Lufthansa</b> <b>SWISS</b> Miles & More	Three years	Star Alliance members, 21 additional carriers	Car rental, hotels, shopping, telecommunications and more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers with a lump sum of 18 000 award miles can use miles to pay for taxes and fees on award flights within Europe operated by Lufthansa and selected Miles &amp; More airline partners</li> <li>• No black-out periods</li> </ul>
<b>Qantas</b> Qantas Frequent Flyer	No expiry if member earns/uses points once every 18 months. Excludes family transfers	Jetstar and more than 35 partner airlines including Emirates and oneworld alliance airlines	Credit cards, hotels, car rental, travel, shopping, financial, entertainment, dining and business services (Note: some point accruals are not applicable to non-Australian members.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferred seating and access to selected Qantas Classic Award seats</li> </ul>
<b>Qatar Airways</b> Privilege Club	Qmiles expire at the end of three calendar years	oneworld alliance airlines and US Airways	Hotels, car rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silver, Gold and Platinum members are placed on corresponding oneworld tiers that provide enhanced recognition and benefits on oneworld flights</li> <li>• Members can redeem Qmiles or Qcredits at the airport for an upgrade to business or first class on Qatar Airways when they fly out of Doha, and some other airports. Members can also redeem Qmiles for an upgrade for a companion travelling on the same flight</li> </ul>
<b>RwandAir</b> Dream Miles	Silver, Gold and Diamond tiers: two years. Emerald tier, no expiry	Codeshare and interline airline partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrades, priority baggage tags and extra baggage allowance</li> <li>• Business-class lounge access (even when travelling in economy)</li> </ul>
<b>Singapore Airlines</b> KrisFlyer	Three years	Star Alliance members, SilkAir	Over 120 global non-airline partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miles earned on lower booking classes; 50% of miles flown in Q class and 10% of miles flown in V class</li> <li>• Miles can be used to pay for all or part of the airfare</li> </ul>
<b>South African Airways</b> Voyager	Three years; can be extended by one year (T&Cs apply)	El Al, Jet Airways, Emirates, Virgin Atlantic, TAM, Etihad, Mango, Star Alliance members, SA Express, Airlink, Swaziland Airlink, Jet Blue, Virgin Australia	Car rental, financial, hotels, property, retail and lifestyle, fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic redemptions on SAA-operated flights, with conversion of miles to cash to pay for base fare and fuel levy</li> <li>• Additional benefits for higher tier members include: lounge access with guests; chauffeur-drive services with companions; tier-based bonus miles</li> </ul>
<b>Turkish Airlines</b> Miles & Smiles	Three years	Air Canada, Air China, Air New Zealand, EgyptAir, Lufthansa, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, SAA, Spanair, SWISS, TAP, Thai Airways, United Airlines, Jet Airways	Hotels, car rental, financial, telecommunications, technology, vehicle purchases, fuel products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn through the Shop &amp; Miles credit card</li> <li>• Free tickets or upgrades for traveller and companion</li> </ul>
<b>Virgin Atlantic Airways</b> Flying Club	No expiry if account is active. Alternatively, three years	Air China, Air New Zealand, ANA, Cyprus Airways, Delta, Gulf Air, Hawaiian Airlines, Jet Airways, Malaysia Airlines, SAS, Singapore Airlines, SAA, US Airways, Virgin America, Virgin Australia	Hotel partners, car rental, credit cards, dining and rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold: Earn an extra 100% of base flown mileage</li> <li>• Silver: Earn an extra 50% of base flown mileage</li> <li>• Red: Miles will never expire, as long as miles are earned or spent once every three years</li> </ul>

## Key

- **oneworld alliance partners:** Air Berlin, American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, LAN, TAM Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, S7 Airlines, Sri Lankan Airlines.
- **Star Alliance partners:** Adria Airways, Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EgyptAir, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, Thai and United.
- **SkyTeam partners:** Aeroflot, Aerolineas Argentinas, AeroMexico, Air Europa, Air France, Alitalia, China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Czech Airlines, Delta, Garuda Indonesia, Kenya Airways, KLM, Korean Air, Middle East Airlines, Saudia, Tarom, Vietnam Airlines, Xiamen Air.

Hotels			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Unique benefits
<b>Accor</b> Le Club Essential Connected Upgraded Even More VIP	Stays at 2 000 hotels (budget to luxury)	Club Med, Europcar, Lenôte (France only), Shell, TAM, Itau (Brazil only), HSBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer points to participating partners, points never expire</li> </ul>
<b>aha</b> (took over Three Cities Programme) Real awards Classic Green Plus Green Premium Green	Earn Real Rands according to total accommodation spend	Bidvest Premier Lounge and Europcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Classic Green:</b> Earn up to 5% of accommodation spend back in Real Rands when paying qualifying rates and receive up to 10% discounts at hotel-owned restaurants</li> <li>• <b>Plus Green:</b> As above, but up to 10% of accommodation spend and up to 15% discount at hotel-owned restaurants</li> <li>• <b>Premium Green:</b> As above, but up to 15% of accommodation spend and up to 20% discount at hotel owned restaurants</li> </ul>
<b>Carlson Rezidor</b> Club CarlsonSM Club CarlsonSM for Planners (meetings and events planners) Gold Points Gold Points Plus Hotel brands: Quorvus Collection; Radisson brands; Park Plaza, Park Inn; Country Inns and Suites	20 Gold Points per US\$ spent on hotel nights, plus all meals and beverages charged to the customer's room, bonus points earned through online bookings. 1 000 participating hotels	Budget, Avis, and selected airline partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red tier: Discount on food and beverage and free awards nights</li> <li>• Silver tier: Same as Red plus: free room upgrades and an elite member service line</li> <li>• Gold tier: Same as Silver plus: guaranteed room availability up until 72 hours</li> <li>• Concierge: Same as Gold plus: guaranteed room availability up until 48 hours and free continental breakfast</li> </ul>
<b>City Lodge</b> The Lodger Club	Points earned by processing bookings online while logged into account (valid for three years)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discounts on rack rates and free accommodation offers</li> <li>• No loss of points when redemption bookings are cancelled/ amended</li> <li>• No blackout or availability restrictions</li> </ul>
<b>Hilton</b> HHonors	Points accrued at 4 440 hotels and timeshare properties in 97 countries and territories	Airline, rail, car rental, cruise, shopping, dining and entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customised stays from mobile devices up to 24 hours in advance</li> <li>• Second guest stays free and no blackout dates</li> </ul>
<b>Indigo Hotels</b>	Stay at one of the hotels that comprise the Indigo Group	Air Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn Kestrelflyer miles</li> <li>• Complimentary stays for spouses</li> <li>• Room upgrades</li> <li>• Complimentary spa treatments</li> </ul>
<b>InterContinental Hotels Group IHG</b> Rewards Club IHG Business Rewards (meeting and event planners)	Members can earn points at more than 4 900 hotels worldwide with opportunities to earn points through regular promotions	Over 400 airlines and online portals: Flights Anywhere, Cars Anywhere and Hotels Anywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No blackout dates</li> <li>• Points can be redeemed on hotel stays, merchandise including music downloads, electronics and vouchers through IHG Rewards Club's catalogue</li> </ul>
<b>Legacy Hotels and Resorts</b> Legacy Lifestyle	Members can earn a percentage back of their spend when shopping at a Lifestyle partner. R1 equals 1 Lifestyle Rand. Rands can be earned and spent with brand partners	Over 200 partners across the airline, car hire, hotel and lifestyle industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once enough Lifestyle Rands have been earned, they can be redeemed by entering the member's mobile number as well as a five-digit pin on the in-store card machine of the product in question.</li> <li>• Members can double rewards earned in store by linking their Dischem Benefits Card to their Lifestyle account</li> </ul>
<b>Peermont Hotels and Resorts</b> Crown Key	Points added when booking through Central Reservations using a qualified room rate. Guests also earn points on qualified room charges, room service, laundry services and telephone usage. For every R10 spent, members earn 1 point.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn 10% back in Crown Key points on qualified room rates</li> <li>• Upgraded rooms (when available)</li> <li>• Discounts on green fees at selected golf courses and spa treatments and free movie and show tickets at applicable resorts</li> <li>• Double reward and earn points on redemptions if booked room rate is Crown Key qualified rate</li> <li>• Private airport pick up from OR Tambo International to the D'oreale Grande at Emperors Palace</li> </ul>
<b>Preferred Hotels and Resorts</b> iPrefer	Receive one point for every US\$ spent on nett room reservations at participating hotels booked through eligible channels. When enough points are earned, the iPrefer certificate can be used to book any service at more than 550 hotels. Reward certificates never expire and are transferable	More than 550 independent hotels and resorts worldwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silver: Points for eligible stays</li> <li>• Gold: Silver membership benefits plus welcome amenity and room upgrades on availability</li> <li>• Platinum: Gold membership benefits plus 10% bonus points per stay</li> </ul>
<b>Premier Hotels and Resorts</b> Royalty Club	Points earned on total hotel bill: accommodation, hotel services and dining		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% back on total hotel bill including accommodation, hotel services and dining, in the form of Royalty Rands</li> <li>• Room upgrades</li> <li>• Accommodation specials below the Best Available Rate</li> </ul>



Hotels			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Unique benefits
<b>Protea Hotels</b> Prokard Note: Marriott Rewards will be available across Protea Hotels in late 2015. Protea will remain as a local benefits card offering	Earn up to 10% of accommodation spend in Prokard Rands at Protea and African Pride Hotels	Bidvest Car Rental, kulula.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 10% discount on Best Available Rate of the day in SA and 20% in Africa; 5% off online special offers</li> <li>Complimentary room upgrades</li> <li>Members earn up to 10% of room revenue back in Prokard Rands and receive dining discounts of up to 50% for Gold members even if not staying in the hotel</li> </ul>
<b>Starwood</b> Preferred Guest Starwood	Earn points at more than 1 200 hotels. Starpoints do not expire as long as there is activity once every 12 months	Airlines, car rental, financial, retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free nights, free flights, room upgrades, gift certificates, and transportation</li> <li>No blackout dates</li> <li>Rewards for hotel services</li> </ul>
<b>Sun International</b> MVG Programme	Members are given a Maroon MVG card to use at all Sun International Casinos. The status of the card is determined by the number of MVG points earned at SI casinos in a 12-month period		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significantly reduced accommodation rates</li> <li>Golf course discounts</li> <li>Meal discounts at Sun International-owned restaurants</li> </ul>
<b>Tsogo Sun</b> Frequent Guest	Earn Sun Rands on accommodation rates and services (valid for two years)	American Express, Nedbank Greenbacks, SunSwop and Europcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earn 5% to 15% Sun Rands on qualifying rates and items</li> <li>10% accommodation discount at Luxury and Full Service hotels, 5% accommodation discount at Select Service hotels</li> <li>7,5%-20% food and beverage discounts at hotel-owned restaurants and bars</li> <li>30-60% discount at movies@cinemas</li> </ul>

Car Rental			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Unique benefits
<b>Avis Rent a Car</b> Wizard membership Preferred Service membership Preferred Plus membership President's Club membership Club Red Frequent flyer programmes	Vehicle rental	Frequent flyer programmes with all major international airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wizard: Global recognition and renter profile in the Wizard system</li> <li>Preferred Service/Preferred Plus/President's Club: Global recognition, Loyalty Mobi app, US\$15 off weekend car rental (valid worldwide), upgrade and free weekend vouchers</li> <li>Club Red (travel agents): Earn Club Red Roses on qualifying rentals; Roses redeemable via E-Bucks</li> <li>Frequent Flyer: Earn frequent flyer miles on qualifying rentals as well as rental discounts</li> </ul>
<b>Budget Car Rental</b>	Vehicle rental	Frequent flyer programmes with all major international airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club Red (travel agents): Earn Club Red Roses on qualifying rentals; Roses redeemable via E-Bucks</li> <li>Frequent Flyer: Earn frequent flyer miles on qualifying rentals as well as rental discounts</li> </ul>
<b>Europcar</b> Platinum Programme Drive Card (Leisure) Drive Club (Leisure) Business Connect (SMEs)	Vehicle rental	kulula, SAA, SAA Voyager, Tsogo Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatic upgrades and preferential rates</li> <li>Earn Voyager Miles with every rental</li> <li>Up to 10% discount on Europcar Chauffeur Service</li> <li>10% discount, free upgrade on every fifth rental</li> <li>No credit card needed for rental collections</li> </ul>
<b>First Car Rental</b> First Club Card Corporate Show & Go Card	Vehicle rental	Premier Hotels & Resorts, Hotel Express, FlySafair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Club Card: Vehicle upgrades, discounts and free days</li> <li>Corporate Show and Go: Direct from plane to car, mobile check-out in one minute</li> </ul>
<b>Hertz</b> Hertz Gold Plus Rewards	Vehicle rental		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gold: First additional driver free of charge; one Master Gold agreement</li> <li>Five Star: Free rental day voucher after every 10 rentals booked and a one-car-class upgrade subject to fleet availability</li> <li>President's Circle: Gold and Five Star benefits plus a guaranteed class vehicle upgrade for one car</li> </ul>
<b>Thrifty Car Rental</b> Moolla Rewards (Travel agents)	Participants can book a vehicle from a Group P to an E Class Merc for one day or more and earn Moolla Rewards.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moolla Reward Card is credited monthly with rewards. One Reward, R1</li> <li>Moolla Reward Card can be used to purchase fuel, pay utility accounts, purchase groceries, clothing etc.</li> <li>Thrifty does not prescribe where or on what Moolla Rewards members can use their Moolla Rewards</li> </ul>
<b>Woodford</b> Pinnacle	Earn points through every rental booked		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One free day of car rental after every 10 days booked</li> <li>No deposits</li> </ul>

**Disclaimer:** The tables contain a selection of the benefits offered by those loyalty programmes that supplied information.

► Article continues from p11

## Hotels must offer real returns

Usability is equally important in the hotel sector. "The programme should be kept simple and easy to understand from a consumer perspective. Therefore, the customer value propositions need to be clearly defined and, most importantly, there should be guaranteed redemption of points or the loyalty programme currency, no restrictions," says **Nicholas Barenblatt**, group marketing manager of Protea Hotels, part of Marriott International.

It would seem that Protea holds the secret to success of hotel loyalty programmes in South Africa as 39% of travel agents participating in the *eTNW* Loyalty Programmes Survey voted Protea as the top loyalty programme in South Africa, saying it was a good-value product, frequently offering customers free accommodation and meals. Tsogo Sun came second with 17% of the votes. One agent said the Tsogo Sun programme was easy to use, as

no conversions were needed with one point equalling one rand. Hilton came third receiving 16% of the votes. "Hilton always accommodates and gives upgrades to members without clients even having to ask," said another agent.

According to Barenblatt, it is important to remember that loyalty is not about how members demonstrate their loyalty to a brand but rather about how the brand recognises and serves the members based on their loyalty and value. For this reason it is important to improve the programme year-on-year to remain relevant to the ever-changing consumer needs, he maintains.

Nurturing relationships with clients is a priority, agrees group sales and marketing manager for Indigo Hotels, **Stéphanie Fischhoff**. As such the group's loyalty programme aims to reinforce guests' loyalty through "exciting" benefits and upgrades, ranging from room upgrades to earning miles on Air Mauritius. "With the continued growth of South African corporate travel to Mauritius, it became obvious that a

loyalty programme incorporating the island's local airline would be beneficial to all stakeholders," she comments.

## Car rental – promises must be kept

Travel agents favour Avis when it comes to car-rental loyalty. In the *eTNW* survey, 76% of travel agents said Avis had the best loyalty programme, with clients raving about it. Reasons for this success, according to agents, are the friendly staff, great global rewards and easy upgrades. Second place belongs to Europcar with 16% of the votes, followed by First Car Rental and Hertz, each with 4% of the votes.

In August this year Avis completely revamped its loyalty programme, allowing travellers to advance through the programme from Avis Preferred to Avis Preferred Plus and Avis President. **Lance Smith**, executive director of sales, says whereas before the membership to the Avis President programme was through invitation only, clients can now move up the

ladder to earn more rewards.

Although Avis demonstrates constant innovation when it comes to its programme, Smith rather attributes the company's success to the consistency and reliability of the global programme.

**Melissa Storey**, executive head: Strategy, Development and Marketing at First Car Rental says the biggest mistake companies can make is to become paralysed by data complexity. "Those who succeed will be the ones who can consolidate their digital activity within one technology platform and who are then able to harness multi-channel data-driven insights to develop powerful targeted campaigns that, because they are both personalised and relevant, produce smarter results."

Meanwhile, Thrifty has been working closely with the trade when it comes to loyalty. **Fiona Angelico**, global national sales and marketing executive for Thrifty, maintains that agents love Thrifty's Moolla Rewards card. "Moolla Rewards is driven by technology to produce a seamless product that requires minimum intervention."



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# New programmes shift buying patterns

**C**OMPANIES and governments around the world are wielding the austerity axe as a result of difficult economic times, and so too are airlines when it comes to frequent flyer programmes. During the past year, a number of airlines have made radical changes to their programmes, rewarding spend instead of miles flown.

**Ravindra Bhagwanani** warns that this move could increasingly push formerly loyal travellers to no-frills airlines. "Customers who perform badly according to the new systems and who have no hope any more of ever making it to the elite level, for instance, now have less incentive not to transfer their loyalty to an LCC. Moreover, if the LCC offers an attractive FFP, the motivation to shift loyalty becomes even stronger."

"The switch to LCCs has

become more prevalent because of the cheaper fares. One can now purchase two tickets on these carriers as opposed to one high-cost ticket. The redemption of points is not always possible as seating is not always available during peak and holiday seasons. However, it is still cheaper to utilise LCCs and then spend the savings on confirmed seats for these peak travel periods," notes **Wilma Van Vuuren**.

She adds, however, that the changes to loyalty programmes will also see a change of buying behaviour in favour of the legacy airlines. Van Vuuren says, in the past, FFPs were simply taken for granted while the miles simply rolled in. "Now, every penny has to be turned over three times, so clients have become more attuned to the fine print and rules of loyalty programmes. Consequently, clients are sometimes willing to pay more



**Wilma Van Vuuren**, head of yield management, Wings Travel Management

for airline tickets if they can earn more loyalty points in the process. They are even changing their travel routes to comply with airline terms and conditions for more points."

Airlines that have made

the shift to a rewards-based programme are optimistic about the change. "Changing to a revenue-based FFP has not resulted in a shift of business to the LCC but rather solidified support from high-and medium-yield frequent flyers belonging to the FFP," argues **Suretha Cruse**.

Delta agrees that its updated SkyMiles programme has been to the benefit of its customers. "In the first three months of 2015, in direct response to member feedback, Delta made 50% more Award Seats available, giving members more options when they travel," says **Debbie Egerton**, Delta's regional manager corporate communications, EMEA. "Following updates to our programme, more members have been able to redeem miles through the availability of more reward seats and lower redemption levels." ■

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## Will the new framework be effective?

Government has been working closely with the trade in an effort to resolve the payment and expenditure issues' developing a new framework. **Dorine Reinstein** reports

**T**HAS been an interesting couple of years for government travel. In 2013 and 2014, there was a massive crackdown on wasteful government expenditure, with former Finance Minister, **Pravin Gordhan**, putting strict containment measures in place for government travel.

As a result, the government and the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (Asata) have been working together over the past year to develop an effective travel procurement framework and code of conduct to help improve compliance with Treasury regulations with regard to wasteful expenditure; to address budget deficits as a result of inaccurate tracking of expenditure and misallocation; and to help government officials obtain the best return

on investment.

Ceo of Asata, **Otto de Vries**, says government's Chief Directorate of Strategic Procurement together with the industry Member Advisory Forum (MAF), which was set up by Asata, have conducted intensive research, engaged with stakeholders and end

users, analysed spend patterns and looked at improvement opportunities to develop a sourcing strategy for travel and accommodation.

This includes travel agents or TMCs, domestic accommodation, domestic car rental and domestic air transport.

The travel industry has greatly welcomed Asata's extensive work with the government, but says it is still too soon to judge how beneficial the programme will be. **Gary Mulder**, financial

director for Club Travel, says Club Travel is optimistic that the work performed will significantly improve the entire process between TMCs and government departments.

"This is a new process, which will take time to turn around within government," says **Themba Mthombeni**, ceo of Duma Travel. He says the framework is going to help TMCs a great deal, noting that previously, procurement discussions within government took place in isolation. "If they can get industry input, it will take the process further," he says.

However, not everyone in the industry is as positive about the new developments. "I think the relationship between travel and government is fundamentally flawed due to government's lack of understanding that travel is not like other service procurements in that the bulk of the cost of the service comes from the air, car and hotel

providers and not the TMC," says **Mike Gray**, ceo of Uniglobe Travel.

He maintains that government's requirement for credit from TMCs and prepayment of accounts on their behalf, coupled with their inability to handle travel lodged cards, is going to remain a problem until they come to grips with it.

What's more, the government's inability to structure tenders for travel differently to those for other consumables and services, and its inability to properly design a coherent and relevant travel policy framework, prevent progress, Gray says. "This is a recipe for continued abuse and fraud.

"Government is also paying dearly for this through poor service and marked up prices to compensate for their tardiness in payment and lack of proper travel policies and procedures," he adds.

**"This is a new process, which will take time to turn around within government."**

# New database will save time and money

**T**HE newly launched Central Supplier Database (CSD), where travel agents can self-register, is the first step towards an easier procurement process for both government officials and TMCs, according to the government.

**Phumza Macanda**, acting chief director: Communications for government, told *Travel Buyer* that the establishment of the CSD would significantly reduce duplication of effort and costs for both supplier and government.

According to Macanda, travel agencies will only need to register as a supplier with government once. Thereafter, they should confirm at least once a year that their data is still current and updated. "TMCs will therefore have exposure to all spheres of government," he says.

At the launch of the CSD, Minister of Finance **Nhlanhla Nene**, explained that the CSD would also bring about a reduction in the rate of



*Nhlanhla Nene, Minister of Finance*

corruption. "As you automate you remove the human element and there is a huge possibility of [the] reduction of corruption because that platform is transparent," he said.

**Otto De Vries** warns that only Asata-accredited travel agents and TMCs will be able to

register on the new CSD. "This is as a direct result of months of engagement between Asata and National Treasury to define terms against which government will procure travel and accommodation in future," he says.

The fact that government departments are only able to procure through Asata agents is a big step towards ensuring that the integrity of the TMC industry is upheld in the government sector, according to **Gary Mulder**.

He adds that the CSD could see more TMCs tendering for government work, which could be a huge advantage for government officials. "Increased competition will always be to the benefit of procurement managers. However, it is important that the procurement managers are educated about best practice in travel, the tools available and how best to work with TMCs to ensure optimal travel management."

# The end of 'ridiculously low' fees

**S**HOULD all TMCs comply with Asata's code of conduct, it would put an end to "ridiculously low" service fees being submitted in tenders and, consequently, agents earning revenue from hidden margins in travel items booked, maintains **Gary Mulder**. "This will then ensure a more level playing field between TMCs that do operate ethically and those that haven't in the past," he says.

**Themba Mthombeni** agrees and says the main challenge is that government officials tend to focus on travel agency fees. They are blinded by fees, which are only a very small percentage of the travel spend, without realising how much a travel agency or TMC can reduce their travel spend in general.

He says that once TMCs have passed the technical evaluation for their tender, everything comes down to pricing. "If you are a capable agency and you really want the account, you'll have to do something about pricing, and that's not always the best thing to do."

# The problem with late payments

**T**HE main challenge TMCs face in their dealings with government is the issue of non-payment or late payment. In its negotiations with government, Asata has addressed these challenges. "We have addressed ongoing poor payment habits that saw our members owed R350m at the end August last year. The framework will not only guide how we as an industry and government engage, but will also guide industry engagement with private sector too," says **Otto de Vries**.

A special unit has now been established to ensure that suppliers are paid within 30 days, provided a legitimate invoice has been submitted. Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning,

Monitoring and Evaluation, **Jeff Radebe**, says: "A comparative analysis of national departments between 2013 and 2014 showed that there had been improvement in the average number of invoices paid within 30 days."

Despite these results, the travel industry has not seen a significant improvement in payment delays. "Payments have not been more prompt yet, but again, we remain optimistic," says **Gary Mulder**.

According to Mulder, as long as there is no obligation for government departments to use lodged cards, the cash-flow risk is still a serious one. "I would caution smaller agencies to tread carefully until processes are working as they should."

"We're owed a lot of money by

government. So, we welcomed this intervention by Asata – it came at the right time for us," says **Themba Mthombeni**. He reveals that Asata's intervention helped a lot initially as there was sudden compliance from most government departments. However, there was also some backlash and negative impact from government officials feeling "betrayed", he adds.

Mthombeni maintains that there should be a more constructive intervention in the back office when it comes to payments. "If Asata and Treasury intervene without changing the dynamic in the chain of payment, then there will be short-term success but in the long term, things will go back to where they were. Where Asata can actually help is in ensuring

there is an intervention in the back office of government."

He says the departments that don't pay often don't have the capability or manpower to chase travellers to sign off invoices. "We should be taking stock of why certain things are not happening. Do these departments have a sufficient number of people to handle payments? If you come up with a policy, are there sufficient hands to ensure that this policy is enforced?"

Asata could be pivotal in this process, according to Mthombeni. "We have to look at each government department and the problems they have – asking ourselves how we can intervene at that level. Let's not point fingers but help streamline the process."





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## BEE – how are TMCs adjusting?

When deciding on a TMC partner, BBBEE ratings are an important consideration. **Dorine Reinstein** looks at how local companies are adjusting to the new codes and how they are achieving successful transformation.

**T**HE draft broad-based black economic empowerment codes for the tourism sector have been a contentious issue within the travel industry, as the codes are considerably stricter than the generic codes of good practice.

The travel industry was given some time to adjust to the new codes with the transitional period extended to the end of October, however, as **Gary Mulder**, financial director for Club Travel, points out, companies need to start planning very early in a year as the ratings take into account the whole year's activity. "It's not something you can quickly try and put together a month before the current rating expires," he says.

EconoBEE processing manager, **Patrick Motaung**, says, to maximise points on the enterprise and supplier development pillar,

companies have to aggressively look at procuring from suppliers that are more than 51% black owned.

This is less of an issue for some TMCs than others. Mulder notes that ownership is not a problem for Club Travel as the company is majority owned by Thebe, the first truly broad-based BEE company in SA. "We have a training division that focuses on the development of all staff and many of our ITCs and partners. Our employment equity programme ensures that our staff are representative of the demographic spread in the regions in which we operate. Club Cares ensures that we focus our socio-economic spend on projects that need us most, always with an eye on the BEE requirements and we are making a concerted effort to drive our procurement spend to the right areas."

"TMCs must look at the process holistically," says **Mike Gray**, ceo of Uniglobe Travel. He says there are many areas available for scoring points that make sound business sense and which Uniglobe has used to improve its ratings. "Key areas of focus are on consolidating franchisees and forming strong BBBEE-based partnerships; developing learner programmes and employing learners; ensuring BBBEE procurement and enterprise development with new young black suppliers and businesses."

TMCs need to move away from simply ticking the BBBEE boxes, says Wings coo for Africa and Middle East, **Frank Palapies**. He says Wings Travel Management has achieved a BBBEE Level 1 rating by avoiding a reactionary mindset and focusing on its objectives from the outset. "A true culture change can only be facilitated by a top-down approach.

If top management does not agree with the approach, or sees it as a nuisance best dealt with by the HR department, it will not succeed."

According to Palapies, Wings Travel's achievement of a Level 1 rating is based on two pillars: a clear strategy and a business process approach. "If you do not have a clear mindset, you cannot achieve your goals. This informs the strategy. The business process involves managing your investment, managing the staff involved in the process, a clear division of responsibilities and fulfilling administration around it.

"If you are committed to transformation but you do not have a clear strategy and process, you will not achieve results. If you have processes in place but you are not truly committed to transformation, you will also fail. It has to be a combination of the two."



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"BEE is being seen by a lot of companies as a ticking exercise," agrees **Themba Mthombeni**, ceo of Duma Travel, noting that most companies merely want to comply to win contracts. "But BEE is not about that. BEE is about patriotism and being South African. We need to build a sustainable country; it shouldn't be a ticking exercise."

According to Mthombeni, BEE can be an expensive exercise if it's merely seen as ticking the boxes. "You will end up having to sell your shares and procure from people from whom you don't want to procure, and employ people you don't want to employ," he says. Companies need to be completely sold on the process and make BEE part of their strategy, says Mthombeni. He says Duma Travel is 100% black-owned and 50% women-owned. Over 85% of Duma Travel's staff were previously disadvantaged and have been

trained by the company. Also, procurement is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure Duma Travel is procuring from the right people.

In terms of empowerment, Duma Travel has several initiatives in place, with scholarships available for university students and school-level students. The company has also installed three computer labs in KZN, training students to obtain their Microsoft international driving licence. In Mpumalanga, the company is helping local communities to cultivate the land and set up markets where their produce can be sold to local hospitality establishments.

"We're a small company but we're making a big difference. Imagine if the big companies adopted the same mind set: we could become a first-world country. But we're too busy thinking short-term," Mthombeni says.

## Dispute resolution mechanisms

**T**he National Treasury and the MAF (through Kitso Consulting) have agreed on a process to be followed with regard to outstanding amounts. All contract payment disputes must be brought to the attention of the Governance, Monitoring and Compliance Unit within the OCPO at the National Treasury. Process steps:

1. If a business has outstanding amounts owed by government, the business should log the issue with its industry association and upload an accurate age analysis (split on separate tabs by province and department) on a monthly basis;
2. If a business has experienced ill practice by a government official or department, a formal complaint may be logged with the relevant industry association;
3. The association will extract the case log and submit it to the dedicated person at Treasury, monthly;
4. The business's age analysis or official complaint will be attached to each case log submitted;
5. Treasury will send a letter with the applicable information for comment from the offending department;
6. Treasury will provide feedback to the industry association regularly in this regard;
7. The department will simultaneously resolve the issue directly with the business concerned;
8. If no resolution is found, the business may request that it meets directly with the offending department and a mediation process may begin;
9. Progress regarding case logs will be shared continuously and managed at quarterly meetings between National Treasury and industry;
10. Contract disputes - Asata members will cooperate with any inquiry conducted by Asata to facilitate resolution of a dispute involving government. ■

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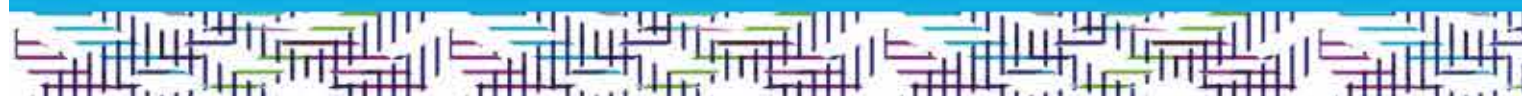
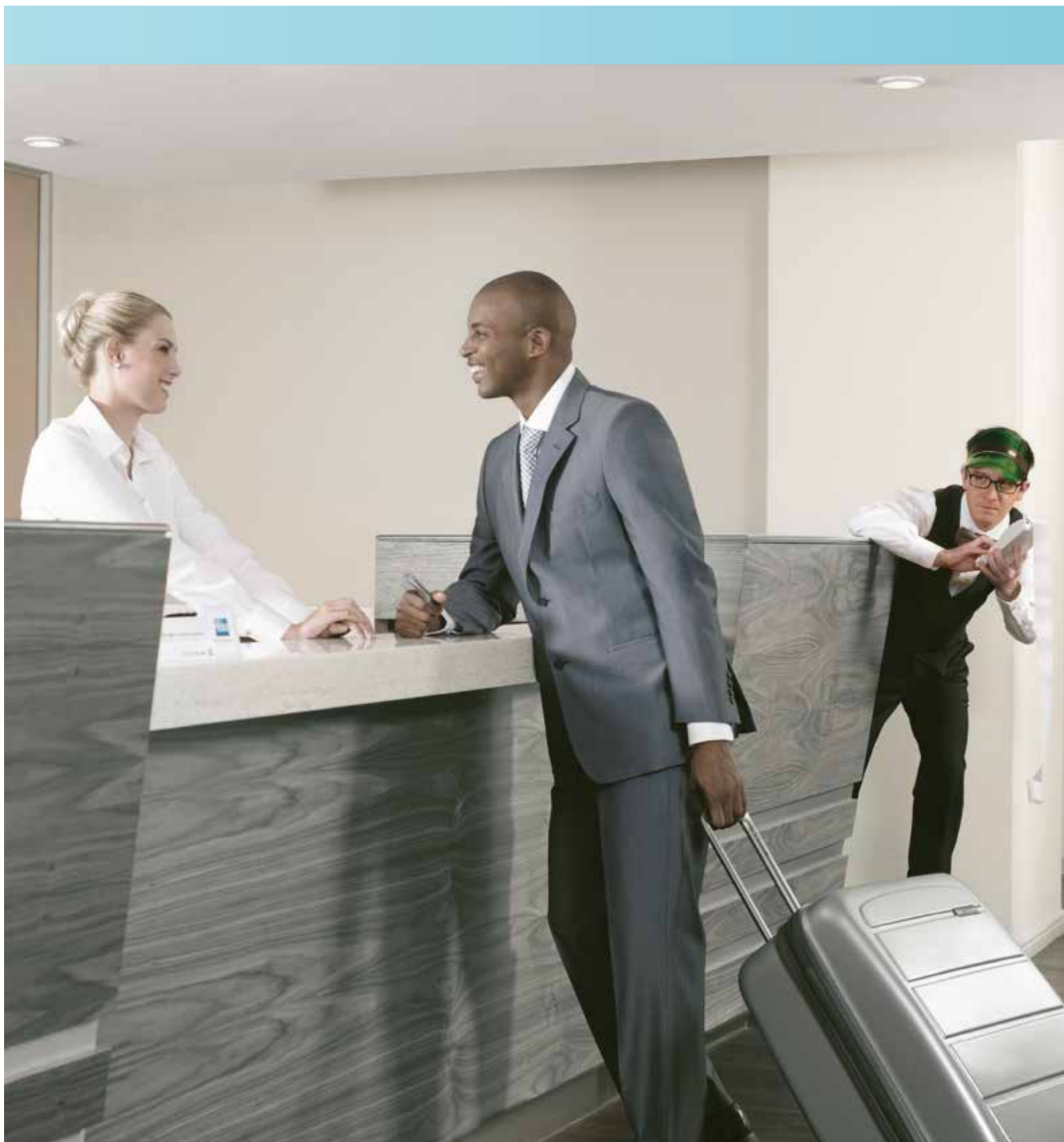

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Lanseria International Airport thrives on a central location, close to the central business districts of Sandton and Randburg, as well as an internationally recognised heritage site. **By Michelle Colman**



## Air traffic continues to grow

**A**N INCREASING number of domestic scheduled flights are being routed to and from Johannesburg's second international air hub, Lanseria International Airport, attesting to the growing demand for the gateway.

Far smaller and compact in comparison to OR Tambo International, Lanseria has a lot going for it, mostly in the form of time-saving. Check-in times at a half-hour ahead of departure are significantly shorter, baggage handling is faster and arriving aircraft are cleared in as little as 15 minutes.

The airport's location, straddling the corporate-dense suburbs of Sandton and Randburg, is another advantage. In addition it's on the border of a significant tourist attraction, The Cradle of Humankind, where a mounting list

of conference and team-building facilities offer attractive venues to the corporate world.

It's little wonder that Lanseria International has become a business travel nucleus. **Claudette Vianello**, Marketing & Media manager, says although a concise business/leisure split is unavailable, business travellers account for the greater half of the airport's two million annual users. The airport also handles the lion's share of private jet travel in South Africa. "We predominantly cater for the business traveller. It's favoured by corporates due to ease of access, short turnaround times and short dwell times and the proximity to Sandton," she comments.

Vianello believes the privately owned airport, which was established some 40 years ago with an investment of just R2,7m, has positively influenced the influx

of corporate travellers into the area. Indicators, she says, are the many new hotels and venues in the area, the recent upgrade of the R512 – a major arterial into the vicinity – and the increase in flights on airlines such as Mango and kulula. Codeshare options on these carriers (Mango with SAA and kulula with Air France) have also brought the international traveller into the mix.

The airport itself is a contributor to business traveller traffic. Lanseria holds the tender for the management of an airport on St Helena, and this has seen many businessmen from the UK and other countries flying in and stopping over en-route to St Helena. In addition, the Lanseria International Airport Training Academy was recently launched, drawing visitors from African countries for aviation training.

New developments at the airport include the extension of the drop-off, pick-up zone to accommodate more vehicles. The ring road has been re-surfaced, benefiting airport tenants in particular. In coming months, the international terminal will be upgraded and extended to accommodate more regional and international schedules – Vianello says discussions with relevant carriers are under way.

"We are also about to build a new air traffic control tower on the south side of the runway, along with a new emergency services centre. The current Air Traffic Control and Emergency Medical Services centre will then be decommissioned and broken down to make more apron room for aircraft to park. In 2016 we will also possibly see the building of a multi-storey parkade," she says.

## Ideal for creative conferencing

**L**ANSERIA International Airport has the added advantage of an opportune location close to the Cradle of Humankind. The Cradle is currently enjoying a renewed spate of interest with the discovery of the Homo Naledi fossils, the largest single fossil find yet made in Africa.

For the MICE industry, the unique location lends itself to a multitude of relevant meeting themes and subject matter. A tour of the Sterkfontein Caves, which form part of the Cradle's premier sites, can be incorporated into programmes with confidence that the experience will be stimulating and leave a strong impression.

Bleeding off the outskirts of Krugersdorp and easily reached

from both of Gauteng's large urban centres, it is little wonder that the Cradle is home to a large number of conference and meeting facilities, while its rural surrounds have given rise to a plethora of team-building activities. Gauteng Tourism's list of facilities on the nearby West Rand lists 13 quality MICE venues and 28 accommodation locations.

**Nonnie Kubeka**, head of Gauteng Conventions & Events Bureau, says: "The secluded and serene environment in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site provides a unique atmosphere that facilitates concentrated attention and the effective sharing of knowledge. This environment ignites creativity and innovation."

According to **Anthony Paton**, deputy director: Website, Editing & Copywriting for the Cradle, Maropeng remains the most popular conference venue in the vicinity because of its status as the official Interpretation Centre Complex. "Besides that, it has a uniquely designed space which is very flexible in format and scale with three interlocking venues that can be used independently or opened up to form one large and effective space seating about 500 people, cinema style, including a full stage."

At the nearby Maropeng Hotel, there are 24 double rooms accommodating 48 guests. Should group numbers be larger, Maropeng has arrangements with accommodation providers in the vicinity.



**Nonnie Kubeka**, head of Gauteng Conventions & Events Bureau

Currently, a day conference package at Maropeng is pegged between R435 and R485, while the 24-hour conference rate is R1 250-R1 600 per person.



## Where to meet

**T**HE following properties in close reach of Lanseria International Airport offer meeting facilities to business executives. The list is not exhaustive.

- Riverstone Lodge
- Avianto
- EnGedi
- Hole in One Guesthouse and Conference Centre
- Silverstar Casino Hotel
- Misty Hills Country Hotel, Conference Centre & Spa
- Glenburn Lodge
- Kloofzicht Lodge & Spa
- Valverde Country Hotel

- The Moon and Sixpence
  - Forum Homini Hotel
  - Shumba Valley Lodge
  - Heia Safari Ranch
  - Askari Game Lodge & Spa
  - Budmarsh Country Lodge
  - Stone Hill
  - Valley Lodge & Spa
  - Toadbury Hall
  - Warthog's Game Lodge and Conference Centre
- Team-building activities in the location include hot-air balloon flights, sky diving and fly fishing. In addition, the Cradle area has become renowned for its cycling and mountain biking trails.

## New air services added

**R**ECENT additions to Lanseria's flight schedule include a service to Durban by low-cost carrier, Mango, launched on October 15 with two return flights daily in the mornings and late afternoons. The airline also increased its Cape Town-Lanseria schedule with a fourth early-morning frequency.

"Demand at Lanseria has shown welcome growth over the past 24 months with well-performing load factors across the schedule and we expect the additional Cape Town flight as well as the new Durban route to mirror performance at Lanseria and further stimulate growth," says **Hein Kaiser**, the airline's spokesperson.

In mid-September, Namibia flyAfrica began scheduled flights from Lanseria to Hosea Kutako International Airport in Windhoek. It offers services on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays but plans to

operate daily soon. The service previously operated out of OR Tambo but relocated following objections to its low fares by a competitor. The move has enabled Namibia flyAfrica to further reduce fares by R500 based on savings gained at Lanseria. Passengers are able to board a bus at the Sandton Gautrain station for transport to Lanseria.

Domestic carrier, Majestic Air, has added five new scheduled services from Lanseria. The airline is now flying return to Polokwane, Kuruman, Elisras and Nelspruit once daily. Since September 6, four return flights a week are also offered to Kimberley. At the time of writing, the airline was conducting a survey on the viability of flights between Lanseria or OR Tambo and Hoedspruit. Majestic Air operates a Piper Seneca, King Air 200, Cessna 402C, PC-12 and Caravan aircraft.

## SLOW Lounge to open in 2016

**A**SLOW Lounge will be opened at Lanseria early next year, with construction starting in February. The lounge will have an airside location.

According to **Cindy van den Heuvel**, general manager for SLOW Lounge, the venue's facilities may be restricted by space. The lounge

may thus be branded differently to other SLOW lounges and a branding process is under way, with details to be announced once it is completed.

The lounge will be available for the use of FNB and RMB qualifying clients, as well as BA Executive Club members and, in some instances, Silver and Gold members. ■



Official Visitor Centre for the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site

[www.maropeng.co.za](http://www.maropeng.co.za)

**Maropeng is the place to be**




The groundbreaking discovery of *Homo naledi*, a previously unknown early human relative, is being hailed as "perhaps one of the most exciting scientific finds in recent history". Discovered two years ago in a chamber of a cave in the Cradle of Humankind, the incredible remains comprise of at least 15 individuals of all ages and both sexes. The fossils are on show until 18 October at Maropeng, the official visitor centre for the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, so don't miss this chance to see *Homo naledi* for yourself.

To celebrate this historic find right on our doorstep, Maropeng is offering the following conference special for an opportunity to discover the world-class corporate facilities at the venue:

**Conference offer at Maropeng Conference Centre**

24 hour conference package with overnight accommodation at Maropeng Hotel:  
**R1440 single DBB, and R1125 sharing DBB.**

Full day conference package:  
**R436 per person**

**Standard conference inclusions.**  
**Valid until 30 November 2015.**




For more information or bookings, contact Maropeng on 014 577 9000 or e-mail [info@maropeng.co.za](mailto:info@maropeng.co.za), or Southern Spoor Marketing on 011 467 0521/31 or e-mail [info@southernspoor.co.za](mailto:info@southernspoor.co.za).

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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](mailto:lindav@nowmedia.co.za).

## 1. New York

Kulula holidays. Four-night 'Budget New York' packages are on offer from R11 064pp sharing. Rate includes return airport-hotel transfers, accommodation at the three-star Wellington Hotel and a New York City pass, which grants entrance to the Empire State Building and a choice of either a two-hour Circle Line Cruise or the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Valid for travel until November 30.

## 2. Dubai

Edusport Travel. Dubai Sevens packages from R6 440pp sharing. Offer includes three nights' accommodation, airport transfers and event tickets (unreserved seating). Travel dates are from December 3-5.

## 3. Mauritius

SAA. Fly to Mauritius with SAA on a return flight leaving from Johannesburg or Durban from R2 050. Rate excludes taxes. Special is valid for travel until November 25 and again from January 15 to March 18.

## 4. Port Elizabeth

Courtyard Hotels. Stay at The Courtyard Hotel Port Elizabeth from R1 690 per room per night. Special rate applies to a maximum of two people per room. Valid until January 31.

## 5. Zambia

Dreams. Spend three nights at the Zambezi Sun from R6 990pp sharing. Special includes return flights leaving from Johannesburg, return airport transfers, breakfast and buffet dinner daily, travel insurance,

## 6. Ireland

United Europe. Visit Dublin and Belfast with a five-night Rail & Stay package from R6 840pp sharing. Offer includes three-star accommodation, breakfasts, a second-class rail ticket, seat reservations and city sightseeing hop-on, hop-off bus tickets in both cities. Valid for travel between December 1 and 31.



a Dreams travel bag, unlimited access to the Falls, park fees and Zambian government tax. Excludes approximate taxes of R3 060 pp. Valid for travel until November 30.

## 7. Sandton

Faircity Hotels & Apartments. Weekend special rates at the Falstaff Hotel are R1 099 per room per night. Price is based on two people sharing a double room. Offer is valid until December 31.

## 8. Spain

F1 Grand Prix Tours. Experience the Spanish GP from R13 150pp sharing. Rate includes economy-

class return tickets leaving from Johannesburg, airport taxes, return airport transfers, three nights in four-star accommodation with breakfast, two-day circuit transfers and a South African on-site tour director. Race tickets are not included. Travel is between May 11 and 16.

## 9. Egypt

Travel Vision. Seven-night Cairo and Nile cruise packages are on offer from R9 625pp sharing. Rate includes all private transfers, meet and assist at airport and stations, two nights in Cairo at a four-star hotel with breakfast and a private half-day Pyramids and Sphinx tour, two nights on a

sleeper train (Cairo-Aswan/Luxor-Cairo) with breakfast and dinner, three nights on a five-star Nile cruise with breakfast, lunch and dinner, guided sightseeing tours and entrance fees. Valid for travel until December 15.

## 10. Nigeria

RwandAir. Fly to Lagos from R4 730 including approximate taxes. Fares are based on flights leaving Johannesburg. Sales and ticketing until November 30. Valid for travel until December 31.

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

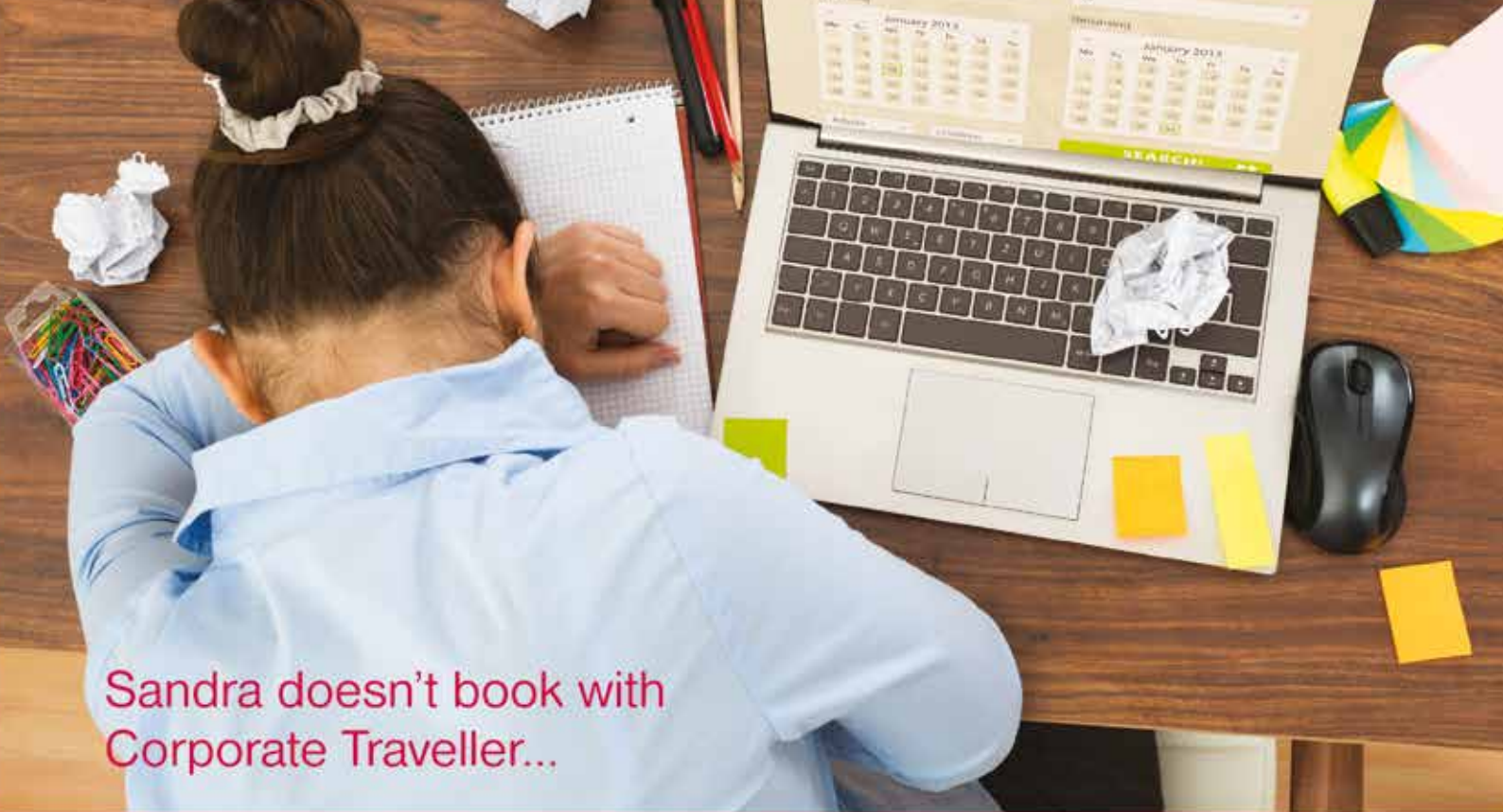


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