

SEPTEMBER 2014

TRAVEL BUYER

FOR SA CORPORATES

+Meet

SUPER-GIRL

Fikile Nkala is on a quest to streamline Super Group's travel commodity

- *Ebola outbreak – tighten up your duty of care*
- *Premium economy: is it worth it?*
- *Low-cost carriers enter long-haul market*
- *How to liven up your year-end: **5** budget-friendly ways*



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COMMENT:

A new chapter

It can be a cliché to say that all good things come to an end but in this case it is true in the sense that this is my last issue of *Travel Buyer*, as I move on to work on new projects. I have been with the publication for many years yet it seems like yesterday that we were excitedly setting the wheels in motion for the launch of a new specialist business travel publication aimed at the corporate travel manager, a newly and loosely defined role within corporations at the time.

We have grown with the sector, sharing its successes and hardships, watching with interest while trying to facilitate the empowerment of travel buyers within our industry. I have loved hearing your stories and it has been a privilege to share them with readers as our community grew. I have watched with fascination as debates became more sophisticated

during industry events and new members including those from new regions slowly joined the ranks and stood up to have their voices heard too.

It really has been an honour to have been part of the industry's development for so long and so it is with a great sense of pride that I leave you, our readers, advertisers, friends and industry colleagues in the capable hands of **Natasha Toppel** who will continue as editor, supported by **Debbie Badham** who has been promoted to assistant editor. They will take *Travel Buyer* forward on the next phase of its journey with you.

There is never enough space for the words I want to write, so I will keep it simple.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Everything of the very best, always.

KIM COCHRANE
(kimcochrane@telkomsa.net)

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

KIM Cochrane has been associated with *Travel Buyer* since its first edition 13 years ago, when it was launched as *Business Travel Now*. As consulting editor, she has guided and grown the publication, with an unswerving focus on South African corporate travel buyers, making *Travel Buyer* a monthly 'must read' for those responsible for managing significant corporate travel expenditure.

Kim's vision, expertise and exceptional work ethic will be missed. We thank her for her commitment, for setting the bar high for a professional publication and wish her everything of the best in her future endeavours. – **David Marsh**

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COVER

This month we profile Super Group, a global logistics and mobility group. Looking after the group's travellers is **Fikile Nkala** from the Group Procurement division. Cover photograph by **Shannon Van Zyl**.

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Brought to you by Now Media, *Travel Buyer + Meet* is a professional travel publication aimed at South African travel procurement decision-makers in travel-buying companies. This publication aims to reflect an unbiased perspective of the corporate travel industry offering insight and tools encouraging readers to manage their travel spend better. *Travel Buyer* is the media partner of ABTA, ACTE and the GBTA



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MasterCard launches digital payment first in SA

MASTERCARD has launched its digital wallet services – MasterPass – in South Africa, the first market in Africa and the Middle East to receive the technology. Launched in 2013, MasterPass is available in nine other countries – the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Singapore, China and Poland.

Digital wallets accessible through the MasterPass network allow consumers to store all their MasterCard or other branded credit, debit or cheque card information, and shipping and billing address details securely in one place. This gives them the ability to make secure online

payments without the repeated hassle of entering these details each time.

SAA is among the first merchants to accept MasterPass as a payment method at checkout.

For retailers, MasterPass provides a more secure, faster and easier way to check out customers.

“Check-out happens with just a few clicks or taps whether at home, in a taxi, at work or at a supermarket, so merchants can look forward to fewer customers abandoning their shopping carts, which, according to research, affects over 67% of online purchases,” says **Mark Hearne**,



Celebrating the launch of MasterPass are (from left): **Mark Hearne** (MasterCard South Africa), **Kim Thipe** (SAA) and **Andrew Wilmot** (Standard Bank).

MasterCard South Africa’s head of business development. As MasterPass evolves, it will also enable in-app and in-store purchases.

Standard Bank is the first local

bank to offer a digital wallet powered by MasterPass via the free Standard Bank MasterPass app, which anyone can use even non-Standard Bank cardholders.

Ebola – SA issues travel advisory, airlines cancel flights

The South African Department of Health has issued a travel advisory against all but essential travel to Liberia, Guinea or Sierra Leone. At the time of going to print the Department released a statement saying: “South Africans are not restricted from travelling to these countries, however all returning travellers from these countries will be subjected to rigorous screening and medical assessments before being allowed entry into the country.”

Meanwhile, various airlines have cancelled flights to Ebola-

affected areas in West Africa. Most recently, Kenya Airways suspended commercial flights to Liberia and Sierra Leone. The airline will continue operating all its scheduled flights to Nigeria and Ghana, however, Kenya Airways’ ceo, **Titus Naikuni**, said he reserved the right to cancel flights to any other destination should the situation warrant it.

Earlier in August, Askya, Arik Air, and British Airways suspended flights to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Emirates suspended flights to Guinea.

SAA continued to fly to West

Africa but had stepped up measures to protect its passengers, crew and ground staff against the Ebola virus.

Staff will be on the lookout for passengers who have specific and visible symptoms associated with the virus. Passenger interviews and tests will follow, conducted by the health authorities. In the event that there is any doubt regarding the medical condition of any suspected passenger, SAA may deny the passenger boarding.

■ For more on the Ebola story, see page 4.

NO MORE temporary passports

The Department of Home Affairs will no longer issue temporary passports from September 1.

A circular from the DHA states that SA citizens have been refused entry into a number of countries when travelling on temporary passports. “Temporary passports have been abused for corruption purposes, which puts South Africa at risk of its travel documents being unreliable.”

Only an Emergency Travel Certificate (ETC) will be issued to an applicant under circumstances of emergency travel purposes.

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Save these dates: GBTA and ABTA conferences

FOR the first time, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Southern Africa annual conference will be held in the greater Sandton area.

The 2014 conference will be held at the Bryanston Country Club, Johannesburg, from October 15-16.

The venue had been chosen to enable travel buyers to minimise time away from the office, while maximising the benefits from attending the event, the GBTA SA said.

The conference will have the theme 'Designing Business Travel'.

Meanwhile, the African Business Travel Association has opened registration for its

inaugural ABTA Africa Business Travel Conference.

The conference takes place from November 2-4, 2014 at the Sheraton Pretoria Hotel. Over 200 delegates from across Africa and the globe are expected to attend.

The theme is Education-Strategy-Power. The event will have a corporate travel education and networking focus where delegates will experience a host of highly pertinent sessions pertaining to managing business travel in Africa and will finally have the chance to meet and interact with industry peers across our continent and the globe, says ABTA founder **Monique Swart**.

KENYA rethinks visas for SA travellers

THE Kenyan High Commission has suspended visa requirements for South African nationals – for now.

The Deputy High Commissioner for Kenya in South Africa, **Helen Gichuhi**, told *Travel Buyer* the suspension of the visas could just be a temporary reprieve. "The Kenyan government and the South African government

are negotiating, hence a pause as we await feedback from the negotiations."

In June it was announced that SA passport holders would, from September 1, need to acquire a visa before travelling to Kenya; in a tit-for-tat move as a reaction to the new immigration laws in South Africa. The decision has been heavily criticised by tourism and travel stakeholders.

Australia launches online visa applications

SOUTH African passport holders can now apply online for Australian Visitor Visas.

Visitor Visas apply to holidays, family visits and business visits that do not involve work in Australia.

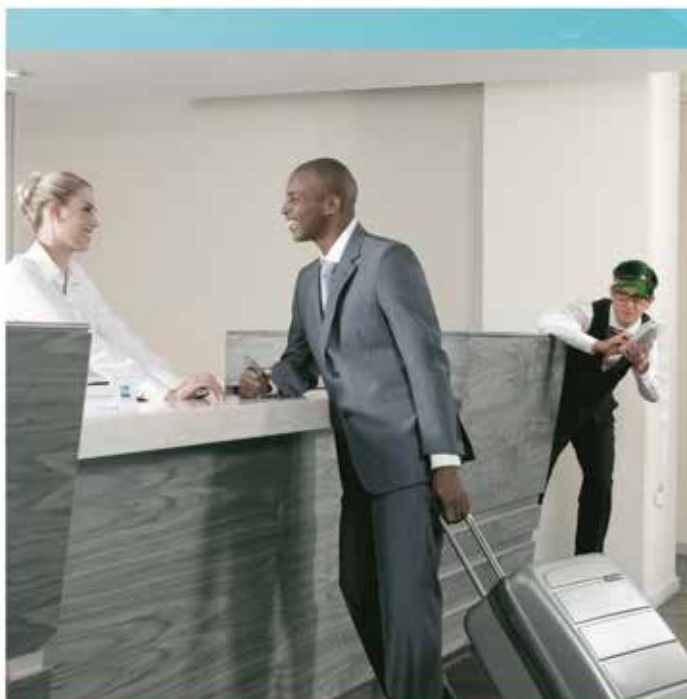
They are generally valid for

three months, although this can be extended on request.

Access the online portal at www.immi.gov.au under 'Online Services'. The service will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Applicants will also be able to check the status of their application. ■



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Duty of care during the Ebola outbreak

The importance of an effective and seamless duty of care programme has once again become apparent as the Ebola virus continues to spread throughout Western Africa, writes **Dorine Reinstein.**

THE World Health Organisation and IATA have assured corporate travellers around the world that business travel to affected areas can continue uninterrupted, as the risk of contracting the disease while travelling is extremely low.

Yet despite these assurances, numerous multinational companies with employees based in the region have started restricting travel to affected areas, while others have requested evacuations. Nestle, for example, has restricted all corporate travel to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone unless it is an 'absolute necessity'.

Chris Pouney, director of business travel for UK-based Severnside Consulting Ltd, says most companies have travel bans in place to affected countries. "Energy companies are scaling back hugely on the numbers of foreign workers. People just don't want to travel but this needs to be correlated with the practical realities of keeping highly lucrative facilities functioning."

He says companies also need to consider the risk and fear of infection from travellers returning back from infected areas. "As discovered through the swine flu outbreak of 2009, despite the WHO advice saying that it was fine, other workers were uncomfortable if their colleagues had just returned from a holiday in Mexico and came straight into the office."

Jim Weighell, director of operations in South Africa for GBTA, says at least one US-based company has already issued a travel ban notice for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, along with a travel restriction for Nigeria, requiring travellers to clear the trip with senior execs.

He says we can expect to see increasing numbers of corporations banning or limiting non-essential travel for the duration of the outbreak and beyond. "Medical evacuation would be considered vital for expats, and corporations should have medical 'extraction' plans in place for any infected person."

“People just don't want to travel but this needs to be correlated with the practical realities of keeping highly lucrative facilities functioning.”

Rachael Penaluna, business manager of Sure Maritime Travel in Port Elizabeth, says most companies are struggling to ensure duty of care for their travellers. She says the Ebola outbreak could last months and companies with interests in those countries will have to send representatives at some point. She adds, however, that it is almost impossible for companies to ensure travellers' safety. "They can only advise on how to avoid certain situations, food and to read the material that is offered and become familiar with symptoms etc.," she says.

Limited facilities

Although travel insurance will provide cover for corporate travellers for medical emergencies in affected areas as long as the WHO and Foreign Commonwealth Organisation (FCO) don't issue travel warnings, expatriation and medical care could still be a problem.

Uriah Jansen, md of Oojah Travel Protection, explains it is only possible to evacuate travellers within legally permitted parameters and the traveller needs to receive a 'fit to fly' from a local doctor. We cannot force an airline to allow commercial evacuation and that we are limited by each government's policy on whether they will allow someone to leave/enter their country."

Dr Katie Geary, medical director at International SOS, adds there is almost no reliable access to medical care available in countries such as Liberia. "Many medical facilities have either closed or are over capacity. They are severely limited in their capability and do not have stringent infection control. Less-serious illnesses may become life threatening."

WHO has issued comprehensive guidelines for more effective exit screening at airports and border crossings. "This means business travellers must be absolutely certain they are fit and well to travel. If they are displaying symptoms of any kind of fever, they may automatically be considered as a possible case of Ebola subject to any quarantine procedures."

There is no need for companies to become swept up in unnecessary mass hysteria, says **Monique Swart**, founder of ABTA. "Many companies are limiting 'unnecessary' travel into affected regions, but for the most part, business trips of high importance are going ahead as planned with informed companies understanding that the threat of travellers contracting the disease is highly unlikely and cannot be used to impede business."



What your travellers should know

- 1. Access to medical facilities**
Travellers should ensure they have access to medical facilities when travelling. The option to come home to be treated might not be possible.
- 2. Avoid crowded areas**
Travellers should avoid crowded areas as well as dense public transport options.
- 3. Keep hands clean**
Travellers should wash hands frequently and wear gloves during preparation of food. They should also avoid shaking hands with people.
- 4. Be aware of your own health**
Travellers should be aware of their own state of health. If they already have flu or a cold, they may be running a temperature and be stopped at the airport.
- 5. Use a travel agent**
Reputable contacts, drivers, meeting hosts should be able to guide visitors and give them local advice should they be uncomfortable. Travel agents can give clients the correct information at source and help them establish reputable contacts through embassies, hotels, etc.

What you should know

Q: What is Ebola?

A: Ebola is a viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF). "Haemorrhagic" means these diseases can involve bleeding.

Q: How is it spread?

Not through the air.

There is no data on whether the virus can be spread to others via sweat. People who have gotten Ebola from other people have probably had exposure to several body fluids from the sick person, in addition to sweat.

Ebola is not a food- nor a water-borne illness.

Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms.

Q: How is it diagnosed?

A: Through blood tests.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: Usually, the person suddenly feels weak, with a fever, muscle/joint pain, headache and sore throat. Vomiting, diarrhoea, rash and abdominal pain follow in most cases. Some people may develop redness of eyes and hiccups.

Organ failure and bleeding (both internally and externally) occur in some people. These lead to death. About 50% to 90% of cases are fatal.

Q: How can I avoid the virus?

- Stay away from sick people. Do not touch their bodily fluids or objects contaminated with their fluids.
- Pay strict attention to hygiene. Wash your hands often. Waterless alcohol-based hand rub can be used if soap is not available.

- Do not go to hospitals, as they may be treating patients with Ebola.
- Do not handle animals, even if they seem healthy.
- Ensure all meat is cooked well.

Q: Treatment

A: There is no treatment or cure for Ebola. Sick people are given supportive therapy, which are treatments that help make them more comfortable but do not cure their illness.

Q: Is there a cure?

A: There is currently no cure for Ebola virus. An experimental medication called ZMapp was administered to two Ebola patients in the United States in early August. One of them seemed to dramatically improve after receiving it. This medication

has never been tested in humans and is highly experimental.

Q: Previous outbreaks

A: The first known Ebola outbreak occurred in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) in 1976. There have been at least ten outbreaks since then, all in African countries. Outbreaks have occurred in Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, South Sudan, Uganda, and now Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Q: Putting it in perspective

A: Since the Ebola outbreak began in February, around 300 000 people have died from malaria, while tuberculosis has likely claimed over 600 000 lives. ■

SOURCE: SOS International and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

GBTA Southern Africa Conference 2014 - Bryanston Country Club - October 15&16

CONFERENCE THEME - DESIGNING BUSINESS TRAVEL

THE Conference for Southern African Travel Buyers. Join the business travel community in Southern Africa at this event to network with your peers, learn from industry experts and explore new products and services on the exposition floor. This event is an ideal opportunity to share best practices and bring innovation to your travel program or travel offerings.

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Website: <http://www.gbta.org/africa/SouthAfrica/Conference/Pages/default.aspx>



SUPER TRAVEL

Super Group is a global logistics and mobility group with a head office in Johannesburg as well as operations in Australia, New Zealand and the UK in addition to a strong footprint in Africa. And looking after logistics and mobility for the group's travellers is **Fikile Nkala** from the Group Procurement division. She spoke with **Kim Cochrane**.

Q: I see you brought an energy drink with you...

A: <Laughing> Yes! It is hectic here at the moment. Super Group Procurement recently merged with Super Group IT and a new group procurement portal or intranet will be launched to improve the travel system.

Q: What will this mean for your travellers?

A: Changes to internal processes include a revised travel booking and approval process for both domestic and international reservations. Travel procurement will have its own intranet page where travellers will be able to find information as well as obtain a quote and an approval form.

We don't have too many major challenges in travel procurement. Things run smoothly and I hope they will run even smoother following this merger with IT. I now report in to procurement and IT; procurement management is now IT management. My boss is the chief information officer, **Adrian Lewis**, who represents travel at an executive level.

Q: There must be challenges that keep you on your toes?

A: Super Group is represented by a diverse range of cultural groups. My biggest challenge has been to learn all their requirements and meet those within the most cost-effective way. There are not different travel policies but there are exceptions to the rule for our travel policy.

Q: How does the travel process work currently?

A: We use TravelLinck for domestic travel bookings, the approval process and to facilitate an automated process from pre-booking right through to expense management. For international and regional travel, we partner with Claudia's Travel. Three quotes are provided by the TMC: the lowest airfare for a direct flight, the lowest airfare with one connection (under four hours) and the lowest airfare for the day (maximum two connections). Should an airfare higher than the cheaper logical fare be chosen, additional approval is required as per group travel policy and at the discretion of the divisional managing director.

The travel-booking solution has changed the traditional way of managing corporate travel and expense management in the organisation. I see this technology as being a solution for the future of travel management in Super Group as it provides real-time booking of flights, accommodation (hotels and B&Bs) and car hire as well as real-time reporting.

Q: When did you take on the travel portfolio?

A: My previous working experience never involved travel as I worked in the safety and security sector (SAPS) for seven years doing clerical work. There were no real challenges for me there. I needed more and I found it when I came to Super Group in 2008.

I started off in procurement by managing smaller commodities



BORN and bred – and still living – in the only place she calls home, in Daveyton on the East Rand, Fikile Nkala (left) loves spending her free time socialising with family and friends. She is photographed here with Super Group executive personal assistant and travel booker, Angelique Stuart.

such as telecommunications. The procurement division expanded and travel became more of a challenge, particularly as management had decided to move to an online booking solution for domestic travel. That was my first encounter with corporate travel management. I was therefore the first to test Travellinck and to benefit from the training offered. I then had to recommend it to the business in terms of how it would work and improve travel.

Q: What did you like most about the system?

A: At the time, I only managed travel for the head office but now after six years, I oversee travel for the whole group. All I know and understand I learned from managers who mentored me on travel booking, supplier negotiation and procurement, among other topics.

What I like so much about Travellinck is that it was so easy to use and adapt to. With the training I received – and working within the group's existing travel policy, I could train bookers; we understood it well. We subsequently have 100% compliance on the system.

Q: What are your responsibilities now?

A: The travel buck stops with me. I manage and consolidate group travel across all divisions. Each division – there are about 20 divisions in the group – has its own travel booker. All queries and issues are sent to me as I am the mediator between supplier and travel booker if problems are encountered.

I also manage the executive bookings for the Super Group head office and I strive to keep senior staff members satisfied at all times. I aim to ensure excellent service delivery from my service providers. This is what gives me sleepless nights but keeping these travellers happy is my greatest achievement as head office executive travel booker. It makes me whole in my heart and helps me perform even better. It is a pleasure to ensure that management's travel goes 110% well and then to be complimented after a traveller has had a fabulous travel experience.

I reconcile all American Express statements and supplier invoices each month to ensure that Super Group business units are billed

correctly. It is my responsibility to ensure prompt payment of suppliers and to ensure that the group American Express control account is paid on time to avoid added cost. While meetings, incentives, conferencing and events (MICE) are not part of my portfolio, I do reconcile the MICE spend if it goes through our lodge card.

I facilitate all the accommodation payments inhouse directly instead of using bill-backs or the TMC to help, which saves on spend.

Included in my travel management responsibilities is the reporting I analyse each month for management: reporting on ethical practice, irregularities of travel booking, group high spenders, misspending and on savings incurred by Group Procurement.

Q: How controllable is travel spend within the organisation?

A: Spend is controllable and we've seen savings of about 20%-30% on travel spend since I joined and we moved on to Travellinck.

In terms of a break-down, about 65% of our travellers travel to Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, with about 20% going into regional African countries. Of international spend, 15% visit Australia, the UK and Mauritius.

Q: What has been an eye-opener over the years regarding travel?

A: I've found it most interesting to interact with travel service

providers who have a common objective to achieve cost savings.

When I first took on travel, my goal was to develop Group Travel into a world-class procurement travel offering and the one-stop-shop service provider for Super Group travellers.

To help myself develop I have acquired further academic skills and achieved a Purchasing Management Diploma at Varsity College Sandton in 2013. I am currently studying towards obtaining a Procurement and Supply Diploma with the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) and I am a member of the Institute. In this way, I have gained in-depth knowledge of procurement ethics, principles, procedures and processes and have a better understanding of supplier management, relationships, negotiating, contracting, business context as well as needs and sourcing.

Q: I can understand the energy drink...

A: I start studying from 21h00 when it is quiet and my husband and three daughters have gone to bed!

Q: Do you have any time left to travel yourself?

A: I never dreamt that one day I would be managing a travel programme. The first time I travelled was last year when one of the hotels invited me to a site inspection in Cape Town. It was my first time in an aircraft. I had the time of my life!

And that is the excitement of doing travel. Day by day I get more excited.

STREAMLINING the travel commodity

THE Super Group IT department is working closely with Travellinck to design the most streamlined solution for the travel commodity, advises **Marcelle Ross**, who heads up Travellinck's client-facing support and business development.

"We are considering various direct integrations to either the new procurement portal or the intranet to allow for 'single sign-on' capability."

How it works presently at Super Group, she says, is that bookers request travel via a re-branded Travellinck portal. "Real-time quotes are selected per service category and sent for approval via SMS or e-mail. The travel policy is embedded within the system and has assisted in terms of meeting savings goals."

She adds that each division has access to its own real-time dashboard that depicts the spend per day, percentage of savings achieved, number of travellers on the same flight etc.

The various divisions have implemented workflows to suit business units. "Some send all requests to central procurement to process using Travellinck, whilst others manage all their own travel using the system."

Since travel arrangements can be unpredictable, Travellinck's capability to readily allow changes to existing bookings without having to start the entire booking process from scratch has assisted Super Group with process efficiencies.

She says the billing process is tailored for Super Group to meet the requirement for monthly invoices to be sent to 20 divisions. "No duplicate billings are experienced since we only charge per service (flight) regardless of how many sectors or changes etc. There is also the facility to capture/attach expense claims to each travel order, enabling the client to calculate the total cost of travel and store the slips in a secure place."

Shifting gear to go global

TRAVELLINCK'S pioneer, **Dr Rod Ross** (pictured), recently spearheaded the recruitment of a bigger outsourced development team to assist with rapidly accelerating projects to deliver immediate client value.

"With this additional capacity, our clients can expect more efficient integration work, better support for our current system as well as new ways to meet existing needs and plan for future needs in a global context. The team is busy with a host of new solutions, some are client-specific and others are first to market and will benefit the entire industry."

As a result, Dr Ross has shifted his focus from ceo to



head of product development, to focus on taking the current solution to the next level. This strategic business change has led to **Tim Straw**, executive chairman, moving into management of daily operational responsibilities to allow Dr Ross to focus on technologies. ■

REMEMBER...

- Adapt to change, new travel products, innovation and technology.
- Source reliable, responsible, capable and preferred suppliers in the supply market.
- Have smart travel procurement with the right policies and procedures.
- Always treat internal and external stakeholders as 'King', as these people make the travel world go around. Without them there is no travel.
- Senior buy-in is essential.

Plan **GREENER** meetings and events



The meetings and events industry is becoming more conscious of sustainability issues. **Monique van der Zon**, sustainability consultant, offers insights into how PCOs can start taking steps to organise more sustainable events.

A GROWING number of professional conference organisers are conscious of concerns surrounding sustainability in the event industry. Many are, however, unfamiliar with the practices they can easily implement before, during and after a specific event to reduce its negative effects. Events have enormous impacts on the environment but sustainability is not only about the environment; it involves social issues as well.

Overcoming the client barrier

Unfortunately, while organisers are keen to host a sustainable event, there seems to be an enormous barrier as clients often see it as a pricey exercise. Although some of the green products that are available are more expensive than their non environmentally friendly counterparts, we are starting to see a shift in demand and therefore a shift in prices. The 'price barrier' is also a misconception – there are a number of changes we can make in the industry without paying more. A sustainable event can include practices that save costs.

Organisers who want to encourage their clients to host events and conferences that are more sustainable need to be equipped with enough knowledge to answer the client's questions and address concerns.

Making the change

The timeline for achieving event sustainability often depends on the scale of the event as well as the level of commitment from the PCO and client. Some small events with full commitment

can reach a high level of sustainability when first-time measures are implemented. Yet most large events – whether they are conferences, exhibitions, sporting events or music festivals – can take up to two or three times to be considered a green event.

The first time you attempt a sustainable event you will probably come across some issues. It is important to take note and learn from them. Involving eco-event consultants is always a good idea, as they will be able to assist you in the planning phase and also provide recommendations.

Remember, it is important to say that your event is 'going green' or that you 'aim to host a sustainable event' instead of declaring that an event is 'green' or 'sustainable'. It is not possible to measure whether an event is sustainable until after the event, when all the data has been collected.

Eight focus points for your next event

1. Planning: Sustainability must be part of the vision for the event from the first day of planning. Start looking for ideas and suppliers from the very beginning and ensure that you have a statement regarding your intentions surrounding sustainability issues as this will help you stay focused. Make your statement public wherever possible so that your client, committee, suppliers, exhibitors and delegates are aware. Try to keep paperwork, documents and registrations electronic.

2. Procurement: Choose the greener option wherever

possible. This could include selecting seasonal, local, healthier menus, or even local arts and crafts as gifts for delegates and guest speakers. Choose your suppliers and service providers wisely and avoid imported items and products.

3. Waste: Minimise waste wherever possible. If you can avoid fresh-cut flowers, buffet meals, printed collateral and marketing materials, then do.

4. Water: Venue selection is always important with regard to water conservation. Select venues that have water-saving procedures, technologies and practices. If you are not sure what to look for, ask them about their laundry procedures (for tablecloths and linen) as well as their water-saving technologies such as dual-flush toilets, tap aerators, low-flow showerheads, and water-wise gardens and irrigation. Always avoid bottled water wherever possible.

5. Energy: Select a venue that has an energy efficiency policy in place and ask them if they are able to monitor the energy usage during your event. Also look at the number of service providers and vendors who may use generators on site. Look at the use of natural light at the venue for daytime events and conferences and ask the venue if they use renewable energy through solar panels or wind turbines. You can also look into purchasing renewable energy certificates for the event.

6. Emissions: Plan logistics carefully and select your destination and venue wisely.

If most of your delegates are attending from out of town, you may need to rethink the destination and venue for the following year. Also look at factors such as accessibility to the event, access to public transport and possible car-sharing to reduce emissions.

7. Biodiversity: Try to avoid fresh-cut flowers wherever possible by looking at indigenous potted plants instead and always ensure that no threatened or endangered species are on display or on the menu. With regard to this, take special note of the seafood available by visiting the Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative website. If there are any generators on site or display vehicles, they need to have drip-trays underneath to avoid oil spills.

8. Social: Looking after the local community before, during and after the event is an important part of leaving a positive legacy. You can do this by donating leftover delegate bags or potted plants and planting trees in the area. The social legacy aspect includes employing and training local people and promoting local job creation. For example, you can hire a local dance/music group as entertainment, or employ local unemployed community members to assist with waste separation. Always avoid damaging the natural and cultural areas. Remember that your event often affects the local communities through increased traffic, noise and waste. So be mindful.

► *Meet continues on p10*

UNIGLOBE - TRAVEL.SIMPLIFIED

Tips for Better Business Travel

Travel often equates to travail. Business travel is hardly ever described as a picnic. In fact, traveling on business can be exhausting and highly stressful. However, there are steps that can make this a more positive experience even under the least desirable circumstances.

PLAN AHEAD

Taking time and advice to plan ahead of time can make a huge difference in the quality of travel. Delays and changes can be expected as something always comes up at the last minute. Planning for these situations in advance can decrease stress and increase productivity. UNIGLOBE has online and personalised support systems to help you plan ahead. With over 700 offices in over 70 countries we have the network and resources to help you plan a better trip. Our online trip planning, approval and booking system enables corporates to efficiently and simply manage what can be a complex problem. Our expert consultants are able to support you 7/24/365

HAVE BACKUP AND SUPPORT

Besides ensuring that there are hard copy and digital copies of all key documents available, ensure you have back up and support on the road. UNIGLOBE's mobile, online and after hours 7/24/365 Emergency Solutions provide for total peace of mind for the traveller, travel arrangers and companies who take seriously their duty of care for travellers.

TIME AND COST MANAGEMENT

Timing of trips can be critical not only for achieving business objectives, but also managing travel costs. UNIGLOBE online trip planning, requisition, approval, booking, tracking and reporting systems will provide you with the means to manage company human and financial resources efficiently, effectively and economically. This includes supplier and loyalty contract management, as well as managing those last minute specials and global procurement deals.

BE FAMILIAR WITH THE DESTINATION

Knowing where the traveler is going, where the traveller is at any one moment and what to expect can help decrease anxiety and allow for a smoother transition. Having valuable destination management guides 7/24/365 alerts, with online tools

and mobile tools to help manage the trip in real-time will make this process simpler and free of hassle or stress. UNIGLOBE mobile itineraries, online travel guides and advisories, on site offices worldwide and knowledgeable staff provide the security of knowing you have dependable and professional people and systems supporting your travellers

BE FINANCIALLY PREPARED

Individual travellers should be financially prepared for all business travel financial needs. In addition to carrying the company credit or debit card, cash and insurance may also come in handy. UNIGLOBE can help your travellers ensure they have the financial resources for any eventuality on the road through the most efficient and economical means.

SECURE COMFORTABLE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

UNIGLOBE will also help travel arrangers make the travel arrangements comfortable from online check-in to securing that special seat, to business lounge passes, upgrades, loyalty programme management and rescue line services in the event of emergencies - your travellers safety and comfort needs are our key focus. Staying comfortable and secure throughout the whole trip can make a huge impact not only the overall trip experience but also the final business results.

TAKING DOWN TIME

Business travel is about business. However, it is important to stay rejuvenated to be on top of your game and giving only your best. The traveller should make time for something enjoyable while on the trip and make sure to relax and unwind afterwards. UNIGLOBE's TRAVEL.SIMPLIFIED philosophy also extends to providing mobile, online and offline support for breakaways and excursions during and after the business trip.

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The good, the bad and the *unusual*...

Celebrating the end of the year together remains one of the most effective ways of rewarding both clients and staff, but doing things differently can be tricky in light of tight budgets and time constraints. **Liesl Venter** talks to PCOs to find out what makes the difference.

A YEAR-END function is a wonderful medium to get people to realise which goals have been achieved, which projects have been successful and where there is still work to be done – all in a social and relaxed manner, believes **Beatrix Lourens**, md of Beatrix Events. “Employees end the year motivated and clients are inspired.”

There is much to be gained from a well-designed year-end function. “From teambuilding with employees struggling over obstacles, themed events with the office nerd dressed up like Austin Powers to the most glamorous gala dinners, there is something very beautiful in seeing a company get together successfully on a social level.”



YOUR event should aim to create a fun atmosphere for most people attending.

PCO: EVENT AFFAIRS

Corporates should also never underestimate the value of a thank-you. Thanking staff and clients goes a long way to boost morale, improve relationships and set the tone for the next year of business, she says.

Many corporates are veering

away from spending on year-end functions due to the recession and budget constraints but as **Elouise Cloete** of Shift Ideas points out, end-of-year functions do not have to be expensive and over the top. She cautions, however, about under-spending. “Too little effort can have disastrous effects, negatively affecting morale.”

Megan Buchanan, co-founder of Event Affairs, says if there is no thought or effort put into the event it simply becomes a waste of time and money.

Ensuring success

Making magic is what year-ends are all about, says Lourens, but it has to happen within a budget. There is little room for error at a year-end function due to the emotional expectations associated with it.

Buchanan says it is important to know the crowd with whom you are working. “Try to gather as much information about who is attending and what their interests and behaviours are so that you can have something for everyone or at least organise

an event that will speak to the majority of the people’s interests. In other words, racy dancers are not going to impress a conservative group of people any more than a performance by a group of tenors is going to keep a young, active audience interested.”

The experts agree that the location needs to be well placed, easily accessible and offer ways for people to get home safely if they have been drinking.

“And don’t forget about the basics,” says Cloete. “Good food, parking, safety and security.”

Keep your guests front of mind

Although unusual, out-of-the-ordinary events can be a lot of fun, they require an audience willing to go the extra mile.

“There is no point having a dress-up if the majority of the guests are not willing to do so and will arrive in their Sunday best anyway,” says Buchanan. “You will be far better advised then to have a formal sit-down dinner as that will be more enjoyable for them.”

Making sure staff and clients are acknowledged in a way that is familiar and acceptable to them is very important.

“In general, people do enjoy something different and funky but it must aim to have a major impact and create an atmosphere that is fun for most people attending,” says Lourens.

So whether it’s sundowners on Table Mountain or a disco in Sandton, it’s not what you do, but who you do it for, says Cloete.

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Top tips for success

- If you don’t buy into an idea, theme or venue – don’t present it.
- Make provision for various cultures when it comes to entertaining and catering.
- Keep everyone together.
- Don’t underestimate the importance of entertainment.
- Plan in advance.
- Make sure your ideas have not been done before.

5 budget-friendly ways to liven up your year-end



Under pressure to find innovative ideas for your year-end function that won't break the bank? **Sandra Minnaar**, owner of Conference Complete, offers five cost-effective suggestions.

Fancy dress

Nothing encourages the spirit of camaraderie like the opportunity to dress up, which is why Minnaar suggests holding a fancy dress party on the company's premises. Staff can be placed in teams, allocated a specific budget, and then take part in a competition to decorate different parts of the venue. A more significant portion of the budget can then be spent on bringing in external caterers.

to interact with one another. Minnaar says this can be organised internally quite easily and held at a school sports ground. An end-of-year sports function is best complemented by a fun and interactive lunch or dinner such as a braai. In cases where the number of staff members is more than 900, fast-food franchises can be brought in (at their own cost) to set up stalls so that employees can move from vendor to vendor in a fête-type of environment.

Sports challenge

A round robin sports day is another great way for employees

Potjiekos competition

Stay in budget by getting your colleagues to cook their own

food. Potjiekos competitions are simple to facilitate – staff members should be split into teams and provided with a budget to buy their ingredients. An impartial judge can assess different categories, from best potjie to best presentation and most team spirit.

Community projects

One of the best ways to motivate employees and allow them to feel part of a bigger picture is to arrange for them to give back to their community. This can be done in a number of different ways, such as helping to plant trees in the

area or taking Christmas gifts to underprivileged children. A breakfast or lunch could be organised, giving staff members the opportunity to interact with members of the community.

An evening with artists

Amazink in Stellenbosch is a venue that enables groups to support local artists while enjoying an evening of culture and entertainment. Minnaar says, for about R200 a head, catering and décor is included. Similarly, Richard's Supper Stage and Bistro in Sea Point showcases local performance talent.

► *Meet continues on p12*

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SWEETENING THE DEAL

Event planners looking for a completely different add-on or team-building activity to sweeten up an event or conference should consider the secretive world of chocolate making at the Chocolate Studio. **Liesl Venter** finds out.

THERE is something uniquely seductive about chocolate. From the aroma and texture, to the tantalising taste, what's not to love?

The Chocolate Studio is the brainchild of Lindt Chocolate and is the first of its kind in South Africa. Based in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, the Chocolate Studio offers specialised training workshops to entry-level chefs, non-professionals and chocolate enthusiasts alike. Guided by Lindt's

Master Swiss Chocolatiers, participants are shown how to make a masterpiece of their own using the Lindt chocolate ranges.

The workshops offer each participant the opportunity to gain insight and obtain a better understanding of the secretive world of chocolate making and its confections, says **Catherine Abplanalp**, Lindt & Sprüngli retail and project manager.

A variety of workshops are on offer, including the creation of a chocolate showpiece, learning how to use moulds and fillings, to the making of hand-crafted truffles, petit fours, chocolate confectionery and the art of mousse cakes.

According to Abplanalp,

besides being out of the ordinary, the classes are fun.

"The best part, of course, is the end product. You are creating a masterpiece with the finest chocolate available and you get to take it home with the knowledge of how to do it again."

On the practical side, the activity can be pre-arranged to conform to the timeline available. Ranging from as little as one hour up to five hours, it is completely dependent on what you want to make and how much time you are willing to spend on the activity. Being indoors, it is also not weather dependent and can be worked into a schedule during the day or in the evening.

"We can build a course to



PIC: DEBBIE BADHAM

IN addition to sharing the secrets of chocolate making, the studio also creates hand-made chocolate products and desserts for corporate gifts.

suit just about any budget and the application options of the courses available are endless, from team building where you get to choose what you would like to do in the course, right through to bringing guests to the studio after dinner to create their own dessert." ■

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Low-cost carriers enter long-haul market



Low-cost carriers are tackling their next frontier, long-haul air routes, writes **Michelle Colman**.

AVIATION observers are keeping a keen eye on a new development in the no-frills, low-cost arena – the movement of low-cost carriers (LCCs) into the long-distance market.

The movement is not new, its history going back to **Freddie Laker's** London-New York Skytrain of the early 80s and followed by other start-ups, none of which went the distance.

To cite some of these ventures in Europe, Norwegian Air Shuttle commenced services from Gatwick to New York, Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale in early July. The airline, which is looking at Cape Town among its future ports, also operates to US points from a series of Scandinavian cities. Lufthansa is in talks with Turkish Airlines on the establishment of a discount arm, Wings, to serve destinations in the Indian Ocean and Asia, thereby fending off competition from the hugely successful Gulf carriers. LCC giant, Ryanair, has stated its intentions to go transatlantic in a big way.

In Asia, the medium- and long-haul operation of AirAsia, AirAsia X, is flying to 17 destinations in Asia, Australia and Saudi Arabia. The LCC intends

setting up hubs throughout Asia, which will give it bases into areas further afield. Despite a false start some years ago when long-haul services to the UK were dropped, it is determined to serve Europe and North America. Scoot, Singapore Airlines' low-cost sibling, has also made its intentions to enter the medium- and long-haul arenas known.

LCCs will likely continue to outperform traditional airlines in terms of end-user affordability.

- Hein Kaiser

Many international LCCs have just about spun out their double-digit growth and now seek new air space as short-haul networks become saturated. Their success in many markets has been phenomenal. In Asia-Pacific, some 50 budget airlines now carry close on 60% of domestic and regional traffic; nine of the world's 15 busiest low-cost air routes are located here and most legacy carriers are invested in a low-cost operation in some way. In Europe, LCCs account for some 40% of air traffic.

Opinions on the success of low-cost, long-haul services are split. Detractors allude to higher fuel burn per passenger on longer routes, and higher labour and in-flight costs such as crews and catering. The need to contain costs by keeping aircraft in the air would mean complex scheduling and inconvenient departure times across time zones, with little passenger appeal. Seat capacity would have to be increased to cover costs, cutting into profitable cargo space. LCCs would also be competing with long-established, successful charter airlines.

The result would be less price-elasticity in the long-haul market and thereby less ability to attract passengers.

Others believe that with the right aircraft, optimum management of fuel costs and good utilisation of digital marketing and booking aids, LCCs stand more than a fair chance in long-haul. Norwegian Air Shuttle's ceo, **Bjorn Kjos**, recently told the travel industry newsletter, *Skift*, that the long-haul, low-cost environment had been changed by more fuel-efficient planes, the internet and a shift in global economic power to the East.

The right equipment is said to

be key for LCC long-haul success, and despite its early problems, the B787 Dreamliner, as well as the A350, have been mentioned as good options for LCCs.

Should LCC carriers become a fixture on the long-haul scene, travel buyers may find themselves reaping the benefit of an initial price war. But this will accompany a turbulent market, until such time as a settling occurs. It must also be borne in mind that the discount window could be temporary, as price wars are inevitably followed by periods of consolidation, where prices rise once again.

Service differences between legacy carriers' economy class and LCCs are narrowing. Traditional carriers are beginning to charge for meals, reserved seats and checked baggage, while a growing number of LCCs, for their part, are introducing services such as allocated seating.

Says **Hein Kaiser**, head of communications at Mango: "LCCs may introduce competitive products that are retailed for ancillary revenue. LCCs traditionally operate from a much lower cost base and as such would likely continue to outperform traditional airlines in terms of end-user affordability".

Local skies fill with more LCCs

SOUTH African air routes will be a lot busier if all the LCCs mooted recently do succeed in launching operations.

Mango and kulula.com remain the stalwarts of the local LCC tableau, which has proved erratic as airlines come and go. Names such as Flitestar, Nationwide, Velvet Sky and 1time are now nothing more than distant memories.

FlySafair, founded by Safair, will begin scheduled passenger services between Cape Town and Johannesburg; Cape Town

and Port Elizabeth; and Cape Town and George in October. Initially set to start operations in late 2013, it was blocked when competitors brought an urgent application to interdict the airline, based on its not meeting the 75% domestic ownership requirements. FlySafair has since remedied its shareholding.

Skywise, another new venture planning to fly between Johannesburg and Cape Town, has yet to take off. Behind this undertaking are the founders of

the failed 1time. Fly Blue Crane, a subsidiary of Blue Crane Aviation and headed by former SAA ceo, **Siza Mzimela**, has also applied for an air services licence for the same route.

Regionally, the airline fastjet recently began flying between Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam, and intends developing Johannesburg as one of its African hubs. Khuphuka Kings Airways, a cargo carrier, plans to move into passenger services between Durban and Nigeria, Swaziland and the DR Congo.

FlyAfrica.com planned the inauguration of services between Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and Johannesburg on July 23 at a one-way fare of R99 excluding taxes, but a week later the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe (CAAZ) revoked the airline's South African pilots' validation to fly. The carrier successfully commenced services on August 1.

Should these new entrants get off the ground, what's in it for the local travel buyer or TMC?

► feature continues on p14

▶ feature continues from p13



For one, more competitive fares to start. FlySafair's rates for early bookers are as low as R499 and R399 one way between Cape Town and Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth respectively, including taxes. That's half those of its LCC competitors. Although the base rate covers a seat only, and extra charges apply for checked baggage (R300) and pre-seating, the FlySafair fares represent considerable savings.

Both LCC and traditional carriers are likely to react to these reduced fares with adjustments of their own, bearing in mind the price-sensitivity of the South African market. But would it be just a matter of time until sustainability rears its head?

Hein Kaiser, Mango's head of communications, says the introduction of competitive domestic airlines always has

positive impact for consumers given the natural competitive inclination vis a vis pricing, but "one cannot assume that the launch pricing of any airline would be maintained throughout".

Dave Andrew, FlySafair ceo, has stated that the new airlines' announced fares are not simply opening ploys and that the low-cost model applied is sustainable. The average fare across all seats in aggregate exceeds the cost of operation the flight, he says.

Kaiser cautions that in recent years aviation and GDP growth have de-coupled with negative growth in passenger numbers. The introduction of additional capacity could negatively impact the equilibrium between supply and demand, and thereby the aviation sector commercially.

Fastjet strengthens presence in Africa

By **Debbie Badham**

FASTJET continues to extend its reach within Africa, moving forward with a number of different developments on the continent.

Richard Bodin, fastjet chief commercial officer, reveals that the airline's base in Zambia remains a top priority. "The project to obtain our air operator certificate (AOC) is well underway and things are moving forward positively," he says.

The airline which is currently based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, hopes to have the second base in Lusaka up and running soon.

Fastjet recently announced that it would be disposing of its holding in Fly540 Kenya. This comes on the back of an in-depth evaluation into whether Fly540 possessed enough of the essential elements necessary for the carrier's expansion. "At the end of the day we decided it would make more sense to develop a brand new AOC," comments Bodin, referring to the establishment of a new airline, fastjet Kenya.

The airline is particularly



excited about the launch of its third international destination, Harare, and inaugurated thrice-weekly flights to that city from Dar es Salaam on August 5. Fares start as low as US\$50 one-way, excluding airport and government taxes.

Bodin notes that fastjet's route between Dar es Salaam and Johannesburg continues to grow.

He believes that it is the success of fastjet in Africa which has attracted new LCC competitors to the continent. "There are 1,1 billion people in Africa representing a vast untapped market – as such we believe that competition can only be a good thing."

News Flash...

- MANGO was named the Best Low Cost Airline in Africa at the World Airline Awards presented by Skytrax recently. The recognition places Mango in the Top 100 global airlines for 2014 following a worldwide customer satisfaction voting process late last year. To date, Mango has carried in excess of 11m passengers between eight airports across the country and between Johannesburg and Zanzibar. In October, it will increase frequencies between Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth by 55% with the addition of return services on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.
- FASTJET customers can now select and pay for a preferred seat when booking their flights, or add their preference to their booking up to 24 hours before departure. The cost is US\$5 per seat one-way for premium seats in the 'quick-exit' rows and the 'extended leg-room' seats. The cost for reserving a non-premium seat is US\$3 per seat one-way.
- KENYA Airways and kulula.com are participating in a bilateral codeshare agreement, connecting their networks via OR Tambo International Airport. The partnership is in line with kulula.com's medium- to long-term strategy to grow its African footprint. ■

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PREMIUM ECONOMY: is it worth it?

Premium economy, the middle ground between business class and standard economy, has become a popular option. Yet the concept of premium economy is a hazy one at best, with every airline offering a different take, writes

Dorine Reinstein.

OPTIONS for premium economy are definitely on the rise, with an increasing number of airlines tapping into this lucrative new tier of service.

According to Airbus, around 24 international carriers now offer premium economy. There are, however, no universal guidelines about what constitutes a premium economy class. It can range from a bit more legroom and a few extra perks for a bit more money to roomier seats and greatly enhanced service for quite a lot more money.

Lufthansa has undoubtedly made a bold statement when it comes to the new premium economy class. The airline is planning to turn 10% of its long-distance capacity into premium economy this year. The installation of the new travel class in Lufthansa's aircraft will be carried out on a gradual basis and completed during the European summer of 2015.

Axel Simon, director Southern Africa for the Lufthansa Group, explains the premium economy class is located within the cabin as a clearly identifiable separate compartment. The new seats are up to 3cm wider than the standard economy seats. The backrest can be reclined further and the seat pitch is a significantly more spacious 97cm.

Simon says: "As a result, passengers have around one-and-a-half times as much room as economy class."

Air France has invested heavily in a unique new premium economy class. The first Air France Boeing 777 equipped with the new premium economy made its inaugural flight to New York very recently. The premium economy seats have hard shells

as well as 40% more space than the economy seats. They have 12-inch screens and footrests. Air France will be equipping 44 Boeing 777 planes with more than 1 100 premium economy seats. By year-end, the new cabins will be used on flights to Singapore, Jakarta, Tokyo-Haneda, Houston and Shanghai. Douala, Dubai and Sao Paulo will follow early 2015.

Enhanced benefits

The premium economy experience is not restricted to wider seats and more space. Premium economy travellers also have access to priority check-in and boarding, an enhanced meal service, the same baggage allowance as business class and the option of paid lounge access at Charles De Gaulle Airport.

So while carriers such as Lufthansa and Air France have created a completely new product concept, other airlines simply use the same economy class seat and just add more distance between seats.

The discrepancy between the standards of premium economy could therefore lead to confusion and raises questions as to whether airlines should adopt a standard or consensus across the different airline alliances when it comes to premium economy.

According to Simon, a standard for all the different airlines would not be a good option. "Healthy competition between airline products prevents complacency and encourages innovations and changes, hereby distinguishing one airline's product from the other. All these factors benefit the customer."

An Air Mauritius spokesperson



PIC: AIR FRANCE, BUSINESS CLASS

WHILE the benefits of flying in business class (pictured) are apparent for corporate travellers, Air France premium economy passengers also have access to priority check-in and boarding, an enhanced meal service, the same baggage allowance as business class and the option of paid lounge access at Charles De Gaulle Airport.

says every airline should be allowed to position its own value proposition and have its own unique selling points. She explains that although Air Mauritius currently has no premium economy class, she foresees a surge in demand internationally for these seats, especially as travel policies for corporates increasingly dictate economy class in an attempt to save cost. "Business travellers welcome some more leg space and other benefits. By flying premium economy they stick to policy."

A gold mine

While passengers might still be debating whether premium economy is worth the extra money, for airlines it is a gold mine. According to a recent article in UK newspaper *The Daily Mail*, the most expensive one-way premium economy ticket will cost £2 340 (R41 836) to £1 000 (R17 878) more than the cheapest economy option.

“Healthy competition between airline products prevents complacency and encourages innovations and changes. All these factors benefit the customer.”

- Axel Simon

According to the newspaper, the premium extras don't cost anywhere near £1 000 (R17 878). And whereas a business-class seat uses three times as much space as an economy one, a premium economy seat takes up only 50% more space.

Simon admits premium economy is indeed a lucrative class. "Lufthansa expects more than 1.5m passengers per year to use the new premium economy."

New business class on JNB-Hong Kong route

CATHAY Pacific will launch its new business class product for South African passengers when the B777ER between Johannesburg and Hong Kong goes daily from September 2.

"This is an enhanced product design made after consolidating the feedback from our customers," said **Frosti Lau**, Cathay Pacific's country manager for South Africa.

The product features Cathay's new generation of full flat-bed, which is just over 2m. The bed extension increases its width by 16,5cm to provide additional hip support, while the side storage compartment offers extra knee space for sleeping on the side. Passengers can also choose to lift up the armrest for more privacy or down for more space for their shoulders.

The side cabinet consists of a headset, a vanity mirror and has room for small items



PIC: CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS

COCOONED in their own private area, the design of the new business class product allows passengers to control the degree of privacy and interaction they prefer. Passengers can move the seat forward to converse with a travel companion or move the seat back for more privacy.

such as glasses and gadgets. The cabinet door also acts as a privacy divider when it opens. Passengers can also enjoy

hours of entertainment with touch-screen personal TVs, with audio and video on demand.

Air Mauritius expands long-haul fleet

AIR Mauritius has announced its decision to replace its existing fleet of A340-300s with six A350-900 aircraft.

The re-fleeting exercise will take place in phases. The first two A350-900 planes will be delivered in 2017 through operating leases from AerCap Holdings and the remaining four will be purchased from Airbus, with two aircraft to be delivered in 2019 and the remaining two in 2020.

► Did you know?

SINGAPORE Airlines has announced it will introduce premium economy on its aircraft from the second half of 2015. It will be outfitted initially on 777-300ERs and soon after on A380s.



Air Namibia offers specials to Frankfurt

AIR Namibia has announced it is launching seasonal specials to Frankfurt. Fares start from R9 190 from Johannesburg and R10 690 from Cape Town, including taxes. This special needs to be booked in E-booking class and is valid from November 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

Lufthansa's new premium economy – what to expect

LUFTHANSA'S new premium economy cabin, which will operate on flights from Frankfurt to Johannesburg from April next year, has 50% more personal space than economy class.

The new seats are up to 3cm wider and provide greater privacy as well as about 10cm more room at the side thanks to a wide armrest and a centre console between the seats. The back rest can be reclined further and the seat pitch is a more spacious 97,5cm.

Touch screens for in-flight entertainment are 28cm to 30cm,

depending on the aircraft type. Around the seats are an electrical socket and lots of storage space for belongings.

Meals are presented on menus commensurate with the new travel class and served on porcelain tableware.

There are also additional services for premium economy passengers, with a baggage allowance of two items weighing up to 23kg each. For an extra €25 (R360), passengers can also enjoy the comfort of the Lufthansa business lounges before their departure. The Welcome Lounge can be used for €50 (R718).



PIC: LUFTHANSA

Check-in and boarding procedures as well as hand luggage regulations are the same as in economy class.

► feature continues on p18



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Premium classes at a glance

First Class						
Airline	Aircraft	Seat width (cm)	Seat pitch (cm)	Recline	Seats	Configuration
Air France	A380 (JNB)	61	200	Flat bed	9	1-2-1
British Airways	B747-400	53	198	Flat bed	14	1-1 and 1-2-1
	B777	81	216	Flat bed	14	1-2-1
Emirates	B777-300ER	58	208	Private suite	8	1-2-1
Lufthansa	A380 (JNB-FRA)	62	213	Flat bed	8	1-2-1
	A340-600 (CPT-MUC)	52	215	Flat bed	8	1-2-1
SWISS	A340-300	56	208	Flat bed	8	1-2-1
Business Class						
Airline	Aircraft	Seat width (cm)	Seat pitch (cm)	Recline	Seats	Configuration
Air France	A380 (JNB)	53	175	Flat bed	80	2-2-2
	B777-200 (CPT seasonal)	53	175	Flat bed	35	2-3-2
Air Madagascar	B737-300	60	152	160°	12	2-2
Air Mauritius	A340-300	66	152	170°	34	2-2-2
Air Namibia	A330-200	46	191	Flat bed	30	2-2-2
	A319-100	53	137	160°	16	2-2
Air Seychelles	A330-200	-	-	Flat bed	18	2-2-2
Arik Air	A340-500	51	191	Flat bed	36	2-2-2
	A330-200	51	191	Flat bed	30	2-2-2
British Airways	B747-400	51	185	Flat bed	52-70	Main deck 2-4-2 Upper deck 2-2
	B777	54	185	Flat bed	56	2-4-2
Cathay Pacific	B777-300	53	-	Flat bed	40	1-2-1
Delta Air Lines	B777LR	60	198	Flat bed	36	1-2-1
Edelweiss Air	A330-200	52	114	Flat bed	22	1-2-1/2-2-1
EgyptAir	A330-243	51	148	39cm	24	2-2-2
	A330-300	51	152	Angled bed	36	2-2-2
El Al	B767	-	152	165°	24	2-2-2
	B767ER	-	152	165°	24	2-2-2
Emirates	B777-300ER (JNB)	52	183	Flat bed	42	2-3-2
	B777-300ER (DUR)	53	163	Flat bed	42	2-3-2
	B777-300ER (CPT)	53	183	Flat bed	42	2-3-2
Ethiopian Airlines	B787	58	165	Angled bed	24	2-2-2
	B777	53	165	Angled bed	34	2-2-2
Etihad	A330-200	51	185	Flat bed	22	1-2-1
Kenya Airways	B737-300	51	102	19cm	16	2-2
	B737-700	51	102	25cm	16	2-2
	B737-800	52	119	33cm	16	2-2

Airline	Aircraft	Seat width (cm)	Seat pitch (cm)	Recline	Seats	Configuration
KLM	B777-200	51	152	170°	35	2-3-2
Korongo Airlines	B737-300	-	102	45cm	12	2-2
Lufthansa	A380 (JNB-FRA) A340-600 (CPT-MUC)	51 50	164 145-152	168° 168°	92 60	2-2-2 2-2-2
Qantas	B747-400	55	203	Flat bed	56-66	Main deck 2-3-2 Upper deck 2-2
Qatar Airways	B787-788	76	203	Flat bed	22	1-2-1
RwandAir	B737-800NG B737-700NG CRJ-900NG	50 50 50	130 94 97	18cm 13cm 13cm	16 12 7	2-2 2-2 1-2-1
SAA	A340-600 A340-300E A330-200 A320 B737-800 A319	63 63 63 53 45 49	183 183 183 98 90 90	Flat bed Flat bed Flat bed 18cm 10cm 10cm	42 38 36 24 32 25	2-2-2 2-2-2 2-2-2 2-2 2-3 2-3
Singapore Airlines	B777-200ER	76	130	Flat bed	26	1-2-1
SWISS	A340-300	52	200	Flat bed	48	Angled layout 1-2-1/2-2-1
Thai Airways	B777-200ER	51	155	170°	30	2-2-2
Turkish Airlines	A330-300	56	198	177°	28	2-2-2
Virgin Atlantic	A340-600	56	202	Flat bed	45	1-1-1
Premium Economy						
Air Austral	B737-800 NG	44	89	115°	18	2-2
Air France	A380 (JNB) B777-200 (CPT seasonal)	48 48	97 97	123° 123°	38 24	2-3-2 2-4-2
British Airways	B747-400 B777	47 47	97 97	18cm 18cm	36 44	2-4-2 2-4-2
Edelweiss Air	A330-200	50	90	20cm	50	2-4-2
Delta Air Lines	B777LR	46	90	15cm	36	3-3-3
Cathay Pacific	B777-300	49	97	20cm	32	2-4-2
KLM	B777-200	48	89	116°	34	3-3-3
Lufthansa	A380	48	97	23cm	52	2-4-2
Qantas	B747-400	50	97-101	23cm	32	2-4-2
Virgin Atlantic	A340-600	53	97	21cm	38	2-3-2

*Disclaimer: Travel Buyer has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this table but accepts no responsibility for incorrect information supplied by the airlines. Where airlines did not respond to requests for information, details were taken from Travelinfo.

PIC: THE BLUE TRAIN



THE Blue Train is a popular option for clients looking to give an event an air of ultimate exclusivity.

Full steam ahead

Although corporate travellers around the world opt for rail travel as a time-efficient and convenient mode of transport, Africa still seems to be lagging behind, with safety remaining an important obstacle. South Africa does, however, seem to be the exception, writes **Dorine Reinstein**.

THE African continent has seen major investments in its rail infrastructure over the past few years.

Chinese investors in particular have recognised the potential of rail travel in Africa. On a recent visit to Africa, China's prime minister signed a contract to build a new \$3,8bn (R405bn) track that will link Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan and where trains will be able to travel at a top speed. Construction work on the line is expected to start in October this year, and the 610km stretch from

the coast to Nairobi is due to be finished in early 2018.

African Union chief, **Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, has repeatedly mentioned her dream for Africa to be linked by high-speed railways. In a speech to the African Union in the beginning of the year, she outlined her vision of what the continent could look like in just 50 years with high-speed railways and space travel.

For corporate travellers, however, efficient, comfortable and safe rail travel across Africa is just that: a dream.

Kananelo Makhetha, md for BCD Travel SA, explains the quality of rail travel in Africa currently is just not geared towards servicing visiting business people. "We do not consider rail as an option for our clients travelling in Africa."

Makhetha explains that Africa needs inter-city connections in African countries such as Lagos and Abuja. "Rail is very high capital-intensive business and in some areas in Africa the little infrastructure for passenger and goods travel has been allowed to collapse."

Chris Pouney, director, Business Travel for Severnside Consulting in the UK, agrees that for the moment, there are no credible rail options for Africa at all. "I am aware of some isolated pockets of development, mostly in Morocco and Algeria, but for the most part any development planned is internal within countries (Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya for example) and geared towards freight/cargo."

Pouney adds that in most countries, rail routes follow historical trade and freight routes.

► feature continues on p22

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► feature continues from p20

According to Pouney, what business travellers need is fast, clean, safe and reliable services between the points they need to go. That has not yet been achieved in Africa. "The sheer distances in Africa make train travel struggle in comparison with air travel, unlike in Europe where business capitals are often only a few hundred kilometres apart."

SA – the exception?

Whereas corporate travellers do not seem so keen to take to the rails in Africa, South Africa seems to be the exception. The Gautrain is a popular choice for business travellers.

Pouney agrees: "There are examples of excellence. The Gautrain would grace any city in the world in terms of cost, quality and reliability."

Tlago Ramalepa, Gautrain spokesperson, says the province recently conducted a detailed assessment and analysis of the

current transport network in Gauteng. A 25-year Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP25) was developed prioritising public transport and recognising the rail system as the backbone of the entire transport network.

According to Ramalepa, this has prompted the Gautrain to conduct a feasibility study on new routes. "The purpose of this feasibility study is amongst others to inform which routes need to be developed based on a number of associated benefits such as socio-economic development, land-use changes and environmental impacts."

Ramalepa adds that in the short term, the Gautrain will be expanding its platform at the OR Tambo International Airport Station and increasing parking capacity at the Pretoria and Centurion Stations.

Minister of Public Enterprises, **Lynne Brown**, recently explained that a focus over the next five to ten years would be on refurbishing all rail lines across the country.

THE Gautrain offers value in terms of cost, quality and reliability.



PIC:GAUTRAIN

The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) has also signed a R51bn contract with Gibela to supply 600 passenger trains (3 600 coaches) to be delivered between 2015 and 2025.

PRASA Group ceo, **Lucky Montana**, says: "The PRASA fleet renewal programme is the catalyst for the transformation of Metrorail services and public transport in South Africa as a

whole. It is the beginning of the roll-out of government's comprehensive rail programme."

Makhetha continues that a high-speed connection between Johannesburg to Cape Town and Durban is needed yet Pouney warns that unless there are true high-speed train lines such as Eurostar, Thalys or ACELA in the US, the distance from Johannesburg to Cape Town is really best covered by plane.

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Luxury MICE rail travel – a different league

AS passenger trains in Africa still seem to lag behind European and US counterparts, luxury leisure rail travel in Africa is recognised as exceptional, with private operators such as the iconic Blue Train and the Rovos Rail.

Themba Masheula, spokesperson for the Blue Train, explains incentive travel has increased exponentially. "Last year we saw an increase

of almost 200% on our turnover budget on this market."

Masheula explains the Blue Train acquired business from corporates attending annual SA calendar events such as the Vodacom Durban July, Macufe Festival in Bloemfontein, J&B Met in Cape Town, Nedbank Golf Challenge in Sun City and the Fashion Week in Cape Town.

Get free days on the Eurail



EURAIL has launched a promotional offer where travellers can get one free day of travel on a selected Eurail Pass. This is valid for passes of six, eight or ten days.

Travellers can also get two free days on the Eurail Global Consecutive Pass when they purchase a 15-day pass. They'll receive three free days when they purchase a 22-day

pass and five days when they purchase a one-month pass.

This special is valid for sales until September 30. Travel must take place within six months of the date of issue.

Eurail is also offering a 25% discount on the German Rail Pass when purchased before September 30 for travel up to October 31. ■



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Top 10 specials

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

1. CHINA

SAA Holidays. Packages are from R15 225 pp sharing. Offer includes flights ex-Johannesburg to Beijing, all taxes, approximate levies and surcharges, return airport-hotel transfers plus five nights' accommodation with daily breakfast. Package ex-Cape Town is R18 264 and ex-Durban R17 388 pp sharing. Offer expires October 31.

2. MOZAMBIQUE

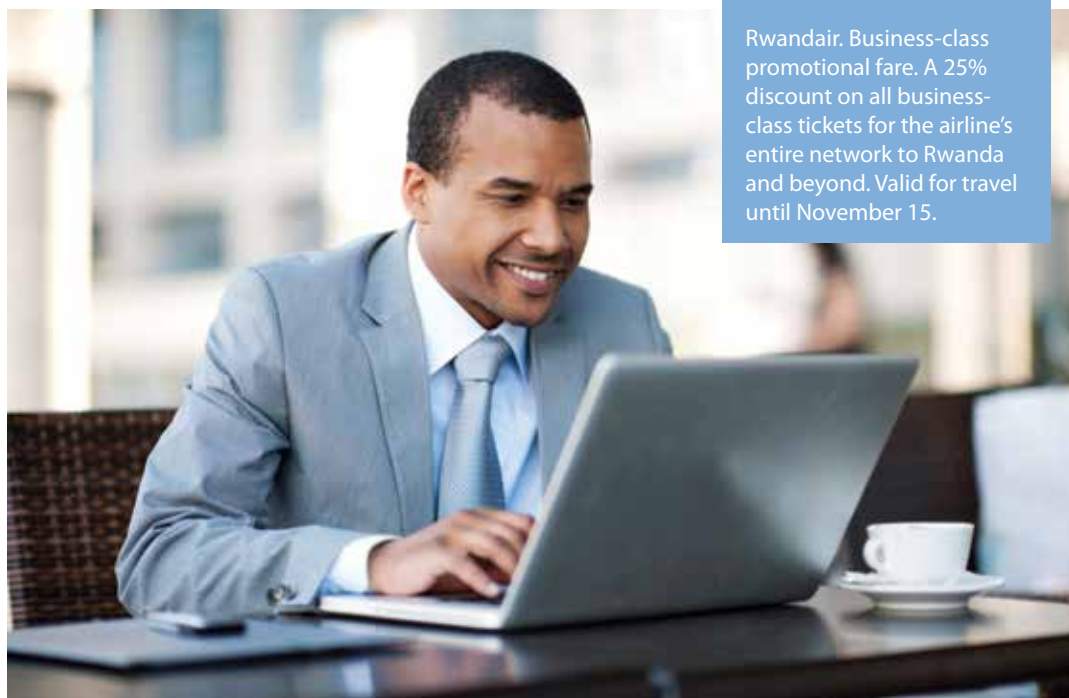
Rove Africa Islands and Safaris. Fly-in packages from R7 955 (four nights) and R10 225 (seven nights) pp sharing. Special includes return flights ex-Johannesburg including taxes, return road/boat transfers, and four-star accommodation at Vilanculos Beach Lodge on a full-board basis. Valid for travel until October 31.

3. DUBAI

Holiday Tours. Dubai deals from R10 170 pp sharing. Offer includes return airfare ex-Johannesburg, approximate taxes, return airport transfers, three nights' accommodation and daily breakfast. Rate is available for travel until September 30.

4. REUNION

Travel with Options. Rates are from R13 743 pp sharing. Offer includes return flights ex-Johannesburg, taxes, airport transfers, seven nights' accommodation (three stars) with daily breakfast. Self-catering and four-star rates are also available. Offer is valid for travel



between September 1 and November 30.

5. SINGAPORE

Thompsons Holidays. Eight-night 'Exotic Asia Cruise' onboard RCL *Mariner of the Seas*. Rates are from R14 202 plus R5 962 for taxes. Cruise departs March 7; bookable 70 days prior to travel. Package includes return flight from Johannesburg to Singapore, all meals and entertainment onboard, port charges and gratuities. Visiting: Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City (Phu My), Vietnam, Hong Kong, Xiamen and Shanghai (Baoshan).

6. AUSTRIA

Worldview. New Year's Eve special to Austria (Vienna). Rates are from €532 (R7 522) for three nights to €743

(R10 504) for five nights. Offer is valid from December 30 to January 4. Package includes return airport transfers, accommodation with buffet breakfast, city tour and concert ticket for December 31 in the Musikverein.

7. NAIROBI

South African Airways. Flight-specific promotional fare between Johannesburg and Nairobi, valid for travel until September 30. Return fares are from R2 490 ex-Johannesburg (SA 180) and US\$266 (R2 813) ex-NBO (SA 181).

8. DUBAI

Azure Travel. Dubai IRB Sevens Azure Travel. Dubai IRB Sevens World Series, December 3-7. Land-only package from R6 782 pp sharing. Package

9. RWANDA

Rwandair. Business-class promotional fare. A 25% discount on all business-class tickets for the airline's entire network to Rwanda and beyond. Valid for travel until November 15.

includes airport transfers from Dubai Airport, four nights' accommodation at the four-star Millennium Hotel with breakfast, general admission season ticket for Dubai Rugby Sevens for December 5-6 and Dubai visa for SA passport holders. Please note there is a supplement of R890 per person for reserved seating.

10. ROME

United Europe. Three-night city stay from R1 820 pp sharing, including breakfast. Add on Hop-on Hop-off city sightseeing for R340 per person. Available for travel on select dates in November and December. London, Edinburgh and Dublin packages also available. ■

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

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