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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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# New ITC brand enters SA

DORINE REINSTEIN

FLIGHT Centre has launched its ITC brand – Flight Centre Associates – in the South African market. The retail travel group initially introduced the model for its own, more experienced consultants, who had been with Flight Centre for many years and were looking for flexibility. Now, the group is opening up the model to the rest of the SA travel industry. **Chantal Gouws**, area leader for Flight Centre Associates, says that, in general, ITC models are growing in popularity and seem to be the future for the travel industry.

“Flight Centre’s ITC model will be more than just a ticketing service,” she says, explaining that Flight Centre will offer agents full and comprehensive support. To help members start up, Flight Centre will offer comprehensive IT support as well as full administrative and financial support; 24-hour ticketing support and a dedicated marketer to assist with monthly campaigns, Chantal says. “Members will also receive 75% of their total commission in the month that it’s earned, so they don’t have to wait until

the client has travelled.” Although agents will be independent, they will be trading under the Flight Centre brand, with payments for travel arrangements made into a central Flight Centre bank account. Flight Centre has put safeguards in place to regulate ITCs and avoid incidents of fraud, Chantal adds. “Each ITC will be audited internally on a monthly basis by our finance department.” To join Flight Centre Associates, travel consultants will have to pay a start-up fee of R10 000 as well as a monthly membership fee of R1 500. They’ll also need to bring with them an existing client base and at least two years’ industry experience. Flight Centre Associates successfully launched in Canada two years ago and has grown to over 140 ITCs in just over 18 months. Chantal says in most countries where the brand operates, including Australia and New Zealand, it has proved to be successful. She says Flight Centre hopes to reach 50 members in South Africa by the end of June next year. For more on ITCs, see TNW’s feature on page 9. ■



## It’s wine-o-clock!

Travel industry peers gathered at the Faircity Quatremain Hotel – a hidden gem in the heart of Sandton – to catch up before the winter blues set in. Pictured here, sharing a drink, are (from left): Rod Rutter (XL Travel), Enid Maulin (Beachcomber Tours) and Kekeletso Mokwena (SATC). For more pics, see page 8. Photo: Darise Foster

# BON bursts on to African scene

DEBBIE BADHAM

BON Hotels has taken over the management, sales and marketing of four Protea hotels in Nigeria. This follows the hotel group’s recent launch of BON Hotels International West Africa. The acquisition is just the first step in a series of major developments throughout West and East Africa, says founder and ceo of BON Hotels, **Guy Stehlik**. The group’s ultimate strategy is to dominate the hotel management space in West Africa, he says, adding that it currently has “many” other

hotels under negotiation in Nigeria. “It can be difficult for South African companies to get into Nigeria. However, we feel we have the right infrastructure on the ground and the right existing regional set-up in terms of senior staff and management and people who understand the local trading conditions.” The team involved in negotiations includes founder of Protea Hotels, **Otto Stehlik**, who is executive chairman on the board of BON Hotels International West Africa. While Otto is not operationally involved in the hotel group’s expansion into Africa, the

group will leverage off his strong connections in the region, Guy says. In East Africa, BON has signed a master licence agreement with a “well-known and experienced” hotel operator, Guy says. He adds that the deal was very recently concluded and will see the operator take on the BON licence to roll out the brand across Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. BON has a working arrangement with Marriott International under a bare licence agreement, whereby some of the newly acquired

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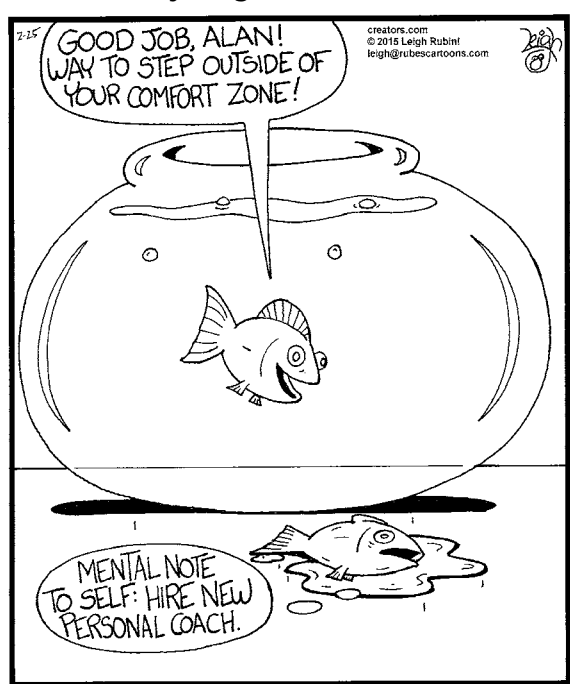
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Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



Letter to the Editor



Is the government using a sledgehammer to crush an ant?

ATA notes with concern South Africa's new immigration measures, which require adults travelling with children to carry unabridged birth certificates.

Iata fully supports South Africa in its laudable campaign to combat child trafficking but the new measures prompt us to ask just how big is the problem in South Africa? Is the country dealing with a problem of crisis proportions? And how much of it takes advantage of airlines serving South Africa's major international airports?

Airports are not a country's only points of entry and exit and, by the government's own admission, its land borders are porous and it has inadequate resources to patrol its long coastline from traffickers and smugglers.

The SA Police Service's 2004-2014 crime statistics, which categorise all significant types of reported offences, make no mention of child trafficking. Can one infer from this that the level of incidence does not warrant the categorisation of such occurrences?

So is the government using a sledgehammer to crush an ant? Iata believes there are better and more effective alternative solutions worth exploring. It is on these burning issues that Iata and its sister bodies in travel and tourism have sought to

engage the DHA since last year.

Airlines are in the business of safely carrying people and goods between markets. They are neither policemen nor immigration officers, yet governments, including South Africa's, insist on passing the buck and tasking airlines with doing governments' work – with no reward or reimbursement for the additional costs incurred for doing so. Surely then, governments should ensure that everyone in the chain is consulted on the rules, that there is proper and full understanding of them and that their enforcement measures are pragmatic and manageable.

The effects of over-regulation should already be apparent to South Africa, which, in 2013 invoked a new transit visa requirement for travellers commuting to and from other African countries on flights connecting at South African airports. The result has been a marked movement of intra-African connecting passengers away from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport to Nairobi, Addis Ababa and even Dubai, all of which offer comprehensive connections to African destinations with simplified, yet still effective, visa and immigration processes.

In the sole meeting we were granted with the Minister of

Home Affairs last September, he agreed to stop the clock on the implementation until June 1 and to appoint a joint government-industry task group to research international best practices and make recommendations on the new regulations and their implementation. Its task was also to include the preparation of a communications strategy and toolkit to support the roll-out of the new systems and processes and ensure that accurate and consistent information was conveyed to potential travellers and all other stakeholders.

For reasons unknown to us, and despite several attempts to maintain an open channel with the Minister's office, this task group was never appointed and none of the tasks undertaken.

Despite these unanswered questions, Iata has every faith that the South African Government is acting in the best interests of the country and that it will review, modify, or, if necessary, rescind the new measures if they do not have the desired effect and if they act as a handbrake on travel, tourism and economic growth, not just for South Africa, which is experiencing its weakest GDP performance in decades, but for the entire region.

**Raphael Kuuchi**  
Iata vp, Africa ■

Helen Johnston selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Qantas Holiday/Tour East.** Stay three nights, pay for two nights Thailand offer. Three-night packages are from R1 690pp sharing. Offer includes accommodation at Ban Thai Beach Resort in a double standard room on a room-only basis. Special is available until October 28.
- **Dolphin Beach Hotel** (Cape Town). GDS offer: 15% off any two-night stay – lagoon-view apartment rates are from R1 105 double, sea-view apartments are from R1 405 double, and two-bedroom Beach Cabanas are from R1 605 (four adults and two kids). Offer is applicable Sunday to Thursday until July 31. Minimum two-night stay required.
- **Azure Travel.** Special packages to Spain are from R7 795pp sharing (plus airline levies of approximately R5 580pp). Rate is inclusive of return airfares ex-JNB, all transfers, four-star accommodation – five nights in Costa Brava, two nights in Barcelona. Value-add: free upgrade to breakfast and dinner in Costa Brava plus selected beverages with meals and breakfast. Last departure from SA is June 22. High-season supplement may apply.
- **VIP Hotels.** Rates in Mozambique are from R1 460 at the VIP Inn Beira, R2 300 at VIP Executive Tete and R2 550 at VIP Grand Maputo. Rates include breakfast and are per person sharing. All rates are nett and valid until December 31.



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# Staff Travel offers more perks for agents

**F**ACILITATOR of travel and tourism specials exclusively for members of the travel industry, Staff Travel, has rebranded under the German personal education programme operator for travel agents, pepXpress.

With the aim of re-introducing affordable travel to the travel and tourism sectors, pepXpress assists travel salespeople to gain experience of the destinations and product they are selling at a price they can afford.

The programme gives the South African travel trade the opportunity to enjoy the same perks and benefits available to their European counterparts. "In Europe, industry travel and industry-discounted travel are popular, and pepXpress has a substantial amount of databases, resources and buying power, allowing it to make use of the same

negotiated rates," says pepXpress md, **Shona Pittaway**.

Further plans include expanding pepXpress's customer reach throughout sub-Saharan Africa and attracting membership from such countries as Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the Indian Ocean Islands. "The greater our database, the better the offers we can contract to benefit our trade customers," says Shona.

A cruise portal will go live within a few weeks, offering discounted industry exclusive cabins, while an online flight booking engine will also be included to give members access to contract airfares that are set to beat any current pricing on the market.

"Most people initially joined the industry because they fell in love with travel and it is pepXpress's role to bring that back," says Shona. ■



## Treasures of Thailand

The Tourism Authority of Thailand invited travel agents to 'Discover Thailand' at a recent workshop held at The Maslow in Sandton, where hotel, airline and adventure representatives updated guests on their products. Pictured here (from left) are: TAT's director for the UK, Ireland and SA, **Teerasil Tapen**; TAT's director of Europe, Africa and Middle East market division, **Denduen Luengcheng**; and Travel Counsellors, **Mart-Mari Osborn** and **Jolene Steyn**. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Air France puts à la carte dishes on the menu

AIR France now offers first-class (La Première) and business-class customers a choice of à la carte dishes, which can be reserved up to 24 hours before departure.

Six dishes are available:

- Thai cuisine
  - Traditional Chinese
  - Flavours of India
  - Japanese delights
  - A taste of Korea, and
  - A seafood basket
- Customers can book the

complimentary à la carte meal when purchasing their ticket, in the 'manage your bookings' section of the airline's website, or when they check in online 24 hours before departure. ■

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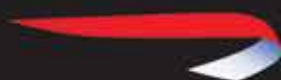


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**BRITISH AIRWAYS**



# Sha'p Sha'p!

Local is lekker! City Lodge Hotels has 52 hotels across all SA provinces. Here is the latest news in domestic tourism.

**Sha'p-sha'p:** (Sharp-sharp) (a)  
A South African term used to express  
our good health and well being.



## Cape tourism arrivals show growth

**D**OMESTIC and international travel into the Western Cape is at a five-year high, according to the latest figures from Cape Town International Airport.

Peak season – January and April – numbers have steadily increased since 2010 and more people are choosing the Western Cape for leisure and business, says **Alan Winde**, Minister of Economic Opportunities. “Looking at the passenger numbers for the first quarter, international arrivals have

increased by 6% year-on-year and domestic arrivals rose by 5%.”

Cape Town International Airport saw a 3,5% increase in overall passenger numbers, at 8 626 167 arrivals in 2014, compared with the 8 334 117 arrivals seen in 2013.

**Deborah Francis**, the acting communications manager of Cape Town International Airport, said: “We have seen an increase in flight frequencies on the domestic front.

Mango Airlines increased its flights to Durban and Johannesburg in the month of August; SA Express also increased movements on the Hoedspruit and Kimberley routes; while SA Airlink increased movements to George, Kimberley and Upington. New airlines and airline routes were introduced with FlySafair in October and SA Airlink now operating a new route to Skukuza. Cemair also started its Plettenberg route early in the year.”

### Go robotic!

African Pride Arabella Hotel and Spa in Hermanus has partnered with Specialized Adventure, a tour operator offering guided Ninebot tours (a Ninebot is a self-balancing, robotic transportation device, with no CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) on the luxury hotel's estate. African Pride Arabella Hotel is situated in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. The tour takes guests along the Bot River estuary, where they can experience an abundance of bird life and diverse fynbos. Photo: Arabella Hotel and Spa

## Kruger's visitor numbers rise

THE Kruger National Park's visitor numbers have risen by more than 100 000 in the past year, according to the Department of Environmental Affairs.

The park's popularity has grown, with an increase in overseas visitors and a definite increase from

the Southern African Development Community region.

The Department of Environmental Affairs released figures showing that a total of 1 659 793 guests passed through Kruger's gates in the 2014/2015 financial year compared with

1 556 916 in 2013/2014. Of these, 1 277 397 were day visitors and 382 396 were overnight guests. The increase in day visitors can also be attributed to the limited accommodation within the park, resulting in guests staying outside the park and going in as day visitors.

## Developments planned for Pinnacle Point

PINNACLE Point Beach and Golf Estate is undergoing renovations and upgrades, set to be completed by September 2016.

Plans include extending the clubhouse and adding a kids' entertainment centre,

wellness centre, golf cart barn, function venue, beauty salon and heated indoor pool.

Pinnacle Point gm, **Carl van der Linde**, said: “The quality of lifestyle for homeowners and visitors will only improve as the resort continues to

expand its facilities. There will be no need to leave the estate as all facilities and amenities are available on the estate: hairdresser, wellness, dining, beach, golf, wildlife, walk and bike trails etc.”

## See the penguins in PE

RAGGY Charters, which offers guided whale-watching and African penguin-watching cruises in South Africa, has launched a new ‘Penguin Patrol’ day tour in Port Elizabeth.

The tour starts at 08h15 with a boat cruise into Algoa Bay. Guests are then taken to St Croix Island to see the penguins, followed by lunch at The Chartroom restaurant at the Algoa Bay Yacht Club. After lunch, guests will be given a tour of the marine rehabilitation centre

(Samrec), with tea and cake at the Flying Penguin Café. The final stop of the tour is at Bayworld Oceanarium and Museum, where guests will learn about the importance of the captive breeding programme for the survival of the penguins.

The cost of the tour is R1 450, which includes the boat trip, lunch, entrance to Samrec and Bayworld, drinks and snacks at the Flying Penguin Café and all transport provided by Blunden Shuttles. ■



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# TNW's Thirsty's

THE evenings may be getting cooler but it was a warm and festive Thirsty's last month at the Faircity Quatermain Hotel in Sandton. Travel industry friends got together to network and enjoy a few drinks and good food, while some walked away with great prizes. This month's TNW Thirsty's is coming to Durban – for more information, email [katenathan@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:katenathan@nowmedia.co.za). ■



▲ All smiles! From left: BCD Travel's Sabie Tsolo and Jabulani Sangweni.



▲ From left: Kate Nathan (TNW); Mary Shilleto (Thompsons Travel); Jane Davidson (Development Promotions); Kim Botti (Lee Botti); and Cornelia van Zyl (Lee Botti).



▲ From left: Marco Cristofoli (Harvey World Travel); Sue Botes (British Airways); Kelly Jackson (Contiki Holidays); Cindy Cunningham-Scott (Comair) and Liezl Gericke (Virgin Atlantic Airways).



▶ Having a laugh are (from left): Shaniel Singh (Aviareps); Tanja du Toit (Car Hire Brokers); and Charmaine Thomé (Aviareps).

▶ Three pretty ladies (from left): Cathie Bester (World Leisure Holidays); Amanda Hardy (The Travel Corporation); and Megan Wilson (Border Air).



▼ The lovely hosts from Faircity Quatermain Hotel (from left): Rochelle de Waal, Jaco Steyn-Venter and Madeli Mollentze, join Travel and Meetings Buyer's Chantel Booysen.



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With a number of fraud cases making newspaper headlines, South Africa's ITC industry has recently come under the spotlight. Is it time for a new model? Dorine Reinstein investigates.

## ITCs – is more regulation needed?

THE travel industry has undoubtedly been harmed by recent incidents of fraud, which have affected consumers' trust in ITCs, says **Dinesh Naidoo**, group operations director at Serendipity Worldwide Group.

With fraud cases being reported on programmes like Carte Blanche, the entire industry's image has been harmed, making rogue players a cause of concern for all members. It's therefore in the interests of all players to find a solution, says Travel Counsellors gm for South Africa, **Mladen Lukic**. He believes that more regulation is required to protect both the industry and the consumer. However, it is the host companies, rather than individual ITCs, that must be more strictly governed.

This view is shared by **Garth Wolff**, ceo of eTravel, who looks to Asata for guidance when it comes to regulations. "The correct code of conduct should be stipulated and managed by Asata and host companies," he says, adding that he doesn't believe that Asata has the power or the passion to impose regulations.

The main opportunity for fraud tends to lie in the sale



**"The correct code of conduct should be stipulated and managed by Asata and host companies."**  
**Garth Wolff**

of air tickets, says Mladen. He notes that the vast majority of South African ITC solutions are limited to non-lata ticketing agreements, a solution that is purely override driven. "This being the case, Asata and lata should take a stance on regulating the industry. Ultimately, it is lata that licenses host companies to

issue tickets," says Mladen.

Asata has changed its criteria to encourage independent travel consultants to join its fold, says ceo, **Otto de Vries**.

This change was made in recognition of the massive expansion in the number of ITC operators during the past 10 years. "The question we, as an industry, now face is this: to what extent do the various forms of ITC models safeguard the interests of the consumer, their host company's brand, the industry and the individual ITC? We need to define and encourage a model that minimises risks to any of these parties and encourage ITCs that are not already Asata members to join, contribute to and comply with a strict code of conduct that protects all parties involved."

According to Mladen, South Africa is the only market with a 'free for all' model in the travel industry. "In other markets, you can't issue tickets without first obtaining a licence, and you cannot sub-license to someone else without following appropriate procedures. There has to be a binding agreement stipulating the conditions."

He says the industry needs an open discussion about what is, and is not, acceptable. "There has to be



**"Asata has changed its criteria to encourage independent travel consultants to join its fold."**  
**Otto de Vries**

a review of who can provide ticketing services and on what conditions. And more importantly, in terms of fraud, what is the responsibility of the host company?"

However, not all industry players agree that further regulation is the answer. Club Travel is a case in point. Franchise director, **Jo Fraser**,

says that although Asata needs to be the vehicle for protection and should be the industry's representative when addressing the issue, individual companies should implement their own rules. At Club Travel, several internal regulations have been put in place to protect ITCs and clients alike.

The lack of industry regulation isn't necessarily a problem, Jo argues. "I think we live in a world where people take responsibility for their choices because they see that regulations don't protect them."

"It's up to the general public to take responsibility to check they are dealing with a legitimate entity," agrees **Rian Bornman**, managing director of FlightSite. He argues that the industry's lack of regulation is essential for transformation, making it easy for potential agents to become involved in the trade.

Rian does not believe that further regulation is the answer. He says the most that can be expected from the ITC industry is that operators register and engage with governing bodies like Asata so that the general public know they are dealing with an endorsed entity.





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## What makes a great ITC?

ALTHOUGH there are numerous 'easy' start-up options available for travel agents wanting to launch their own business, industry leaders warn that there's more to becoming a successful ITC than simply issuing tickets through a host company.

**Mladen Lukic** of Travel Counsellors says the three main ingredients that make for a successful ITC are passion for what you do, a sincere desire to help clients and utter dedication to your business. "The competition is fierce, so you need to be able to relate to all your clients and treat them all as individuals."

"The main reason ITCs fail is because they try to replicate what they did as staff members of a retail store," Mladen continues. "In fact, the retail environment is entirely different." He warns against focusing exclusively on air fulfilment, a task that is

easily completed by online travel agencies. "If the only service you provide is access to tickets, you're not offering anything unique."

This view is shared by **Jo Fraser** of Club Travel. She further believes that successful agents are those who use the best technology systems to find the cheapest fares in the market and are able to upsell to clients by including land arrangements. They are able to provide good advice, and charge a fair price for their service.

An ITC should have at least five years' experience as a travel consultant in a travel agency; two years' experience as a senior and two years' experience in ticketing and fares, says eTravel's **Garth Wolff**. "We screen every potential ITC to see if they have what it takes to succeed as an ITC."

Having a dynamic, social and energetic personality is a key requirement for any ITC, says **Dinesh Naidoo** of

the Serendipity Worldwide Group. He adds that ITCs need to be professional and pro-active at all times but also need to be able to offer competitive pricing on a wide range of products and, most importantly, provide great service.

"The single biggest driver that we've identified amongst our most successful agents is a commitment to service," agrees **Rian Bornman**, md of FlightSite. He explains that it is important to be able to offer clients various options within their timeframe and budget. Turnaround time is key.

Rian adds that agents will be successful if they manage to establish a relative advantage by focusing on the perceived value of the product they're selling, such as direct flights or minimum connection times. Identifying niche markets can also make an ITC stand out.

## How can suppliers best connect with ITCs?

THE exponential growth of the ITC sector places pressure on suppliers to find new ways to connect with these individuals.

The challenge here is that ITCs are located across the country and often work from their own homes.

Technological advancements are a crucial help for suppliers trying to reach ITCs. In fact, says **Mladen Lukic** of Travel Counsellors, technology has made the physical location of travel consultants "almost irrelevant". "We even have consultants who operate from outside South Africa for a couple of months a year. They have full access to suppliers through channels such as Travel Counsellor TV."

Technology has also been used to great effect at Beachcomber, where sales and marketing manager, **Joanne Visagie**, says new platforms have made it easier to connect with ITCs. "For example, Beachcomber's new online quoting system is designed to further enhance opportunities



**Tammy Hunt**

for travel consultants to provide instant quotes, offering a range of choices accessible round the clock."

Mainstays like email and phone calls are still key for **Gail Gilbert**, product, marketing and sales manager for AfricaStay. "We send out our specials regularly, place advertising in trade

To page 14



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"I got bogged down...Having responsibility for back office admin, salaries, airline BSP, IATA bonding, auditors, management of staff, annual leave, maternity leave, training, errors, ADM's, offices and equipment costs, insurance, debt collection, fraud and more, were all things that stopped me from what I do best, bringing in the sales and making my clients happy. "

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How can suppliers best connect with ITCs?

From page 12  
magazines and trade websites and regularly update online services such as Travelinfo. All these mediums are accessible to agents nationwide."

Although these technological possibilities are useful, **Tammy Hunt**, operations director for eTravel, says that personal relationships are critical, especially within the demands of the travel industry. "Webinars and other technological solutions can solve some issues but no relationship can be built on trust and respect via a screen."

She further believes that, although it can be difficult for suppliers to reach ITCs around the country, employing more sales staff is not necessarily the answer. "ITCs should be more open minded about joining presentations and training sessions put together by the suppliers, either at the host company's offices or at other arranged venues."

"The relationship requires



Mladen Lukic

input from both sides." Most suppliers tend to focus on key centres, such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, says **Dinesh Naidoo** of Serendipity Worldwide Group "Durban has been labelled the price-conscious city with difficult clients and travel agents," he says. The ideal solution, he continues, would be to host more social activities such as late afternoon catch-up

sessions in a convenient location, inviting as many ITCs as possible to attend at least once a month. He says although webinars are a popular method, face-to-face contact remains vitally important.

Another challenge for ITCs is that suppliers often focus on top-selling operators. Joanne admits that Beachcomber's system means that this is sometimes the case but adds that this doesn't mean that others are ignored. "We include agencies throughout the country by conducting regular out of town trips, and monitoring the resulting feedback. We also have one office day every month where we focus exclusively on out-of-towners, updating them on the latest developments via email or telephonically."

A number of platforms have been launched so that each ITC consortium or network system is able to interact with Beachcomber in the manner that suits them best, says Joanne. For example, all ITCs from a certain region may



Cathie Bester

be invited to attend a coffee date or breakfast meeting. "Distance is dead. We have solutions enabling us to reach everyone."

Nonetheless, for many suppliers, the emphasis remains on major centres. For instance, **Cathie Bester**, national sales manager for World Leisure Holidays, says the company's primary focus is on the regions where the biggest sales are

concentrated. However, WLH also maintains contact with ITCs in outlying areas with regular communication via e-mail, sales calls to these regions at least twice a year and invitations to educational and the annual roadshow. Cathie points out that a good relationship with the consortium is key. "We work closely with our partners who offer us tremendous support in facilitating communication with their ITCs, from regular webinars and online training sessions, to allowing us time at ITC regional meetings where we are able to interact with their ITCs, and inviting us to participate at their annual conferences."

According to Cathie, the advent of cellphones, email and Internet has revolutionised the way the travel industry does business, at the same time boosting opportunities for ITCs. But, she concludes, "there is nothing to beat a face-to-face call and building a personal relationship with your client". ■

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### DHA ruling: few cancellations

How many of your clients have cancelled travel bookings as a result of the new birth certificate requirement?

Number of cancellations	Percentage
None	61%
Fewer than 10	14%
Between 10-20	15%
Between 21-50	7%
Between 50-100	1%
Over 100	2%

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# Home Affairs fails to enforce damaging regs

DORINE REINSTEIN AND  
CARINA BORRALHO

TNW has established that immigration officials are selectively enforcing the new regulations governing the movement of minors across SA's borders.

TNW's reporter spoke to several families at OR Tambo who had cleared immigration and claimed they were not asked to present an unabridged birth certificate, when this issue was going to press on June 3. A mother with a child arriving from Zimbabwe was asked for documentation but a Canadian single parent with a daughter told TNW she was neither asked by the airline when she boarded in Canada nor by immigration at OR Tambo.

*If you know of travellers with minors crossing SA's land borders, please ask them if they saw the regulations being enforced. Let us know: email [natashas@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:natashas@nowmedia.co.za)*

DHA spokesman, **Thabo Mokgola**, said the reports

were hearsay and the regulations were being enforced across all borders consistently.

Airlines say there were no major incidents during the first few days but warn it is early days. **Stephen Forbes**, spokesperson for British Airways, says most passengers were arriving in SA having commenced travel prior to June 1, and therefore did not yet need to provide additional documentation.

However, whereas the situation was relatively calm at SA airports, incidents have been reported in other countries where passengers are flying to SA. **Carla Da Silva**, Air Mauritius regional manager for Southern Africa and Latin America, says: "We had a South African family who were denied boarding due to confusion regarding the operating procedures."

The real impact of the new immigration regulations will most likely be felt on forward bookings, says **Otto De Vries**, ceo of Asata. He told TNW the association was working with its members to assess

what, if any, impact they were seeing on their forward bookings.

A poll survey of eTNW readers, which received 163 responses, revealed that 61% of agents had not had any cancellations as a result of the new immigration regulations (see poll on this page).

**Yvonne Horak** of Cape Gulf Travel says there haven't been cancellations as passengers travelling this year lodged their applications with DHA as soon as the new regulations were announced. She says, though, that there may be people who opt to travel locally instead of internationally this year as a result of the regulations.

**Joanne Visagie**, sales and marketing manager of Beachcomber Tours, says the new regulations have, so far, had very little effect on bookings. "For last-minute bookings for the June/July holidays, there probably has been some impact but it's impossible to measure. Bookings for the past two months for future travel have even been a bit up." ■

## BON bursts on to African scene

**From page 1**

Nigerian properties will be managed by BON Hotels, using the Protea Hotels brand, while others will become fully fledged BON Hotels. These are Protea Hotel Abuja, Protea

Hotel Delta, Protea Hotel Ikeja and Protea Hotel Victoria Island. The four hotels were among eight properties that Marriott International ceased to manage earlier this year (see TNW April 22).

Guy says BON Hotels has positioned itself alongside large hotel groups such as Marriott to assist in taking on properties that they may consider too small for their portfolios. ■

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