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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

TNW7196SD

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Who owns 'your' client?

Going it alone? Beware of restraint of trade. Dorine Reinstein reports

THE South African ITC market is flourishing, with more agents choosing to take the risk and start up their own operation. However, consultants who think they can take clients with them may find themselves in hot water as consortiums are actively enforcing restraints of trade.

Harvey World Travel recently enforced a restraint of trade against one of the company's in-house travel consultants. An agent, who had worked for HWT since 2002, resigned in June. When head office contacted the client to inform them of the consultant's resignation and make arrangements for her replacement, the client informed HWT that they were aware the agent had resigned and that they wished to continue working with her, terminating their contract with HWT.

"It further transpired that the consultant made malicious and defamatory accusations about HWT, particularly regarding what she had been paid while in HWT's employ," **Craig Cowgill**, owner of the affected HWT branch, said in an affidavit.

"It also transpired that the consultant set up her ITC business from the premises of the HWT client, where she had previously worked as an HWT employee. She had also contacted other HWT clients for whom she did sporadic work."

Although the consultant was entitled to work for herself, or even a competitor, the contract she signed with HWT included a restraint of trade. This meant that she was not allowed to solicit or deal with HWT's

clients for a period of 12 months, says **Gareth Cremen**, attorney at Ramsay Webber.

"There is a misguided perception in the market that restraints of trade are rarely enforced when travel consultants move on. Nothing could be further from the truth," he says.

HWT recently obtained a court order stating that the consultant was interdicted and restrained for eight months from doing business with any of HWT's clients. She was also ordered to pay the costs of the legal action.

But the consequences could have been graver, Gareth says, as this recent case opens up the possibility of HWT claiming further damages for the loss of income as a result of losing an important client.

Craig adds that the travel industry is almost entirely dependent on the validity and enforceability of restraint agreements. "The very nature of the industry has encouraged employers to place in-house, highly qualified, experienced travel consultants to expedite services for clients. This places in-house travel consultants in the unique position of being able to establish, maintain and develop – on behalf of their employers – customer connections that appear to adhere to them personally. These customer connections do not belong to those in-house travel consultants and if this type of agreement was not enforced it would potentially open the door to a level of corporate hijacking by in-house consultants that would seriously and adversely affect the travel industry in this country." ■

Namibia hits the road



The Namibia Tourism Board, in partnership with Legacy Hotels and Resorts, will be hosting the travel trade at the **Namibian Roadshow**, which takes place on October 19 at the DaVinci Hotel in Sandton and on October 20 at the Commodore Hotel in Cape Town. Agents who are keen to learn more about the destination and stand the chance of winning some prizes, should RSVP to naminfo@saol.com. Pictured here, getting ready to hit the road, are (from left): **Lisa Roos**, O&L Leisure Hotels & Lodges sales manager; and **Michéll Fourie**, Air Namibia's commercial manager of sales and marketing. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Air France reviews long-haul routes

DORINE REINSTEIN

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

To restore long-term profitability after four years of losses, the airline said it would need to launch a drastic restructuring plan of its long-haul network. This will see the airline close five routes as well as substantially reduce long-haul frequencies by 2017.

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

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‘We will not back down’ – tourism industry

DARISE FOSTER

TOURISM industry associations will not silence their call for the new immigration regulations to be abolished, despite being accused of not doing enough to market South Africa to overseas travellers by Minister of Home Affairs, **Malusi Gigaba**.

Tourism associations, including TBCSA, SATSA, Asata, Barsa, Saaci, NAA and Fedhasa addressed members of the press at a media briefing on October 1 to respond to comments made by the minister on Twitter.

On September 27, Malusi tweeted that opposition to the new visa regulations had been based on “lies and cooked-up figures and surveys that have no credibility whatsoever”.

He went on to state: “I think our tourism sector has not been selling South Africa as well as they should (sic). They should be selling the country on the basis

of what it offers travellers, not on the basis that it’s easy for somebody to enter South Africa with a child, unnoticed.

“We (the Department of Home Affairs) never said the [tourist] numbers would not drop. We expected numbers to drop as tourists comply and familiarise themselves with the regulations,” he tweeted. “We are not just a small country. Our security and stability matter, not just for the country but also for the region – which is why we met Lesotho.”

The TBCSA said the Minister’s comments were particularly concerning in light of the fact that an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) process, chaired by the Deputy President, **Cyril Ramaphosa**, was currently under way.

David Frost, ceo of SATSA, said the members of the TBCSA had elected to respect the IMC process and remain silent while the committee deliberated on the issues relating to

the new visa regulations. However, the IMC had not been accorded the same level of respect by the Department of Home Affairs. “They have taken to the press, stakeholder workshops and social media to air their views and we’ve reached the point where this relentless barrage of unsubstantiated accusations cannot go unanswered.”

The TBCSA, on behalf of the tourism industry, continues to urge both the Department of Home Affairs and Deputy President Ramaphosa to abolish the legislation. “Overwhelming evidence from multiple reliable sources points to the disastrous impact these draconian, ill-thought-out requirements are having on the tourism industry,” TBCSA chairman, **Mavuso Msimang**, said in a statement. “The economy has already suffered devastating losses as a result and thousands of jobs are on the line because of it.” ■

Airlink to launch new route

AIRLINK will launch flights between Cape Town and Maun from March 11.

Flights will initially operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The flight will depart Cape Town at 10h35 and arrive in Maun at 13h05.

The return flight departs Maun at 13h35 and arrives in Cape Town at 16h10.

The airline currently operates Johannesburg-Maun; Johannesburg-Kasane; Livingstone-Nelspruit; Nelspruit-Cape Town and

Skukuza-Cape Town routes.

Airlink’s ‘lodge link’ flights allow travellers to connect directly to bush lodges in the Sabi Sand through Skukuza Airport. The airline also connects travellers to Mozambique with its Nelspruit-Vilanculos route. ■

Air France reviews long-haul routes

From page 1

Air France foresees that its long-haul capacity will decline by around 10% between 2015 and 2017. The airline’s long-haul fleet will be scaled back by 14 aircraft, from 107 aircraft in operation during the

2015 European summer to 93 in the 2017 European summer. This adjustment will be made through the accelerated retirement of Airbus A340s, which will not be replaced by Boeing 787s as initially planned. In 2016 and 2017, the

related capex reduction could reach up to €200m (R3bn).

The airline will also need to cut approximately 2 900 jobs. It is expected that 300 pilots, 900 cabin crew and 1 700 ground staff will be affected. ■



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A brief look at this week's hotel news

Carlson Rezidor expands into Nairobi

CARLSON Rezidor will open the first Radisson Blu Residence in Nairobi late next year. The 123-unit property will be located adjacent to State House. It will be Carlson Rezidor's third project in Nairobi and the group's fifth Radisson Blu Residence in Africa. The group's portfolio features 65 hotels in 27 countries in Africa. Its first hotel in Africa, the Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Cape Town, opened in 2000 and this year the group opened eight hotels in Africa followed by two resorts in Mauritius. Five further openings are expected by year-end, among them Radisson Blu flagships in Lomé; Maputo; and Nairobi as well as the first Park Inn by Radisson in Nigeria.

Simbavati to start next phase of refurb

SIMBAVATI River Lodge in the Timbavati Game Reserve, which forms part of the Greater Kruger National Park, will be closed for refurbishments for two weeks from the end of November until the beginning of December. The second phase of the refurbishments includes redecorating public areas and replacing four of the eight luxury tents with newly designed chalets. The first phase of refurbishments took place in May and included re-thatching the public areas and construction of a waterhole in front of the lodge.



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Pictured here at the launch of the partnership between the Legacy Group and African Sun at the Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton on September 28, are (from left): chairman of Brainworks Capital Management, which is the majority shareholder of African Sun, **Richard Muirimi**; chairman of Legacy, **Bart Dorrestein**; chairman of African Sun, **Herbert Nkala**; Zimbabwe ambassador in South Africa, **Isaac Moyo**; and chief investment officer of Brainworks Capital Management, **George Manyere**. Photo: Carina Borrhalho

Legacy expands into Zimbabwe

THE Legacy Group has signed an agreement with African Sun to take over the management, refurbishment and expansion of five of African Sun's assets in Zimbabwe.

The properties are The Elephant Hills Hotel, The Kingdom at Victoria Falls, Hwange Safari Lodge, The Monomotapa Hotel and Troutbeck.

There are also plans to expand Caribbea Bay and Fothergill Island properties.

Bart Dorrestein, chairman of the Legacy Group, commented: "Zimbabwe has the potential to become one of the world's leading tourist destinations. On the opening of the new international airport, the Victoria Falls is ideally placed to become Southern Africa's gateway for tourism."

Bart said the group had agreed to upgrade, on a phased basis, The Elephant Hills Hotel and The Kingdom at Victoria Falls, while also

adding conferencing capacity. The 100-room Hwange Safari Lodge will be completely upgraded into a four-star lodge.

A face-lift of all 240 rooms is planned for The Monomotapa Hotel, with the addition of a new outdoor pool area and restaurant facilities.

At the Troutbeck, it is intended to retain the unique Scottish Highlands feel and atmosphere, while expanding leisure activities. ■

More currencies on one card

DARISE FOSTER

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

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

Travellers can also lock in the exchange rate on the local

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

The cardholder can use the card to pay for goods and services at merchant locations or withdraw cash from ATMs wherever the MasterCard Acceptance Mark is displayed.

Cardholders can transfer between currencies or check balances and transaction history either via the World Currency Card mobile app or online via the 'My Account' online portal. Alternatively, currency can be preloaded or topped up via the Bidvest Bank online forex ordering portal or at one of the bank's branches.

The card comes with Chip and PIN protection and if the card is lost or stolen, a free card replacement will be sent to the cardholder abroad in 24-48 hours. ■

Applying for passports just got easier

CARINA BORRALHO

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

The project is currently being piloted with bank employees until the end of November and, based

on the results, a national roll-out will commence at certain FNB, Standard Bank and Nedbank branches. Consultations with Absa are at an advanced stage.

Home Affairs spokesperson, **Mayihlome Tshwete**, told *TNW* the department was

completely responsible for the safe keeping of all documentation. "The banks will simply be granting us space within their branches but Home Affairs will be running the entire process and using its current system of application and delivery." ■



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On site at Cruises International's new home is md, George Argyropoulos. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

A new home for CI

CRUISES International is dropping anchor in a new location. From December 1, the cruise specialist will begin the move to its new headquarters in St Andrews, Senderwood, alongside the N3 highway.

Apart from its innovative nautical design, the 580-sqm

three-storey building will incorporate a skills development centre for travel agents. Video conferencing facilities will give Cruises International the opportunity to consult 'face-to-face' with trade partners across the country.

A 'client experience centre' will be made available to the

trade to consult with their clients and have immediate access to Cruises International support staff as well as state-of-the-art presentation and reservation facilities.

An indoor and outdoor entertainment area will be available for trade and client promotional events. ■

Mauritius ups unique offerings

DARISE FOSTER

MAURITIUS planned to host more social and cultural events as it sought to establish itself as a destination where there was "always something happening", chairman of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, **Arnaud Martin**, told delegates at a recent event in Johannesburg.

Arnaud said Mauritius had enjoyed an 11% increase in South African tourist arrivals for the year ending August 31, 2015. SA is the fifth biggest market for Mauritius. "We host about 90 000 South Africans every year and this has become one of our primary markets," he said.

"We have created a series of sporting and cultural events to show that there is more to Mauritius than beautiful resorts," Arnaud said. The Sunshine Tour, European Tour and Asian Tour have been combined

to create a tri-continent golfing tournament that will be hosted on the island. Additionally, a seven-a-side rugby tournament will be hosted in October, which will involve the Springboks.

The weak rand was also a benefit leading into the upcoming holiday peak season, as travellers who, for instance, were prepared to travel to Europe might opt for Mauritius, said MTPA director, **Kevin Ramkaloan**.

He added that, while the MICE industry was not a primary market for Mauritius, it was part of the growth strategy. "Of the 90 000 South African tourists we had last year, 90% visited for tourism purposes. So leisure will remain our core market out of South Africa," he said. "But there is an opportunity for MICE that has not been tapped into as yet – especially for the niche products we can add to incentive trips." ■



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'Goodbye roaming fees' – Cell C

DARISE FOSTER

CELL C customers will soon be able to use their cellular network service anywhere in the world, just as they would in South Africa, without incurring roaming costs.

The 'Wi-Fi Calling' functionality automatically connects mobile phones to WiFi hotspots anywhere in the world. Once connected, customers can then make calls and send SMSs over the WiFi network without having to connect to data roaming.

Only Cell C customers in possession of a Wi-Fi Calling-enabled handset that is connected with a Cell C USIM card will be able to make use of the service.

The service will be available for purchase as an add-on bundle to existing contracts at a launch price of R199 for a monthly subscription. This will include unlimited Cell C to Cell C minutes, 500 Cell C to other network minutes and unlimited SMSs for all subscribers.

"Cell C Wi-Fi Calling effectively turns any WiFi

hotspot into a Cell C base station, providing customers extended coverage, wherever they are, to make calls and send SMSs seamlessly over the WiFi network," Cell C ceo, **Jose Dos Santos**, said at the recent announcement of the service.

"Unlike VoIP services – calling over Whatsapp/Facebook – customers do not have to download an application and the quality of Wi-Fi Calling is much better than with VoIP services."

He admitted, though,

that the quality of the calls would depend on the quality of the WiFi network, however explained that Wi-Fi Calling-enabled devices warned users when they were connected to a low-quality WiFi hotspot, just as network connectivity would be symbolised by bars on an ordinary mobile phone.

The network provider also has combo deals for SMEs that need better connectivity and want additional prepaid SIM cards.

Cell C will launch Wi-Fi Calling with the AG Style handset, which is

available from accredited retailers throughout South Africa from October 1. The service will be rolled out on the AG Shine, ZTE V6 and ZTE Lite handsets during October, with the Samsung Galaxy S6 and Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge to follow in November.

"We are already in talks with other handset manufacturers, including BlackBerry, Sony, Microsoft, LG and Apple," Jose said. "We hope to provide Wi-Fi Calling launch dates on these devices in the coming months." ■

Hahn Air partners' 'rich' content now available

Hahn Air Systems has signed an agreement with Travelport's Rich Content and Branding solution, making 37 of its partners' content available through the GDS.

With Travelport's Rich

Content and Branding solution, Hahn Air Systems' partners are able to market and retail their services more effectively, fully displaying all their branded fares and ancillaries to travel

agencies. The solution includes rich product descriptions and graphics and optional or ancillary products for sale, including 'next product/price point up' offers to encourage upselling.

The additional content will be available to travel agencies through the point-of-sale technology, Travelport Smartpoint. The first three H1 partners displayed will be fastjet, flyafrika and Blue Air. ■

To the point



The Khelekhele Hiking Trails in the Ngwempisi Wilderness Area of Swaziland have been renovated and re-launched. The 33km trails in Ngwempisi give guests the opportunity to see numerous birds, flora and geology.

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PROGRAMMES

Loyalty membership is on the rise but how effective are these reward programmes? Dorine Reinstein investigates.

Popular programmes – what is the secret?

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

Despite the undeniable popularity of loyalty programmes, their effectiveness has been

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

Global Flight.

To be successful, loyalty programme providers must possess a good understanding of the end user and their needs. “Important is not to offer a long list of benefits that the average traveller is not going to use,” says **Wilma Van Vuuren**, head of yield management for Wings Travel Management. She says the average traveller

should be able to appreciate each benefit, examples of which include private lounge access, extra baggage allowance and preferred seating.

“Loyalty programme providers differentiate themselves through their ability to go the extra mile in ensuring that travellers’ unique preferences are met, which means that concierge services are invaluable,”

adds Wilma. “They also need to cater for unforeseen circumstances such as flight cancellations, as a result of which members need to be advanced to the top of waiting lists, or emergency situations during which they need to depart quickly. The loyalty programme should also feed into the provider’s GDS, offering better rates for hotels and transport to valued members.”

Airlines’ strategies for success

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

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

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

“Technology plays a significant role in loyalty programmes,” he says. “Customers would like access to their miles and redemption process online in a seamless manner that they can control. Air Mauritius does not have a select few ‘miles’ seats

like other carriers; instead a passenger who qualifies for a free ticket will receive their free ticket based on availability.”

Suretha maintains that there is a growing awareness of the limitations of the legacy mileage-based FFP models due to an increase in the line-up of partners promoting greater customer participation, which then puts more pressure on the limited award seat inventory of airlines that was initially intended to fill empty seats.

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

Suretha admits that moving from an ‘instant gratification’ model (accrual of miles/points based

Top three airline loyalty programmes



on distance travelled) to a ‘delayed gratification’ model (accrual of miles/points based on uplifted pro-rated sectors flown) has necessitated a significant mind-set change for mileage junkies. She says the most frequently asked question is whether customers are benefiting from a revenue-based FFP model. “The short answer is ‘yes and no’,” says Suretha, explaining that high-yield customers will praise you for rewarding

them equitably, whereas low-yield customers will feel deprived.

In South Africa, SAA’s revenue-based programme seems to have been widely accepted. In a recent survey run by TNW’s sister publication eTNW, over 120 agents voted that SAA had the most effective loyalty programme, followed by Emirates and British Airways; 36% of agents voted for SAA, claiming the programme was popular with clients as it offered

a considerable number of partner airlines through which points could be redeemed. This, in turn, makes finding seats hassle-free when using miles.

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

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Key

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

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Hotels			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Unique benefits
Accor Le Club Essential Connected Upgraded Even More VIP	Stays at 2 000 hotels (budget to luxury)	Club Med, Europcar, Lenôtre (France only), Shell, TAM, Itau (Brazil only), HSBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer points to participating partners, points never expire
aha (took over Three Cities Programme) Real awards Classic Green Plus Green Premium Green	Earn Real Rands according to total accommodation spend	Bidvest Premier Lounge and Europcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classic Green: Earn up to 5% of accommodation spend back in Real Rands when paying qualifying rates and receive up to 10% discounts at hotel-owned restaurants Plus Green: As above, but up to 10% of accommodation spend and up to 15% discount at hotel-owned restaurants Premium Green: As above, but up to 15% of accommodation spend and up to 20% discount at hotel owned restaurants
Carlson Rezidor Club CarlsonSM Club CarlsonSM for Planners (meetings and events planners) Gold Points Gold Points Plus Hotel brands: Quorvus Collection; Radisson brands; Park Plaza, Park Inn; Country Inns and Suites	20 Gold Points per US\$ spent on hotel nights, plus all meals and beverages charged to the customer's room, bonus points earned through online bookings. 1 000 participating hotels	Budget, Avis, and selected airline partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red tier: Discount on food and beverage and free awards nights Silver tier: Same as Red plus: free room upgrades and an elite member service line Gold tier: Same as Silver plus: guaranteed room availability up until 72 hours Concierge: Same as Gold plus: guaranteed room availability up until 48 hours and free continental breakfast
City Lodge The Lodger Club	Points earned by processing bookings online while logged into account (valid for three years)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discounts on rack rates and free accommodation offers No loss of points when redemption bookings are cancelled/amended No blackout or availability restrictions
Hilton HHonors	Points accrued at 4 440 hotels and timeshare properties in 97 countries and territories	Airline, rail, car rental, cruise, shopping, dining and entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customised stays from mobile devices up to 24 hours in advance Second guest stays free and no blackout dates
InterContinental Hotels Group IHG Rewards Club IHG Business Rewards (meeting and event planners)	Members can earn points at more than 4 900 hotels worldwide with opportunities to earn points through regular promotions	Over 400 airlines and online portals: Flights Anywhere, Cars Anywhere and Hotels Anywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No blackout dates Points can be redeemed on hotel stays, merchandise including music downloads, electronics and vouchers through IHG Rewards Club's catalogue
Legacy Hotels and Resorts Legacy Lifestyle	Members can earn a percentage back of their spend when shopping at a Lifestyle partner. R1 equals 1 Lifestyle Rand. Rands can be earned and spent with brand partners	Over 200 partners across the airline, car hire, hotel and lifestyle industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once enough Lifestyle Rands have been earned, they can be redeemed by entering the member's mobile number as well as a five-digit pin on the in-store card machine of the product in question. Members can double rewards earned in store by linking their Dischem Benefits Card to their Lifestyle account
Peermont Hotels and Resorts Crown Key	Points added when booking through Central Reservations using a qualified room rate. Guests also earn points on qualified room charges, room service, laundry services and telephone usage. For every R10 spent, members earn 1 point.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn 10% back in Crown Key points on qualified room rates Upgraded rooms (when available) Discounts on green fees at selected golf courses and spa treatments and free movie and show tickets at applicable resorts Double reward and earn points on redemptions if booked room rate is Crown Key qualified rate Private airport pick up from OR Tambo International to the D'oreale Grande at Emperors Palace
Preferred Hotels and Resorts iPrefer	Receive one point for every US\$ spent on nett room reservations at participating hotels booked through eligible channels. When enough points are earned, the iPrefer certificate can be used to book any service at more than 550 hotels. Reward certificates never expire and are transferable	More than 550 independent hotels and resorts worldwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver: Points for eligible stays Gold: Silver membership benefits plus welcome amenity and room upgrades on availability Platinum: Gold membership benefits plus 10% bonus points per stay
Premier Hotels and Resorts Royalty Club	Points earned on total hotel bill: accommodation, hotel services and dining		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% back on total hotel bill including accommodation, hotel services and dining, in the form of Royalty Rands Room upgrades Accommodation specials below the Best Available Rate
Protea Hotels Prokard Note: Marriott Rewards will be available across Protea Hotels in late 2015. Protea will remain as a local benefits card offering	Earn up to 10% of accommodation spend in Prokard Rands at Protea and African Pride Hotels	Bidvest Car Rental, kulula.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 10% discount on Best Available Rate of the day in SA and 20% in Africa; 5% off online special offers Complimentary room upgrades Members earn up to 10% of room revenue back in Prokard Rands and receive dining discounts of up to 50% for Gold members even if not staying in the hotel

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Hotels			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Unique benefits
Starwood Preferred Guest Starwood	Earn points at more than 1 200 hotels. Starpoints do not expire as long as there is activity once every 12 months	Airlines, car rental, financial, retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free nights, free flights, room upgrades, gift certificates, and transportation • No blackout dates • Rewards for hotel services
Sun International MVG Programme	Members are given a Maroon MVG card to use at all Sun International Casinos. The status of the card is determined by the number of MVG points earned at SI casinos in a 12-month period		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly reduced accommodation rates • Golf course discounts • Meal discounts at Sun International-owned restaurants
Tsogo Sun Frequent Guest	Earn Sun Rands on accommodation rates and services (valid for two years)	American Express, Nedbank Greenbacks, SunSwop and Europcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn 5% to 15% Sun Rands on qualifying rates and items • 10% accommodation discount at Luxury and Full Service hotels, 5% accommodation discount at Select Service hotels • 7,5%-20% food and beverage discounts at hotel-owned restaurants and bars • 30-60% discount at movies@cinemas

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

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



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LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Hotels should offer real returns

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

manager of Protea Hotels, part of Marriott International.

It would seem that Protea holds the secret to success of hotel loyalty programmes as 39% of travel agents participating in the eTNW Loyalty Programmes Survey voted Protea as the top loyalty programme in SA, saying it was a good-value product, frequently offering customers free accommodation and meals.

Tsogo Sun came second with 17% of the votes. One agent said the Tsogo Sun programme was easy to use, as no conversions were needed, with one point equalling one rand.

Hilton came third, receiving 16% of the votes. "Hilton always accommodates and gives upgrades to members without clients even having to ask," said another agent.

Nicholas says it is important

Top three hotel loyalty programmes



Source: TNW survey

to remember that loyalty is not about how members demonstrate their loyalty to a brand but rather about how the brand recognises and serves the members, based

on their loyalty and value. For this reason it is important to improve the programme year-on-year to remain relevant to the ever-changing consumer needs, he maintains.

Car rental – promises must be kept

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

In August this year Avis completely revamped its

loyalty programme, allowing travellers to advance through the programme from Avis Preferred to Avis Preferred Plus and Avis President. **Lance Smith**, executive director of sales, says, whereas before the membership of the Avis President programme was through invitation only, clients can now move up the ladder to earn more rewards.

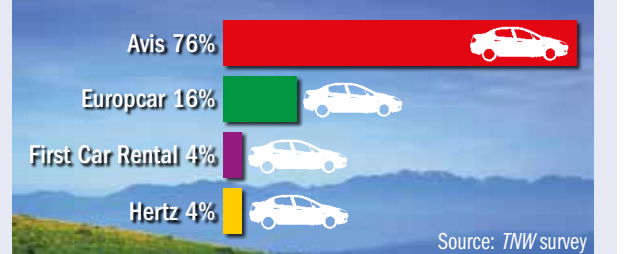
Although Avis demonstrates constant innovation when it comes to its programme, Lance rather attributes the

company's success to the consistency and reliability of the global programme.

"While innovation is important, consistency is even more important. What you promise, you must deliver. Not delivering on your promises will destroy a loyalty programme," he says.

First Car Rental executive head of strategy development and marketing, **Melissa Storey**, says the biggest mistake car-rental companies can make is to become paralysed by data

Top car rental loyalty programmes



Source: TNW survey

complexity. "Those who succeed will be the ones who can consolidate their digital activity within one technology platform and who can then harness multi-

channel data-driven insights to develop powerful targeted campaigns that, because they are both personalised and relevant, produce smarter results."

New loyalty programmes shift buying patterns

DURING the past year, a number of airlines have made radical changes to their programmes, rewarding spend instead of miles flown.

Ravindra Bhagwanani says this move could push formerly loyal travellers to no-frills airlines. "Customers who perform badly according to the new systems and who have no hope any more of ever making it to the elite level, for instance, now have less incentive not to transfer their loyalty to an LCC.

Moreover, if the LCC offers an attractive FFP, the motivation

to shift loyalty becomes even stronger."

"The switch to LCCs has become more prevalent because of the cheaper fares. One can now purchase two tickets on these carriers as opposed to one high-cost ticket. The redemption of points is not always possible as seating is not always available during peak and holiday seasons.

"However, it is still cheaper to utilise LCCs and then spend the savings on confirmed seats for these peak travel periods," notes

Wilma Van Vuuren.

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

in the process. They are even changing their travel routes to comply with airline terms and conditions for more points."

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

Delta agrees that its updated SkyMiles programme

has been to the benefit of its customers. "In the first three months of 2015, in direct response to member feedback, Delta made 50% more Award Seats available, giving members more options when they travel," says **Jimmy Eichelgruen**, Delta's director of sales for Africa, Middle East and Indian Subcontinent. "Following updates to our programme, more members have been able to redeem miles through the availability of more reward seats and lower redemption levels." ■

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Appointments

■ **Chantelle Browne** has been promoted to senior international product manager of kulula holidays, replacing **Dezy de Lima**, who has left the company to pursue her own interests. Chantelle brings with her a wealth of knowledge and expertise gained over the last ten years working in the travel industry, particularly from her background as product manager for Indian Ocean Islands.



■ Marriott International has appointed **Clinton Arnot** as director of distribution and strategy for the Middle East and Africa, as of October 1. Clinton has 13 years' experience in a number of positions at Protea Hotels, where he worked in sales and distribution. He holds a diploma in hotel management and marketing from City & Guilds.



Stress less!

Beachcomber recently hosted eTravel on a fam trip to Mauritius. Attendees visited Beachcomber's properties, went on excursions, and enjoyed spa treatments at Shandrani Resort & Spa. Pictured here, from left, are: **Shelley Daniels** (Beachcomber Tours); **Garth Wolff** (eTravel); **Nicola Hards** (Beachcomber Tours); and **Julia Page** (eTravel).



Travelbags

On October 2, the travel trade gathered at the Travelbags luncheon at Moyo Zoo Lake in Johannesburg to network and enjoy delicious food, African face painting and prizes. The event was hosted by Serena Hotels, Itseng Africa, Itseng India, and RwandAir. Pictured here, celebrating the beginning of summer, are three business development managers (from left): **Claire Swanepoel** and **Samantha Wing** (Corporate Traveller); and **Rachelle Campbell** (Europcar). Photo: Megan Fischer



TAG gives back

The sixth annual TAG Foundation Party held on October 1 at Katy's Palace Bar in Sandton, saw members of the travel industry network and raise funds for the foundation in support of children. This year, the foundation raised a record-breaking R743 000. Pictured here (from left) are: **Nadine Morley** (TAG); **Kirsten Johnston** (Beachcomber Tours); **Gina Stanford** (Beachcomber Tours); and **Jonathan Gerber** (TAG). Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

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Brazil implements transit visas

PASSENGERS who are travelling from countries that require a visa to visit Brazil now need to obtain a transit visa if they are travelling on separate tickets, as of October 1.

South African passport holders do not require a visa when travelling to Brazil, therefore they do not require a transit visa, the Embassy of Brazil in Pretoria confirmed.

“The only difference is that, from now on, the Federal Police will enforce a policy that citizens from countries that require a valid visa to enter Brazil – as other African nations like Kenya do – will need to have a visa before going to Brazil when they are travelling on two

separate tickets – that is one to Brazil and another one from Brazil to the final destination – the embassy told TNW.

“The reason for this new policy is that when the person has two separate tickets, he/she may be asked to leave the international area of the airport in order to receive his/her luggage and check in again.”

Transit visas would not be required for those passengers who were travelling on an e-ticket that included their complete itinerary, whereby the person checked in once their luggage had been transported directly to the final destination, the Embassy said. ■

Up and away!

Namibia flyafrica will up frequencies on its Johannesburg-Windhoek route from November 16 to five weekly flights. The airline will add Thursday and Sunday flights to its schedule. The airline currently operates three weekly flights between Windhoek and Lanseria on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Getting ready to board, are (from left): Courtney Hill, marketing manager of flyafrica.com, and Nellita Scholtz, sales manager of flyafrica.com. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

lata default insurance on the cards within months

DORINE REINSTEIN

ATA's Default Insurance Programme (DIP) could be available to all travel agents in South Africa within the next few months.

An lata spokesperson has told TNW that lata had initiated the process for the formalisation of the proposed new Local Financial Criteria for BSP ZA, which has been submitted to the PAConf meeting taking place in Geneva from October 13-15. If approved, the new financial criteria will be effective

from February 1, 2016.

Although not part of the financial criteria, the introduction of the DIP and the process for accrediting a suitable financial security provider is being managed in parallel with the review of the Local Financial Criteria. An lata spokesperson told TNW: “Subject to the ongoing review process being completed, the DIP will be made available as soon as the final approval is confirmed by lata, which may be in advance of the new local financial criteria.”

The DIP has proved

successful in other parts of the world as an effective solution for both airlines and agents to ensure financial security but in South Africa its implementation has encountered some stumbling blocks. Already announced mid-2014, the DIP product policy document submission to lata at that time did not comply with the lata Global Policy Template. As a result, an independent local legal review was initiated to ensure compliance with South African legal jurisdiction requirements. ■

pulse poll

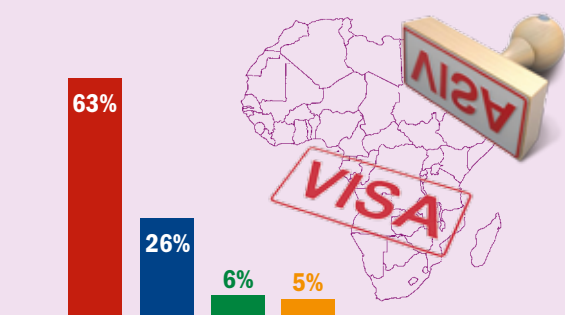
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Visas are a major hassle

Which factor is the most challenging when organising Africa-specific corporate travel?

- Visa issues
- Flight access
- Safety and security
- Language and communication barriers



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Lufthansa stands firm on distribution charge

DORINE REINSTEIN

“It isn't about a fee but about changing the distribution landscape,” said Jens Bischof, chief commercial officer of the Lufthansa Group.

Jens was speaking about Lufthansa's controversial €16 (R242) distribution surcharge in a ‘Global DCC’ webinar, hosted by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (Acte) on October 6.

He said Lufthansa was aware that the new distribution strategy was disruptive “but we simply feel that now is the right time to trigger this change as new technologies allow us to go

this way and new customer demands and behaviour require us to”.

The Lufthansa Group was in advanced talks with technology providers to implement direct connect functions for the trade, Jen said. “We're in talks with TMCs to work together with us on these solutions. I'm confident that we'll be able to achieve significant progress over the next couple of weeks.”

Lufthansa would have liked to engage the trade at an earlier stage, Jens said, but wasn't able to as a result of the confidentiality of its GDS contracts. Lufthansa could only reveal the details of its

strategy when it entered into new contracts with the GDS, he said.

Lufthansa plans to begin an NDC pilot project by the end of this year. Jens said the NDC was a “great match” to the Lufthansa Group's new strategy, as it would help the airline overcome limitations in distribution, such as product differentiation.

“We firmly believe that this is the right strategy for forming sustainable relationships with our travel partners and corporate customers in the future. Airline distribution needs to be modernised and more cost-effective in order to be fit for the future.” ■