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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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Queues must fall!

Latest DHA blunder set to wipe out tourism gains

TESSA REED AND DORINE REINSTEIN

LONGTHY queues at OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg continue to delay international and domestic travellers by hours, with the result that some visitors are missing connecting flights. Satsa ceo, **David Frost**, has called for urgent intervention.

All international passengers arriving in South Africa at OR Tambo Airport need to submit biometric data, Department of Home Affairs Spokesperson,

Mayihlome Tshwete, has confirmed. He added that it was also being implemented at Cape Town International Airport and King Shaka International Airport.

According to Mayihlome, taking biometrics at the airport meant that people requiring visas no longer had to apply in person and that international visitors who did not need visas also had to submit biometric data at the airport to improve security.

However, David suggests that, until Home Affairs has employed more immigration

officials, biometrics should only be taken from visa-requiring tourists who had not applied for their visa in person. "Home Affairs does not have the capacity to take biometrics from all international arrivals and long delays are hurting our brand as a tourism destination."

Last month, Mayihlome told *TNW* that the DHA would not be employing more staff due to cost-containment measures (see *TNW* September 21).

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THE LATEST VISA NEWS

'EU visa-free travel – a long shot'

DEBBIE BADHAM

THE Department of Home Affairs has set its sights on visa-free travel to Europe for all South African passport holders but travel experts believe this is a completely unrealistic goal.

A meeting between Minister of Home Affairs, **Malusi Gigaba**, and EU Ambassador,

Marcus Cornaro, to discuss immigration-related issues between SA and the EU raised speculation about whether visa concessions may soon be introduced for South Africans headed to Europe.

Home Affairs has made it clear to the EU that the dropping of visa requirements for all South African

To page 20

New Zealand imposes visas on SAs

TARYN NIGHTINGALE

EFFECTIVE November 21, all South Africans visiting or transiting through New Zealand must have a visitor or transit visa before travelling to the country.

Currently, SA travellers are granted a visitor visa on arrival. As a result of

the change, all SA passport holders will have to apply for a visa before departure.

Online applications are done individually at a cost of NZ\$165 (R1 634) each. Visitors applying in paper form can include all their family members in their form for a single fee of NZ\$165

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Spain changes application process

TARYN NIGHTINGALE

SOUTH Africans requiring visas for Spain can no longer submit applications via VFS Global but must apply through either the Spanish Consulate General in Cape Town or the Embassy of Spain in Pretoria, effective October 11.

"The requirements and all documentation for Schengen visa applications to Spain remain the same," the Spanish

Embassy told *TNW*. Visa appointments and applications can be made by emailing emb.pretoria.cic@maec.es the embassy said. The consulate general in Cape Town was not available for comment at the time of going to print.

Applicants with confirmed appointments from October 11 must submit applications at the consulate or embassy on the date in their original appointment letters. ■



Kenya's calling

Thompsons' latest special to Kenya includes return flights from JNB to Malindi and five nights' accommodation at the five-star Diamonds Dream of Africa Kenya. The offer is priced from R22 135pps ex-Johannesburg; from R24 095pps ex-Durban and from R24 523pps ex-Cape Town. Pictured here are Terry Sowazi, reservations consultant, and Phillipa Matshoe, sales executive, Thompsons Holidays. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl



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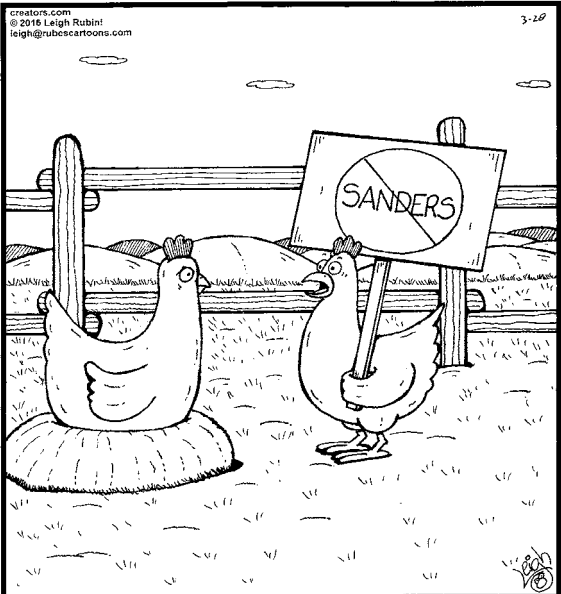
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“No, I have nothing against Bernie. It’s the colonel that scares me silly.”

TNW TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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Clampdown!

DEBBIE BADHAM

AGENTS welcome the moves by major municipalities to implement greater cost reductions and control within their travel policies, saying the change will make municipal accounts easier to manage and comply with.

Mayor of Johannesburg, **Herman Mashaba**, recently wrote to City Manager, **Trevor Fowler**, requesting that immediate steps be taken to curb abuse of public money on travel. He says over the past financial year alone, R73m was spent on travel.

Mashaba says international travel by any representative of the City must now be approved directly by him and will be considered on a cost/benefit analysis to residents of the City.

The Mayor also plans to drastically reduce the cost of travel by focusing on the

size of delegations travelling overseas; class of travel; length of stay relative to the duration of the commitment; and travel allowances.

Similarly, Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay, **Athol Trollip**, recently issued an instruction to prohibit all business- and first-class domestic air travel for Nelson Mandela Bay officials and public representatives.

Sailesh Parbhu, md of XL Nexus Travel, believes it would be a good thing to have National Treasury and municipalities working together. “The intention of both is to manage costs and save the country money. With a drive like that, we could see more like-minded travel agencies wanting to partner with municipalities – if the right structures are in place.”

He says, in the past some agencies have steered clear of servicing municipalities because of the lack of proper

structures in place, including budgets not accounted for.

Rachael Penaluna, business manager of Sure Maritime Travel, agrees that more structure and control within travel policies would be a good thing and ultimately easier for agents to police. However, in terms of the Mayor’s proposal to approve all international travel personally, Rachael warns this could create logistical challenges.

“All anybody wants is good compliance, governance and proper policies that everyone understands and with which they can comply,” says **Otto De Vries**, ceo of Asata.

He says the possibility of less international travel might impact the revenue of travel agents but says: “If the City of Joburg believes this is an appropriate policy, then the role of the TMC is to support this and help deliver those results.” ■

Dreams – alive and well

LEIGH HERMON

RUMOURS about the closure of local tour operator, Dreams, have been dispelled by the company’s ceo, **Erica Barrett**. She told *TNW* that the tour operator was not going anywhere but was in the process

of restructuring.

The company wants to update its earnings structure for staff to current travel trade standards. Erica says this will lead to a more focused and energised team whose earning potential will be uncapped.

Travel agents can look forward to a new booking

system that will be made available on the Dreams website in the near future. According to Erica, the new system will make bookings simpler, with a new payment gateway to offer agents a seamless experience during bookings. And, says Erica, Dreams will launch a new product later this month. ■

AF confirms long-haul LCC plans

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE Air France-KLM Group plans to enter the low-cost, long-haul travel market.

A spokesperson for Air France-KLM told *TNW* that, as part of its strategic “Trust Together” project, the group was looking at current market trends, including low-cost long-haul options. However, she says no concrete plans are in place for a long-haul LCC yet.

Whether a long-haul LCC between Europe and SA would be viable is questionable, industry experts say.

“I am sceptical whether a ‘true’ LCC will operate non-

stop scheduled flights between Europe and SA,” says **Marc Israel**, researcher of Airline Profiler. He says currently the longest long-haul LCC flight is under eight hours, mainly because aircraft rotation must be maximised in an LCC model to be able to sell more seats.

Dr **Peter Morrell**, author of “Can long-haul low-cost airlines be successful?”, agrees and says applying the low-cost model on long-haul routes works best using single-aisle aircraft on sectors of up to about five to six hours. “Longer flights require larger wide-body aircraft.” He doubts whether Air France could

get its costs low enough to compete on price (or service quality) on longer sectors.

However, AASA ceo, **Chris Zweigenthal**, says: “This is largely an untested market but as airlines look to make air travel even more affordable, this is an option. It is clearly a lot longer flight time [than normal LCC flights] and passengers may require up to two meals and drinks. [Airlines using a long-haul LCC model] would have to factor in these costs as well as costs for additional services, such as inflight entertainment – if available on board – in the total cost of the trip.” ■

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Contiki has become the iconic name for youth travel and has always specialised in Europe. With its 2017 European brochure, the operator has poured its wealth of knowledge and passion for Europe into creating an unbeatable product. Four new Adriatic trips and a continued focus on immersive, authentic experiences will satisfy millennials' hunger for authenticity. The Europe 2017 trips went on sale on September 28, with a 10% discount for bookings made by January 26. **Anna Smith** (left) and **Marischen Glutz** (right), both from STA Travel, got the information first-hand from Contiki ceo, **Casper Urhammer** at the Johannesburg brochure launch, held at Vicky Cristina's on September 20. Photo: Kate Nathan

Contiki captures youth

SAA sells ancillaries on new GDS

LEIGH HERMON

SAA has signed up for Traveport's Rich Content and Branding merchandising solution to allow travel agents to pre-book the airline's ancillary services on the GDS.

Agents can now pre-book

excess baggage via the GDS and, at the time of going to print, Traveport's spokesperson, **Siobhan McCarthy**, said the seat-selection service was in the final stages of testing and would go live in the coming days.

Previously, Traveport agents

had to book SAA's ancillaries through the airline's website.

SAA spokesperson, **Tlali Tlali**, told *TNW* that the ancillaries would apply to domestic and international flights operated by the airline and that the pre-booking of the services would not contribute to overrides. ■

Qatar revises transit visas, signs codeshare

QATAR Airways, Qatar Tourism Authority and Qatar's Ministry of Interior have revised the tourism visa scheme available to passengers transiting through Doha. The airline also signed a codeshare agreement with British Airways that will commence from October 30.

The new transit visa structure allows passengers with a minimum transit time of five hours in Hamad International

Airport to stay in Qatar for up to 96 hours (four days) without having to apply for an entry visa.

The previous transit visa scheme allowed travellers with a minimum transit time of eight hours to spend a maximum of 48 hours (two days) in Qatar.

The visa is available on arrival in Doha at no charge to passengers who have a minimum transit time of five

hours. Passengers will need to present confirmation of their onward journey and completion of passport control procedures on arrival.

The airline's codeshare agreement with British Airways is on all non-stop flights between the UK and Doha. BA's parent company, International Airlines Group signed the agreement with Qatar last month. ■

Renovations under way at Joburg hotel

TSOGO Sun has started a R16-million refurbishment of SunSquare Montecasino in Fourways. The upgrade of the 179 en-suite rooms started in August and is expected to be completed by March. The renovations are being implemented on a floor-by-floor basis to minimise any disruption, says gm, **Bernie Hilario**, adding that a two-month construction hiatus will be in effect over the festive season.

Santorini Mozambique opens new villa

VILLA da Praia, the latest addition to Santorini Mozambique, opened on September 1. The three-bedroom villa is ideal for couples sharing or families travelling with children. All the bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms with private patios and two of the bedrooms can be converted into a twin/king size bed. The villa is ocean facing and has its own lounge, kitchen, and dining room. A private infinity pool and outdoor dining area are situated on the ocean-facing patio.


BON Hotels adds East African property

BON Hotels has taken on a second property in East Africa, the Lake Heights Hotel in Uganda, which has been rebranded Lake Heights Entebbe. The 33-room hotel has a wellness centre, spa and gymnasium, full in-house restaurant and bar, conference venue and swimming pool. Complimentary WiFi is also offered.

Helen Johnston selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Finfoot Lake Reserve.** (Rustenburg, North West) Launch special from R4 500 for two people. Offer includes two nights' accommodation (weekends only) with all meals and activities (Segway, game drives, barge cruise). Valid until December 11.
- **The Westin Cape Town.** Recharge and restore from R3 100 per room per night. Offer includes one night's accommodation in a double room for two people sharing, breakfast, access to 24-hour gym and spa facilities, three-course dinner at ON19 restaurant daily. Single room from R2 550 per night. Valid December 9-24 and January 6-22.
- **Club Mykonos Langebaan.** Rates from R1 235 per unit per night. Offer is applicable to Athenian Cascades preferred two-bedroom unit, midweek only. Valid between October 10 and December 11.
- **City Lodge Hotels.** Sho't Left deals from R1 370 per room. Offer is based on two people sharing a double room and includes breakfast. Available weekends only (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Valid until January 31, 2017.
- **Blue Marlin Hotel.** (KZN) Spring special from R1 190 per person sharing. Offer includes one night's accommodation, all meals and drinks. Valid until December 15.



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JILL JACOBS - Senior Travel Consultant at Prosper Travel (A Club Travel Affiliate)

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Beware – card-not-present payments place you at risk

DEBBIE BADHAM

TRAVEL agents are exposing themselves and their agencies to large-scale financial risk and its consequences (disputed transactions and ADMs) by the continuing practice of processing ‘card-not-present’ credit card transactions without gaining bank authorisation.

Linda Dempster, financial consultant to the travel industry at BSP and Financial Consulting, says that with South Africa having the highest rate of credit card fraud in the world, local legislation for credit card payments is designed to offer banks protection.

She warns that any time agents accept credit card payment, they should be swiping their clients’ cards, otherwise the client is able to dispute that transaction and win. An unscrupulous client can get an agent to book a trip for them using their credit card details, complete the trip and then dispute payment.

While technically agents could take these clients to court, questioning why they used the air ticket if it was never their intention to purchase it,

the agent would then have to incur the cost of going to court. What’s more, says Linda, airlines generally refuse to go to court, saying they are too busy for this. Agents would have to subpoena them.

Agents should not accept clients’ credit card details over the phone or e-mail, “unless they are very sure of who their customer base is,” says Walter Volker, ceo of the Payments Association South Africa (PASA). Walter says if merchants don’t have proof that the cardholder authorised the transaction, then it could be viewed as a stolen card scenario.

He says although travel agents are able to conduct card-not-present transactions, this pertains primarily to the eCommerce environment where transactions must be submitted for 3D-Secure verification by the cardholder. “3D-Secure authentication is done by the cardholder on their mobile device and offers merchants (in this case travel agents) similar protection to that of a signature or PIN in the card-present environment.”

Walter says if a transaction was authenticated via 3D-Secure, the

merchant is protected against the chargeback where a customer claims they did not perform the transaction. “In that case, the issuer who authorised the transaction will take the liability for the transaction.”

Resolution 890 in the IATA Travel Agent’s Handbook stipulates that, while agents may process card-not-present transactions, this is done under the sole responsibility and liability of the agent. It says in the case of a disputed transaction, and its subsequent rejection by the card company, the relevant airline will charge back the loss to the agent by means of agent debit memo.

With this in mind, Linda emphasises the importance of agents phoning the bank for an authorisation code. She says some agents might simply enter six zeros into the system instead and, although certain transactions may go through, this is extremely dangerous. However, the Resolution maintains that any authorisation does not guarantee the charge will go undisputed, and in such cases, a chargeback will still be made by the airline. ■

LCC targets corporates via the GDS

DARISE FOSTER

FLYSAFAIR hopes to attract the corporate market when its tickets become available on the GDS later this year.

The airline’s inventory will be distributed via Hahn Air Systems and Sabre from the end of October and Travelport and Amadeus from the end of November.

FlySafair vp: distribution and sales, Kirby Gordon, told TNW that tickets available on the GDS would be more expensive than the airline’s usual low fares, but would still offer value for the corporate client as fares would include baggage and changes to the flight booking.

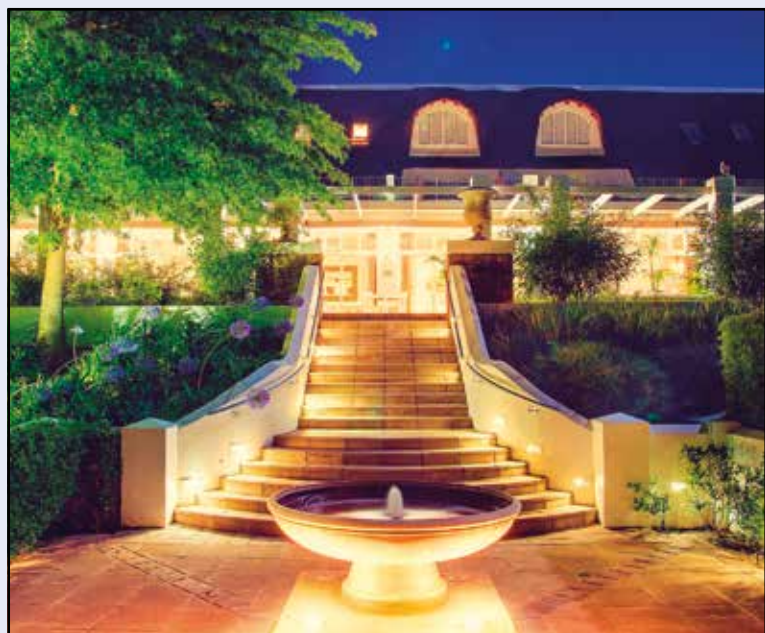
“Fares for tickets sold via the GDS will start from R1 500 one-way but will include the bag fare, usually R150 one way, and two free changes, usually R300 for one,” he says.

Travel agents looking for FlySafair’s R399 starting fares and R2 sales can still access them via the travel agent portal on the airline’s website, says Kirby. ■



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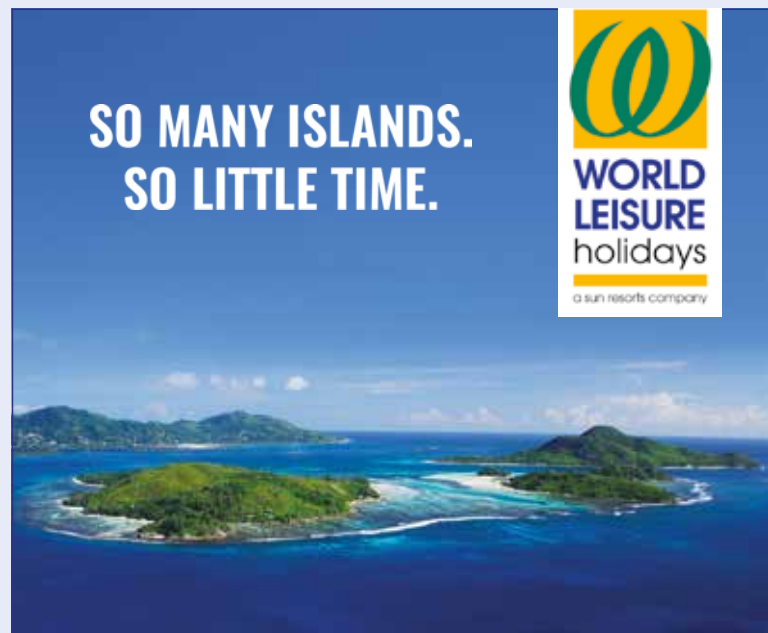


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LOYALTY PROGRAMMES



Customers are increasingly aware of the difficulty of redeeming rewards, making it necessary for brands to rethink their approach to loyalty. Darise Foster reports.

Brands must work harder to drive loyalty

BRANDS do it all the time. They lure potential customers toward a loyalty programme by selling the possibility of amazing rewards, thinking this will ensure repeat business and increased market share.

But some forward-thinking brands say this won't last long, arguing that the loyalty programme strategy needs to change if it is to achieve its end goal – to encourage consumer loyalty.

Melissa Storey, executive head: strategy, development and marketing at First Car Rental, says customers are becoming increasingly savvy and educated with the 'always on' access to comparisons that comes with the Internet and social media reviews.

"This wealth of real-time information can easily disrupt a brand's 'path to purchase', forcing many companies to compete on price alone," she says.

As a result, genuine customer loyalty is fast becoming a fleeting advantage for many, says Melissa.



Melissa Storey

In a survey run by *TNW's* sister publication, *eTNW*, in which 78 travel agents participated, the overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents said only 50% or less of their clients actually redeemed points for travel. Of the 91%, 35% said less than 10% of their clients used loyalty points.

This is because benefits and rewards alone do not

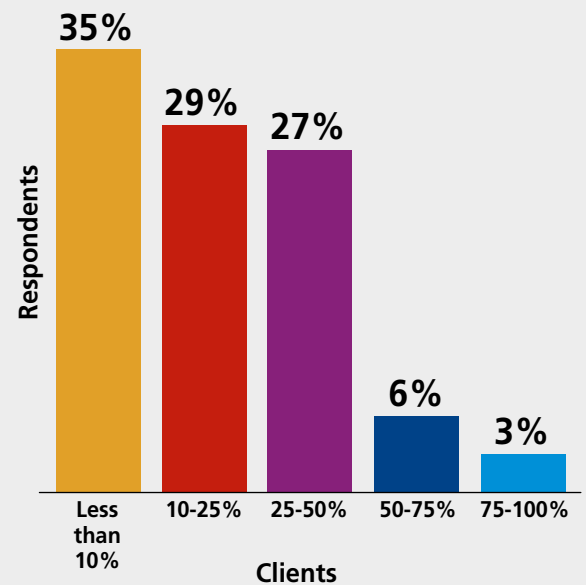
encourage true loyalty, says **Alan Campbell**, brand manager at Premier Hotels and Resorts.

Alan says this statistic could be turned around if brands shifted the focus from rewards to service to encourage genuine loyalty among customers. "Loyalty programmes are becoming the gym memberships of old, with scores of people joining them with the best of intentions and grand visions of usage, only to find that the value simply isn't worth the hassle of making their way through a complicated mix of terms and conditions to extract the value that initially attracted them."

The membership card is then discarded into that drawer to lie with that New Year's gym membership card, video store card and library card – all of which have failed to remain relevant and deliver the easy-to-understand value customers were after when they first joined, Alan says.

He believes true loyalty is achieved through the long-

What percentage of clients redeem rewards for travel?



term customer focus on all aspects of the product and service offering. "No matter how enticing your loyalty programme, if your customers

don't genuinely connect with the brand, then the programme itself will never succeed in driving customer loyalty."

New strategies to reward clients

SUPPLIERS have been exploring new avenues as they look to further encourage customer loyalty beyond points and rewards.

In the *eTNW* survey, the overarching theme in agents' responses was that travellers want immediate rewards, and can become frustrated

waiting to accumulate sufficient points or miles before they can redeem them for rewards.

Trafalgar has answered this by introducing a different strategy to encourage loyalty. Says md, **Theresa Szejwallo**: "Why complicate your loyalty programme with

points to be earned and then make it difficult to redeem them? Instead, we believe in rewarding our guests by giving them a simple, straightforward discount on their next trip, regardless of which brand they choose from our TTC family of brands."

Basically, The Travel

Corporation (TTC) offers travellers a 5% discount on the tour or cruise portion of the customer's booking – provided the customer has travelled with one of TTC's collection of brands in the past. This discount is



combinable with other tour discounts offered by TTC.

Theresa says this strategy

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TNW7851SD

New strategies to reward clients

From page 8 has hugely encouraged customer loyalty for Trafalgar – which enjoys a repeat guest rate of nearly 50% as a result.

However, discounts must form part of greater strategy if they are to encourage loyalty.

Suretha Cruse, SAA executive: customer loyalty programmes, highlights the importance of not relying on discounts alone as a means of encouraging repeat business. She says while discounts achieve instant gratification for customers, they don't necessarily sway them to return to the same supplier in future.

"If a similar or better discount is offered by a competitor, the customer is likely to simply switch."

The SAA Voyager loyalty card is more than just a frequent flyer card because earning and redeeming miles on SAA is only one of the many ways members can participate in the programme, says Suretha.

"There are many other options through which members diversify the potential of earning and/or redeeming miles even quicker through cross-utilisation of our many programme partner categories, ranging from airlines

to financials (including the SAA Voyager Credit Card), car rentals, accommodation, petroleum, retail and lifestyle," she says.

Personalisation is also key to encouraging loyalty. **Melissa Storey** of First Car Rental adds that while customers' constant access to real-time information makes it challenging to earn their loyalty, their digital activities inform suppliers exactly how they behave and how they are motivated. "This allows us to align and personalise their experience by unlocking the value of our cross-channel data."

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TNW7839SD

Rewards – not just 'nice to have'

CONSUMERS have become pickier about where they place their loyalty and once they invest in a brand, they demand to be rewarded accordingly.

Benefits and rewards have evolved from "nice to have" to musts as a result of commoditisation of loyalty programmes, says **Sharon de Leur**, Peermont loyalty and direct marketing manager.

"From a Peermont perspective, we have seen a significant increase in the overall consumer participation and perceived value of our loyalty programmes because of the introduction of lifestyle, travel and partner benefits into the Peermont Winners Circle and Crown Key loyalty programmes," she says.

However, often when travellers try to redeem their rewards for travel, they are denied the opportunity – and this leads to the customer resenting both the supplier and the travel agent because they expect to receive the reward they were initially promised, says **Hilke Desmarais**, travel consultant at 360 Degree Travel.

"Some airlines do not give travellers the opportunity to



Edward Frost

be placed on a waiting list to use their mileage to upgrade seats. Consequently, even though the traveller purchased a more expensive ticket in order to use miles to upgrade, these are often not confirmed due to the airline only having allocated a specific amount of seats for upgrades using miles and the agent or traveller needs to keep calling the airline to find out if the upgrade with miles has been successful," she says.

Hilke finds the difficulty in using mileage to upgrade

seats is a bit narrow-minded when it comes to customer relations as an unoccupied seat is a lost seat.

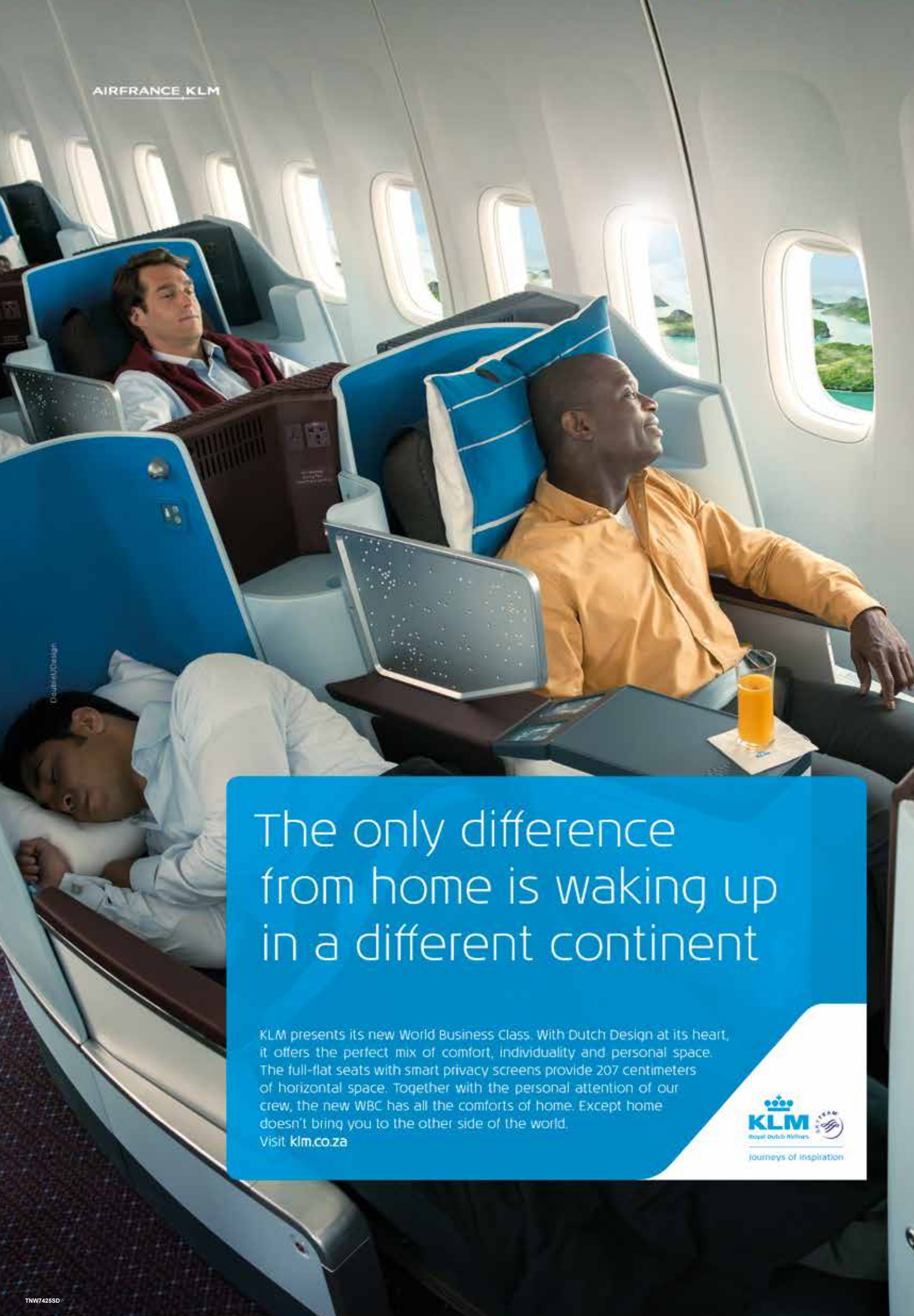
"As such when the traveller boards their flight and sees that business class has several empty seats, they become annoyed and often blame the travel agent for not having been able to confirm one of these empty seats." She says this often leaves a bitter taste in the traveller's mouth as they've been loyal to the airline but there seems to be no reciprocation.

Edward Frost, British Airways commercial manager for southern and East Africa, says the increased complexity in loyalty programmes can be bewildering for clients as more partners and opportunities form for clients to earn and burn rewards.

"It will all become clearer to the traveller once they understand the difference between rewards and benefits, actively manage their accounts, become responsible for maximising their earning potential and claim their rewards early. Only then will they actively be engaging with their loyalty programme," he says.

NEWSFLASH

Air France recently introduced new instant benefits for Ivory members of its Flying Blue frequent flyer programme. All Ivory members now benefit from a baggage discount on all worldwide flights operated and marketed by Air France and KLM (except flights between Europe and USA, Canada or Mexico). Ivory members will receive a €10 (R154) discount on the first paid bag on international and European one-way flights where the baggage fee is more than €20 (R308). Ivory members can also benefit from a 10% discount on seats with extra space, for example economy comfort with extra leg-room and extra recline, or seat plus with extra leg-room. This discount is applicable for all flights operated by Air France and KLM. These members can now take advantage of these travel options as soon as they join the Flying Blue programme, before they have even started to earn miles.



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Journeys of Inspiration

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Airlines				
Programme	Mileage expiry	Partners	Non-related point accrual	Top selling feature
Air Austral Capricorne	Three years	Air Mauritius (codeshare flights to Perth only)	Rail, postal delivery, car rental and hotels. Bonus points earned when joining and through promotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 year. Miles for Diamond card holders do not expire	-	Cresta Marakanelo Group and Peermont Hotels in Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Pula Lounge at Gaborone and Shongololo and Mashonja at OR Tambo International for Gold and Diamond members. Diamond members can invite one guest. For 1000 miles, Gold and Diamond members can invite travel companions to Pula Lounge.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business-class upgrades and free or discounted seats and economy comfort seats for all tier levels. Discounts vary per tier.
Air Mauritius Kestrel Flyer	Three years	Air France, Emirates	Car rental, hotels, duty-free outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free tickets and upgrades to business class.
Air Namibia Reward\$	Five years. Awards requested before expiry must be used within 12 months	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free flights and upgrades.
Air Zimbabwe Rainbow Club	Miles expire after two years if member has not used Air Zimbabwe services	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> 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, Iberia, 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"> Avios points collected are valid for life.
Cathay Pacific The Marco Polo Club	Three years	oneworld alliance members	Travel, leisure, hotel, dining, retail, telecoms, finance and insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteed seat reservations across all cabins, up to 24 hours prior to departure.
Delta Air Lines SkyMiles	No expiry	SkyTeam alliance partners, Alaska Airlines, GOL, Great Lakes, Hawaiian Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia	Car rental, home entertainment, financial partners, cruises and vacations, dining and retail, shopping, hotels, convert partner points to miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miles never expire.
EgyptAir EgyptAir Plus	Three years	Star Alliance members	Hotels, car rental, restaurants, and financial, health and mobile services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage.
El Al Matmid	Three years	jetBlue, American Airlines, SWISS, S7 Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines	Hotels, car rental, restaurants and shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members can book an EL AL ticket and pay with money and points.
Emirates Skywards	Three years	Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Qantas, SAA, Alaska Airlines, easyJet, Jet Airways, jetBlue, Jetstar, S7 Airlines, TAP Portugal, Virgin America, Air Mauritius, Malaysia Airlines	Hotel partners, car rental, financial, retail, leisure and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members can use a combination of cash and miles to pay for 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"> Extra baggage allowance for Gold and Silver members.
Ethihad Airways Air Seychelles Etihad Guest	Mileage expiry depends on tier level: Etihad Guest – two years; Silver – two and a half years; Gold and Platinum – 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, GOL, Philippine Airlines, SAA, codeshare partners	Car rental, hotels, telecommunications, shopping, financial partners, leisure and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Redeem miles on flights, upgrades, products and services using the exclusive Reward Shop.

Airlines

Programme	Mileage expiry	Partners	Non-related point accrual	Top selling feature
Iberia Iberia Plus	If there has been no activity in three years, the points will expire.	oneworld alliance members, Avianca, Binter, Meridiana, Royal Air Maroc and TACA Airlines	Hotels, car rental, financial, shopping, wellness, leisure, rail, ferries, educational courses, taxis, fuel and cruises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Triple points promotion for flights to South America until December 15.
LAM Flamingo Club	Three years	-	Hotels, car rental, fuel products, telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Executive desk check-in.
LATAM LATAM Pass	Three years	oneworld alliance airlines	Hotels and car rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. LATAM miles can be used to book flights on other oneworld partners to over 1 000 worldwide destinations.
Lufthansa SWISS Miles & More Partner Plus Benefits	Three years	Star Alliance member airlines and other airlines	Car rental, hotels, shopping, telecommunications and more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Redeem points for cash. (PPB) Redeem points for cash.
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	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"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Qantas Classic Flight and Upgrade Rewards.
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"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. 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.
RwandAir DreamMiles	Silver, Gold and Diamond tiers, two years. Emerald tier, no expiry	Codeshare and interline airline partners	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Priority for free upgrades to business class for members with confirmed economy seats when those classes are full and business class is available.
Saudia Alfursan	Three years	SkyTeam partners	Car rental, finance, hotels, telecommunications, retail and booking engines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free flights.
Singapore Airlines KrisFlyer	Three years	Star Alliance members, SilkAir	Over 120 global non-airline partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeem miles for free tickets, upgrades and excess baggage. Premium economy class - 110% of miles flown is earned.
South African Airways SAA Voyager	Miles are valid for a minimum of 36 months from the date they are earned. Expiring miles can be extended by one year at a time (repeatable) by flying 6 000 tier miles on SAA in the calendar year preceding the expiry date. T&Cs apply	Star Alliance member airlines, SA Express Airways, Mango*, Airlink, Swaziland Airlink, El Al, Emirates, Etihad, Jet Airways, Jet Blue, LATAM, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia. *Mango is a redemption partner	Car rental, financial, hospitality, property, fuel, retail and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earning and redemption of miles on flights is based on a conversion from/to the monetary value of the fare and fuel levy on the ticket.
TAAG - Angola Airlines Umbi Umbi	Three years	-	Hotels and car rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated access to check-in counters for gold and silver members.
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, technology, telecommunications, vehicle purchases, fuel products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free tickets or upgrades for traveller and companion.
Virgin Atlantic Airways Flying Club	-	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virgin will relaunch its loyalty programme in the near future.

Key

- oneworld alliance partners: airberlin, American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, LATAM, 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	Top selling feature
Accor Le Club Essential Connected Upgraded Even More VIP	Stays at 2 800 hotels (budget to luxury)	Club Med, HuaZhu, partner hotels, Finnair, Hertz, Europcar, Bagllerina, Multiplus, Smiles, Orange Holiday Shell, LATAM, HSBC	• Transfer points to participating partners, points do not expire as long as guests stay once a year in any Accor hotel.
aha Real Rewards Classic Plus Premium	Earn real rands on accommodation spend	Europcar	• Accommodation and meal vouchers.
BON Hotels BONami	For every stay members earn a BONami bonus crown	-	• Purchase one-year membership for R600 for access to benefits, which are then instantly available.
Carlson Rezidor Club CarlsonSM Club CarlsonSM for Planners (meetings and events planners) Hotel brands include: 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 1 000 participating hotels	Budget and Avis	• Free award nights starting from 9 000 gold points with no blackout dates on standard rooms.
City Lodge The Lodger Club	-	-	• City Lodge will relaunch its loyalty programme in the near future.
Hilton HHonors	Points accrued at more than 4 700 hotels, resorts and timeshare properties across 104 countries and territories	Airline, rail, car rental, cruise, shopping, dining and entertainment	• Redeem points for free nights, premium merchandise, charitable contributions, or unique events through the Hilton HHonors auction platform.
InterContinental Hotels Group IHG Rewards Club IHG Business Rewards (meeting and event planners)	Members can earn points at more than 5 000 hotels worldwide with opportunity to earn points through regular promotions and partners	Over 200 airlines, and online portals, Flights Anywhere, Cars Anywhere and Hotels Anywhere	• Members can redeem points for flights on over 200 airlines with Flights Anywhere, car rentals with Cars Anywhere, hotel stays - even competitor hotels - with Hotels Anywhere, and a variety of merchandise, through the IHG Rewards Club 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 spent with any other Lifestyle Brand Partner	Over 200 brand partners across an array of categories, including fashion, dining, adventure, travel, and much more	• Legacy Lifestyle offers up to 20% off and Lifestyle Rands back at over 257 hotels, across 37 countries worldwide.
Peermont Hotels and Resorts Crown Key	Crown Key points are added to the member's account 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	Mango Airlines, Wine Club and Official Protea Supporters Club	• Crown Key members receive instant Mango Plus status and travel in style with an array of exclusive privileges on Mango Airlines. When they book their Mango flight on peermontrewards.co.za they will be entitled to special offers, flexibility to change flight time or dates, free name change, access to the business class lounge, on-board meal voucher for refreshments and 10kg extra checked in baggage. T&Cs apply.
Preferred Hotels and Resorts iPrefer	Receive points for every US\$ spent on nett room reservations at participating hotels booked through eligible channels, which are redeemable for cash-value Reward certificates which can be used against room nights or hotel services at more than 600 hotels. Reward certificates never expire and are transferable	More than 600 independent hotels and resorts worldwide	• Members can use a combination of reward certificates and cash to purchase room nights or any other hotel services.

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Hotels			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Top selling feature
Premier Hotels and Resorts Royalty Club	Points earned on total hotel bill: accommodation, hotel services and dining	-	• Welcome platter on arrival in room.
Protea Hotels Prokard Note: Marriott Rewards is available across Protea Hotels. Prokard also remains 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	• Up to 10% discount on Best Available Rate of the day in SA and 20% in Africa; 5% off online special offers and complimentary room upgrades.
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 and Uber	• Free nights, free flights, room upgrades and instant rewards.
Sun International MVG Programme	-	-	• Sun International will relaunch its loyalty programme at the end of October.
Tsogo Sun Tsogo Hotel Rewards	Earn SunRands on accommodation rates and hotel owned services (SunRands are valid for two years). 1 SunRand = R1.	American Express, Nedbank Greenbacks and SunSwops	• 7,5%-20% food and beverage discounts at hotel-owned restaurants and bars.

Car Rental			
Programme	How to earn points	Participating partners	Top selling feature
Avis Rent a Car Wizard membership Preferred Service membership Preferred Plus membership President's Club membership ClubRed	Vehicle rental	Frequent flyer programmes with all major international airlines	• Preferred Service/Preferred Plus/President's Club: Global recognition, upgrades and free weekend vouchers.
Budget Car Rental	Vehicle rental	Club Red Programme	• ClubRed (travel agents): Earn ClubRed Roses on qualifying rates; you can now redeem for eBucks or cash on the new ClubRed VISA card.
Europcar Platinum Programme Drive Card (Leisure) Drive Club (Leisure) Business Connect (SMEs)	Vehicle rental	Kulula, SAA, SAA Voyager, Tsogo Sun	• 'Ready Service' customers can use the Ready Service counter to avoid queues. ID only is needed to collect keys.
First Car Rental First Club Card Corporate Show & Go Card	Vehicle rental	Premier Hotels & Resorts, Hotel Express, FlySafair and Anytime Holidays	• Corporate Show&Go: Direct from plane to car, mobile checkout in one minute.
Hertz Hertz Gold Plus Rewards	Vehicle rental	-	• Complimentary access to Acsa Bidvest Premier Lounges with car rental reservation of three consecutive days or more.
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	-	• Thrifty does not prescribe where or for what members can use their Moolla Rewards.
Woodford Woodford Advance	Vehicle rental	-	• Upgrades of vehicles; free GPS and extra driver inclusions; no deposit required for specific categories and classes.

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

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Price beats loyalty with leisure travellers

THE likelihood of a client being swayed by loyalty points and rewards is determined by their reason for travelling.

Of the 78 corporate and leisure travel agents who responded to eTNW's survey, 50 said loyalty programmes impacted consumer choices while 28 were unconvinced.

"While business-related travel or recurrent travellers are more sensitive to loyalty programmes, price sensitivity is higher for tourists."

LATAM Airlines commercial director: UK, Nordic Countries and Africa, **Martin Modarelli**, says the effectiveness of a loyalty programme depends on the customer's profile and their intention to travel.

"While business-related travel or recurrent travellers are more sensitive to

loyalty programmes, price sensitivity is higher for tourists," he says.

Hilke Desmarais of 360 Travel, says when it comes to the corporate traveller, travel policy often dictates that the cheapest available flight needs to be selected, so if the traveller has a loyalty programme, they would accumulate miles dependent on which supplier is the cheapest.

"When it comes to the leisure market and the client has the budget, then the loyalty programme may sway the client. However our market has become quite cost sensitive, so if there is a remarkable difference in pricing and the air connections are still reasonably convenient, then the client would normally select the cheaper option," she says.

"My clients now look at price before loyalty," one agent said, adding that if the loyalty cost is slightly more expensive than the cheapest option, that is

Do loyalty programmes play a role in your clients' choice of supplier?



when the client could be swayed to remain loyal.

Another agent said that clients and agencies were looking at service more than rewards.

"If I know my client will

get better service with a particular supplier, then it is them that I will go with – that is why I am guaranteed repeat business as opposed to losing a client due to bad service."



Thaybz Khan

Cruisers are loyal too

LOYALTY programmes are also popular with cruise passengers, says **Thaybz Khan**, marketing executive at Cruises International. "Cruising generates a high volume of repeat guests, and often these repeat clients are well ranked within the loyalty programme. This means clients automatically qualify for the value-adds that come along with being a loyalty member of that cruise line, which assists the client in making a decision to go on yet another cruise holiday," she says.

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KEEP CLIMBING





Partnerships offer more value

SUPPLIERS partnering together to allow customers to redeem points for the same loyalty programme across a number of different sectors is another way to encourage repeat business, the experts agree.

Sharon de Leur of Peermont says consumers are seeking more value, choices, point redemption options, discount options, ease of transacting and experiences that add significant value to their lifestyle – consequently as loyalty programmes continue to evolve, brands will have to be increasingly aware of adding meaningful benefits and rewards to mitigate the loss of brand loyalty.

“This has resulted in a number of brands forming smart partnerships to offer an enhanced and broader value proposition to their consumers,” she says.

Lance Smith, executive sales at Avis Southern Africa, says suppliers partnering together is an ongoing trend and is an example of suppliers becoming more innovative in their approach to loyalty.

“At Avis, we have partnerships with



Lance Smith

various hotels, credit card companies, banks, health companies etc. which have been effective in encouraging loyalty and repeat business,” Lance says.

It makes sense for suppliers to partner up to give passengers a full-service travel offering, adds LATAM’s **Martin Modarelli**.

He says passengers who make use of loyalty programme partnerships regularly

have peace of mind knowing what to expect from associated suppliers, making travelling more convenient and allowing them to access benefits faster.

Supplier partnerships are important in providing the traveller choice and value, agrees Air Mauritius head: sales and marketing, **Wouter Nel**.

Air Mauritius’s Kestrel Flyer has recently entered into a partnership with Emirates Skywards, which offers travellers more choice in earning and redeeming their miles on both carriers’ flight operations.

“Through these partnerships, our travellers have access to more lounges, flights and other value-added benefits that were not there before,” he says.

LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Earn rewards faster

EFFECTIVE partnerships also enable travellers to earn rewards more quickly.

Partnerships make a loyalty programme more appealing to customers because they can consolidate rewards in one portfolio rather than getting points across different vendors and struggling to build up enough to be redeemable, says **Jimmy Eichelgruen**, Delta Air Lines sales director for Africa, Middle East and India.

“I do it myself – I fly Delta and stay at the same hotel chain to build up points to pay for future trips,” he says, adding that Delta has a number of partners, including Hertz and Starwood Hotels, which enables customers to earn and redeem miles for flights or a range of other holidays perks.

Partnering with companies within the same or associated industries can also yield maximum impact and results, especially when a common objective – such as the nurturing of tourism or encouraging business – is the basis of the partnership, says **Essa Suleman**, operations manager at Woodford Car Hire.

“We have not engaged with partners for our loyalty programme, Advance, as yet, although this is a plan for the future,” he says.

Suretha Cruse of SAA says supplier partnerships are more of a necessity for those suppliers with complementary services or products as part of their loyalty offering because the partnerships provide opportunities for the cross-selling and upselling of those services.

Suretha says that, by partnering with complementary partners, a loyalty programme supplier can create a convenient multi-partner one-stop e-commerce marketplace and offer rewards with such partners.

“Initially, airline programmes partnered with other airlines to extend networks, but more and more programmes, including SAA Voyager, have now crossed over to non-travel partnerships in the retail and lifestyle space. This is a very effective strategy for programmes seeking to continuously keep customers engaged and the loyalty card first in wallet,” she says.

Top tips for agents

Hilke Desmarais, travel consultant at 360 Travel, offered the following tips for agents who are dealing with clients who are members of loyalty programmes:

1. It is important for travel agents to have a broad knowledge of the different frequent flyer programmes. “The client has spent money with the agency in order to accumulate miles and so the agent should reciprocate by assisting the client with the redemption of these miles.”
2. As booking tickets when redeeming loyalty miles is labour intensive, a slightly higher

transaction fee than normal would be fair, she says. “Having said this, the client needs to understand that the agent is a go-between and thus does not have much control if these seats are confirmed or not. Communication with the client in this regard is vital,” Hilke says.

3. Star Alliance, SkyTeam and oneworld loyalty programmes are still the most popular among travellers, Hilke says. “These alliances make it easier for the traveller to accumulate miles and also reach higher tier levels.” ■

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New ceo for SA Tourism

MINISTER of Tourism **Derek Hanekom** has welcomed the appointment of **Sisa Ntshona** as the ceo of South African Tourism. The appointment has been approved by the Cabinet and was announced by chairperson of the SA Tourism Board, Dr **Tanya Abrahamse**. Sisa previously worked as an executive manager for Africa and the Middle East at SAA from

February 1999 until March 2004. More recently he was responsible for enterprise development across 12 countries in Africa at Barclays. He is currently the chairperson and president of the Enterprise Development Council of South Africa. Derek thanked the ceo of SA Tourism, **Sthembiso Dlamini**, for acting as ceo and keeping the organisation on

track to meet its objectives during the appointment process. "Sisa's experience in the banking and aviation industries will be valuable to SA Tourism, and to the wider tourism sector. We look forward to working with him and his team to grow international tourist arrivals even further and develop a vibrant domestic tourism market," says Derek.

Recognising excellence

Emperors Palace gm for hotels and resort operations, **Wayne Hill**, has been awarded the Certified Hotel Administrator designation by the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute. The certification is considered the most respected of its kind that can be awarded to a hotel gm or hospitality executive. During his 26 years in the hospitality industry, Wayne has managed various departments in leading hotels. "I have always wanted to be a Certified Hotel Administrator, just like some people want to be pilots or lawyers," says Wayne.



City Lodge cares

City Lodge has donated R430 000 to three worthy organisations: the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa, and Food & Trees for Africa. CANSA received R199 600 from the hotel group. Pictured here (from left): **Chris Hudson**, national sales manager at Ciro Beverage Solutions; **Tony Balabanoff**, City Lodge divisional operations director; **Munnik Marais**, CANSA's corporate relations manager; and **Patrick Tate**, City Lodge divisional operations director.

Appointment

■ Avis Southern Africa has announced the appointment of **Luis de Sousa** as country manager for



Mozambique. Luis's 17 years of experience include a position in the financial services sector as a risk manager at Barclays and gm of MultiRent SA, where he managed its fleet management business.

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Queues must fall!

From page 1

Meanwhile, South African travel agents report that numerous clients have missed connecting flights and transfers. "An FCM client waited for over an hour yesterday and we had to extend his transfer pick-up time because of it," says **Michelle Jolley**, Corporate Traveller Marketing Manager. Club Travel md, **Wally Gaynor**, recently had what he calls a "most horrific experience" when leaving OR Tambo this week. "It took about 45 minutes to get through security," he says, adding that once his hand luggage had been checked, there was nowhere to move forward any more.

Wally says numerous immigration counters were unoccupied, with only two counters handling biometrics. "When I was seven people away from the counter, the immigration official said his system was frozen and he literally just left. I thought a riot was going to break out as the

people tried to merge into other queues."

When Wally eventually got to the counter, the immigration official told him he had been there since 5am and that he had had enough. "He said: 'They will sack me if they see I don't do the biometrics but I don't care.' And he proceeded to stamp my passport without checking it."

According to David, in recognition of the tourism industry's contribution to the economy, the delays at OR Tambo must be dealt with at an inter-ministerial level as a matter of urgency. Additional immigration staff must be hired and trained ahead of the coming high season, he says.

"The galling thing is that this is the same department that has wrought legislation that has severely impacted our sector... and now they can't even do their day jobs properly," he says. "I urge Minister Hanekom to take this matter up urgently with the Deputy President." ■



Spiffy fares, mate!

As part of Air Mauritius's special fares in business class to destinations including Australia, India, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, passengers can fly from Johannesburg to Perth from R25 090 return, including taxes. Pictured here is MK's **Wouter Nel**, sales and marketing manager: Southern Africa. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Gigs gracefully bows out

TARYN NIGHTINGALE

FOUNDER and co-director of Travel Connections, **Geraldine Ziik**, affectionately known by her travel colleagues as Gigs, has 'retired' after dedicating 44 years to the travel industry. "I don't really like the word 'retiring'," says Gigs. "I chose to sell my shares and exit the company because I want to spend more time with my children and grandchildren who live in London." She says she and her husband, Thomas, will now be living

between London, Austria (where Thomas's children live) and South Africa.

Geraldine and **Lindy Preston** started Travel Connections in March 1988. The pair met at school and ended up in the travel industry where they worked together at Budget Travel.

Gigs says one of her career highlights was selling 60% of their business to Bidvest to allow for a BEE partner in 2001. "The biggest lesson I've learnt in my career is that without your staff you really have nothing and that the key

to good business is to look after the people who work with you," she says.

Travel Connections will continue to be run by md, Lindy, and is now 100% owned by Bidvest.

"Entering into a business with a partner is a very risky endeavour and I think statistics would show that most partnerships do not prevail, and certainly not for 28 years.

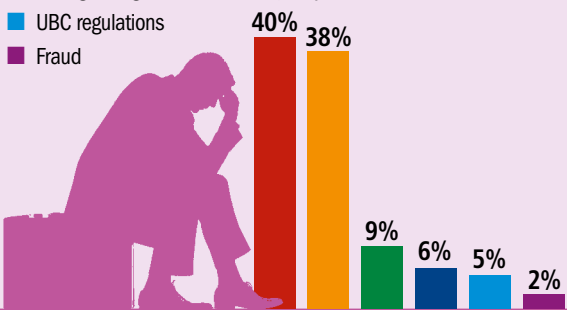
"Such was our friendship that we never gave this possibility a second thought," says Lindy. ■

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Plenty to worry about

Which of the year's biggest issues concerns you most?

- Volatile rand
- Clients finding cheaper fares online
- Increase in terrorism
- Changes to government travel policy
- UBC regulations
- Fraud



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'EU visa-free travel – a long shot'

From page 1

travellers is its ultimate goal. Spokesperson for the DHA, **Mayihlome Tshwete**, says the EU needs to examine the so-called threat SA poses to Europe. "Most SA travellers are tourists and not economic migrants." He says the DHA wants to look at issues that concern the EU and address them.

"Once we do this, we could see visa requirements dropped within two years."

However, **Annemarie Lexow**, sales and marketing manager of Travel Vision, says the proposed concessions are optimistic and opportunistic and that there's no reason to expect the rest of the world to

open its doors to Africa. "We would need to get our own house in order first."

Chris van Staden, director of Azure Travel, agrees, saying while it would be great, it's not going to happen.

In terms of shorter term concessions, the DHA aims to simplify the process and lower the cost of long-term multiple-entry visas for business travellers, students, academics and other groups of frequent travellers to the EU.

Susan Thesen, gm of British T.I.P.S, says some countries within the EU are quite strict when it comes to granting multiple-entry visas and an initiative to streamline the entire process would make it

easier for frequent travellers.

However, TNW spoke to a visa specialist who says the EU is realistic about visas for SA travellers. "I don't think long-term multiple-entry visas should be opened up to everybody. This could put EU countries at risk. Travellers who are more stable and likely to return are granted longer visas."

Mayihlome says the EU ambassador expects to have more direction on how and when concessions for multiple-entry visas will be addressed next year. He says other concessions, such as for diplomats and officials who no longer require visas for the EU, will be addressed sooner. ■

New Zealand imposes visas on SAs

From page 1

(R1 634) until November 20. From November 21, paper applications increase to \$184 (R1 822). All South Africans submitting paper applications can do so through VFS Global in Cherry Lane Office Park in Pretoria.

"The length of the visitor visa is usually up to three months, but can be as long as nine," VFS Global told TNW, "however, visitors wanting to stay that long

have to request this in their application as the embassy ultimately determines the length of the visa granted."

SA nationals passing through New Zealand as transit passengers will need to apply for a transit visa before travel, unless they are travelling to Australia and hold a valid visa for the country. With the transit visa, travellers can stay in the transit area of Auckland International airport for a

maximum of 24 hours.

Biometrics will not be required for either the visitor visa or transit visa.

South Africans travelling to New Zealand before November 21 will be granted a visitor visa on arrival – valid for up to three months – provided they meet standard requirements, which include having sufficient funds, an outward ticket and satisfying the immigration officer they genuinely intend a visit. ■