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# The demise of a travel group?

TESSA REED

CASE of fraud may have sounded the death knell for the South African Travel Centre (SATC) group, a wholly owned SAA subsidiary.

While SAA would not answer any questions on how many, if any, agencies were still part of the group and how these were ticketing, *TNW* understands that the group's lata licence ceased on May 4 due to a case of fraud.

While the lata logo was still displayed on the group's website earlier this month, it has since been removed and the website has been replaced a basic website displaying no SAA branding.

In January, an SATC ITC

told *TNW* that it had fallen victim to client credit card fraud amounting to roughly R1 million (*TNW* February 7, 2018).

Earlier this year, 22 SATC members moved across to the XL Travel Group. Marco Ciocchetti, ceo, told *TNW* that this included four agencies with their own lata licences and 18 non-

To page 2

### Industry is ill-prepared for NewGen ISS roll-out

SARAH ROBERTSON

IATA's NewGen ISS programme is set to be rolled out in South Africa in the first quarter of 2019, however when *TNW* canvassed local trade, they were largely unaware of how the programme will affect operations.

NewGen ISS was developed with the aim of updating lata's agency programme in an attempt to modernise it. Roll-out for the programme began in March this year in

the Nordic regions, Canada and Singapore, with agents in early adoption regions critical of its effectiveness to date.

Asata ceo, **Otto de Vries**, said the biggest criticism from agents currently working within the programme related to the Remittance Holding Capacity (RHC) notification system and the timeframe for payment processes, either through early settlement or using EasyPay. He explained that NewGen

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# XLent!

Having a good time at the recent XL Travel conference, Beyond Xlence, are (from left) Otto de Vries of Asata; Tracey Krog of MSC Cruises; Uriah Jansen of Oojah Travel Protection (which administers Hollard's travel insurance); Rudolph Theunissen of Thompsons Travel and Thompsons For Travel; and Matthew Fubbs of The Holiday Factory. Photo: Tessa Reed

### Etihad appoints new country manager for SA

SARAH ROBERTSON

KARLENE Barkley, has been appointed South African country manager for Etihad Airways, replacing John Friel in the role.

Karlene will be responsible for all aspects of business on a commercial level for Etihad and brings over 25 years of experience with her in the travel and aviation industry. Previously Karlene held the position of sales and marketing manager for Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands at

Cathay Pacific.

Internationally Etihad has been cutting back on routes and focusing on driving Abu Dhabi's tourism sector and commercial links during 2018 following two years of reporting losses.

When asked if there was any truth to the current whisperings that Emirates was in talks to take over Etihad, Karlene denied this as a rumour. Were a transaction to go ahead the enlarged operation would make it the world's largest airline.



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#### **TBCSA** appoints permanent ceo

#### **TSHIFHIWA** Tshivhengwa

has been appointed permanent ceo of the Tourism **Business** Council of South Africa (TBCSA).

He was appointed interim ceo on August 15 after the departure of Mmatšatši Ramawela.

"We are excited that we have secured an outstanding tourism executive of the calibre of Tshifhiwa to spearhead TBCSA's



Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa

organisational strategy," said chairman of the TBCSA board, Blacky Komani. "He is levelheaded, and is well respected in the industry." Blacky added that there was huge interest in the role from tourism industry heavyweights. Tshifhiwa.

who is excited by this opportunity, said there was a lot of work ahead and that the tourism industry was not in good shape.

#### TIC adds car-rental excess waiver

SARAH ROBERTSON

IC has introduced a new car-rental excess waiver benefit to all its international products. effective from October 1, together with the insurance company's annual rate increase.

The new waiver offers reimbursement of the excess for which a traveller is liable if they are involved in an accident or if a hired car is stolen. The benefit is being introduced on TIC's business products as well as on its Leisure Comprehensive and Leisure Standard products.

Simmy Micheli, manager -

sales and marketing for TIC, says the new benefit was introduced due to popular demand from travellers.

"The waiver limit varies according to the plan the client takes and is valid in whichever country they are travelling."

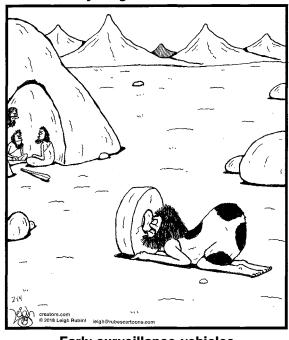
"The waiver limit varies according to the plan the client takes and is valid in whichever country they are travelling," explains Simmy.

Additional changes to TIC's products include overall benefit limit

increases on various products including medical and related expenses, pre-existing illness cover, cancellation cover, accidental death, travel delay, weather conditions, luggage cover and luggage

The company's travel delay benefit now also includes reimbursement for lounge access costs. Missed events are included as insured events under iourney cancellation and curtailment cover. Senior cover is now available for up to 123 days and the denied visa benefit is restricted to South African passport holders only.

#### Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



#### Early surveillance vehicles

#### The demise of a travel group?

#### From page 1

lata agencies.

The group, which once claimed a footprint spanning beyond South Africa to Gaborone. Maseru, Lusaka and Accra and consisting of more than 80 members in 2008, shrunk to fewer than 50

members in 2015.

The decline came after a failed attempt to privatise the group, which was up for sale in 2014. Then ceo. Bulelwa Kovana, said at the time that there had been interest in SATC from a number of industry players over the years but

no sale materialised. TNW understands that the price wasn't right. XL Travel was rumoured to be in talks with SAA to purchase SATC at that time.

In 2016, SATC and XL Travel signed an MoU to collaborate on preferred suppliers' contracts. ■

#### Gina Richter selects the top specials from Travelinfo

• Discover the World. December fly-and-cruise offer from R35 299pp sharing. Offer includes return flights from Johannesburg to Singapore, all meals and entertainment on board, on-board spending of US\$100 (R1 484) per cabin, transfers and approximate taxes. Depart Singapore and visit Kota Kinabalu, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok and Koh Samui. Set departure December 19.

• Beachcomber Tours. Enjoy more from R16 750pp sharing. Offer includes five nights' accommodation at the Mauricia Beachcomber Resort & Spa. Valid between June 1 and 30. Supplement of R1 530pp applicable from June 14-30.

• Thompsons Holidays. Wonders of Turkey from R20 897pp sharing. Offer includes return flights departing Johannesburg to Antalya, approximate taxes, return transfers, six nights' accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily, tour guide throughout and more. Visit Antalya, Cappadocia, Ankara and Istanbul. Valid until November 2.

· Air Austral. Fly to Mauritius from R5 380 return, departing Johannesburg. Offer includes approximate taxes. Book by October 31

• Dream Kist Tours. Classic Scotland self-drive package from R8 499pp sharing. Offer includes seven nights' accommodation and a full Scottish breakfast daily. Offer car rental from approximately R3 679. Set travel dates November 5-12



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#### To the point



TAAG Angola Airlines is to launch a Luanda-Lagos service, starting on November 11. It will operate on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays using a Boeing 737-700. Flight DT564 departs LAD at 10h40 and arrives in LOS at 13h40. Flight DT565 departs LOS at 14h40 and arrives in LAD at 17h40. The new Lagos flight connects with TAAG's Johannesburg-Luanda service. Flight DT576 departs JNB at 06h50 and arrives in LAD at 09h20. Flight DT575 departs LAD at 19h20 and arrives in JNB at 23h50.

# SAA CONNECTS BUSINESS TRAVELLERS TO EAST LONDON.



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Pictured at Tourvest Travel Services' recent client day are Carol Petersen, gm preferred partners; Morné du Preez, ceo; Shereen Morolo, ceo public sector; and Tracey van den Berg, corporate communications and events manager for Tourvest Travel Services. Photo: Sarah Robertson

# BSP shows September slowdown

TESSA REED

HILE BSP figures from January until August reflected industry growth of just under 10%, September figures show growth of just under 3%.

This substantial slowdown in growth comes alongside significant losses by the rand against stronger currencies. In June and July, the

rand reached a high of R14,71 to the euro and a low of R16,12. However, In September, the rand dropped as low as R17,94 to the euro.

Agents surveyed at the time reported a significant drop in both business and leisure forward bookings compared with the same period last year, while more than 50% said some clients cancelled

bookings after the rand weakened.

Franz Von Wielligh, gm of Flight Specials, told *TNW* it was an expected reaction to the rand's decline, especially in the current economic climate. He added that, given that most consumers had already made their travel bookings, he didn't expect the market to show improvement until next year. ■

#### **Letter to the Editor**

# Misconceptions about the NDC

THERE seems to be a misconception that there are fewer facilities available through an NDC or direct connection. The view seems to be that these connections are merely built to supply and confirm inventory but that agents are stuck when it comes to things like seat allocations, any extras like meal preferences, special needs, or making modifications.

The truth is that most of the NDC connections have facilities for these things. It's merely up to the booking tool provider to build them. For example, the FlySafair API allows agents to make bookings; modify flights/dates/pax names; allocate seats; sell ancillaries; allocate specialneeds services and check in passengers.

It's up to those connecting to this API to build the facilities to do what they want. So your functionality wish list should be something to have at hand when looking for a booking tool if you are a TMC.

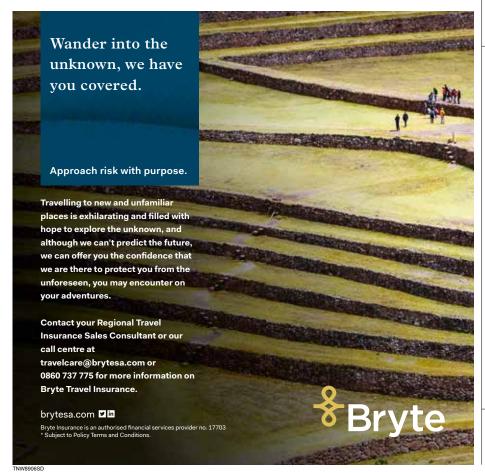
At its essence NDC is about creating a standard way for airlines to connect their central reservation systems to external booking tools. The problem at the moment is that not all systems speak the same language and the idea is to create a standard.

These connections are often referred to as APIs, which is IT jargon for a link between two systems.

For example, imagine that your booking tool is asking two airlines for pricing and availability for a flight. One system might require the booking tool to request availability in the following order: departure date and destination, whereas the other airline's system might require that availability is requested in the order of origin; destination then departure date. The whole idea behind NDC is that all systems format their requirements in the same way so that booking systems (GDS and alternatives) can all easily plug in without having to re-format every request for each airline.

This is the second in a three-part series on the NDC. In my next piece, I am going to look at the opportunities NDC presents.

**Kirby Gordon**, head of sales and distribution at FlySafair ■





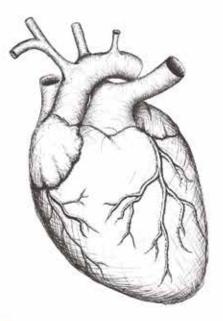
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(51%)

of consultants at travel agencies say that management is the one thing they'd change at work.



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#### **REPORT XL TRAVEL BEYOND XLENCE**

The recent XL Travel conference, Beyond Xlence, took place at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Johannesburg, October 5-7. Savannah Freemantle and Tessa Reed report.

#### Keep up, or become irrelevant

HE PACE of change is at an all-time high, upending traditional business models, and agents that cannot keep up with it will become irrelevant.

Marco Ciocchetti, ceo of XL Travel Group, shared this message with management in the XL Travel Group ahead of the group's conference.

On-demand products like Uber and Netflix had created an expectation of immediate gratification, Marco said, adding that travel was not safe from this.

Today's consumer also expects a high level of personalisation. Marco said while this is something agents offered in the past when servicing a select group of loyal customers, today's agencies need to offer this at scale. Big data and artificial intelligence are the tools to help agencies achieve this, he said.

Marco said companies like Amazon and Netflix are using big data to take personalisation even further predicting what consumers want. He said Amazon was piloting "anticipatory shipping", where it had started boxing goods before consumers had placed an order, based on purchases they were likely to make. Netflix is working on an algorithm to make suggestions to viewers based on their

Speaking to agents across the group on Sunday, Marco said agents need to break free from their comfort zones and actively seek out new opportunities if they want to succeed in the current challenging economic climate. The overriding theme of the conference was that a change of mind-set is essential in a changing world.

In his keynote address, Marco emphasised that the technical recession is an ideal environment for sparking innovation. "The recession is forcing us out of the environment we are used to and challenging us to create new opportunities. This is a good thing. People lose the momentum to chase their vision when they accept the comfort zone they find themselves in."

He said that while change can be financially, emotionally and physically painful, it is important to embrace it if you want to stay relevant. Use this pain as a driver to become an expert in what you want to achieve going forward," he said.

Motivational speaker Gavin Sharples agreed, adding that instead of focusing on market saturation, agents should look for any opportunity to personalise the travel they offer to clients and so, stand out, "Don't tell me there are only so many destinations and ways to package them. There are only eight musical notes and yet the music industry is thriving. Tell me what you know about your customer and how you're using that to up your value proposition," said Gavin.



There's something about Mary! A tribute was paid to Mary Shilleto, Thompsons Travel ceo, who retires at the end of the year. Delivering the tribute, Robyn Christie of Just Saying, reflected on Mary's endless energy and passion and thanked her for leading the way for women in the industry. Mary is pictured here with Marco Ciocchetti, XL Travel.



Claudette Thorne, Travelport, and Aadil Esack, XL Travel.

#### Millennials will make or break your business

AGENTS should aim their products at millennials or be left behind, said entrepreneur and business coach Mummy Mthembu-Fawkes.

"Anyone between the ages of 22 and 36 is a millennial. Older generations are also influenced by millennial family members when buying travel. Do you still think millennials aren't your biggest customer group?"

Mummy emphasised the importance of understanding the millennial requirement for convenience and instant feedback. "I conducted an experiment where I phoned an agent to book flights for my trip and my assistant began an online booking process at the same time. By the time I received an email with three quotes for my first flight (30

minutes later) my assistant had booked seven flights and checked me into my first one."

She suggested agents be active on all social media platforms. "Advertise your packages in creative ways and when people comment, or post queries, answer them immediately. They will feel like they are receiving instant feedback."

She warned that agents resistant to using social media would lose out to competitors who already drive business on these platforms.

Marco added that millennials are still interested in purchasing agent services. "Millennials are willing to give you the data you need to personalise the experiences you sell them. Ensure that you are proactively collecting this data as it is key to taking your business to the next level."



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6 ■ Wednesday October 17 2018







# Planning your customer's next holiday? Why not Hoedspruit?

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#### **CASE STUDY: DIRECT CONNECT**

### LH's Direct Connect delivers better pricing and more content

It's been six months since Lufthansa Group and Tourvest Travel Services (TTS) announced their collaboration on the first NDC-capable Direct Connect solution in the South African market. *TNW* was invited to check out the solution.

ARLIER this year, TNW surveyed agents, asking them what their feelings were about lata's NDC (New Distribution Capability). Chief among participants' concerns were that it could compromise consultants' productivity; it would require additional agent training; and it would allow clients to bypass travel agents.

The integration of Lufthansa's Direct Connect into TTS's online booking solution, Travelit, puts paid to these fears, says Tourvest. In fact, it has helped the group secure better pricing and a wider range of content.

There is no change to how agents and corporate clients book tickets because these are made through the Travelit system. Pricing of Direct Connect fares is also more competitive because bookings are not subject to the €16 (R263) GDS surcharge and prices are on a par with those available on Lufthansa's website, says **Dr André Schulz**, gm Lufthansa Group Southern Africa. As a Direct Connect partner, TTS has access to exclusive fares.

**Philip Katz**, ceo of Travelit, adds that direct connections shorten the supply chain between airlines and their customers, enabling the former to offer better pricing.

In the future, the solution will also enable TTS agents and corporate clients to book tickets and ancillaries

within a single workflow, resulting in further time savings.

Philip is excited about how the NDC will dramatically increase the amount of choice that agents can offer their clients. He says while working within the parameters of the GDS, airlines are restricted to no more than 26 fare classes; the NDC does away with this restriction. The limit is a result of fare classes being assigned letters of the alphabet.

He explains that, instead of offering fares, airlines will respond to agent requests with offers through the NDC. There will be no limit on the number of offers an airline can serve and these can be specifically tailored to a particular client.

Lufthansa expects to roll out differentiated offers in the next few months, says **Claudia Noack**, account manager at Lufthansa.

One of the other benefits of the NDC is that it will mean the death of ADMs. Philip says because the airline will present agents with offers based on a request, the airline controls the offer and this eliminates any chance for error on the agent's side.

At present, TTS is the only TMC in South Africa that has signed up for the Direct Connect solution. Claudia says the airline is in advanced discussions with other TMCs to roll out this solution.



The Tourism Authority of Thailand recently hosted the trade at a breakfast at Kai Thai, Montecasino, to introduce them to its new marketing concept, 'Open to the New Shades of Thailand'. The concept encourages visitors to discover new perspectives in existing attractions, or indulge in popular experiences in new tourist attractions. From left: Lesley Simpson, marketing representative in SA for the Tourism Authority of Thailand; Marilyn Padiachy, product manager, The Holiday Factory; and Chiravadee Khunsub, director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand UK.

#### **AirHeads**



#### A snapshot of the week's airline news

#### Airlink adds business class to RCB

FOLLOWING the introduction of jet services on the Johannesburg-Richards Bay route, Airlink has included a business-class service from October 1. The service includes a welcome drink, hand towel, a cold meal served on crockery, branded silverware on a tray, a choice of white and red Michelangelo award-winning wines, a 30kg checked baggage allowance and lounge access at OR Tambo. The recently acquired Embraer E-Jet 170 will operate the route.

#### BA to service Kos, Osaka next year

BRITISH Airways will launch a three-times-a-week service from London Gatwick to Kos Island International Airport in Greece, from May 15 to October 26, 2019. The airline will also launch a four-times-a-week direct service to Osaka from March 31, 2019, operated by the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner.

#### For the record

When reporting on the Mandela Centenary in the *TNW* dated September 26, **Wendy Webber** and **Emca Kruger** from Thompsons Holidays were incorrectly referred to as **Hilary Vilioen** and **Jena Timm**. *TNW* apologises for this error.



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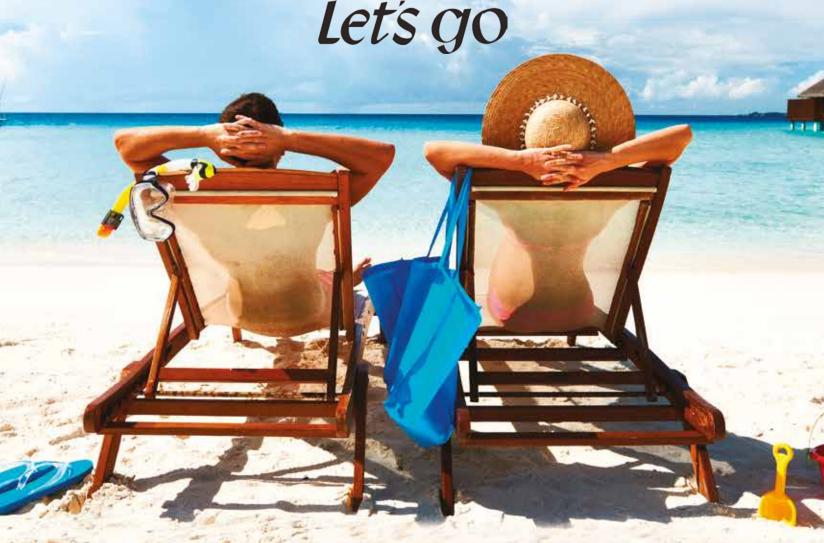


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# XL TRAVEL CONFERENCE **GOES BEYOND XLENCE**



A 500 strong delegation descended on the Birchwood Hotel & Conference Centre last weekend for the XL Travel Group annual team conference where the consortium challenged its membership to go 'Beyond XLence'

In his opening address CEO Marco Ciocchetti highlighted that 'The secret to survival and prospering during tough time is opportunity recognition. The first step in opportunity recognition is to know and believe that there will always be opportunity for those who seek and pursue it.'

In a weekend featuring product and technology training workshops, keynote addresses by internationally acclaimed speakers including Buhle Dlamini, Gavin Sharples,

Mummy Mthembu, Braam Malherbe and

Robyn Christie, were introduced throughout the weekend by MC Chantal Rutter-Dros.

A breath taking gala and awards evening featuring entertainment by Dr Victor and the Rasta Rebels was highlighted by truly fantastic prizes by all sponsors, which recognize the training and sales efforts of the group, with the Grand Prize, a brand new car, being won by Donelle Hietink of XL Aloe Travel.





















#### **Aviation addict**

In the latest Who Is... Tessa Reed chats to Sylvain Bosc, fastjet chief commercial officer.

YLVAIN Bosc, fastjet chief commercial officer, grew up within earshot of the Airbus factory in Toulouse, France. He says he is addicted to aviation. "I remember when I was a kid, the tests were performed at night for the Concorde engine," he recalls. "As a child, I was sleeping with the noise of these engines running in the background and I found them to be melodious."

In Toulouse, in every family, there would be someone who worked in aviation, says Sylvain. "Toulouse is the Seattle of Europe," he says, (Seattle is the home of Boeing). He says growing up in Toulouse undoubtedly had a big influence on his career choice. Bar a brief stint in fashion, he has spent the bulk of his career in aviation.

After graduating, he started his career at Air France in 1995 and spent over a decade at the airline, moving up the ranks and being appointed sales and marketing director for Japan, where he was based for more than three years, before taking a position as group strategic planner for the Air France KLM Group in 2007.

France was in the US, where he was involved in the pricing and revenue management of the Concorde, which operated a daily Paris-New York service, as well as for charter trips of US tourists visiting France.

Sylvain recalls working with the trade at the time before the Internet, when 99% of sales in America were through the trade. He says: "I remember very clearly the first travel websites and when commissions started declining in the mid-90s. I remember, at the time, commission went from 10% to 8%. People thought it was crazy and unsustainable. Little did we know that we would evolve very quickly to a zero-commission model.'

Still, he says, in the US today, despite some online retailers, the same agencies that were powerful back then, wield the power today, in spite of all the changes.

Over his career, Sylvain has

been posted in Spain, Japan and South Africa. "I have been very lucky to learn the trade in different environments," he says. "It has been very exciting to market a product as aspirational as travel."

"It has been very exciting to market a product as aspirational as travel."

Sylvain's foray into fashion was about 10 years ago, after the financial crash when the Lehman Brothers collapsed. "I was pessimistic about the future of air travel and thought it may be a good time to try do something else. He went to work for an affordable luxury fashion brand for women.

However, he quickly realised it wasn't for him. "I didn't like it at all," he says. "Selling a service is very different from selling a product.'

four years before he was head-hunted to SAA, where he worked for two years. Of this

December 2017, the airline narrowed its losses from US\$49,7 million (R739m) to \$24,5 million (R364m) and in June this year, reported that it had achieved a cashflow breakeven in the last quarter of 2017.

Sylvain has spent the last four years in South Africa and his children do not want to leave. When living in France, he spent many holidays in Africa and has a great passion for the continent and the Indian Ocean islands.

"I could've been South African because my forefathers were Huguenots who were expelled from France because they were Protestants," Sylvain says. However, instead of coming to South Africa, they went first to South America and then North Africa. "I think I have a special connection to Africa.'

#### **Getting to** know Sylvain

- Sylvain is fluent in French, English, Spanish and German and can also speak a little Catalan and Japanese.
- He met his wife in Paris
   20 years ago. "I am lucky that my wife also likes travelling and didn't mind relocating with me," he says. Together, they have three boys, aged six, 12 and 13. The kids have been raised in Japan, France and Africa. "We can say that we are an international family, so when we watch the World Cup, we have several teams that we support," he laughs.
- The family frequently travels domestically. "South Africa has so much to offer," says Sylvain. Next up, they will head to the Karoo for Christmas. Their travel is managed by an agent. "I am a big believer that it's best to ask professionals to help you."
- Sylvain is a big wine lover. He says South Africa's wines compete with the best of them in terms of quality. "In terms of value for money, I don't think there is any country that can beat South Africa's offering." He finds it refreshing that South Africa's winemakers are friendly and accessible. "The wine business in France is so profitable that people start to behave like divas."
- He has developed a passion for mountain biking and completed the Cape Epic last year - one of the highlights of his life. "It's such a beautiful race with incredible scenery."





#### Incentives weather the economic storm

WHILE economic uncertainty affects the demand for travel both in the business and leisure sectors, there are signs of things picking up for incentives, with more companies returning to use travel as a tool to motivate staff.

"Incentive travel is definitely growing in the SA market. Companies are realising that consumers are motivated more and more by experiences, and travel offers countless varied experiences to suit every kind of person," says **Ross Volk**, md of MSC Cruises South Africa.

While **Mandy Lerena**, Virgin Atlantic commercial manager South Africa, agrees that there has been growth, she feels that the pace has been a bit slower in SA than abroad. She says that in the last few years, there has "certainly" been an increase in incentive travel, but adds: "This trend is true in our international markets and we can slowly see the demand increasing in SA."

#### Teresa Richardson, md of The Travel Corporation, says sales-driven companies use incentives to drive the right behaviour to increase productivity or sales. "We know that travel is high up on the wish list of the average South African and an incentive trip in exchange for targets

A motivational tool

But what is it about travel that makes it so effective as a motivator? For **Dalene Oroni**, groups manager at Development Promotions, travel works effectively as an incentive because people generally can't afford to travel in their personal capacity.

"Everyone wants to travel, so

being achieved has always

been a successful driver."



"Everyone wants to travel, so they will work hard to achieve their targets in order to do so." Dalene Oroni

they will work hard to achieve their targets in order to do so," she says.

Meanwhile, Beachcomber Groups and Incentives has experienced "another good year". Enid Maullin, groups sales executive, says: "Our repeat corporate business is also encouraging. Beachcomber's group travel for the new year and forward bookings are positive and exciting." She says companies have used travel as an incentive for many years and that this will continue as it is a great motivator. "It is rewarding and one of the best options to get the company together in a special place, have fun and enjoy time together with your fellow colleagues," she adds.

**Tighter budgets**However, **Lizaan Schnettler**, groups and incentives manager, Cruises
International, says while there has definitely been an

increase in incentive travel, companies' budgets have not increased much over the past two years.

"We have also seen that this year we have a mix of incentives looking to travel within the next six months and quite a number of other incentives looking at a longer lead time," she adds. The reason for travel being an increasingly popular incentive option, says Lizaan, is because it offers value for money when motivating staff.

While **Samuel Herman**, team leader at FCM Events, says incentive travel is booming, he's found that budgets are not up in the South African market as a result of the poor exchange rate. He adds that, in the current economic climate, money incentives tend to go toward paying off debts. "Travel, on the other hand, still offers exciting experiences and memories," says Samuel.

Martine Sanderson, group sales manager for World Leisure Holidays, says while there is constant growth in incentive travel, there is definitely a push to be more cost-effective. "Due to the negative currency fluctuations,



"We have a mix of incentives looking to travel within the next six months and quite a number of other incentives looking at a longer lead time."

Lizaan Schnettler

we are seeing very last-minute sporadic booking patterns and a trend to drive more costeffective destinations."

**Stagnant demand**But **Jose Emilio Garcia**,
portfolio brand manager in

South Africa for Iberia, is of the view that SA's incentive travel market is "currently stagnated in all the segments, including group travel".

Sharing his sentiments is Club Travel travel manager,

Mandy McEvoy. She says the incentive market is not growing and that it is still the same as it has been in previous years.

David Sand, ceo of Uwin Iwin Incentives, argues that incentive travel is "definitely booming, judging from the number of tender processes we are taking part in". But he says budgets aren't up and because of currency fluctuations, clients frequently have to adapt. "This sometimes means cutting a day or some excursions."

He says although travel is a highly sought-after experience for people, luxury travel is still out of reach of some employees. "This makes an incentive trip so much more aspirational. If you look at the overall expense burden on companies, it has proven its value as a stand-out reward. South Africans are travel crazy and that is why it is so successful in this market."



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#### Bespoke travel is the talk of the town

WHEN it comes to incentives and groups, many travellers are demanding something new and exciting, but can agents deliver customised travel for groups?

"It's all about the experience these days. Travellers today are quite savvy and they're looking to do interesting and exciting things that take them off the beaten track. You cannot discount the power of social media in driving this type of behaviour. Travellers don't want more of the same thing and they don't want to have to think for themselves," says The Travel Corporation's Teresa Richardson.

#### Off the beaten track

She says that while the usual destinations such as Paris and Rome are still very popular, there is more demand to visit off-thebeaten track destinations and for once-in-a-lifetime experiences, "At TTC we are able to tailor-make trips and these are often requested. We are constantly changing, expanding and adding to our trips to keep them fresh and exciting through our unique experiences." According to Teresa, people want to immerse themselves in new cultures and soak up authentic experiences.

Thanks to technology, travellers are more knowledgeable about the destinations they visit, and are likely to have done some research before their trip. "This increases their expectations," says **Noku Dlodlo**, sales manager at Mercure Hotel Bedfordview. Travellers are now looking for unique, one-of-a-kind experiences."

#### Keeping it fresh

Enid Maullin, group sales executive of Beachcomber Tours, says every year the tour operator looks at different ways to offer unique



Experienced travellers are requesting once-in-a-lifetime destinations, such as Lapland.

experiences. These include unique dining options and cultural activities involving the local communities and eco-sensitive experiences. Dalene Oroni of Development Promotions says repeat groups are looking for different and new destinations, and new groups are trying to promote bucket-list destinations and unique experiences.

One of the ways this is playing out in the marketplace, says David Sand of Uwin Iwin Incentives, is that companies with

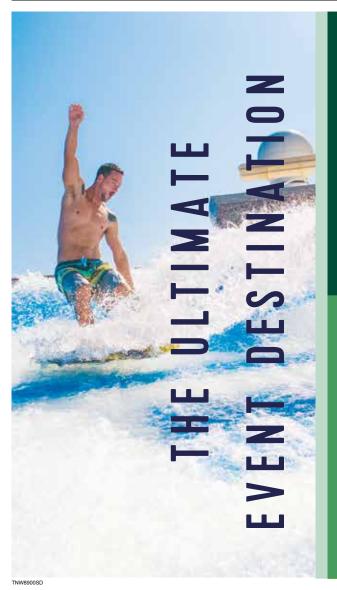
first-time travellers are usually more open to unusual destinations, as long as the complexity of the trip is minimal, while experienced travellers are looking for completely unique experiences outside of their comfort zones and frames of reference.

"We are seeing experienced travellers requesting out-of-the-box thinking from our side. Clients like that push our creativity and it is really exciting for us. We recently took a group to Lapland,

truly once in a lifetime, and in October we are taking another group to Sri Lanka, a new unexplored destination with some magical experiences." David adds that clients are also looking for unique experiences at more commercial destinations.

#### **Busy itineraries**

Club Travel's Mandy McEvoy explains that it's essential to keep the itinerary packed for incentive travel. "Activities or day trips need to be arranged almost every day,





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DATE	PORTS OF CALL	
Wed 12 Jun 2019	Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy	
Thu 13 Jun 2019	Ajaccio, Corsica	
Fri 14 Jun 2019	Provence (Marseilles), France	
Sat 15 Jun 2019	Nice (Villefranche), France	
Sun 16 Jun 2019	Rome (Civitavecchia), <b>I</b> taly	

#### 3 NIGHT WESTERN MED CRUISE: Onboard Oasis of the seas

DATE	PORTS OF CALL
Thu 22 Aug 2019	Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy
Fri 23 Aug 2019	Naples (Capri), Italy
Sat 24 Aug 2019	Cruising
Sun 25 Aug 2019	Barcelona, Spain



lizaan@cruises.co.za | michele@cruises.co.za

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14 Wednesday October 17 2018

plus gala dinners and often teambuilding days such as survivor on the beach or amazing race around the island.

"Islands are the most popular as it is easier to keep a group all together in a resort on an island such as Mauritius rather than in a city like Phuket," she adds. Mandy says cultural experiences, such as a Mauritian cooking class as a teambuilding activity, are becoming increasingly sought after.

#### **Excitement at sea**

According to Ross Volk of MSC Cruises South Africa. the increased interest in new destinations was the reason Pomene in Mozambique was introduced last year. The island was added to the MSC Musica itinerary due to its popularity. "Groups get to enjoy not only the unspoiled beauty of the island, but there are also a variety of experiences and activities available, such as water sports and guided tours," he says.

Ross believes the rising popularity of cruising reflects

an emerging trend in group travel – having everything you need in one venue that offers a wide range of activities, entertainment and meal options, with almost everything included.

"It is much less hassle and makes sense for limited budgets."

**Lizaan Schnettler** of Cruises International says the increase in demand for new destinations and

"We are seeing experienced travellers requesting out-of-thebox thinking from our side."

bespoke experiences is having a positive effect on group travel. "You can travel almost anywhere on a cruise ship as a group and some of our ships go to amazing ports where groups can do private events, for example an awards dinner in Ibiza." She says more groups are looking at destinations such as Alaska, European river cruises and the Northern Lights.

#### The cost of customisation

Teresa explains that all 17 of Uniworld's ships and both U by Uniworld ships are available for full-ship charter, accommodating up to 159 guests in Europe and up to 81 guests in Egypt, India, Vietnam and Cambodia. "Charters are completely customisable, including special menus, on-board entertainment and activities, private shore excursions, corporate branding opportunities and more. Itineraries can also incorporate themes such as food and wine, history or art, or emphasise events such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries or family reunions," she savs

Similarly, Lizaan says: "Cruises International is able to work with the cruise line to tailor-make the on-board experience to what the group requires."

Tread carefully World Leisure Holidays' Martine Sanderson says there will always be



Cruise itineraries can incorporate special events.

increased demand for new destinations when it comes to incentive travel as clients don't want to repeat the same experiences. She says for small incentive groups there's often a push to find bespoke experiences and new adventures. But, she points out, value for money plays a vital role. "Often clients are not aware of the hidden costs when you do offer more bespoke experiences, so

this can harm the final decision-making process, which in turn results in loss of time and revenue."

Samuel Herman of FCM Events, says: "Although we are always looking for new destinations and experiences, the reality is that unique and bespoke destinations are expensive. The economic climate means incentive budgets are currently not allowing for these kinds of experiences, however we predict the tide will turn."



QUICK READ FOR BUSIEST PEOPLE



Attending trade fairs helps incentive specialists forge relationships with suppliers.

#### Become a specialist

BECOMING a specialist in selling group and/or incentive travel is not only financially rewarding, it pushes you to be creative and puts your skills to the test. If that sounds like a path you'd like to follow, here's how to get there.

According to FCM Events'
Samuel Herman, education is key for anyone wanting to become an incentive specialist. "Aspiring incentive consultants need to try and visit as many destinations as possible, as first-hand experience is key to selling

a destination. Attending trade fairs will also help incentive specialists forge relationships with suppliers and acquire new and original ideas," he says. He points out that putting together an incentive programme is very different to normal leisure trips. "It's important to have the right contacts and relationships in place with DMCs," adds Samuel.

For **Mandy McEvoy**, being a group specialist boils down to product knowledge and experience. "A little is learned after each group departure. Organisation is

vital - the moment a group gets messy, it is almost impossible to find your way back." She recommends using Excel spreadsheets for big groups. She agrees that travelling to popular group travel destinations is an advantage, as the client feels more comfortable knowing that the person organising the trip has been there. "This will also allow vou to offer essential little tips," adds Mandy. Why take on the challenge? Mandy says: "It's fun, it's intense, it keeps you on your toes and it's profitable!"

#### **GROUPS & INCENTIVES**

#### Strength in numbers

BOOKING for a large number of travellers gives you an advantage when it comes to pricing trips, as suppliers might be open to discounting on the basis of large volumes.

Ross Volk of MSC Cruises South Africa, says groups guarantee a high number of guests with just one booking, which offers cost benefits for suppliers and entails much less hassle. "They are highly sought after," he adds. Because of this, Ross says agents have leverage when negotiating the best deal with suppliers.

"The greater the group, the more buying power you have," says FCM's **Samuel Herman**. But he adds that this isn't necessarily an advantage when dealing with airlines, but a plus when dealing with ground handlers and hotels.

#### **Budget upfront**

When it comes to negotiating with suppliers, **Martine Sanderson** of World Leisure Holidays



"Groups guarantee a high number of guests with just one booking, which offers cost benefits for suppliers and entails much less hassle."

says budget is important. "Managing clients' expectations and budgets is such a critical part of



the negotiation process with both suppliers and the client. We won't normally enter into negotiation with suppliers until we have a budget. If we don't have a budget that is clearly defined, it becomes a nightmare to put packages together," she explains.

Because hotels need at least one group staying with them at a time, **Noku Dlodlo** of Mercure Hotel Bedfordview, says they are more flexible, which can benefit agents, particularly during off-peak times. She suggests that agents request value-adds and signature products or experiences that will improve their guests' experience.

Mandy Lerena of Virgin Atlantic South Africa, says the airline's dedicated groups team gives agents "exactly what you need". "We offer a dedicated group sales team, global connections and discounted fares, among lots of other



"We offer a dedicated group sales team, global connections and discounted fares, among lots of other great benefits that help you and your groups enjoy the best trips yet."

Mandy Lerena

great benefits that help you and your groups enjoy the best trips yet."

The TTC brands, says md, **Teresa Richardson**, offer agents group rates that allow them negotiating power on pricing.

"For every 15 full-paying passengers we offer a free seat and, of course, we pay commission on the entire package, not just on part of the package."

#### The right timing

To secure the best price for your clients, **Jose Emilio Garcia** of Iberia, advises agents to confirm the group bookings well in advance and to book out of the high season.

"November and February would be a very good period to organise this kind of trip," he adds.

David Sand of Uwin Iwin Incentives, says: "Through a network of trusted suppliers, agents can gain more negotiating power, however incentive travel is not all about the cost because of the expectations of clients to deliver top quality."



Couples have a choice of resorts. Photo: Beachcomber Hotels

# Wedding special from Beachcomber

BEACHCOMBER has an exclusive offer available for destination weddings or vow renewal.

Travellers have a choice of eight resorts on premier beachfront sites in Mauritius, and can opt for either the Beachcomber Wedding Package or Beachcomber Glamour Wedding Package.

The bridal or renewal of vows couple receive

a 25-30% discount on the land portion as well as sparkling wine on arrival. This discount is applicable to all guests joining the couple. Should 20 adults book, the bride's discount increases to 50% and a complimentary celebratory beach barbecue dinner is arranged for the full group (on condition that they travel between May 1 and September 30, 2019).



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QUICK READ FOR BUSIEST PEOPLE

#### Stretching your clients' rands

WITH most companies keeping a close eye on budgets, destinations that are more affordable for South Africans are becoming strong incentive options.

Samuel Herman of FCM Events says there's been a trend toward all-inclusive options, making Mauritius and Zanzibar popular choices. "Cruising is also a good choice as it not only has the all-inclusive element, but also offers delegates the opportunity to visit multiple destinations on one trip."

According to The Travel Corporation's Teresa Richardson, a good incentive will have many interesting and unique experiences in the mix. "Turkey, Portugal, London and Greece are all great on-trend destinations that have always

managed to cater

for large groups by being able to offer great service and support." She says the eastern Mediterranean has always been incredibly popular, with countries such as Greece and Turkey offering the right amount of culture, sightseeing and history to satisfy travellers. "They are also rand-friendly destinations, making the incentive winner's spending money go further," says Teresa, adding that Eastern Europe is also "packed to the rafters

with culture, history and hidden gems".

Jose Emilio Garcia of Iberia, recommends southern Europe, and Spain in particular, for incentive trips. "Spain offers a lot of things: culture, good cuisine, nice weather, natural landscapes, great beaches, good transport infrastructure and plenty of hotel and congress venues. It is also verv close to other destinations in Europe that you can combine in your ticket.'

Jose adds that it is fairly easy to offer a competitive package for incentive travel

> to Spain and other parts of Europe. While the traditional cities such as Madrid and Barcelona remain popular, Jose says other Spanish cities, including San Sebastian and Seville, are being discovered by South



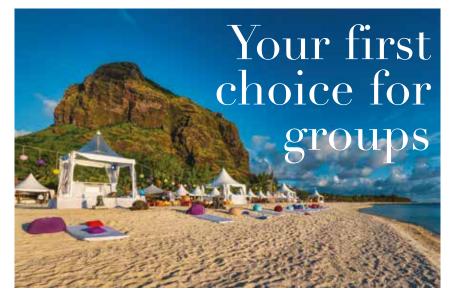


Carla da Silva

exact budget. With meals and drinks included, they don't have to worry about additional costs when they check out of the resort." He savs another drawcard is that most of the four- and five-star properties offer conferencing facilities.

According to Martine Sanderson of World Leisure Holidays, more adventure is a hot trend. "Réunion Island is definitely a talking point for 2019 and 2020 for MICE groups. It offers a whole array of adventures for teambuilding and relaxing and taking in the magnificent sights of the island. The nightlife is amazing as well, with a meal only costing €6 (R103)." Other countries Martine says are getting a lot of attention are India, because it's not a traditional destination, and Egypt, because the political unrest is no longer a concern and the destination offers a myriad things to do that are affordable for South Africans.





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The islands

Mandy McEvoy of Club

Travel, says incentives are

closer destinations such

as Mauritius, Mozambique,

Zanzibar and Madagascar

Mauritius regional general

manager: Africa & Latin

America, says Mauritius

remains a top incentive

travel destination for South

flight, no visa requirement,

and conferencing facilities, all-inclusive value

propositions with different

packages; entertainment

and more. She adds that

enquiries for India, Hong

"Most companies today look for the best value for

money - their requests are

all-inclusive, a good resort

a fun programme, and not

long-haul flights. Mauritius

offers all of this and more." She adds that some

companies do look at other

destinations they consider

different experience, but that

to be new to them, for a

this depends on budgets.

Zanzibar is experiencing

a boom in incentive travel.

Says Steve Cooke, sales & marketing manager for

Africa Stay: "It is a very cost-effective destination and

ideal as companies have an

ideal for teambuilding. The all-inclusive packages are

offering added value and

Kong and Singapore.

Enid Maullin of Beachcomber agrees:

and tailormade excursions.

there have also been MICE

world-class infrastructure

Africans, thanks to the short

Carla da Silva, Air

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#### Float their boat

When it comes to cruising, Lizaan Schnettler of Cruises International says Europe is a bestseller because of the cost-effective flight options, leaving more budget to spend on a cruise of their choice. She says Asia is also popular due to competitive rates on cruises as well as the lack of a visa requirement for South African passport holders embarking on shorter cruises from Singapore to Phuket.

Companies stand to benefit from the affordability, luxury, variety and convenience cruising offers, says **Ross Volk** of MSC Cruises South Africa. "Cruising is an all-inclusive travel experience where guests get all their meals, accommodation and on-board entertainment and activities included in the price.

"This is ideal for companies that want to offer incentive travel, as they can manage costs." He says the weekend three-night cruise to Portuguese Island in Mozambique (which MSC Musica will be calling at from November) is one of MSC Cruises' most randfriendly destinations. "Our guests love the fact that they get to experience another country without having to break the bank or spend hours stuck in vehicles travelling to the destination," adds Ross.



Quad biking at Swakopmund.

#### Closer to home

With the exchange rate, South Africa offers value for money and a variety of experiences, says Noku **Diodio** of Mercure Hotel Bedfordview. "At Mercure, we work together with the agents and exchange ideas on how we as a hotel can make the guests' check-in or stay with us memorable. For example, a beautifully laid out group check-in station of special personalised welcome packs," she adds.

**David Sand** of Uwin Iwin Incentives, says even though he and his

team like to promote destinations in Africa, they have found that only a few are really affordable for clients. "Destinations such as Swakopmund, Victoria Falls and Zanzibar offer the best value. If you travel further off our shores you find a lot of value in Mauritius, Thailand, Bali and to the west, destinations such as Rio and Cancun. Europe will always come with a premium price tag, however the amount of added value you receive on those trips does make it worthwhile."



Cruising offers an all-inclusive travel experience. Photo: MSC Cruises



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#### Raise a toast with Cruises International

CRUISES International is offering MICE groups an all-inclusive drinks package on all Royal Caribbean sailings.

The package includes cocktails; spirits; liqueurs; beer; bottled water; wines by the glass; freshly squeezed juices and

non-alcoholic cocktails; premium coffees and teas; fountain sodas; and a drinks-only cocktail party. Further, a 40% discount is offered on bottled wines priced up to US\$100 (R1 492) and a 20% discount on wines priced above US \$100.

#### Did you know?

Virgin Atlantic has operated its first commercial flight using nextgeneration sustainable fuel made by recycling waste carbon gases. The airline says if the UK approves plans to go ahead with construction of LanzaTech fuel plants, by 2025 it could produce enough sustainable fuel to fly all the airline's UK outbound flights. If rolled out worldwide, it could produce enough fuel to meet around 20% of the current commercial global aviation fuel demand.

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Nile cruise; three nights' accommodation in Hurghada at Baron Palace Sahl Haheesh; accommodation in Cairo at Cairo Marriott Hotel; domestic airfares; gala dinner; and more.

# Iberia bringing premium economy to SA in 2019

FROM April 2019, Iberia will introduce its new premium economy cabin on its flights between Johannesburg and Madrid. According to Jose Emilio Garcia of Iberia, this new cabin



Jose Emilio Garcia

is perfect for incentive trips, honeymooners or to complement the experience of those travelling to take part in a cruise, for instance.

The premium economy cabin

features more spacious seats that recline further than economy class for a more comfortable flight. In addition to enhanced entertainment and dining, premium economy gives travellers separate fast lane access to tourist-class check-in counters and priority boarding and disembarkation.



TNW8914SD

# AF KLM relaunches Corporate Benefits Programme

AIR France KLM is relaunching its Corporate Benefits Programme designed for its corporate customers. A total of 14 benefits are now on offer on all Air France and KLM flights, as well as on flights operated by HOP! and Joon. Additionally, from November 1, certain benefits will also apply to flights operated by Delta.

Under the service category, benefits include a dedicated accounts manager to each customer, a local sales team and 24-hour call centre for travel agents. In terms of flexibility, the programme offers the opportunity to

change passenger names on tickets, more flexible ticketing deadlines and a

We now offer our corporate customers individual benefits independently of their personal status, but in line with the status of the company for whom they are travelling."

guaranteed seat in economy on long-haul flights.

Priority benefits include the option of selecting seats at any time, priority boarding on

all long-haul flights, and a commitment to take care of them first when it comes to waitlist, customer care and aftersales service.

"Constantly developing our commercial offer for our corporate customers is one of Air France KLM's priorities. We now offer our corporate customers individual benefits independently of their personal status, but in line with the status of the company for whom they are travelling," said **Patrick Alexandre**, executive vp of Air France-KLM Commercial, Sales and Alliances.



AfricaStay is offering promotional, inclusive rates on its Zanzibar packages. Until November 30, agents can book a four-night package from R8 575pps and seven nights from R10 895pps. Prices include return airfare Johannesburg-Zanzibar (including airport taxes), return airport transfers (seat-in-coach), accommodation in a standard room, all meals and selected non-alcoholic and local alcoholic drinks. Prices exclude all items of a personal nature, visas applicable for non-SA passport holders, and travel insurance. Pictured: Steve Cooke, sales and marketing manager, AfricaStay.

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

#### To the point

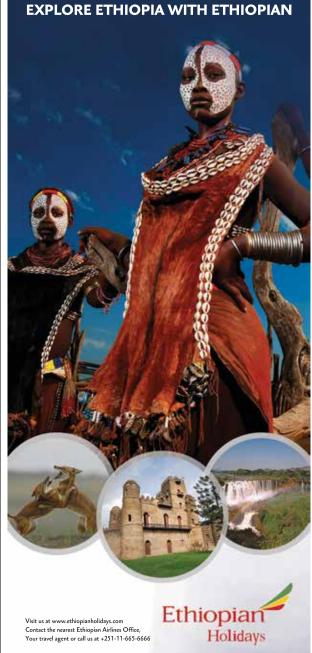
**超**)

Guests staying at Trou aux Biches Beachcomber in Mauritius now get free access to the 18-hole Mont Choisy Le Golf at popular tee-off times, within Beachcomber's prebooked rounds. Guests will get free transfers, green fees and golf carts. Valid until December 19.

#### For the record

In the Loyalty & Rewards table in *TNW* dated October 10, it was incorrectly stated that Lufthansa's Partner Plus Benefit was applicable on Star Alliance member airlines. In fact, it is only applicable on selected airlines: Lufthansa, SWISS, Austrian, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, Air Canada and United Airlines. In addition, the name of aha Hotels & Lodges marketing manager, Ruzandri Stoltz, was spelt incorrectly in the same feature.





TNW8911SD

#### Nine great specials!

- Cruises International is offering a 30% discount on standard cruise fares with Royal Caribbean International for all guests in a stateroom for all sailings. The booking window ends on October 31, 2018 for sailings on or after October 1. All other charges, including taxes, fees and port expenses are additional and apply to all guests. Valid for new bookings only and subject to availability.
- Air Austral's promotional X-class fares from Johannesburg to Mauritius start from R5 380 return (incl. taxes). Stopovers are permitted in Réunion. Valid for sales before October 31,

with no restrictions on the travel period.

- Beachcomber Tours has introduced special rates at the four-star newly refurbished Mauricia Beachcomber Resort and Spa in Mauritius. Five-night packages start from R16 750pps, which is a 25% discount and includes one child under the age of six staying and eating free. Valid for travel from June 1-30, 2019, and a supplement is applicable for stays between June 14 and June 30 of R1 530pp.
- MSC Cruises has launched its South America specials for a selection of cruises



Venice, Ttaly is included in CostSaver's Jewels of Italy package. Photo: Candre-mandawe

ranging between six and 10 nights from Brazil or Argentina on board MSC Fantasia and MSC Orchestra. Options include six- and seven-night cruises from Santos or Rio de Janeiro to explore the Brazilian coast with rates starting from R14 147pps, long cruises from Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro to visit Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay from R22 998pps. The cruise season runs from November 2018 to March 2019.

• The Travel Corporation is offering a CostSaver Jewels of Italy Winter 2019 package with rates starting from R11 250pps. The seven-day tour features seven cities, including Venice, Florence and Rome

and attractions such as the Colosseum, Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Duomo. The package includes accommodation, transport, daily breakfast, two dinners and sightseeing. Valid for travel between November 2018 and March 2019.

 World Leisure Holidays has launched special rates at Shangri-La's five-star Le Touessrok and Spa with rates starting from R42 700 ex-JNB and DUR. Package includes return direct flights to Mauritius, return private standard car transfers, all land and nonmotorised water sports, daily entertainment, WiFi, green fees at Ile Aux Cerfs Golf Course, access to llot Mangenie and approximate taxes. There is also an option to upgrade to half board from R10 580pp. Valid for sales until October 31 and for travel until

December 11.

• Aha Alpine Heath Resort has introduced a midweek 'Berg Break special. A chalet which sleeps between one and six people is available at a rate of R2 999 per night, including breakfast daily, dinner on the first night, all the ingredients to make your own braai on the second night, glass of house wine per person with dinner, selected on-site activities and discounts on horse riding outrides and spa treatments. Children get a free milkshake or soft drinks with dinner, as well as a free slush puppy daily. The offer includes an

upgrade to a deluxe chalet, subject to availability. A minimum stay of two nights applies. Valid from Monday to Thursday until December 15.

- Thompsons Holidays is offering special rates on a Rovos Rail journey combined with a stay at the five-star Fairmont Zimbali Resort, starting from R24 351. The package includes two nights on board Rovos Rail from Pretoria to Durban, two days' car rental (group B), two nights' accommodation at the Fairmont Zimbali and a one-way flight from Durban to Johannesburg (incl. taxes). A bonus extra is all meals and selected drinks daily are included while on the Rovos Rail, limited laundry service and off-train excursions accompanied by a tour guide. At the Fairmont Zimbali, daily breakfast is included, as well as discounts on spa treatments and dinner, along with a complimentary bottle of wine. Valid for set departures from Pretoria to Durban on October 26 and November 23.
- Travel Vision has put together a special four-night package for the Rio Carnival in Brazil. For R11 013pps, the package includes return airport-hotel transfers, four nights' accommodation in the three-star Windsor Martinique Copa, daily breakfast and Sambodrome ticket - Bleacher sector 10. Valid for bookings before October 31 for travel from March 8-12, 2019.



Shangri La, Le Touessrok main pool.

# Mercure









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#### Did you know?

To coincide with MSC Cruises bringing the MSC Musica to South African waters, the cruise line has introduced a special corporate offer. For every 23 full paying passengers booked, one passenger will cruise for free (excluding mandatory charges).

Births, deaths, marriages, promotions - we want to know! Please fax or e-mail TNW's Savannah Freemantle, at savannahf@nowmedia.co.za or (011) 214 7324.



Eight Flight Centre Business School graduates had the experience of a lifetime when they travelled abroad for the first time last month. Flight Centre Travel Group and Topdeck sponsored the graduates' trip to Europe. Pictured here in Venice are (from left): Phumzile Nxumalo, Mpho Thulo, and Sandy Khalanga.

#### **Appointments**

The
Sandown
Travel Group
has appointed
Bruno Reis
Neto md of its
Sandown Tours
& Incentives
operation, and
Nicola Brescia
as md of its
Sandown Travel
operations.





■ Brian Dodge has been appointed Latam's new corporate key accounts manager.

### REWARD

If you can give us the name of any bona fide travel agency (at least two consultants at the same premises) that is not receiving *TNW* at its address



Send the contact details to dianac@nowmedia.co.za
T&Cs apply

TNW7979

For a FREE subscription to *TNW* contact Gladys on gladysn@nowmedia.co.za

#### **VACANCY: FIT – TEAM LEADER**

**Location:** Johannesburg **Business Unit:** Dreams Call Centre **Report to:** General Manager: Dreams

**Purpose of the Role:** The successful applicant will be responsible for the supervision of staff and the overall productivity of the F.I.T. Call Centre. In addition, the successful candidate will be responsible for assisting the F.I.T. Call Centre sales staff with problems, special requests, complaints and responsible for making Call Centre and groups reservations and achieving Sales targets for Dreams.

#### **Duties and Accountabilities:**

- 1 Managing staff shifts, emergency cell phone duty etc.
- 2 Managing and consulting on the various agency / staff
- 3 Specials / promotions
- 4 Daily audit of reservations to be performed
- 5 Producing ongoing reports and statistics on productivity
- **6** Weekly operations meetings to ensure excellent communication
- 7 Updating and training staff on product updates
- 8 Dealing with compliments and complaints
- **9** Managing the Call Centre telephone system
- 10 Training staff on various software systems and product
- 11 Providing accurate quotes for potential passengers / Travel Agents
- 12 Making reservations for all the product the company sells
- 13 Ensuring excellent knowledge of all company products
- 14 Developing a relationship with the retail travel agents based on service excellence
- 15 Maintaining and meeting the various deadlines related to FIT reservations
- 16 Achieving the divisions annual group targets and all reservation targets are met.

#### Position Requirements: Formal Qualification(s)

COTAC Travel diploma Amadeus GDS certificate IATA / UFTAA accreditation an advantage

#### Work-Related Experience

Reservations experience working in either a travel agency or a tour operator in a supervisory position as a Team Leader

Years	Essential  ✓	Desirable
		1
3	1	

#### Systems

- Must be Computer literate with good typing skills Microsoft package, i.e. Word, Excel, etc.
- Must be able to work on Call Center management system.
- Tour Operator reservation system
- Must have the ability to understand package costing

#### Competencies & Behaviours:

- Excellent telephone manner and good selling skills
- Excellent customer service skills
- Excellent time management skills
- Must be able to work under pressure
- Must be able to work under pressure
   Must have an excellent ability to work with statistics
- An understanding of figures and be able to quote accurately
- A team player and a highly motivated individual
- Problem solving skills

Please note preference will be given to BEE candidates. Closing date for this application will be, 22nd October 2018. CV's to be forwarded to dreams@scdreams.com. If you have not heard back from us in 5 working days please note that your application was unsuccessful.

#### Pick of the week

TRAVEL

#### Sales & Reservations Manager – CPT

Quantex Recruitment Group Skills required: people management, driving sales, product management. Dynamic individual from tours industry required. Email: lee@quantex.co.za

#### Senior Leisure Travel Consultant – JNB

Professional Career Services
Minimum 10 years'
experience in leisure
consulting. Must have
travelled internationally.
Galileo. Client focused
& sales driven. Good
destination knowledge.
Email: jeancv@pcs-sa.co.za

#### Assistant Reservations Manager – CPT

Lee Botti & Associates
Assistant manager required
for creating bespoke travel.
Must have sold Botswana,
South Africa & Namibia.
Email: lee-annem@leebotti.
co.za

#### Accommodation Reservations Expert – JNB, North

Equity Connections cc Suit junior with minimum one years' hotel/lodges/ safari camps booking experience. Must have in-depth knowledge of South/Southern Africa plus FIT/Groups. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

#### Commercial Manager – Uganda

Quantex Recruitment Group
Opportunity to take
this company into the
future. Your experience
in contracting, corporate
incentives, online
technology in corporate
travel will be rewarded.
Email: lee@quantex.co.za

#### Inbound Tour Consultant – Fourways

Professional Career Services
Minimum 5 years' inbound
tour operator experience.
Destination knowledge of
Southern Africa.
FIT's & groups. Tourplan.

#### Junior Manager – CPT

Own itineraries, costings.

Email: nonocv@pcs-sa.co.za

Lee Botti & Associates
Opportunity for a tech savvy
candidate with key accounts
experience. Must be flexible
and ready for change. Email:
lee-annem@leebotti.co.za

#### Tours Consultant – JNB, North

Equity Connections cc
Intermediate/senior position
for Africa expert. Sound
knowledge of attractions,
accommodation, sightseeing, routings within
Africa needed.
Handle FIT's/Groups.
Five years' experience.
Email: equitycon@mweb.
co.za

These adverts were selected from the vacancy section of www.travelinfo.co.za
For more details contact jobs@travelinfo.co.za

#### Have you spoilt your team?

Have you done something to celebrate your staff recently? Send us your pictures for a chance to be published in *TNW*.

Photos must be high res (1MB or more). Email savannahf@nowmedia.co.za

NW8002

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TNW8029

#### **Industry** is ill-prepared

#### From page 1

ISS's RHC programme worked around managing agent risk through a system of notifications to agents reminding them to make payment when they neared the limit of their remittance capacity.

"lata is supposed to notify agents when they reach 50%, 75% and 100% of their remittance capacity before shutting down cash ticketing at 100%. These notifications are meant to give agents time to either remit early or to make a payment through the EasyPay prepaid account in order to continue with cash ticketing," said Otto.

"In reality, agents working within the programme are complaining that lata's Madrid hub, whilst supposedly monitoring sales in real time, is sending out notifications about RHC too late, if at all. This problem is compounded by a threeworking-day delay between the time an agent makes an early remittance payment

or an EasyPay transfer, to when lata is able to update that the payment has been received. This leads to waiting periods where agents around the world are complaining about being shut off from cash ticketing, days after they have settled their payments with lata," he added.

The problem of cash ticketing shutdown is further worsened by the current airline clamp-down on agent credit card and virtual payment options. According to Otto, credit card payment limits, together with new PCI DSS compliance requirements, will result in a spike in BSP cash payments for the year. He said, as lata guarantees were measured according to cash ticket sales from previous periods, agents might well reach their remittance holding capacities more frequently. This would mean that agents would also have to fund higher lata guarantees to avoid frequent NewGen ISS shut-down in cash ticketing.

#### FlySafair launches Express Check-In



On September 11, FlySafair launched Express Check-In, a new technology that enables pax travelling with just hand luggage to check in at the airport before they reach the check-in counter. A FlySafair 'queue comber' will identify passengers in the queue who haven't checked in online and check them in using the new hand-held device, which also produces the passenger's boarding pass. From left: Boitumelo Komane, TVET College's intern-groups administrator; Marise Banks, sales and distribution manager; and **Charline Chuttergoon,** key accounts consultant, FlySafair. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

#### Mango: agents fed up

SAVANNAH FREEMANTLE

RUSTRATED with increasing delays, agents say they are off-selling Mango, while some clients have also not to fly Mango.

Agents canvassed by TNW said as many as half the flights they booked on Mango were delayed by two to three hours, with the airline citing technical difficulties.

An agent who asked to remain anonymous, said the last six bookings she had made with Mango had all been delayed by more than two hours. Six of the canvassed agents

said they were off-selling

the airline.

A TMC who manages 900 travellers, told TNW that she was no longer allowed to book Mango because of delays, which have, in some instances, caused clients to miss international flights. "As Mango doesn't have interline agreements, no compensation is given if the client misses their international flight," the agent said. "Mango doesn't view this as its responsibility."

The airline also told TNW that, as it did not have interline agreements with any international airlines it only had an undertaking to move passengers domestically. "In our

communication, we do, however, encourage our passengers to ensure that they factor into their travel [plans], unforeseen minimum delay times for their international outbound connecting flights.

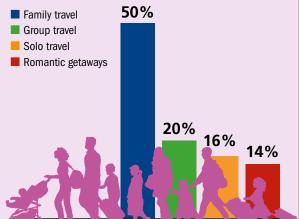
TNW understands that the increase in delays could be linked to Mango having too limited a fleet capacity to support the domestic routes they absorbed after SAA's recent route rationalisation.

Earlier this month, agents also reported difficulty making bookings for Mango. The airline's booking system has experienced intermittent downtime over the last few months (see TNW September 5). ■

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#### Families love to travel!

Where have you seen the majority of your sales this year?



eTravel is the ITC market leader in South Africa and assists senior Travel Itants and Travel business owners to realise their drea ever dreamt of owning your own travel business or would like to cut costs by doing away with your IATA license and improve your current business efficiencies then you should call eTravel. We run the back office for over

200 Independent Travel Companies and specialise in making your travel business a success by offering the best commissions, overrides & a comprehensive support structure. If you have a client base, 5 years travel consultant experience or already own your own business but want to make more, then contact us! You'll be amazed at how easy it is!



Contact Tammy on 0861eTrave1 or info@etravel.co.za

#### Comair makes leadership changes SARAH ROBERTSON

IN A restructuring of leadership positions, Comair has created a new airline divisional head position that will be filled by Wrenelle Stander as its executive of airlines from November.

Group ceo, Erik Venter, will remain in the same position, with five rather than four divisional heads reporting to him. These are lain Meaker, executive of hospitality and tourism, looking after the kulula holidavs and the mtbeds brands; Stuart Cochrane, executive of business processes across all brands; Amanda Mocellin, head of Nacelle. and Wrenelle. Comair is yet to appoint an executive in charge of the Comair

Training Centre but presently

Captain Glen Warden

remains in charge of pilot and cabin crew training.

Wrenelle brings more than 25 years of experience in the aviation and energy industries to the role, having spent 15 years in executive leadership

positions. Notable previous positions include md of Air Traffic and Navigation Services; deputy ceo of the South African Civil Aviation Authority; director general of the Department of Transport; and md of Sasol Gas. She also holds an MBA from Oxford Brookes University, and a BA (Hons) degree from UCT. Wrenelle has extensive board experience at Comair,



**Wrenelle Stander** 

having previously served as an independent, nonexecutive director from 2008 to 2016.

"We're delighted that Wrenelle has joined us in this evolution of the business, as she brings a wealth of aviation

and leadership experience. Comair is moving its diversified businesses out from within the airline to allow each business unit to compete more effectively in its respective industry, and the leadership structure needs to reflect and enable this," said Erik.

Comair has just posted record profits, resulting in 72 years of uninterrupted profitable operations.