

bojanala

broadening horizons

Edition 4
Q4 2017

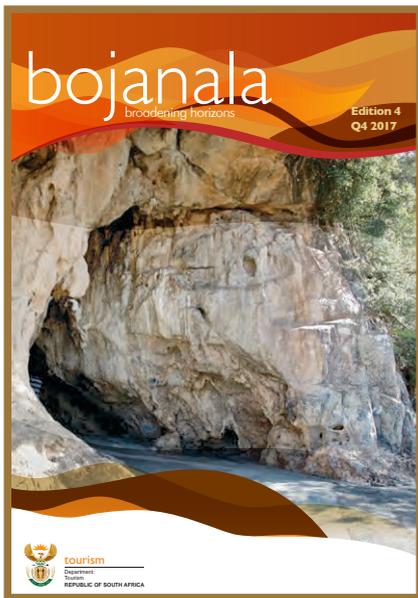


tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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About the cover

The magnificent Cango Caves are located in the Western Cape, in a small town called Oudtshoorn. One of the rarest and finest sites ever seen in the world, the caves are known to attract thousands of tourists from abroad and South Africa every year. It is said that the widespread tunnel system of this rare site can go over four kilometers. However, only less than a quarter of this tunnel is open to tourists under stringent supervision by a guide.



Congratulations to CEO of TBCSA, Ms Mmatšatši Ramawela for winning the 2017 International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) Global Award

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LETTER FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Another tantalizing edition of Bojanala Stakeholder Magazine is heading your way, with some thought provoking articles that will definitely leave you asking for more. Once again, we feature voices from all corners of the sector in an attempt to get the stakeholders talking to one another, thus sharing best practices and secrets for success.

Moving on from the previous one, this edition starts with an opinion piece penned by SA Tourism Chief Executive Officer, Sisa Ntshona. Referring to 2017 being the year of Oliver Reginald Tambo, he challenges the country to deeply interrogate how it is using its efforts to achieve unity and eradicate inequality in society.

You will read about the great achievements of Ms Alushca Ritchie, a registered tourist guide for the Western Cape, whose appointment as president of the internationally recognised body, the World Federation of Tourist Guides Associations will surely continue to put South Africa on the map.

This edition also covers a tourism curriculum evaluation workshop held in Boksburg recently, where industry players gathered to receive recommendations from research commissioned by Umalusi. The research assessed the value standing of service subjects such as Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies.

Read about the South African National Park's new installation of a gravity-defying cottage, which recently opened in the Augrabies Falls National Park, offering guests spectacular views over the iconic Oranjekom Gorge. This much anticipated installation to the park was formerly launched in 2016.

In addition, read more about the incorporation of Tours and Transport South Africa (TATSA), which led to the birth of South African Youth Travel Confederation (SAYTC) in 2007 as an umbrella body of various sectors to date.

Tourism Business Council of South Africa's Chief Executive Officer, Mmatšatši Ramawela, says that the Travel and Tourism is a sector that touches every facet of the economy – at a global, regional or domestic level. As such, each year the sector wrestles with a set of different factors in the operating environment, which present opportunities and challenges for business. She points out the top five macro-economic issues to keep an eye on in 2017.

Cape Town Tourism looks at the blurring business lines of tourism and more sectors than ever before, to the benefit of all. These lines (sectors) include tech solutions, supply chain and construction.

The National Accommodation Association of South Africa, shares their reflection of the year that was (2016), describing it as 'a tale of two halves'.



Read about the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) celebrating their 30th year anniversary and their 31st annual SAACI congress in June. You will also learn about the association's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Rudi van der Vyver's optimism about the future of the industry.

The Association of Southern African Travel Agents' focus on various risks faced by travelers and how our Travel Management Company or Travel Agency can make us feel safe, while traveling.

Lastly, read about the successful Travel Expo, organised by the Flight Centre Travel Group in February. The Expo attracted over 20 000 travelers and boasted 120 exhibitors from among the biggest players in the travel retail industry in South Africa.

Enjoy!

Trevor Bloem

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Transformation and unity, crucial for a sustainable tourism sector



- by Sisa Ntshona



Mr Siza Ntshona, CEO for SAT

2017 the year of Oliver Reginald Tambo, asks of us to deeply interrogate how we are using our efforts to achieve unity and eradicate inequality in our society. His commitment to this vision for his country is aptly tied to our journey as one of the key players in the tourism sector. We understand that the realisation of his vision in our space demands of us to set the economic inclusivity and transformation agenda in all our efforts and engagements.

The drive to eradicate unemployment and inequality in all industries lies in our ability as South Africans, public and private sector at large, to realise that there is an urgent need for creating jobs at a faster rate. But, there is no creation of jobs without the actual growing of the economy. Unemployment is currently sitting at 27.1 percent of the population, meaning that there are approximately five hundred thousand potential entrepreneurs that should be brought into the economic fold. Transformation and economic inclusivity requires the absorption and the enablement of new players into the field.

The responsibility just like opportunities abound to step out of the mundane and adopt a radical and structural shift in how we approach economic development and growth.

The crux of our transformation agenda at South African Tourism rests on: How do we get more black people to participate in the tourism sector; both through their businesses (especially SMMEs) and by travelling around the country; and what are the existing systematic barriers in the sector needing to be flattened. Both these require deliberate interventions. And these interventions, require a concerted and collaborative effort from all players: Associations, established businesses, private and public partners as well as aspirant new players.

Tourism has been identified as a major economic driver in South Africa and other countries across the world. In 2015 South Africa's travel and tourism industry directly supported 703,000 jobs which translated to 4.5 percent of the total employment rate.

The President in his state of the nation address in February mentioned that tourism is one of the focus areas in the Nine Point Plan to reignite growth so that our economy can create much needed jobs. This focus deserves acknowledging that tourist arrival numbers for the period of January to December 2016 increased to nine million, an increase of just over one million arrivals from 2015, representing a 13 percent growth in tourist arrivals.

This I believe can move into a double digit figure if there is a fundamental shift.

We too are mindful that South Africa's tourism sector; in order to surpass this, needs to adopt a developmental and capacity-building approach to thrive, and this has to come from industry as a whole, not just the government.

In staying true to our economic inclusivity and transformation agenda, at South African Tourism we continuously forge partnerships with various organisations that provide SMME's in the tourism sector with intensive training, mentoring and upskilling required to help make their business grow. We also provide market access opportunities for these businesses through our strategic exhibitions to be showcased, marketed and enjoyed by different markets around the world. There is great untapped potential to groom new entrants and make this a diverse, vibrant and multi-faceted tourism economy.

Ours is to work at growing this tourism pie and not splitting the little that exists. Here at home, we need to inculcate the value of tourism and get people to see it as a matter of national pride, something to experience and engage with. Once we get people – ordinary people like you and I, to travel our country, we will then understand that our role in this sector is immense.

Unity, the eradication of inequality, and transformation needs to be deliberately addressed in order to be sustainable.



South African Heads World's Guides

- by Praveen Naidoo

The World Federation of Tourist Guides Associations (WFTGA) has appointed a South African tourist guide as its new President.

Alushca Ritchie, a registered tourist guide for the Western Cape, was appointed to head the internationally recognised body at the 17th biennial World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations Convention which took place in Tehran, Iran, recently.

Ms Ritchie has been a Wine Specialist for the last 6 years. She owns and manages a tourism business and has served as the Chairperson of the Cape Tourist Guides Association, a director on the Cape Town Tourism Board and as the Western Cape Representative of the South African Travel Services Association.

Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, congratulated Ms Ritchie on her appointment.

"We are very proud of this global leadership achievement," said Minister Hanekom. "This presents another opportunity for us to elevate the status of the guiding profession and to acknowledge the important role that our tourist guides play in providing superb visitor experiences."

The WFTGA is a not-for-profit, non-political organisation comprising of tourist guide associations, individual tourist guides, educational institutions and other members who have a direct or indirect association with tourist guides. It is an Affiliate Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

The President of WFTGA serves for a two-year term and is supported by an Executive Board made up of delegates from Australia, Iran, USA, Canada and UK.

The convention was attended by about 350 participants and delegates from more than 40 countries. The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, officiated at the opening ceremony. The Vice-President and Head of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation, Ms Zahra Ahmadipour, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Mr Taleb Rifai, also attended.

Ms Ritchie said: "I look forward to representing all tourist guides on an international platform.

This will be a great opportunity to learn and

to promote a sector which is very rarely recognised as a profession, although it is an integral component of the tourism value chain."

For more information on the WFTGA and the Convention visit: www.wftga.org , www.wftga2017.com

Ms. Alushca Ritchie Email: President@wftga.org



Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom with the newly appointed President of the World Federation of Tourist Guides Association Alushca Rits.



Shannon Doolings of Umalusi and Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa

Industry players urged to play their part in tourism development

- by Johannes Mokou

There is a greater need for the tourism industry players, together with the wider education fraternity, to promote and brand the service subjects, with the view of attracting and retaining talented students within the tourism and hospitality sector; a tourism curriculum evaluation workshop held in Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg heard recently.

The well attended and interactive workshop emanates from the skills development conference, which was held in 2006. Stakeholders such as the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (Cathseta), Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), Department of Tourism, Organised Labour and various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) attended and signed a declaration statement to help improve the curriculum in a course of shaping the country's national agenda for tourism development.

The signing of the declaration was followed by thorough research, which was commissioned by the Department of Tourism, key stakeholders in government including Basic and Higher Education Departments, Umalusi as well as Cathseta. The research was done to ascertain the value standing of the service subjects such as Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies.

Addressing industry players, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, said, "after consultation widely within the industry, the

feedback was that the curriculum as it is now, is not relevant and not responsive to the practical needs of the industry."

Deputy Minister Xasa said that the workshop was essentially aimed at encouraging and fostering dialogue amongst industry players with the view for industry to validate and endorse the curriculum and evaluation report recommendation.

She added that in addressing the challenge of the curriculum not responding to realities of the industry, the department looked at the bigger picture to ensure that it is not only learners that benefit in terms of the curriculum review but the entire tourism value chain is empowered and that educators are also capacitated with relevant knowledge.

The workshop was primarily used as a vehicle to relay findings and recommendations from research conducted by Umalusi, which looked at the Consumer, Tourism and Hospitality Studies. Submitting the recommendations from the Consumer Studies' perspective was Shannon Doolings, a representative from Umalusi, who indicated that there should be more measurable progression in the topic of Entrepreneurship from Grade 10 –12.

In addition to this, Doolings said that the links to careers and industry should be clarified, adding that Textiles should also be included up to Grade 12. "Moreover", said Doolings, "there should be more market potential contribution of the subject, continued teacher development and support, a need for subject-specific pedagogical guidance, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills development as well as detailed analytical rubrics for projects."

There was consensus that Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies should be introduced as early as Grade 8, instead of the current state of affairs where students are introduced to the subjects from Grade 10.

Beverly Muller, a representative from Tsogo Sun tabled recommendations from a hospitality perspective, which suggest amongst others that the examiners must make use of a variety of questioning techniques and guard against the overuse of the same type of questions such as matching terms to definitions.

Muller added that there should be cognitive demand and level of difficulty to significantly include analysis, synthesis and evaluation- to improve the rigor of the papers and that the questions should include real case studies or situations that reflect thinking skills required in the industry and higher education.

Meanwhile Carol-Anne Cairns, who represented Skills Solutions, submitted the recommendations from the standpoint of Tourism, stating that the element of entrepreneurship must be introduced across all grades. Added to this, according to Cairns, is that "the spiral curriculum should be revisited to return to fewer, integrated organisers, which is projected to facilitate deeper, more holistic conceptual thinking, rather than fragmented reproduction of facts in weekly slots."

On subject designation, Deputy Minister Xasa stated that tourism has the potential to change lives and already contributes immensely to the country's coffers and everyone must benefit from it. "In order for this to happen," she said, "we need to have all stakeholders pulling in the same direction to realise our goals much faster. We appeal to our partners, University of South Africa to also help us get to a point where the matter of subject designation is finally approved."

Minister Promotes Service Excellence at North West Imbizo

- by Thapelo Mohale

In pursuit of an established culture of excellence in the sector, Minister Derek Hanekom launched the Manyane Service Excellence Legacy Team at a breakfast event held in Madikwe on 18 March 2017. The Department recently implemented the Service Excellence Integrated Product Support Programme to assist identified tourism products to develop a service excellence-orientated culture in terms of their operations and processes through the application of the Service Excellence Strategy and Standards.

"The twenty-eight (28) member legacy team represents an important step in our government's commitment to making South Africa a globally competitive tourism destination."

"This programme is about putting people first. Excellent service translates to happy customers who become ambassadors. We have wonderful tourism facilities in our country and if we want to grow tourism, we need to make sure that our visitor experiences are great and memorable," urged Hanekom.

The Minister used the occasion to also engage with the community in Madikwe on tourism issues. The Imbizo is one of a number of

engagements that the Minister is undertaking to create awareness about the Department's planned initiatives to build a sustainable and inclusive tourism economy.

"Growing tourism is a key aspect of our country's Nine-Point Plan to ignite economic growth and create jobs. We are working with our provincial departments to ensure that the sector is inclusive, and that all South Africans can enjoy the benefits derived from tourism," said Hanekom.

During the Imbizo, the community raised various issues pertaining to the lack employment opportunities for the youth in the tourism sector; tourism product support initiatives and innovative partnerships between government and communities.

"Today's engagement has not only given us an opportunity to inform you of our plans to grow the sector; but it has also given us an opportunity hear your views."

"Our country can radically transform when its citizens are active participants in its initiatives. I urge you to join us, through our initiatives, and help us uplift our communities and move South Africa forward", concluded Hanekom.

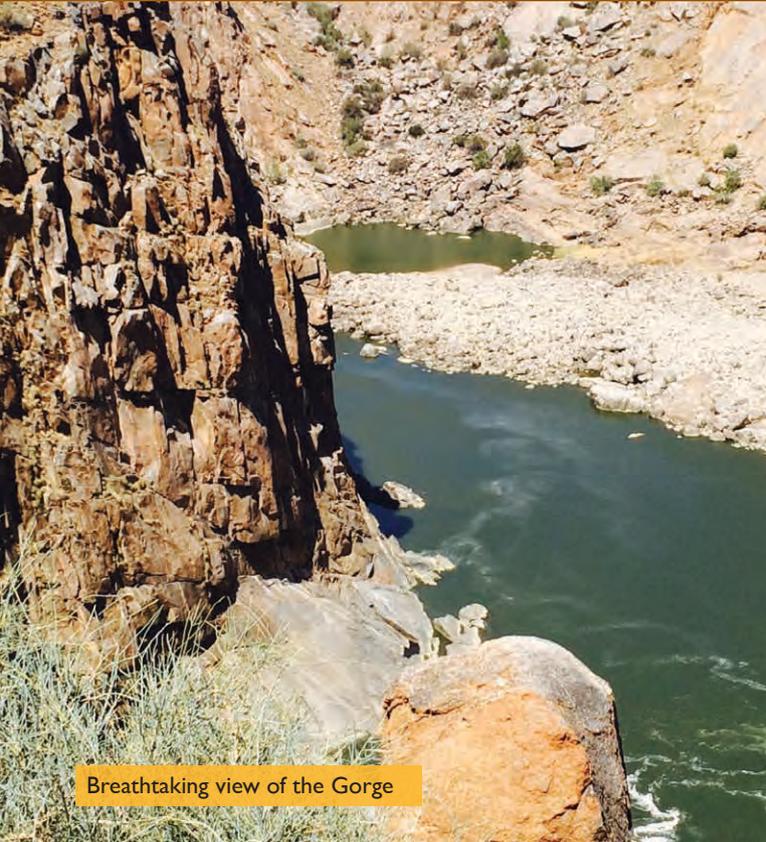
The Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom hands over a certificate to one of the recipients during the Imbizo.



Oranjekom Gorge Cottage – Augrabies Falls National Park



- by Nadia Lemmetuis,
Communications Manager, Arid Region SANParks



Breathtaking view of the Gorge

A new, gravity-defying cottage has been opened in the Augrabies Falls National Park, offering guests spectacular views over the iconic Oranjekom Gorge. This much anticipated addition to the park was launched in 2016.

The Oranjekom Gorge Cottage concept was concluded during the 2013/2014 financial year and was the result of popular tourist demands to have secluded accommodation facilities with a breathtaking view. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) provided the funding via the DEDAT/SANParks partnership agreement. DEDAT contributed R300 000 towards the construction of this establishment.

The intention is to present Augrabies Falls National Park as more than just the Falls. There is so much more to see and do at the park other than a mere visit to the Falls. The establishment of this new unit, which is 10km from the main rest camp, is one step in that direction.

This facility is absolutely unique as it is nestled beneath the viewpoint of the spectacular Oranjekom Gorge, offering unrivaled vistas of the Orange River, flowing 240m below. Visitors can look forward to a luxurious one bedroom apartment with a fully-equipped self-catering kitchen and separate ablution facilities.

The cottage is priced at a base rate of R1 500, and can accommodate only two people - making it the perfect romantic getaway. The unit also caters for guests with mobility impairment.

Tours and Transport South Africa, a potential for growth as a youth travel sector



- by Tara Gellé, SAYTC Coordinator

Tours and Transport South Africa (TATSA) was the next sub sector to be introduced after Backpacking South Africa (BSA). BSA was exclusively representing and working in the interests of backpacker hostels, but tour operators began to want to join for the networking and marketing opportunities. It made sense for tour and transport businesses to eventually be included given the synergies between the two different types of businesses and the potential for growth as a youth travel sector.

The incorporation of tour, transport and adventure activity businesses led to the birth of South African Youth Travel Confederation (SAYTC) in 2007 as the umbrella body for the four sectors, as mentioned in previous articles.

TATSA has member representation throughout South Africa and in some parts of Southern Africa. Many backpacker hostel members offer tours and activities, or outsource to support fellow TATSA members as quality and safety is guaranteed. TATSA maintains standards by requiring all applicants to produce proof of operating licence and public and passenger liability insurance (if they use vehicles), to be resubmitted on an annual basis for current members. The Full tier is the only option as safety in this sector is imperative.

TATSA is the second largest sector. A huge benefit of being a part of SAYTC are the valuable relationships made within TATSA, as well

as working with and being supported by many accommodation and volunteer members.

This is a very hands-on sector, with the TATSA chairperson holding meetings specifically for these members to address the unique issues these businesses face. There is also a TATSA Facebook group exclusively for members, where they can ask questions and get necessary support. Issues like the operating license application process, insurance options and who to contact in emergency situations are discussed at meetings and there is great emphasis on assistance and sharing of correct information.

www.saytc.co.za
www.travelnownow.co.za

Young travelers having the time of their lives, straddling the Indian and Atlantic Oceans



Tourism Industry Advance Guiding through Peace and Development

- by Thapelo Mahale

The Department of Tourism in partnership with the Robben Island Museum (RIM) joined the world in celebrating International Tourist Guides Day in Robben Island, Cape Town. The celebrations took place over two days, from 2-3 March 2017 under the theme "Peace and Development through Guiding" with the aim to create awareness about peace, sustainability and security and provide a platform for guides across the country to discuss challenges and share best practices.

Over 250 tourist guides and stakeholders from around the country kick-started the annual celebration with presentations by industry experts on various issues affecting the sector, panel discussions on the Policy Framework for the sector, and a tour of the Island.

International Tourist Guides' Day is celebrated every year on the 21st of February. This day was first introduced by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations in 1990 at which time only 15 countries participated. Today, tourist guides in more than 75 countries all over the world celebrate this day.

As part of the celebrations, the Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom hosted a gala dinner for the guides. He hailed them as leading lights of our country who have it within their power to create that magical moment of shared truth, by telling tourists accurate stories about places, people and events in a way that illuminates their understanding of our history, our heritage, and our culture. "Tourist guides are absolutely critical to the continuing success and growth of tourism in our country. Everyone involved in the long and wide tourism value chain, whether as tourist guides, or as other links in the chain, has reason to feel very proud of how our sector is performing right now, said the Minister.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa recently celebrated as highly successful, the conclusion of the two-day event with a keynote address emphasising the valuable contribution of tour guides to the tourism sector. As part of new ways to develop the sector, a Tourist Guides App was unveiled and its features demonstrated. "This App is the first of its kind and it is going to curb the challenges of unregistered guides and to make it easier for tourists to locate the guides and validate their authenticity," Said Xasa

As it celebrates 20 years as a museum, Robben Island is one of the world heritage sites around the country that benefits from the department's programme to capacitate Tourist guides at World Heritage Sites. The Department is also looking at training new entrants in guiding, Continue Professional Development (CPD) programme, Foreign language training and Cross-border guiding. These programmes are aimed at improving the quality of the tourist guiding sector, attracting the right people into the profession and continue growing the economy through tourism.

The Deputy Minister also believes that the recent tourists arrival figures demonstrate a healthy growth trajectory in the tourism industry. "This shows extreme confidence in this economic pillar. We are here as government to create the conducive environment to help you thrive and feel that you are part of South Africa's heritage through peace and development," she concluded.



International Tourist Guides Day delegates arriving in Robben Island



Tourist guides and stakeholders sailing to Robben Island



**Congratulations to CEO of TBCSA,
Ms Mmatšatši Ramawela for winning the
2017 International Institute for Peace
through Tourism (IIPT) Global Award**

Top five macro-economic issues to watch in 2017

- by Mmatšatši Ramawela, CEO, Tourism Business Council of South Africa

Travel and Tourism is a sector that touches every facet of the economy – at a global, regional or domestic level. As such, each year the sector wrestles with a set of different factors in the operating environment, which present both opportunities and challenges for business. There are no easy answers to address many of these issues, and in most cases, it may take long-term consistent and concerted effort to resolve them.

Here is our pick of the top five macro-economic issues to keep an eye on in 2017:

1. Security vs Freedom to Travel

Developments relating to global migration, particularly as they related to immigration regulations: As the world grapples with the challenge of immigration – be it in Europe, the United States and even in South Africa – governments are under immense political and socio-economic pressure to ensure safety and security of their citizens, leading to a greater level of attention being placed on placing travel restrictions and the tightening of immigration policies.

What to watch - Europe's handling of the immigration issue; SA resolution on travel facilitation for minors and the roll out of biometrics at our land borders: With Brexit plans underway, and a number of European countries set to go to the polls this year, it will be interesting to see how the political changes (if any) will impact each country's approach to the issue of Europe's immigration crisis.

In South Africa, we look forward with cautious optimism for a resolution on the outstanding matters relating to the Amended Immigration Regulations i.e. regulations for the movement of children under the age of 18, in and out of South Africa. Furthermore, we are likely to see the roll out of the biometric data capturing system at eleven land borders across the country this year. Learning from our experiences at the airports, we hope the Government will take heed and carefully implement this system at the borders in collaboration and consultation with all relevant role-players.

2. Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Tourism Development in Focus

The UNWTO has declared 2017 the year of sustainable tourism development, on the back of the United Nation's new Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG 8: Promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full of productive employment and decent work for all and SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production in particular are worth noting. Social divides and economic inequalities is an issue that dominated discussions between political and business leaders at the 2017 World Economic.

What to watch: Ongoing global response to issues of climate change, particularly with the ongoing drought in parts of South Africa and the rest of the Southern Africa region. Furthermore, South Africa is set to see the introduction of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and the environmental tyre-levy in 2017 amongst other developments, these will have a significant impact on travel and tourism business.

3. The quest for inclusive growth

As the global debate rages on about the causes of the widening gap between the rich and the poor, there is no doubt that conversations about the concept of inclusive growth will be increasingly critical going forward.

What to watch: At a local level, it will be critical to pay close attention to the work of the Tourism BEE Council and the inclusive growth work stream, which is part of the broader work of the Tourism Minister's Economic Boosting Initiative. As we unpack the complexities involved in the implementation of the B-BBEE policy, how do we ensure that travel and tourism continues its growth trajectory, but at the same time ensure that we advance equitable opportunities for all our people in the sector, particularly youth and female-led small businesses?

4. Uncertainty, consumer safety concerns and the shrinking disposable income

Demand for travel and tourism remains robust worldwide, however the economic outlook remains uncertain with most developed economies showing sluggish growth and emerging economies struggling to maintain higher advances. This generally means for as long as the world is perceived to be uncertain and less secure, more and more tourists (including South Africans) will opt for stay-cations (to stay at home) instead of going out and exploring.

What to watch: A greater level of collective effort to tap into the domestic market.

With affordability often cited as a barrier for local tourists to travel their own country, what will be the local travel and tourism sectors collective response? How do we as a collective get the message to all our people about the available travel options right on their door step? Certainly, as individual businesses we are getting better at refining our messages and getting product out in the public space – how do we harness these initiatives and collaborate more with SA Tourism, the Provinces and cities to take our domestic tourism efforts to the next level?

5. A new era of populism and nationalism in global politics?

There is no doubt that global politics will continue to have a significant impact on consumer and business sentiment in 2017. With the rise of populism, nationalism and protectionism, we are set to be entering a new uncertain era in global politics and to a certain extent in trade and economics.

What to watch: Certainly, similar sentiments can be said about local politics in the lead up to the ruling party's policy consultative conference in June, elective conference in December and ultimately the national elections in 2019. For us in business, it is not much about who becomes the next leader of the party (and potentially the country in 2019), but rather whether or not economic policy will change: because business thrives where there is policy certainty everywhere in the world.

After all, travel and tourism needs the support of government in order to realise its full potential as a driver of job creation, economic prosperity and national pride!

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa being interviewed by SABC during the Coffee Bay Town Development and Youth Career Expo.



Coffee Bay Town Development and Youth Career Expo

- by Annah Mashile

On 3 – 4 March 2017 public and private sector joined forces at Coffee Bay to host the Interdepartmental Youth Career Expo. The event sought to outline in detail the developmental programmes targeting youth empowerment, employment opportunities, Internships, skills development, bursaries and other government basic services.

Coffee Bay is a beautiful rural village nestled on the coast of the former Transkei, in the OR Tambo District Municipality. The village is located approximately 95km south of Mthatha and 70km north-east of Elliotdale. Whilst its beauty cannot be challenged, Coffee Bay has complex social problems, with people's lives dominated by poverty, hardship and ill-health. As a result, the community primarily relies on government social grants, small tourism industry (driven by hotels and backpacker establishments), informal trading and subsistence farming.

The Youth Career EXPO exposed young people to an array of education, career and business opportunities available in government, public and private sector. In addition they were given practical experience in terms of developing CVs, business plans, business proposals, business writing and funding applications.

On the second day of the event Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa said Coffee Bay is a gemstone in the province with some of the best nature has to offer. The tourist hamlet of Coffee Bay is set for big changes as there are plans to make it a fully-fledged town as part of the King Sabata Dalinyebo municipality, in the Eastern Cape, with the aim of growing the economy of Coffee Bay.

"This place is a tourist attraction! So we are looking at young people who are not thinking about going outside of their place in order to find jobs. We want to create jobs here. We want to stimulate them at an early age whilst they are still in school but also those who are already doing careers in tourism to say think big, think entrepreneurship." Said Xasa.

Government committed to the community and learners of Coffee Bay that they will address and implement on issues of economic development such as tourism, skills development and training, energy, agriculture and agro-processing, ocean's economy, industrialisation, SMME development, TV and film production.



Department of Tourism Staff providing information to Coffee Bay learners during the Career Expo.

2017 Tourism Research Seminar

- by Charles Mnisi

The Department of Tourism hosted the 5th annual Tourism Research Seminar on the 17 March 2017 at The Innovation Hub, Pretoria. The Seminar, themed “Advancing Tourism Growth and Development Through research” was attended by about 150 participants drawn from various stakeholders in the tourism sector as well as some institutions of higher learning.

Minister Derek Hanekom in his opening remarks, emphasised the idea of rapidly and inclusively growing tourism economy that leverages South Africa’s competitiveness in the global tourism industry. “for tourism to grow we need numbers, and for this reason we need a well-researched marketing strategy that will place SA in a better position to compete with the best in tourism”, said the Minister.

The department identified research as a critical area for the development and growth of the tourism sector. It is for this reason that the department strives to collaborate with universities to conduct tourism research and disseminate the findings to inform policy and decision making. The seminar is used as an interactive platform for universities to share the research findings and obtain feedback from wide range of stakeholders. As the event unfolded, delegates took to the podium to make presentation on findings in various topics they researched on.

The University of Venda in their findings, recommended inclusive participation of the National Department of Tourism (NDT), South Africa Tourism, Provincial government and Municipalities to drive the adoption of responsible operating

practices in the tourism sector. The research was on the topic of interventions and incentives needed to improve the number of enterprises, including state-owned tourism attractions and embrace responsible management practice. Also present was the University of Pretoria as well as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The department has a standing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with five (5) Universities with a view to fostering collaboration and strengthening capacity in the realm of tourism research and skills development. These Universities include University of Zululand (UNIZULU), University of Johannesburg (UJ), Cape Peninsular University (CPUT), University of Venda and University of Pretoria. In the research area, the MoUs established a formal basis of cooperation in support of research conducted with these universities. It also makes provision for financial support to students perusing tourism-related studies at these universities as well as training courses to capacitate NDT officials and industry stakeholders in relevant areas of need.

In hosting the research seminars, the department is also providing a platform for researchers, sector stakeholders, academics and other relevant government departments to network with peers and share ideas and best practices. Furthermore, the seminar provides an opportunity for students who received financial support from the department to exhibit their research and receive feedback from sector stakeholders.

The research reports can be accessed from the department’s knowledge Portal: <https://tkp.tourism.gov.za/Research/researchpapers/Pages/default.aspx>





The business lines of tourism are blurring – no longer in isolation as a sector, the industry is more closely tied to many other sectors than ever before, to the benefit of all.

As potential visitors move overwhelmingly to mobile and online platforms, tourism operators have been forced to adapt how they conduct business. Since these visitors are researching, booking and paying online, as well as dealing with contact centres and then uploading their photos and videos to be curated online, it's no longer an option to ignore their preferred channels. It takes planning to get this right; to create a seamless visitor experience, but the dividends are plentiful.

Tech integration is only the beginning. Large companies already benefit from generating customer and business intelligence, and then employing data analytics tools to improve on their business offerings, and smaller companies are seeing the benefit of this too. In developing products and business strategies, these efforts are driven by being visitor-centric like never before, and with the wealth of information available, it's also possible to build products that are more in line with what the visitor wants.

Supply chains

Across South Africa there have been areas stricken with drought, and the Western Cape is currently dealing with water restrictions. This means that big players in tourism such as hotel chains must exercise improved methods of accessing local products. As part of a Responsible Tourism initiative, it is essential that measures that aid in conserving water are in place. Peripheral to the hotel industry there are thousands of restaurants across the country, and, with food being central to the tourism industry, these businesses must ensure that they're able to produce menus that aren't undermined by factors influencing agriculture.

If we are to see the benefits of tourism optimised, it is essential that businesses understand that visitors form a significant proportion of their customer base, and that these visitors can be marketed for indirect tourism products. This will spread the tourism rand wider across the country.

Don't forget the smaller operators, even those working in the informal sector; they can be drawn into supply chains and as service providers. Many of these often disenfranchised people are relying on innovation to create opportunities, and their ingenuity has the potential to be extremely valuable if harnessed. Mutually-beneficial partnerships are the way to go, as we've noted with many of our local tourism businesses in environments such as Khayelitsha, where small companies such as the Department of Coffee and the Maboneng Arts Experience are driving forces in bringing transformation to communities.

Construction

Investor confidence is high – in Cape Town alone there are eight hotels being developed. Some of these are huge, and will take years from conception to their opening dates. Again, sustainability must remain a focus, but these building developments provide work for tens of thousands of locals. A construction worker isn't considered a tourism professional, but if their professional life is spent building hotels, one could argue that they're linked to the tourism industry. Architects, drafts people, crafts people, linen suppliers, furniture builders – even the artists whose artworks adorn the walls of hotels – these are all benefiting from the current hotel-chain expansion underway.

Finally, it is the travelers themselves who make tourism: from all walks of life, whether enjoying a quick weekend getaway, a luxurious holiday or a simple stay-cation where they're exploring their own cities and towns: all of these contribute to the continued growth of our industry, as well as opportunities for job creation and sustainability. This is of immeasurable value in South Africa where the economic climate can be intimidating and uncertain, so, as tourism professionals, we are committed to pushing ahead with initiatives that seek to develop our sector and ensure its longevity.

The highs' and in lows' of the tourism industry

- by Donovan Muirhead, Chairman NAA-SA



As we sit here and reflect on the year that was (2016), the best way to describe it is that it was 'a tale of two halves'.

Within our sector members reported that the first half of 2016 was phenomenal, with occupancies and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) being equal to if not better than 2008.

Then just like that, bookings stopped. In May and June, occupancy figures were at an all-time low, sure there were a few exceptions but as a whole the smaller accommodation sector took a pounding.

As evidenced in the SA Tourism Performance report from July to September 2016, domestic travel reported a 22% decline in trips and a 40% decline in spend when compared to the same period in 2015.

Whilst positive growth was shown in the International Tourism Performance, for the same period, these guests did not stay at Guesthouses and Bed & Breakfasts

Even more concerning as evidenced within this report was that Guesthouses showed a 58% drop in room nights sold, similarly Bed & Breakfasts showed a 57% drop in room nights sold over the past two years.

Whilst we cannot put our finger on the exact causes for the dramatic drops in occupancies & revenues we know that the current situation is unsustainable.

They say that within every challenge lies an opportunity, and it is through these challenging periods that members have re-evaluated, re-packaged and re-focused on their establishments as a whole.

So far this year this re-focused approach is showing signs of a slow recovery, only time and a continuous evaluation of the performance throughout the year will tell.

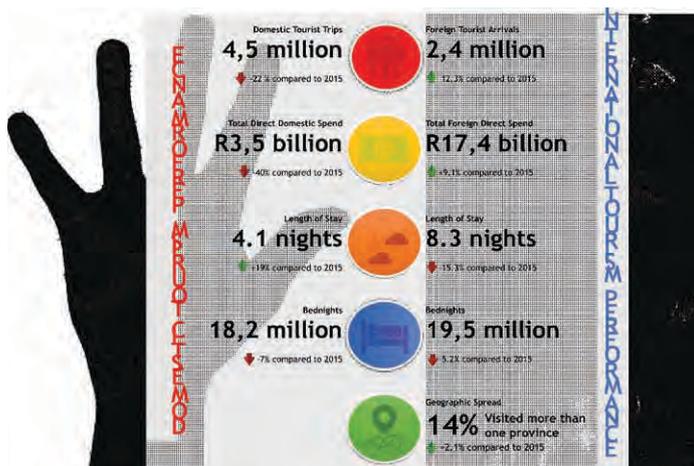


Figure 1 - SA Tourism Performance Report July to September 2016

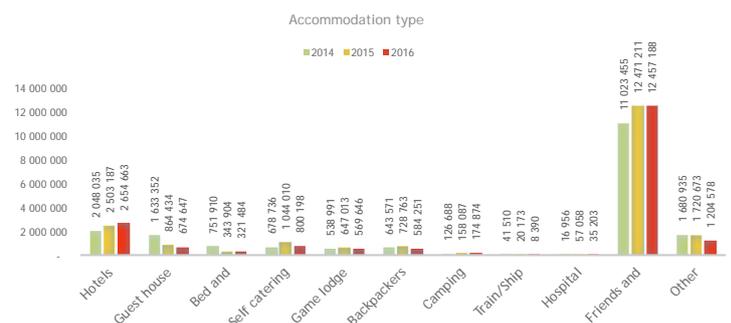


Figure 2-SAT Departure Survey July to September 2016

Should you wish to contact us, our details are as follows:

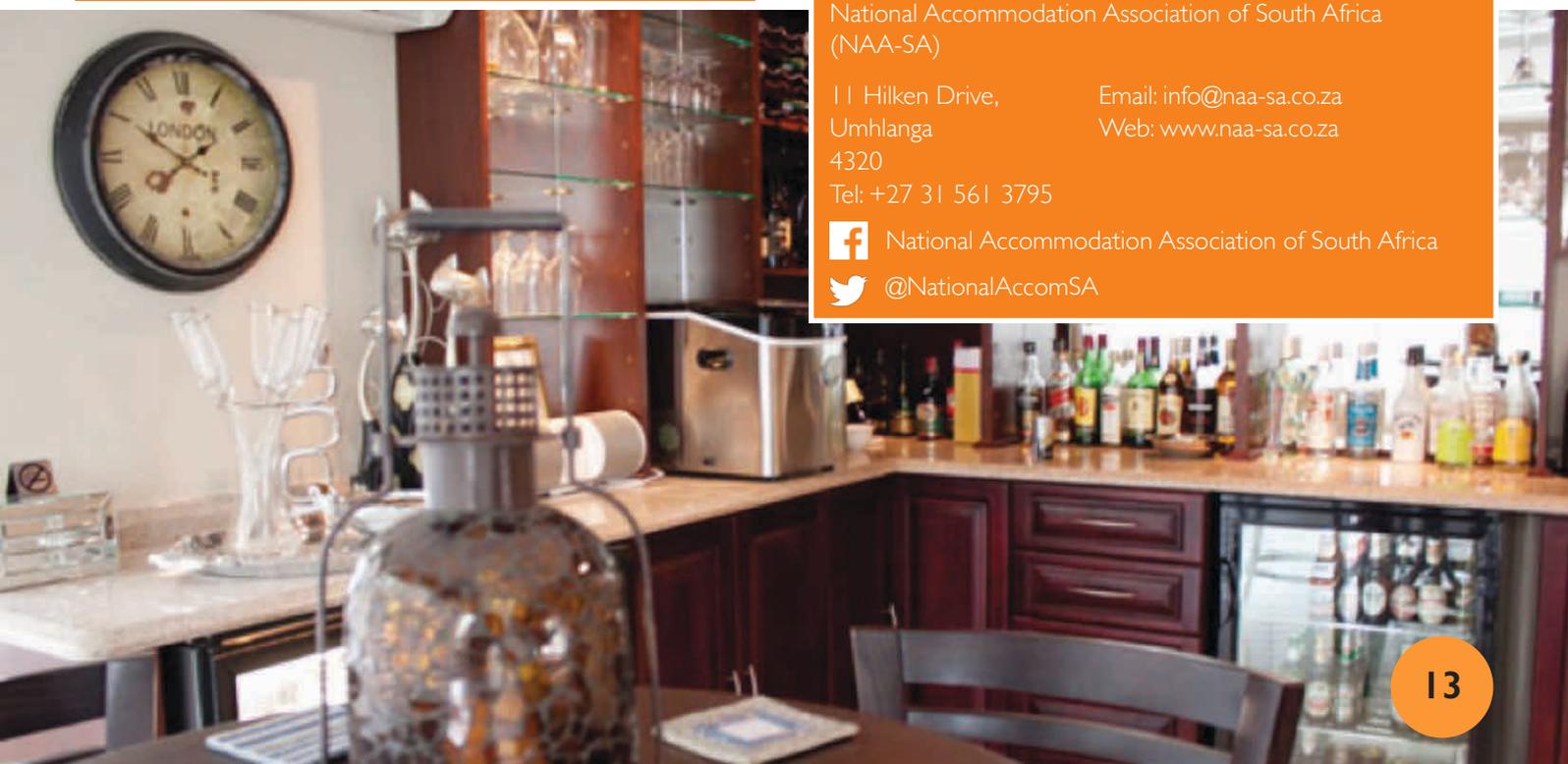
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Duty of Care – Who you gonna call?



- by Otto de Vries, CEO ASATA

Bombs in Brussels. Terror Attacks in Paris. Zika in West Africa. Are you feeling safe and secure when you're required to gallivant around the world on government business?.

The Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) recently investigated the impact of terror on business travelers and found that recent events have made travelers quite fearful. What's more, is that two thirds of travelers say there is a clear psychological effect on either them or their families when they travel to a region where they do not feel safe.

Which are some of the risks you are facing while traveling?

Although terrorist attacks are unfortunately occurring more often, it is more likely that a traveler will be a victim of petty crimes such as being robbed, being involved in a car accident or losing important documents such as passports, than being the victim of a terrorist attacks.

These real-world risks may not be life-changing, but can still be a major source of stress, anxiety, upset, and inconvenience. And, if not handled appropriately, they can lead to much more serious consequences.

First of all, any department or organisation should have a solid risk management plan that involves various stakeholders such as procurement, travel, insurance, etc. No matter what risks any organisation believes its travelers are likely to face, there should be an immediate mitigation plan against such.

Four ways in which your Travel Management Company (TMC) or Travel Agency can make you feel safe

Duty of care and specifically travel risk management requires careful planning, a cooperative effort across departments within an organisation and strong relationships with third parties that offer specialised tools and services for traveller safety.

At a time when terrorism and safety concerns are real, a TMC or travel agent, that is accredited with the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA) will play an important role in helping you travel with peace of mind and facilitate communication among the various stakeholders within your department.

Here are four ways in which your ASATA TMC or Travel Agent can assist you and help you feel safe.

1. A TMC will help you feel prepared

A sure way to mitigate travel risk is to provide tools, services and solutions to travelers prior to their trip. Travelers have reported in recent surveys that they wanted more access to up-to-date risk management tools and specific safety briefings for various destinations.

Your ASATA travel agent will provide travelers with accurate and up-to-date destination briefs, particularly when they are travelling to high-risk destinations. They will also communicate safe travel practices and ensure that travelers are informed about appropriate vaccinations.

Your ASATA travel agent will also make sure that they have traveler profiles containing all their information including emergency contact numbers and records of health issues.



Otto de Vries CEO ASATA

2. A TMC will monitor any situation in real-time

For many companies, it can be challenging to accurately determine if their travelers have been impacted by unforeseen events. Many companies rely on news sites or social media for risk alerts, but both sources can be unreliable and inaccurate.

By working with a partner who can efficiently interpret complex travel itineraries, business travelers can travel with the knowledge that their ASATA-accredited TMC has the tools and technologies at their disposal to monitor any situation, whether it is related to weather, health, terrorism or any other unrest.

3. A TMC can quickly and efficiently bring you to safety in case of emergency

Based on ticketed itineraries, the TMC will know where a traveller is at any given time and can deliver support at any time of the day and night, whether they want to change an itinerary or need to be evacuated.

They will be able to notify travelers immediately if there is the slightest change the traveler could be affected by an unforeseen event. They will reach out to travelers and suggest evacuation services as well as medical or security assistance, new accommodations, and a first point of contact.

In a worst-case scenario emergency, the business traveler may not be in a position to alert anyone. But, the TMC has a procedure in place to notify their company and make sure that they are accounted for. They'll also be in contact with the travelers' families.

4. A TMC will offer you clear communication

One of the biggest obstacles for companies in managing their travel risk management programme comes from travelers' lack of awareness about their company's current procedures. Not knowing about the company's plan can leave travelers vulnerable and exposed in an emergency. Even if a company has the most robust travel risk programme in place, it would be useless if it's not communicated effectively.

The 2017 Business Impact of Travel Risk survey conducted by

International SOS showed that a rigorous implementation and an on-going communication process is key to ensuring travel risk programmes are utilised effectively.

Once again, rely on your ASATA-accredited TMC to communicate the travel risk programme effectively, so that each business traveler is aware of steps to take if unforeseen events occur. The ASATA travel consultant is there to guarantee professional service, ethical conduct, trustworthy behavior and market leadership so that you can travel with peace of mind wherever you need to go.

SAACI Celebrates 30 Years



- by saaci



Rudi van der Vyver - CEO

The year 2017 kicks off with a bang for Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) as we celebrate our 30th year anniversary and the 31st annual SAACI congress in June. The new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Rudi van der Vyver steps into the association being very optimistic about the future of the industry and he is excited about the emphasis that has been placed by government on the tourism industry, both for business and leisure.

"The recent emphasis and increased focus given to the industry in both State of the Nation Address (SONA) and Budget Speech indicates that the future is very bright for our industry and there is a very big responsibility on our shoulders as industry leaders to ensure that this translates into sustainable growth and larger contribution to the economy," van der Vyver said.

Rudi van der Vyver was appointed to the CEO position moving from one of the South African hotel groups where he held an executive position. He also had tenures within the financial services industry in the banking and credit sectors before moving into business consulting and then hospitality.

"From the onset, Rudi presented a clear and stabilising plan for the association and after a review with the board, an offer was made," said SAACI Chairman, Wayne Johnson. "We are pleased to have him on board and look forward to his contribution towards our association and its members" he added.

Outlining his plan, Rudi said SAACI will be going back to basics and that the main focus will be given to their member benefits and uplifting the industry as a whole. "We can only be successful as individuals once our industry is successful, if we don't grow and strengthen our industry together first, it really doesn't matter what we do alone," he said.

In 1987 SAACI was officially registered as a Not for Profit Association in Tshwane, and 30 years later the association returns to celebrate its 30th anniversary and 31st congress in the Capital City of South Africa. The event will take place from Friday 2, to Sunday 4 June 2017 at the CSIR. Minister for the Department of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, will deliver the opening address.

The association is elated by the success of the congress last year and looking forward to hosting another memorable industry event. Planning is already well underway. Registrations for the 2017 congress, themed 'innovation@work, preparing for multiple futures', opened on 1 March and space is filling up quickly. The host venue is ideally situated close to all the central amenities in Pretoria and easily accessible from all major routes in Gauteng. The centre offers superb facilities and quality services and we look forward to welcoming everyone in our industry.

The SAACI 2017 Congress Programme Committee is hard at work developing a relevant programme that will meet the needs of the more than 400 delegates we are expecting to attend this congress as well as offer extensive engagement opportunities, from interactive sessions to networking events. We'll be updating the website as we go, with information about our speakers and more detailed descriptions of their sessions. We are looking forward to welcoming you to SAACI 2017 Congress.



Flight Centre Travel Group host another successful Travel Expo



- Article prepared by Flow Communications on behalf of Flight Centre Travel Group



Flight Centre Travel Group Managing Director Andrew Stark

Debbie Zeelie beamed as she left the ticket counter with her friend Natalyn Portwig, with air tickets in her hand.

"We're going to Portugal in June for my 50th birthday. We were here yesterday. This is well worth a visit if you want to travel," she crowed excitedly.

The "here" Zeelie was referring to was South Africa's largest travel and tourism exhibition, Travel Expo, which South Africa's largest travel company, Flight Centre Travel Group, has hosted annually since 2010.

Zeelie and Portwig had attended the Expo – which took place at the Ticketpro Dome in Northgate, Johannesburg on 11 and 12 February – for the first time this year in the hopes of bagging a deal.

And they did not leave disappointed.

Not that Flight Centre Travel Group, Managing Director, Andrew Stark had expected them to.

Stark says the growth, year-on-year, of the Travel Expo vindicated the group's decision to host it.

"The main objective of the Expo is to gather the biggest players in the travel retail industry together under one roof to offer

consumers massive travel savings for two days, bookable through Flight Centre Travel Group and only available at the Expo. The continued success of the Expo flies in the face of the belief that the poor state of the economy is discouraging travelers. Our Expo shows what free entrance, value add and the predictability of the expo taking place can do," says Stark.

Stark says that from around 9 600 attendees in 2013, Travel Expo 2017 saw 22 000 people flock through its doors.

From 50 exhibitors in 2010, Travel Expo 2017 boasted 120 exhibitors from among the biggest players in the travel retail industry in South Africa including Emirates, South African Airways, Mango, British Airways, Cruiseabout, Club Med, Air Mauritius, Beachcomber, Flight Centre Holidays, MSC Cruises and Top Deck.

Kaya FM and Mix FM also broadcast live from the Expo.

Says Stark: "Attendance was up 10% on last year. Total sales grew a staggering 30% on last year showing an improved quality of service and conversion from our 104 travel experts."



Some of the travelers attending the Expo

Stark points out that while Flight Centre Travel Group is primarily an outbound travel company, the Expo also helps stimulate local travel and tourism – flights and packaged holidays constituted the bulk of the travel purchased at the Expo this year, with the top destination for flights being South Africa followed by Australia, Thailand, the USA and United Kingdom.

"South Africa was also one of the most popular destinations for packaged holidays for Flight Centre Holidays, the company's global manufacturer of unique product packages, along with Mauritius, Thailand, Zanzibar and the Far East," says Stark.

"We're ecstatic that we're stimulating the desire to travel and that we're making travel affordable for ordinary South Africans," he adds.



Travelers ask for more information about the available traveling options

Stark is not just empty words, the proof is in the pudding – the thousands of attendees who visit the Expo annually bear testimony, like Dudu Dube from Buccleuch in Johannesburg who attended the Expo for the first time this year. "I want to travel and my sister-in-law told me I should attend the Expo because you get good discounts here," she said.

Her sentiments were echoed by Rabia and Zain Sayed from Bedfordview who were "in the market for some traveling. We're looking at going on a cruise or going to Dubai. We heard about the Expo on Facebook and decided we had to attend. We normally book through an agent, but heard the Expo was well worth attending," they said.



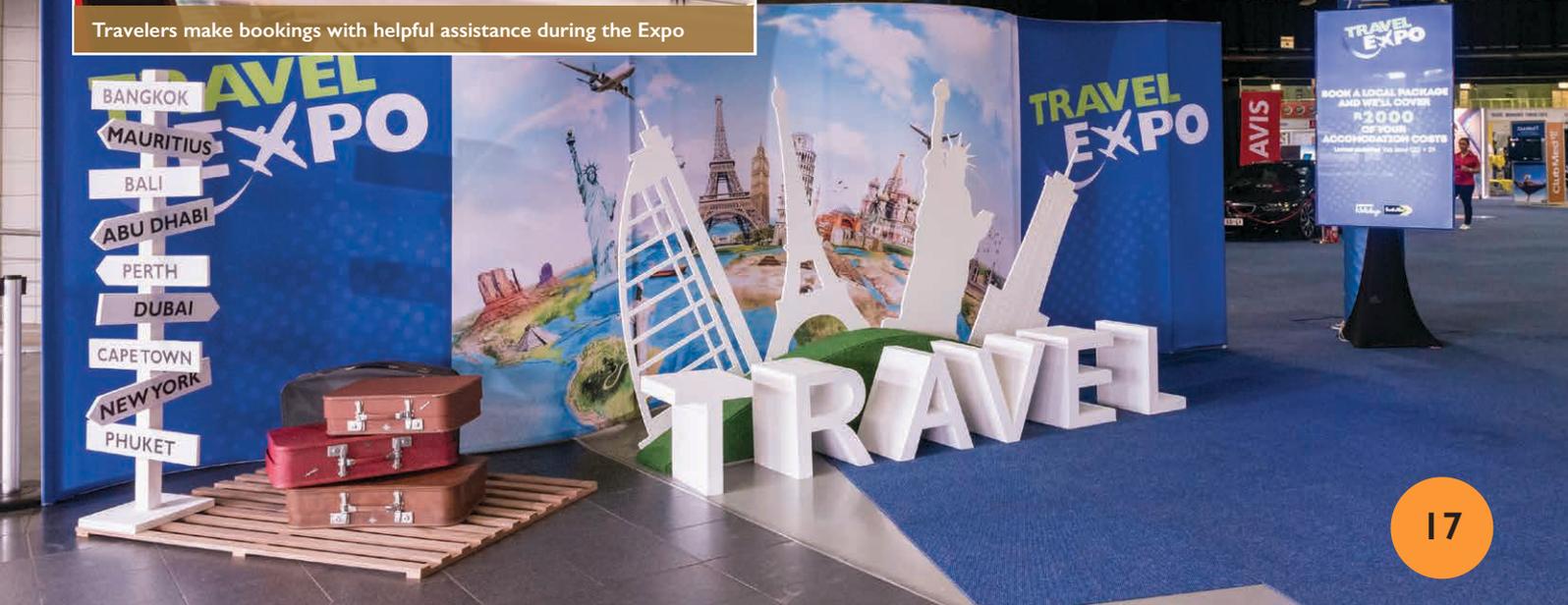
Andrew Stark, Flight Centre Travel Group MD, addressing staff at the Expo

Note:

1. Flight Centre Travel Group's Travel Expo is South Africa's biggest travel exhibition and takes place annually at the Ticketpro Dome in Northriding, Johannesburg.
2. Flight Centre Travel Group is South Africa's largest travel company with over 181 businesses including Flight Centre Holidays, Cruiseabout and Corporate Traveller.
3. Flight Centre hosts the Travel Expo at the beginning of every year, gathering the biggest players in the travel retail industry under one roof and offering consumers massive travel savings over two days.



Travelers make bookings with helpful assistance during the Expo



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM EVENTS CALENDER 2017

APRIL		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOURISM CONFERENCE 2017	03 – 04 April	Gauteng Emperors Palace
IMBIZO FOCUS WEEK	April	Eastern Cape
MAY		
TOURISM INDABA	16 – 18 May	Kwazulu Natal Durban ICC
TOURISM BUDDIES GRADUATION	19 May	Free State
METSI MATSHO SRI LAUNCH	20 May	Free State
JUNE		
YOUTH IMBIZO	June	TBC
NATIONAL CHEFS GRADUATION	15 June	Kwazulu Natal
JULY		
LAUNCH OF MVESO SRI PROJECT	13 – 14 July	Eastern Cape
MAHLATHI VILLAGE LAUNCH	20/21 July	Limpopo Giyani

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