



AFRICA'S
TRAVEL



2-4
MAY
2019

INDABA



Brought to you by *South African Tourism*

Investing in tech can ensure survival

Martin Wiest, Tourvest CEO

When Tourvest first exhibited at Africa's Travel Indaba in 1988, there were just 27 exhibitors and 40 buyers.

Today, Africa's Travel Indaba attracts around 1,000 exhibitors and 1,500 buyers and our aims for being at the event has changed. Last year, over 48,000 meetings were scheduled between buyers and exhibitors with 20,000 new business leads created. This is mainly thanks to modern communications and technology, which has changed the face of the tourism industry. No potential customer waits for trade shows. What matters nowadays is brand positioning and brand equity, both of which require the latest technological and digital assets to get right.

Tourvest, which is the biggest integrated destination management group in the southern hemisphere, is investing R30-million in technology development in a bid to become bigger, better and faster. We understand that the industry has become more about marketing and utilising the right digital channels. Those companies who can adopt, understand and adapt will survive.

Driving many of these trends is the millennial generation, now in their twenties and thirties, who are techsavvy and are comfortable with using digital resources to facilitate their travel plans. Globally, up to 45% of all travellers are using their mobile devices to do this. So it is clear that technology in the tourism industry is not a trend but is here to stay.

At Meetings Africa 2019, emphasis was placed on the importance of the tourism industry adjusting to the demands of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' to remain globally competitive. There were calls for the industry to embrace and become early adopters of beneficial new technologies.

From a macro perspective, the Fourth Industrial Revolution presents South Africa with the opportunity to create and disseminate more commodities to international markets, which, in turn, can attract tourists to South Africa. In addition, success will come to those companies who understand their customers and who have the lowest cost distributor for commodities.

However, with all the talk of adopting new tech, a platform such as Africa's Travel Indaba still presents tourism stakeholders with valuable face-to-face time.

Tourvest is attending its 31st Indaba and is investing R5-million into the exhibition. We will bring along around 120 staff members, including junior employees as part of their training and team building. With all these resources invested in the exhibit, being at Indaba 2019 cannot be measured in monetary terms.

Its true value is in starting new relationships and building on existing ones, which exceeds the tangible cost benefit. It is an opportunity to engage with colleagues within the industry, clients, media and others who are passionate about tourism so as to influence perception.

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