

Trends shaping tourism and hospitality industries in 2023

According to lecturers at the IIE's School of Hospitality & Service Management which has campuses in Rosebank, Johannesburg and Newlands in Cape Town, this year will see an increase in "bleasure" travellers (those visitors combining business and pleasure) and all-inclusive and packaged holidays, while the South African tourism and hospitality industry will have to continue to deal with the effects of load-shedding.



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Europe still corners the global tourism market with 51% as opposed to Africa with only 5%. However, all is not doom and gloom given that Africa is one of the fastest-growing regions when it comes to tourism.

Below are some of the lecturer's predictions.

An emphasis on safety and sustainability:

There is a continued bounce back from the Covid pandemic with a bigger focus than ever before on sustainability and

safety, says Roshaan Hunter, lecturer in Cape Town. "Looking at international tourism market share it remains clear that Europe still leads the pack continuing to corner the market with 51% as opposed to Africa with only 5%.

"We should however not be despondent; it is clear figures are slowly rising as our segment is working hard in re-building consumer confidence and adapting to evolving consumer needs. The highly respected Hospitality Global Market Report of 2022 found that the global hospitality market is expected to experience a 15% compound annual growth. Acsa reported a 90% growth in travellers at airports compared to November 2021.

"South Africa remains a very popular destination but we should not get complacent, we should keep on re-inventing ourselves and seek to deliver unique tourism products to entice and then keep our much-valued patrons. Sustainability is key. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the most widely used green building rating system in the world which hotels are aspiring to. Eco-tourism continues to grow year-on-year.

South Africans make the best out of adversity

The hospitality industry is proving to be innovative and resilient when it comes to load shedding.

According to Collin Thaver, MD of Southern Africa 360, power disruptions in the industry are being managed and most tourism outlets have backup generators to cope with this. He says that tourism bodies are using social media to update visitors to their area and region, and even local municipalities are sending out messages online.

All-inclusive packages and business travel

Dustin Pieterse, lecturer based in Cape Town says that this year business travellers will choose to combine leisure time during their trips. "Guests will think of more ways to save money rather than to spend so they might want to have exclusive packages that meet only their specific needs for that particular visit or stay. One can already see trends such as guest desire to pay for certain services and amenities utilised.

"More tourists will also opt for all-inclusive packages so they know how much their holiday is going to cost them. These all-inclusive packages used to be seen as low quality but that has changed and there will be more upmarket all-inclusive deals which include food, drink and activities.

The electricity crisis will have consequences

From a hospitality operational point of view, there is no short-term sustainable way to remedy South Africa's current electricity crisis. This is something that affects everyone in hospitality, from the most basic employee doing a cleaning job to the CEO.

However, the industry showed resilience during the Covid lockdown and, if anything, hospitalians don't give up but rather take charge and lead.

The electricity crisis forced larger hotels to run on generators to keep and maintain standards, but this is extremely expensive to maintain and not good for a carbon footprint. However, if there is no solution soon, it will have a more severe impact on the hospitality industry than what was experienced during the pandemic.

Business travellers

More and more hospitality industries are leaning toward a new term known as "bleasure", which is the mixing of business with pleasure, adds Etresia Booysen, lecturer based in Johannesburg. The hospitality industry is becoming more corporate-oriented.

"Guests pay for the experience and the memories made, rather than just a bed to sleep in and breakfast in the morning.

Business travellers do not only want to stay at a hotel because they are working but also to enjoy themselves and take some leisure time.

"More corporates are employing hospitality-oriented people and graduates as hospitality equals customer service".

The energy crisis and sustainability

Seeing that electricity is becoming more unreliable, it is forcing more hospitality industries to look at alternative electricity.

Solar power is on the rise and something that many hospitality industries and businesses will adopt in future planning. Other smart technologies, such as automation and air-source heat pumps will also be taken into consideration.

It is very important for future hospitality industry owners to plan ahead and consider all aspects of sustainability, because not taking these technologies into consideration could prove very expensive if only installed when the electricity crisis worsens.

The hospitality industry is becoming more adaptable to sustainability and recent studies have shown that up to 78% of travellers will stay in a sustainable hotel at least once this year.

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