

Driving corporate travel



By Josephine Wawira

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According to a recent report by the World Economic Forum: [What will travel look like in 2030?](#), international tourist arrivals are forecast to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, from 1.2 billion in 2015. The report rates the travel and tourism industry as one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, as it embraces diversification in its various categories.



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For instance, while initially travel was only associated with leisure, the surge of corporate travellers across the world with close focus to Africa, has contributed highly to the massive increase in international travel. In its forecast, the report says Africa will be the biggest winner with an increase of 157% in the number of outbound tourists, from 35 million in 2015 to an estimated 90 million in 2030.

Today's travel market calls for diversity in products and services, especially with the continued rise of the millennial business class. Company executives and representatives are often on the move to attend events, meetings, and conferences and are required to remain connected and productive throughout. Due to factors such as unforeseeable economic downturns, rising costs of travel and often changing business models that affect budgeting, companies are increasingly seeking corporate travel solutions that include but are not limited to partnerships with travel agents such as Jumia Travel.

This is in a bid to streamline travel processes such as scheduling flights, hotel bookings, and airport pickups among others. This means that online travel agents, for instance, introduce special rates for corporates as well as loyalty programs which call for more than just an e-biz relationship, but rather a business partnership driven by the need to meet supply and demand.

Data by Jumia Travel shows that African countries that receive the most corporate bookings include Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Ghana. Further, it shows that bookings are higher during the first three days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday), with the busiest months being between February to July and September to end of October.

Adapt swiftly

The technological changes taking place in the African corporate travel market will require service providers to adapt swiftly

in order to meet the clientele's demand. This would include incorporating business travel technology such as mobile booking apps, provision of free Wi-Fi (which is a trending [traveller preference](#) in hotel booking), as well as flexible payment solutions both offline (pay at hotel) and online such as M-Pesa and Tigo Pesa, as the mobile revolution in corporate travel is quickly materialising.

A 2016 survey by AirPlus International Travel Management shows that this year, global airfares are eating up the spend of most corporate travellers at 41%, followed by hotel stays at 35%, meetings and conventions at 24%, car rentals at 21% and rail trips at 18%. Therefore, combined efforts by both corporate travellers and service providers, such as availability of corporate travel packages, will go a long way in striking a balance in the market to ensure steady growth in the industry.

ABOUT JOSEPHINE WAWIRA

Josephine Wawira is a consultant in communication and public relations with over six years of progressive writing and broadcast experience. She is currently a writer for Africa's online hotel booking portal, Jumia Travel, focusing in the areas of travel, tourism and hospitality as it relates to Africa.

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