

When it comes to car rental, South Africa deserves better

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In October last year, the Woodford Group announced their partnership with Enterprise Holdings in a move that will bring the global mobility solutions leader's services to South Africa for the first time.



The partnership will feature car rental options from Enterprise Rent-A-Car, National Car Rental and Alamo Rent A Car at all Woodford Car Hire's current and upcoming locations. Visitors to these locations would have noticed significant upgrades to the branches, with Enterprise's branding featuring prominently alongside Woodford Car Hire.

But what does the partnership mean beyond new signage and revamped offices?

High on rates, low on service

South Africans know that bigger isn't always better. So, while there was considerable excitement when Woodford announced that they would be bringing Enterprise to the country, the big question was whether it would mean anything to everyday people.

For quite some time, the largest companies in the car rental industry have held travellers ransom. With public transport being inconsistent and unreliable from place to place, and e-hailing services considered unsafe and a gamble, most people arriving at an airport or in a new city simply have to rent a car to get around.

Huge fleets and strong presences in key centres mean traditional rental agencies bank on this need. Rates have skyrocketed in the post-lockdown era with 'specials' or discounts becoming less frequent. The average daily rental value is now the same as (or even more than) the cost of the average hotel room, which is unprecedented in the travel industry.

The Woodford Group hits new heights

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Whilst airlines and hotels are constantly trying to up their game in service and sales, large car rental companies are relatively passive and silent – because business is good.

There aren't many alternatives as well. The smaller agencies take their cue in pricing from the market leaders, their service may not be as slick, and their fleet options are usually meagre. One needs only visit the strip of rental agencies at a major airport during a peak period to see the queues of people needing a vehicle to realise just how high demand is.

A change on the horizon

It may then be justified for the perception to be that having the world's largest vehicle rental company in South Africa could mean that there's just another rental provider that wants a piece of the pie.

Enterprise is a global giant with more than 2 million vehicles and 10 000 locations in more than 90 countries. Those are staggering numbers and South Africa could just be another addition, but that isn't the case at all when it comes to the roll-out plan locally.

Key to the launch of Enterprise in South Africa is that they arrive as a partner to Woodford Car Hire. Woodford has been around for over 30 years and has grown into the largest independent car rental company with a reputation for excellent customer service. Their record isn't just a claim as they are the highest rated agency on review and feedback sites such as HelloPeter.

Woodford remains family-owned and has invested heavily in technology and systems to close the gap between themselves and the larger players in the market.

Partnering with Enterprise was a natural progression in its journey. Enterprise – also family-owned – has always put the customer first with a values-driven approach. Having Enterprise in South Africa means having the experience, footprint, and expertise of a global leader and the personal touch and attention to local flavour of a company like Woodford.

What can we expect?

It may sound far-fetched to travellers – business and leisure alike – that they will be treated to a whole new experience when booking and renting with Woodford and Enterprise, but that's exactly what they can expect.

Come June 2023, Woodford and Enterprise will offer short-term car rental, long-term subscriptions, chauffeur drives, and point-to-point services. What's being offered isn't unique, but how it will come to life is.

Woodford and Enterprise are currently preparing for the launch with the mentioned upgrades to branches and infrastructure and there is hard work being done both in front of and behind the scenes to ensure that the partnership changes the South African landscape.

With regards to their fleets, Woodford and Enterprise are increasing their number of vehicles every day to meet the demands and preferences of customers. Looking at technology, they're making use of booking, pick-up and drop-off systems that are on a global standard and provide a seamless experience.

The two brands are also strengthening their service through training programmes that will ensure their staff are the very best and are focused on behaving with integrity and transparency as well as practicing sound communication. In addition, there are a number of innovations in the works – all aimed at providing more value to customers and enhancing their lives.

Woodford has been making ripples in the market for years, but audiences can expect these to be waves in the coming months.

Woodford and Enterprise are brands that are constantly looking to grow through improvement, so they don't pretend to be perfect, but they are fully committed to providing you with service and experience that addresses all the hang-ups and gripes associated with the industry.

Having 'the world's largest' in any category arriving in the country is usually of interest, but having Enterprise launching in South Africa and enjoying a smooth and seamless journey is truly something for local travellers to get excited about.

For more information on Woodford or Enterprise and the launch date of the brand in South Africa, keep an eye on social and mainstream media and news.

- **A world-class experience with Enterprise** 10 Oct 2023
- **Woodford Car Hire - The very best in hospitality** 28 Sep 2023
- **Long-term rental to suit your lifestyle** 6 Sep 2023
- **ECR's official mobility partner** 11 Aug 2023
- **Enterprise Rent-A-Car South Africa and the Sunshine Tour announce partnership** 26 Jul 2023

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