

Can your growing business afford to use a travel expert?

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If you're watching every penny in your business, you'll probably be quite reluctant to outsource anything - including your travel planning.

Sure, you can find a Johannesburg to Cape Town flight yourself, hop on to the internet to book a car and Google the closest hotel to your meetings, but should you?

In reality, the use of a Travel Management Company (TMC) or travel agency that specialises in business travel, should actually cost you nothing if you consider the savings in time and travel costs they can contribute to your small business.

"SMEs often think their company is too small to use and afford a TMC. With only a few staff members, surely it's easier to let everyone book their own travel and sift through all the slips and invoices at a later stage? It's an understandable misconception and difficult to reconcile that spending money can actually save you money," explains **Ryan Potgieter**, [Flight Centre Business Travel](#) Brand Manager.

Potgieter explains that smaller companies don't travel often enough to have set contracts in place with suppliers such as airlines and hotels. "By using a TMC that specialises in small businesses but has global buying power and partnerships in place with suppliers, you can leverage the specially negotiated rates that we have at our disposal and leverage our relationships with these suppliers to get special benefits like not having to put up an up-front deposit when you rent a car for example."

When your business success relies on a small team, do you really want to be wasting the time they could be using to achieve your business goals?

"In a small business, it's all hands on deck. The unproductivity of having a staff member spend hours trying to arrange their business travel is clear. Do they know what visas are required? Where to get the best travel options? What the unsafe areas are to stay in? A good TMC can arrange this very quickly at a fraction of the cost."

Time and peace of mind are the two top reasons why **Ron Mackenzie**, who calls himself the Chief Wandering Officer for The Safari Guys, decided to hand over his travel arrangements to a travel expert.

"Our lives are busy and filled with commitments – our primary goal being to grow our businesses. The bottom line is that we need to focus on what we're good at and lean on travel professionals to do what they're good at... in this way we will save time and most often money."

Mackenzie explains that when a small business spends its cash on business travel, it is essential that this budget is spent on safe destination that reflect what the company has in mind. "A TMC can offer true value when the travel consultant is experienced, has been to the destination and knows the alternatives," he says. Mackenzie says small companies need to remember that 'life happens' even when you're travelling. "There is great comfort in knowing there is a number to call and someone who cares about your needs."

When it comes to SME business travel, says Potgieter, companies often fail to realise that the 'little things' such as change fees, early check-ins, taxes and visas can considerably drive up expenses. "A good TMC will work with you to mitigate wasted travel spend by helping you develop a travel policy that takes these things into account."

"A lot of SMEs don't really know what their travel spend is and are probably under-estimating how much they spend when

the travel.

“If your travel receipts and invoices are sitting in a shoebox waiting for your outsourced accountant to sift through them, you will understand the benefit of getting on top of how much you’re spending on travel so you can see how saving costs can help your bottom line and cashflow.

“The reality is, you won’t lose money by outsourcing your travel to a TMC like [Flight Centre Business Travel](#), you’ll actually save money.”

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