Munich of Swakopmund
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The Destination Challenges

Currently, most destinations, especially itinerary-based destinations, lack efficiency when it comes to visibility, itinerary planning, booking and payment, and the associated business processes.

DESTINATIONS LACK OF BUSINESS PROCESS EFFICIENCY
This is not only true for direct bookings from potential customers with the various local businesses (such as hotels, lodges, activity providers, car-rental operators), but it also negatively affects the many small and medium in-destination tour operators.

The reason for this inefficiency is the current limited use of technology. Hospitality and Tourism owners are overwhelmed by ever-changing technology and the entire digitisation process. The majority of them still work pen & paper based and, as a result, they are losing business or give away a large portion of their profit to overseas giants. Not only for themselves, but also for the destination.

TECHNOLOGY IS NOT WIDELY ADOPTED
The availability of thousands of “do-it-yourself” applications doesn’t really help, as they are often silos solving only a single issue. A business might end up with an overwhelming number of tools and applications to juggle.

These business owners are not marketing or techno geeks and rather focus on their passion - hosting their guests. They don’t have the time, resources or skills to manage this aspect of their business themselves efficiently and effectively.
INSTANT GRATIFICATION CAN’T BE PROVIDED

Because of this, the average local in-destination businesses are unable to provide what the customers in the respective source markets want - to be addressed based on the travelers mental model and instant gratification.

Take in-destination tour operators as an example. They need to email or call all properties to follow up with them on an itinerary. This could mean contacting anywhere from 5 to 15 properties to check the actual availability. Only when all providers reply and confirm availability, can the local tour operator go back to the customer with further planning and booking details.

COSTLY AND TIME CONSUMING PLANNING AND BOOKING OF ITINERARIES

This process takes at least 3 - 5 days. In the meantime, the customer has decided on another destination or booked the lodges themselves through a global Online Travel Agent. In both cases, the destination and its businesses lose out.

BLOCK BOOKINGS HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT FOR BUSINESS AND THE DESTINATION

Another negative impact is the massive number of block bookings created by large and often vertically wholesale integrated DMCs. A significant number of rooms are blocked and can’t be accessed or sold by in-destination tour operators or directly to customers (FITs).

It is usually only 30 days prior to arrival, that these DMCs release the rooms as “not sold”. As a result, the accommodation provider loses potential business and ends up with poor occupancy, low revenue and a loss of profit.

At the same time, the in-destination tour operator and the destination loses business, since many potential guests might have been turned away due to block bookings.

DMCs tend to use block bookings as a result of the current inefficiency and fragmentation of the industry, with no inventory and real-time availability for all properties in place. They therefore monopolise inventory for themselves, which does not help the destination or its other stakeholders.

It is for this reason that more and more bookings are made through the dominant market players such as the six brands of Priceline and sixteen brands of Expedia amongst others. However, this comes at a huge cost for the actual business and destination.
50% TO 70% OF PROFITS HANDED OVER TO OVERSEAS GLOBAL GIANTS

Not only does a Accommodation provider pay between 15% and 25% commission (50 - 70% of the profit) to overseas giants (tourism spend that does not reach the destination, it’s businesses and its people), but total ownership of the respective customer is lost to these overseas brands as well.

The customers’ metadata is then used for their own marketing. Consequently, properties and destinations become more and more dependent on overseas giants while their contribution to the destination remains limited.

DESTINATIONS TAKE BACK CONTROL OF THEIR DISTRIBUTION

However, there is a global trend of destinations fighting back and pulling back the control of the exposure, distribution, sales, marketing and reputation.

The VISTA Destination Network now enables you to do so.
The Open Platform And Ecosystem
Vista Destination Network

AWARD WINNING PLATFORM
rainmaker’s award-winning, time-tested and proven 5 Stages of Success, as well as the VISTA Destination Network Open Platform and Ecosystem, will contribute heavily to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of all in-destination businesses to create a remarkable competitive advantage against other destinations and dominant global market players to grow tourism in your Destination, keeping more tourism spend in the region.

DEMOCRATIZING TECHNOLOGY
The VISTA Destination Network Open Platform and Ecosystem democratises technology, enabling for the first time local in-destination businesses, such as the many small and medium independent tour operators, activity providers and hospitality providers, to make use of capabilities, features and functions that only the “big guys” can currently afford. The proposed Swakopmund Tourism goes Digital initiative makes this available to all independent small, medium or larger businesses in a destination.

GROWTH TOURISM AND PROVIDE INSTANT GRATIFICATION
This allows local in-destination businesses to provide guests and customers in the respective source markets and market segments what they desire the most: instant gratification. At the same time it solves a lot of inefficiencies and issues in the industry today, streamlining the entire end-to-end content and transactional business processes.

This is implemented throughout the entire process of the travelers mental model - the 5 Stages of Travel (Dreaming, Planning, Booking/Paying, Experiencing and Sharing).
KEEP MORE TOURISM SPENT IN THE DESTINATION
That means rich content and real-time inventory and availability, real-time bookings and payments for potential guests on the businesses’ websites and all local in-destination tour operators, active reputation management, and active revenue and yield management. It means more profit for the in-destination business. As a result, more tourism spend remains in the destination.

CREATING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
The combination of instant gratification and huge improvements to a destination’s business efficiency (in terms of providing instant planning, booking and payment), along with the local in-destination Tour Operators local knowledge and experience, a unique competitive advantage against the global giants is created.
Why Are We Doing This?

Currently, most destinations, especially itinerary-based destinations, lack efficiency when it comes to visibility, itinerary planning, booking and payment, and the associated business processes.

TAKE BACK CONTROL OF YOUR DISTRIBUTION AND VISIBILITY

Local businesses are losing control over their products, marketing and distribution, becoming ever more dependent on global giants. With the proposed Swakopmund Tourism goes Digital initiative, Swakopmund takes back control.

Currently, a significant amount of tourism spend is not being kept in the destination. Tourism, therefore, doesn’t contribute to the destination and its people as it could or should.

KEEP MORE TOURISM SPEND IN THE DESTINATION TO CONTRIBUTE

The more tourism spend remains in the destination, the more people (especially the youth) can be better educated and trained, and the more people can be employed or assisted with their entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry, strengthening the Destination exponentially. The contribution to the destinations’ GDP can be improved significantly, leading to a reduction in poverty.

It is our passion and our mission to democratise technology which only the global giants are currently able to utilise.

ENABLE THE IN-DESTINATION LOCAL BUSINESSES

By doing so, we can make this technology available to all the entrepreneurs and independent hospitality and tourism businesses in the destination. This enables them to gain more visibility, revenue, profit and more customer and market control.

As a result, the proposed Partnership achieves a more sustainable business for local providers and the destination as a whole.
How Does The Actual Market In Africa Look Today?

All over Africa, only 30%* of bookings are made digitally. In order to grow the respective destinations’ tourism and its spend, this needs to change.

**70% OF BOOKINGS ARE STILL PHONE, PEN & PAPER BASED**

These businesses and destinations, need to become more efficient and provide potential travellers with urgently-needed instant gratification. They cannot leave this to the global giants, who monopolise the market, while significant tourism spend flows overseas.

Today, Africa has around 80,000* hospitality businesses. By the year 2020, this will have increased to 100,000*.

**ONLY 15% OF HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES USE TECHNOLOGY**

The current digital presence of these businesses is at a very low 10%*, and only 15%* of all hospitality businesses use any kind of hotel management or booking and reservations software to streamline their business processes.

More than 60% of hospitality businesses in African destinations are small independent businesses.

**TOURISM IN AFRICA GROWS SIGNIFICANTLY**

In 2014 some 53 Million* tourists travelled to Africa. According to the UNWTO, this number will grow to 134 Million by 2020. Currently the Room Nights Market in Africa is estimated at USD 8 Billion per Year*.

It is of the utmost importance that the respective destinations become digitised, efficient and effective in their business processes in order to contribute more to the destinations’ GDP, enable more and better education, training, entrepreneurship, and create more employment, which in turn assists in eradicating poverty.
CONTRIBUTE TO THE DESTINATION AND ITS PEOPLE
Once these businesses are able to provide superb visibility and real-time availability, booking and payment, their unrivaled local in-destination skills, knowledge and experience will give them a strong competitive advantage over their overseas rivals.

This entire process should be followed with active reputation management, in order to grow and sustain their business.

CREATE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
All-in-all, the main goal of the proposed Swakopmund Tourism goes Digital initiative is to ensure more tourism spend is kept in the destination to support education, employment, entrepreneurship and to fight against poverty.

* Sources: E&Y, PwC, Jovago, Hospitality Plus, JLL
Driving The Swakopmund Tourism Goes Digital Initiative.

As a certified and authorised partner of Google we work closely with all the most recent and modern Google technologies and services. This makes the VISTA Destination Network the perfect open platform to scale while remaining perfectly secure and reliable.

**VISTA.switch - THE TOURISM INTEGRATION AND CONNECTION ENGINE**

The core, hyper-flexible integration engine is integrated into all relevant in-destination business applications such as Hotel Management Systems (i.e. Nightsbridge, Semper, Innkeeper, Opera and many others) as well as into Tour Operator applications (i.e. Tourplan, Travelogic and others).

It is also integrated into all respective payment providers (i.e. Direct Pay Online, VCS, NPS) licensed and accredited in more than 15 African countries already. Local payment providers can easily be integrated to follow the respective regulations in Swakopmund.

VISTA.switch, as the core integration platform, not only manages, but also stores and caches all respective content and transaction information, making it easily accessible to all in-destination businesses and stakeholders.

It can seamlessly integrate with the Tourism Board MIS (Management Information Systems) to provide any kind of statistical or tourism-levy related details electronically and includes a universal destination dashboard for the Tourism Board, providing real-time and accurate statistics (from actual data).
VISTA.frontdesk - THE EASY TO USE HOTEL APPLICATION
A simple online/offline capable web-based application (no software needs to be installed) for hospitality businesses that currently do not have any application to manage room-types, rooms, rack and STO-rates, policies, terms & conditions, bookings, allocate/swap rooms, check in, check out and invoicing. It also generates and provides the Tourism Board with statistics and levy-related data automatically.

This basic application will be provided as a freemium business model, meaning that the core service and application is provided either free of charge or at a very low nominal fee. No charges by number of rooms and no commissions are taken. The rainmaker team assists with the setup for the business.

VISTA.dmc - THE EASY TO USE TOUR OPERATOR APPLICATION
A simple online/offline capable web-based application (no software needs to be installed) for in-destination tour operators and DMCs. This application allows the participating tour operator to access all VISTA Destination Network connected businesses including their inventory, availability and contracted STO-rates, enabling for instant planning, realtime bookings and scheduled payments. This provides the ultimate instant gratification to any local tour operator and its customers, becoming the foundation of their competitive advantage.

This will also be provided under the freemium business model. No charges by number of bookings and no commissions are taken.

VISTA.API - THE EASY ACCESS AND INTEGRATION SERVICE FOR DEVELOPERS
A simple programmatic Interface (API) for all larger DMC and Tour Operators who run existing applications such as Tourplan, Travelogic, WETU, or others, to access the same data as smaller tour operators with VISTA.dmc, but seamlessly integrated to their respective applications.

This basic integration will be a freemium service. No charges by number of bookings and no commissions are taken. rainmaker also creates the needed integration if none exists.
A universal dashboard providing high level unique and holistic insights into the hospitality and tourism industry of the entire destination. Information on search traffic, number of visitors, sessions, time on page, number of pages shown, keyword trends, number of bookings, overall revenue, reputation details, and so on in an anonymised and aggregated way for Tourism Board to gain better insights into the respective source markets, market segments, regions and business segments.

It can also provide an overview of the reputation of the TOP 10, 50 and 100 properties in a destination, which can be used for Destination Tourism Awards, or simply to further improve the quality of service.

It can provide the interface for tourism levy return and collection towards the Tourism Board IT-System.
The Destination-Tourism Goes Digital Initiative

A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL BETWEEN TOURISM BOARDS AND RAINMAKER, POWERED BY THE VISTA DESTINATION NETWORK AND ENABLED BY THE GOOGLE CLOUD PLATFORM.

rainmaker proposes entering into a Public Private Partnership with the Tourism Board in order to assist and help the Destination to become more efficient, create competitive advantages and grow tourism and tourism spend in the destination.

The Tourism Board as our Partner will in return endorse, motivate and support the respective stakeholders in the destination to support the approach and deployment of the Destination Tourism goes Digital initiative and assist rainmaker in contacting and approaching the respective businesses as best as possible and with the necessary resources.

ESTABLISHING A LOCAL OPERATION AND SUPPORT OFFICE

As part of the PPP, rainmaker establishes a local support operation in the Destination and employ local team members to provide the needed education and training, oversee the deployment and service and support in the Destination.

INVEST IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Furthermore, a local Digital Tourism Academy Education and Training Program will be setup to ensure the businesses can fully leverage the Destination Tourism goes Digital initiative.
The Funding

Since rainmaker provides the Destination Tourism goes Digital initiative as a Public Private Partnership, there is no direct funding request to the Tourism Board for operating the VISTA Destination Network. As part of the PPP, external funding through interested NGO’s, or other interested contributors and sponsors will be considered. Direct Funding except for a once off Setup Fee from the Tourism Board is not needed.

NO COST OF OPERATION FOR THE TOURISM BOARD OR PPP PARTNER

The respective applications such as VISTA.frontdesk, VISTA.dmc, VISTA.API and VISTA.dmo are provided by rainmaker at no cost for the application to all respective businesses in the destinations. Only a nominal fee for the support, hotline and service will be charged. The features and functions built in are perfectly suited to create a competitive local advantage for the respective businesses and the overall Destination. It covers all content and transactional integration between all stakeholders in the Destination.

However, in the future, other features and functions, services and enhancements might be provided. Those can be opted into by the respective businesses at an extra, but always affordable charge.
GAIN BROAD MARKET ACCEPTANCE IN THE DESTINATION

The goal is to provide a competitive advantage and this goal can only be reached with a pervasive and ubiquitous market adoption.

Furthermore, rainmaker provides the 5 Stages of Success as a holistic methodology and managed service to digitally market hospitality and tourism businesses in their respective source markets. This is a paid-for service which can be obtained by the local providers to further improve their business.

SUPPORT FROM NGO’S AND SPONSORS

Since this is a long term vision and project to put the Destination and its businesses at the very forefront of the African hospitality and Tourism industry, it will be supported by various NGOs and other organisations as well as by sponsors.

In addition, a significant equity investment is backing up this vision and strategy in a sustainable way.
Rainmaker Achievements And Experience

Since we started the development of the VISTA Destination Network and the 5 Stages of Success in Swakopmund, after a 5 year design and experimental phase, we have been able to assist more than 200 customers in Southern Africa already. We are now in a place where the platform and technology, as well as all business processes, are fully-reliable, highly-efficient and scalable. This enables us to assist and enable other destinations as well.

We were able to dramatically improve the overall business of O&L Leisure Hotels & Lodges Swakopmund and their Mokuti Etosha Lodge and Midgard Country Estate between 2012 and 2015 when the platform and its services was in its infant design and development stage. The results are:

- Occupancy improved by 44%
- Average Daily Room Rate (ADR) improved by 24%
- Revenue improved by 85%
- Online Bookings improved by 1200%
- EBIT improved by 343%
- Tripadvisor reputation improved from 15 of 33 to 3 of 33

At Immanuel Wilderness Lodge Swakopmund we started our procedures in February 2016 and have so far achieved:

- Unique Visitors to their digital presence increased by 30%
- Online Bookings increased by 117%
- Revenue improved by 49%
- Average Daily Room Rate (ADR) improved by 16%
- Revenue per Available Room (RevPar) improved by 32%
- EBIT improved by 220%

We can provide similar results and achievements for most of our portfolio customers. We will be able to provide you with references of our customer base on request.
THE TEAM

rainmaker is the brainchild of some of the most experienced hospitality, tourism and digital marketing veterans in the industry. We bring around 50 years of experience in the hotel, tourism, sales, marketing and business development fields, 36 years in the IT, software development, systems integration business, as well as more than 15 years of hospitality and tourism digital marketing experience in the African and Indian Ocean region as well as from Europe and North America to the project.

This is enhanced by over 8 years of in-depth research and involvement in the Swakopmundn and Southern African hospitality and tourism industry, giving us unmatched insights into the various source markets, market segments, value chains and market dynamics.

Due to our specialist understanding of both traditional and digital market behaviour, we have invented the VISTA Destination Network Open Platform and Ecosystem to:

• Improve the destinations’ digital presence, efficiency and effectiveness in all participating businesses’ processes

• Improve the understanding of who the destination and its businesses are targeting and how they influence the industry (spend, demographics, itineraries, transport, etc.)

• Optimise the process by which itineraries and bookings can be planned by tourists and local in-destination tour operators, while still benefiting the destination as a whole

• Integrate existing quality platforms and applications on a large scale in order to streamline booking, payment and communication between service providers and clients

• Providing small independent businesses with the opportunity to upgrade to holistically integrated systems, which they otherwise would not have been able to afford
By implementing these strategies we achieve the following results:

- Increase the in-destination businesses’ revenue and profit through more no-commission direct enquiries and bookings, while also increasing tourist spend in the destination

- Enable the local in-destination Tour Operators to provide INSTANT GRATIFICATION to gain more direct bookings and enquiries

- Gain higher occupancy rates and higher revenue for the participating lodges, hotels and guest houses

- Reduce the time needed to create customer itinerary proposals and fulfill requests

- Increase awareness of the destination and what it has to offer to the traveller

- Increase cooperation between businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry to achieve a common goal of increasing tourism to the destination and thereby improving the destinations’ economy, infrastructure, employment and sense of community

- Grow tourism and keep more tourism spend in the destination
HOW DO WE DO THIS?
We are a partner of Google, TrustYou, WETU, MTN and Direct Pay Online and work with a global network of partners in Europe, Africa and North America from our headquarters in Windhoek.

At rainmaker, we provide you with world class digital technologies, strategic and holistic consulting, and digital marketing services forged from the African spirit, German engineering and American technology. We are a truly African company.

A TRUE AFRICAN HIGH TECH COMPANY
rainmaker is dedicated to improving the destinations business efficiency, digital presence and conversion, thereby increasing revenue, profit and reputation for the local in-destination businesses.

In fact, we create a competitive advantage for all local in-destination businesses against the global giants and, as a result, more tourism spend is left in the destination instead of flowing back to overseas dominant market players.
The Team

Thomas Müller
With 36+ years of experience in IT and 16+ years of experience in digital marketing in the hospitality and tourism industry, as well as 9 years of experience in the Swakopmund tourism industry, Thomas has an in-depth understanding of the relevant source markets, value chains and the market dynamics in Southern Africa. Thomas used to work in digital marketing and on the floor of 5-star resorts with TUI and Thomas Cook, as General Manager Marketing & IT he was part of the turnaround team of O&L Leisure Hotels & Lodges. He was part of the design, development and opening team of the Strand Hotel Swakopmund in Swakopmund. Thomas is the founder and CEO of rainmaker.

Bruce Hutchison
With 50+ years of experience in the global hospitality industry in Europe, North America, Asia as well as Africa and the Indian Ocean, Bruce has a vast knowledge when it comes to brand development, marketing and communication strategies. He also has a deep understanding of the tour operator business since he founded and established world leisure holidays some time ago. Bruce, as an ex-chef, trained by Paul Bocuse, was Vice President for 110 Hilton Hotels and run senior positions at Southern Sun, Four Seasons, W Hotels and many other renowned brands. He created the brands and hotels for Giorgio Armani and One & Only and was the main visionair and creative for the Strand Hotel Swakopmund.
Natangwe Nhiwete
Studied IT at the Institute of Information Technology in Windhoek, followed by being a pre-sales support engineer for complex projects at Telecom Swakopmund. He studied Multimedia Advertising at the Limkokwing University in Malaysia. Recently at rainmaker, he obtained the first Google Adwords and Mobile Advertising certification in Swakopmund.

Antonette Taaru
Studied Marketing and Business Management at Swakopmund Business Institute and is currently pursuing a bachelors in accounting at the University of Swakopmund focusing on management and taxation. Antonette has been working in Angola and just recently came back to Swakopmund. Antonette is the second Swakopmundn to obtain the respective Google certifications.

Katwali Nambala
Is a front-end developer who uses the most modern and recent technologies from Google and others to drive and create stunning Digital Presences for the rainmaker portfolio. He obtained his IT Management Degree at Multimedia University in Malaysia and a GIS Degree at NUST.

Annette Beyers
With a degree in Information Science from the acclaimed University of Pretoria, Annette has solidified her place as part of the rainmaker digital team thanks to her expertise in social media marketing, content marketing and direct marketing on an international level.
Ileni Shithigona
After completing matric, Ileni studied Digital Marketing in South Africa and obtained her Bachelor Of Commerce in Digital Marketing. She is passionate about everything digital and how the right content in the right channel can make a huge difference for your business.

Nicole Staerk
Has been in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry for more than 10 years. She knows Southern Africa, especially Swakopmund, inside-out from her experience of working as a tour guide for 5 years. Over the last 4 years, she also gained extensive experience at the Wholesale Operator, “Chamäleon Reisen”, in Berlin and more recently, at a smaller tour operator in Swakopmund. Her extensive experience from the tour operators perspective, including understanding an important source market, consumer focus, contracting, itinerary and content creation, travel consulting and guiding can significantly assist your project.

WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
We are passionate about driving the tourism in Destinations to the next level and would love to collaborate and partner with Tourism Boards and its registered businesses to create this urgently-needed competitive advantage and work with you and your stakeholders to grow tourism through efficiency and technology in order to have more tourism spend remain in your Destination.