

Speed networking at the Seychelles Roadshow

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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The Seychelles Roadshow took place at the Cape Sun Hotel in Cape Town on 20 July 2017. The first leg of the Roadshow included a MICE speed networking session, which was presented by 18 Seychelles tourist offices that served as information links between the Seychelles, potential visitors, tour operators, travel agents and the media. These offices included Air Seychelles, Seychelles Hospitality & Tourism Association, Vision Voyages, Alphonse Island, Berjaya Hotel, Constance Hotels, Eden Bleu Hotel, Hilton Seychelles, Six Senses, Sunsail and the Moorings, SeyUnique, The Holiday Factory, Thompsons Holidays and Variety Cruises.

Each office had six to eight minutes to highlight the features of their respective establishments and how it could benefit groups visiting the island, for either business or leisure. Throughout these sessions, I was personally reminded of how I had initially fallen in love with the Seychelles as a holiday destination during the 2017 World Travel Market Africa and vowed then and there to make my way to this beautiful, unscathed, holiday utopia.

We caught up with David Germain, the director for Africa and America's Seychelles Tourism Board and Amanda Lang, marketing manager for Alphonse Island, to find out more about MICE services and its positioning within the Seychelles.



David Germain, Director: Africa and America's Seychelles Tourism Board and Amanda Lang, marketing manager, Alphonse Island.

■ *How has the MICE industry changed in the Seychelles – have you seen any changes?*

Germain: Very much so, this is the reason why we are actually promoting Seychelles as a MICE destination, because we didn't have the various facilities and services, maybe establishments as well, in Seychelles that can properly service the MICE industry. I think I use the word properly because it takes into consideration equipment and professional staff as well – so the real professional package to service MICE in the Seychelles. This is why, today, we are positioning Seychelles as a MICE destination, specifically for a certain group of people, because as a small island nation, we also have our limitations.

■ *How successful has the Seychelles been in terms of its MICE offering?*

Germain: So far, I think that it's been very successful, more specifically from the European market, which is our traditional market. As I said, it's new to the African continent, but it has been quite successful in various ways, particularly the work and play kind of programmes and conferences. Remember, Seychelles has a lot of islands and each island has its own unique attractions – this gives delegates and business travellers a lot of opportunities to discover the unique attractions of

the Seychelles. Travellers can come down with their children during school holidays and join up with them. Our hotel services provide a variety of programmes for MICE and conferences to be able to visit all of the islands like Alfonse.

▣ ***What has the international response been to hosting conferences and events in the Seychelles?***

Germain: Seychelles continues to host quite a lot of big events. Conferences on the government side - SADC conferencing, RETSO, African Union - are frequently being hosted by Seychelles and it's been good in the past four to five years. They keep coming to Seychelles for two reasons. First of all, it allows them to discover the uniqueness of the Seychelles and its natural beauty. Secondly, there are a lot of aspects attached to it as well, such as safety, no diseases, no vaccinations and the friendliness of the people. It's a combination of positive factors which continue to grow and boost the success of the Seychelles.

Lang: Because we have such a wide variety of star rating hotels, visitors can look at cost conscious or cost effective hotels as well as the larger ones like Berjaya, for instance, where one can fit up to 200 people. Then there are the high-end hotels like Ephelia where conference facilities can be housed. As Germain mentioned, most hotels are work-and-play compatible, especially that of Eden Bleu which has the capacity to host conferences as they have before with SADC, African Union, etc.



Eden Bleu Hotel [Twitter](#)

▣ ***How has marketing for MICE come along?***

Lang: At my property, for instance, we had fly fishing, where the likes of Columbia and Yeti came through for two weeks, enjoying both work and play aspects. However, I think with other products, we did target a lot of African countries, like Ethiopia and Angola.

Germain: I think it's been more individual in the past with each property doing their sales calls, exhibitions all over the world, depending on the nature of the hotel and the promotion of their offering. Now the Tourism Board has taken it as part of our marketing activity to include MICE because we've made an assessment and can see that Seychelles can properly promote MICE. We also have to take into consideration the standard required to properly service clients. We have to be able to match the international level. There was a time when we thought that we could host MICE, but found that we were unprepared. Now we can rightly say that we are capable of hosting events.

We do need to be careful that we don't overestimate our capacity - invite 400 to 500 people to come and then have a disaster if we cannot manage it.

Lang: We've also seen an increase in airlines coming through, so seat allocation has become a lot easier.

Germain: Taking everything into consideration - man power, equipment, buses, airport, and arrival, etc. - we like to do things properly. I think this is the reason why Seychelles Tourism continues to grow - because we take it seriously. People need to know exactly what it is that we offer.

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ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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