

Tourism's female leaders talk shop

Female thought leaders in the Covid-battered tourism sector share what Women's Month means to them and their hopes for the future of the industry.



"This time is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of all women and the part we play in the world today. Whether these roles are in the social, political, cultural, or economic sphere, we are all responsible for the acceleration and acceptance of gender equality. In times like this, as we contemplate life in our new normal, I encourage all women to support each other to ensure we shape the world for every young girl to thrive and prosper in," says Sue Garrett, general manager, marketing and product at the Flight Centre Travel Group.

Mummy Mafojane, FCM Travel Solutions operations leader says, "It is important to grow and support one another, especially in such difficult times. When women uplift each other, it benefits not only the industry but the nation as a whole."

"Through this pandemic, women in the tourism industry have been negatively impacted due to loss of jobs or salary cuts. What I have learnt is to make the time for family and never take them for granted. Even though this has been the hardest and the longest struggle, if we are united, we will conquer this," says Bianca Mazur, Flight Centre Travel Group general manager.

What does Women's Month mean to you?

"The role of a woman can never be underplayed. The career woman, the entrepreneur, the mom, the stay-at-home mom, the married, the unmarried, the sister, the niece and all of us that play multiple roles. It's a reminder that we can do anything we set our minds to, without limitations," says Megan Vorster, Peopleworks general manager, Flight Centre Travel Group.

“Women’s Month is a time to reflect on what we can do together, and better, to support one another,” adds Jane Davidson, director at Development Promotions.

“This is a time to remember how all women deserve respect and appreciation for the contribution and value they give,” adds Emma Fletcher, Flight Centre Associates.

What encouragement would you like to give women in travel and tourism?

“To all the women in travel and tourism - stay strong for this too shall pass. Don't be afraid to ask for help - any kind of help,” says Prashanta Papia, business leader – Leisure Technology.

“We will keep on fighting, keep on supporting and keep on finding ways to be stronger than yesterday. No matter how you feel, get up, dress, up show up and never give up,” says Mariaan van de Venter, operations leader, Flight Centre Associates (FCA).

“Take time for yourself. Do you have the life you envisioned? Take steps to change the things that are not right for you. One small step can make a big difference if it’s in the right direction,” says Vanya Lessing, CEO of Sure Travel.

“It is up to every woman working in tourism to push the boundaries of what is expected of them. So, go out and celebrate the woman that you are,” adds Sharmila Ragunanan, Dream Hotels & Resorts group marketing manager

“Join the #IAmTourism movement by taking a photo and emailing it to South Africa is Travel Ready,” says Natalia Rosa, founder of Big Ambitions.

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