

# Three key learnings from the Stellenbosch Business Tourism Indaba

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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The first ever Business Tourism Indaba was held at Hofmeyer Hall in Stellenbosch on Tuesday, 13 June 2017. Hosted by [Stellenbosch 360](#) and in partnership with [Wesgro](#) and the [South African National Convention Bureau](#) the conference promised to unpack key trends and opportunities when it comes to business tourism in the Western Cape and specifically Stellenbosch.

Known for beautiful scenery, top class wine farms and amazing food, Stellenbosch has long been a destination to note when it comes leisure tourism however plans are now securely focused on growing the business opportunities the town has to offer as well.



The [International Congress and Convention Associations \(ICCA\)](#) recently ranked Stellenbosch as one of the top 10 cities in Africa for business tourism events and the town secured the seventh position in Africa for hosting association (business) meetings. Stellenbosch is aiming to leverage this recognition with many strategies and initiatives to promote business tourism throughout the town.



Stellenbosch eyes higher ICCA ranking for business tourism

2 Jun 2017



“ Stellenbosch is the place where companies can think about their African strategies. Tim Harris, Wesgro ”

## Business tourism can help transform local communities

From conference bag creation to catering, there're many employment options for local businesses and people when it

comes to business events and incentive travel. Organisations are also looking to give back through CSI initiatives when travelling to new countries to make it a more enriching experience for their conference delegates.

“ Clarisse Coetzee Event Specialist on how to transform [#conferences](#) into memorable experiences!  
[#meetinstellenbosch! pic.twitter.com/sOKpMdzlqg](#)— Stellenbosch (@MyStellenbosch) [June 13, 2017](#) ”

Examples of this was the [Media24 SpanPraad/ TeamSpeak 2015](#) conference held at the Stellenbosch University and organised by brand and event specialist and speaker at the Indaba Clarisse Coetzee. In her talk, she explained how the conference bags were made by the local community, these bags were made from recycled plastic and contained a solar powered light, these were then donated to three schools in Cloetesville after the conference had completed.



Image sourced from [clarissecoetzee.blogspot.co.za](http://clarissecoetzee.blogspot.co.za)

While Corne Koch, head of the Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau spoke of how delegates often want to take something meaningful back regarding their travelling experience. For example a recent conference employed the local community to fix bikes, these were then used on a tour of Nyanga by the delegates and then donated to the people of Nyanga. Bringing this particular community initiative full circle.

## Focus on effective destination branding

International speaker Bruce Redor from [Gaining Edge](#), a convention and meeting advisory company, spoke about how a clear message and brand needs to be relayed by cities when it comes to creating a successful business event destination. From a catchy tag line to well-conceived strategy, the community needs to clearly communicate what their unique offerings are so companies can easily be attracted.

“ International speaker Bruce Redor from [@GTEConferences](#) chats key trends for creating a successful event destination [#meetinstellenbosch pic.twitter.com/W3nGkaEkqH](#)— Bizcom Tourism (@Biz\_Tourism) [June 13, 2017](#) ”

Using Leuven, a small town in Paris, similar to Stellenbosch in many ways, as an example, Redor explained how local companies, knowledge institutions and the government all came on board with the town rebrand through the [Leuven Mindgate](#) initiative and identified the key type of events they wanted to be involved in. Redor also stressed identifying and communicating the elements of what makes your destination beneficial and desirable.

“



Net op tijd voor vanavond...

*A post shared by Leuven MindGate (@leuven\_mindgate) on Dec 8, 2016 at 3:41am PST*

”

**Strong hospitality culture is key**

Redor also spoke about the need to get your hospitality institutions (hotels, restaurants, etc.) on board when it comes to supplying quality and consistent service. Customer satisfaction is key to guaranteeing a returning clientele when it comes to future events as well as delegates who might want to return to travel in a personal capacity.

Zelda Coetzee-Burger, a business tourism consultant for Stellenbosch 360, echoed these sentiments. Explaining a key strategy for Stellenbosch 360 is to hook delegates with offers of tourism experiences and packages outside of the conference and enticing them into longer stays and return visits.

“ Zelda Coetzee-Burger shares [@stellenbosch360](#)'s ongoing business strategy [#meetinStellenbosch](#) [pic.twitter.com/8a6kr5xSgQ](#)— Bizcom Tourism (@Biz\_Tourism) [June 13, 2017](#) ”

In short, it was generally agreed that Stellenbosch has great potential for hosting many more business tourism events in future. Unique and varied venues, beautiful scenery, amazing food and wine, a range of accommodation options as well as a strong academic base make this quaint town perfect for hosting events and conferences.

[www.stellenbosch.travel](http://www.stellenbosch.travel)

[www.wesgro.co.za](http://www.wesgro.co.za)

[businessevents.southafrica.net](http://businessevents.southafrica.net)

“ The 1st [@MyStellenbosch](#) Business Tourism Indaba with 200+ attendees, was a huge success, says Annemarie Ferns, CEO of Stellenbosch 360! [pic.twitter.com/mO42Fow19w](#)— Stellenbosch (@MyStellenbosch) [June 14, 2017](#) ”

## ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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