

# Leaving a Flight Centre SA legacy behind

For those who have been reading the news and started dusting off their passports in preparation for "greener pastures", Flight Centre Travel Group's general manager for Product and Marketing in South Africa, Sue Garrett shares why she would always choose South Africa.



Sue Garrett, GM Marketing and Product at Flight Centre SA

Garrett started her career as a junior travel consultant. With hard work and passion, she moved through the South African business until she became the MD in the early 2000s.

## **You say you will always choose South Africa. Have you always felt that South Africa was the place to be for you?**

I have travelled all over the world. Once, I was the one who went to seek out those 'greener pastures' and I left for the UK to become MD at Flight Centre in London, moving to Australia eventually to work with the global Flight Centre team for nine years.

My extended stint overseas did not diminish my love for South Africa. Although living and working overseas is a fantastic opportunity, it made me realise even more what an amazing country South Africa is and what great opportunities the country still holds.

As Matsuo Basho once said: “Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.”

And so I returned – back to the Flight Centre South Africa fold, surrounded by passionate, like-minded people who love to travel as much as I do.

## **Do you still love to travel today?**

For me, exploring new places and cultures has always been and will always be incredibly inspiring. I’m fascinated by the differences in the world and want to understand the differences in food, religion and beliefs.

I’ve been travelling since I was a little girl – first with my parents, then on a student exchange programme after matric. The second I graduated from college, I hit the road again working across the UK and Europe for three years before taking a nine-month trip through Africa back home. For two of those nine months, I travelled through the beautiful landscapes of South Africa.

That was the start of the real love for travel I still have today.

## **You’ve worked your way up the corporate ladder quite quickly. What for you is the key to success?**

I stand by the mantra: “If you want to succeed in the complex industry that is travel, you have to love the travel industry and, indeed, what you do.”

Besides loving the industry, I think it’s important for aspiring leaders in travel to surround themselves with people who know more than they do. Very often people are intimidated by others who know more, whereas I see it as a great way to learn and grow. Leaders should also never be afraid to fail. Of course, we are going to fail from time to time, but that’s okay and we can’t be afraid of it.

## **Do you have any advice for women wanting to make a mark in their careers?**

I would like to tell women not to be afraid of the glass ceiling. I’m not a huge believer in the glass ceiling and I think success comes down to the individual more than anything else.

## **What’s next for you and your career?**

Today, I’m in the career I love the most with every day bringing new and different challenges. My focus for the future is not to grow into another role. Rather, it is to leave a legacy behind. I want to develop the great people around me so that when I do decide to move on or retire, they are ready to step in and take Flight Centre to new heights.