

Enabling tourism SMEs to make the most of peak season with card facilities

Tourists spent around R31 billion in the first quarter of 2016 according to SA Tourism with around four billion spent on food and drink and around R6.5 billion on retail. As we enter the peak summer holiday season, these numbers are likely to rise significantly.



[Image Source: Yoco](#)

Small businesses play a huge part in catering for overseas visitors. In fact, on a national level, SMMEs contribute around 42% of South Africa's GDP, and 43% of them operate in the trade and accommodation sectors, both of which rely heavily on tourism.

Giving small business access to card payment facilities

A sad reality is that many small business owners find it difficult to capitalise on this huge influx of international and domestic tourists, largely because it is too expensive for them to invest in payment structures like card payment and other support services.

However, things could look differently for many such businesses this season. One homegrown company, Yoco, is looking to change this, by offering small businesses the ability to affordably accept card payments. Since it was launched in 2015, Yoco has provided card readers to over 4,000 small businesses, most of which previously did not have access to these facilities.

On average, a customer spends 30% more if paying by card, as opposed to cash, which can make a substantial difference to a small business. But the process for acquiring a card machine from a traditional institution is time consuming and costly. This is something that Yoco has turned on its head.

Time is money

"Our goal is to get you set up and accepting card payments within four business days, on average two," says Yoco CEO Katlego Maphai. "We know that running a small business is time-consuming, and season means harder work, longer hours and even less time to focus on growing your business. Time is money, so we mean it when we say, we'll get you up and running fast."

The Yoco card reader allows merchants to accept all Visa and MasterCard cards, including international cards. For your consumers, there's no change in behaviour. They hand you their card and you dip it on the Yoco terminal. But the real time saver is in the Yoco Business Portal that allows merchants to track sales, pull and export performance data. This allows owners to manage their businesses with less fuss and time-consuming administration.

With smart devices connected to smart software, cashing up at the end of the day can be dramatically reduced, and paperwork all but removed. Business data can be visualised in an easy graphical interface to help plan better and make smarter decisions. Businesses can get real time feedback on their sales, and use information such as what their best-selling items are and what their peak times are, to help their company grow.

"Over seventy-five percent of adults in South Africa have cards," says Maphai. "For businesses, accepting cards is no longer a luxury - it's an absolute necessity."

Giving small and medium sized businesses access to card readers as well as real time business information, could be the push many of these entrepreneurs need to get them to the next stage of their business growth. And, as statistics show, if they grow, so does South Africa's economy.

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