



**Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
in SOUTH AFRICA's Tourism Sector**



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Fluid dynamics:

Saving money and reducing waste from bottled water

The Amakhala Game Reserve covers 6500 hectares of land that has been converted from sheep and cattle farming to a conservation area with re-introduced wildlife, including lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo and cheetah.

The Safari Lodge is located in the north of the reserve, and offers luxury suites to their discerning guests.

Reducing waste is an important element of being a sustainable and responsible tourism enterprise, and The Safari Lodge has made concrete efforts to reduce waste through this initiative.



Initial situation

The Safari Lodge used to provide each guest with bottled mineral water during their stay. Guests would receive a 500 ml bottle on arrival and one for use during game drive. They would also have one in their room, and received another when they departed. Therefore over the course of a two night stay, each guest would receive 10 bottles each. The costs of the bottled water added up quickly. At R4 per bottle, the cost per guest would add up to R40 for a two night stay.

In addition, the waste created by used bottles was difficult to dispose of. Due to the remote location of the lodge, waste has to be collected, stored, and then taken to Port Elizabeth which is 60 km away. Although the recycling was transported when a guest was travelling to the airport, taking waste in the guest vehicles was unpleasant for everyone!

ILO SCORE training

In November 2010, managers and staff from the lodge participated in the ILO's SCORE training. During the course, the lodge managers and trainers discussed the bottled water problem.

The lodge managers set a target to reduce the cost of water and the volume of associated waste..

Changes that took place

The Safari Lodge stopped buying bottled water, and instead purchased re-usable water bottles for guests. Each guest is now given a bottle on arrival, which is branded with the name of the reserve. Guests are told that the tap water is not palatable, and that they are welcome to re-fill their bottles with mineral water from a dispenser in the dining area whenever they like. When they leave the lodge at the end of their stay, they are also free to keep their bottle as a memento of their stay.



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Direct impacts of the change

Considerable savings have been made from the changes.

The squeeze bottle cost R10 each, while a 20 litre dispenser costs R30, and is re-usable. They estimate that through this system, the costs for water per guest came down to R17 from R40! That is a 58 % saving in expenditure on water, and relates to about 1 % of overall lodge expenditure.

Guests have reacted well to the system, as many of them are interested in recycling and love the idea of contributing towards good environmental management. Since guests get to take home their free branded squeeze bottle, this also gives them a small reminder of the lodge, and helps to promote the destination. The new process has led to the lodge being more environmentally friendly, by generating less plastic waste.

Return on investment

This case study demonstrates that win-win-wins are possible. The changes to providing water for guests have generated 'wins' of (a) greater profit, (b) improved environmental impact, and (c) better quality guest experience.

Target group	Benefit
Employees	No longer travelling with waste bottles during airport transfers.
Management	Lower overheads.
Company	82 % cost savings on providing water (1 % of turnover). Less waste produced.

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Before



After

