



Press Release – Tsogo Sun Hotels – 25/10/2019

**New SAACI board member aims to make ‘a lasting contribution’**

Michelle Bingham, Sales Manager at Sandton Convention Centre, who has been appointed to the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) national board as the venue representative, says her biggest learning in the MICE industry in the past seven years is that “anything is possible”.

She says, “It’s a remarkable, rabbit-out-of-the-hat industry that demands attention to detail, hard work, often in the background, and phenomenal teamwork to ensure that events come together as planned.”

Bingham is determined to make a “lasting contribution” to SAACI, which is a professional association for the business events industry with more than 1 500 members, facilitating an enabling environment for learning, growth and collaboration. Bingham has been a member for seven years and Vice-chair of the Johannesburg sub-committee for three years.

She says, “Being nominated and voted onto the board by the members is a great honour. It is an association that has an important role to play in the wider tourism and travel industry, promoting professionalism in a sector of the industry that is often not addressed in related tertiary studies. Transferring knowledge and skills is a high priority for me in this new position on the board.”

Bingham, who has been with SCC since 2013, says her passion for all things hospitality was ignited by her mother, a strong woman with a great sense of family and inclusion, and a love of entertaining, which inspired her to study Tourism and Travel Services Marketing Management at Tshwane University of Technology. Then her first job, as a hostess at Disney World’s Animal Kingdom, ingrained in her the value of consistent and committed customer-centricity. “Hospitality is about always going the extra mile,” she says. Bingham became a recruit trainer at the Animal Kingdom, sharing her learnings and love for delivering beyond customer expectations.

She spent seven years in the hotel industry as a sales manager, before moving to SCC and the MICE industry. “I love this industry. There is so much involved, it is so diverse – with people from all backgrounds, and the most important requirements for success in this sector are creativity and passion.”



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Having travelled fairly widely around the world and been part of international conferences and confexes, Bingham says the South African MICE industry is respected in other countries. “South Africa has something very special to offer the world and we integrate so much of what the country is about into our MICE offerings. At global events, we have often had associates from other countries express surprise at South Africa’s unique approach to problem-solving and events, incorporating the rich tourism opportunities into our offerings.”

Bingham’s enthusiasm for learning extends to her out-of-work hours too, where she balances her working life with reading, listening to self-awareness podcasts, working out, pilates, and relaxing with friends.

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