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**Inadequate Funding Remains A Significant
Barrier To Tourism Development And Promotion**
Lola Ade John








Plot 1415 Adetokunbo Ademola Street, PMB 12724
 Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria, Tel: +23412772700-5
 (ext,6124) +23414606100 -29 Fax +234 1 2704071
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collaborate with the tourism federation in developing and promoting the sectors?
 Through regular meetings. We aim to bring together NIHOTOUR, NTDA, and FTAN to align training needs, industry standards, and promotion strategies. Collaboration is ongoing and vital as these bodies work on joint projects and initiatives.

Are there any initiatives planned to strengthen NIHOTOUR and NTDA?

Yes, there are. There is a larger plan to ensure all agencies and the Ministry are strengthened and working at optimal level.

Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria [FTAN] What is the nature of the relationship between the Ministry and FTAN? How does this relationship impact tourism development?

We view FTAN as a crucial partner in tourism development. Their insights from the private sector are invaluable in shaping our policies and strategies. This collaborative relationship ensures that our initiatives are grounded in market realities and industry needs. We have a fantastic working relationship with FTAN. They have been very supportive in providing strategic insight and technical assistance.

How does the Ministry engage with private sector stakeholders represented by FTAN in policy formulation?

FTAN representatives are included in key policy working groups. They have been key to the review and development of the National Tourism Policy and will also play a huge part in the development of the MasterPlan.

Strategic Vision What is your vision for the tourism sector?

My vision for Nigeria is simple. It is to be the foremost country that everyone wants to come and discover. We offer everything but snow! Nigeria has the potential to become Africa's premier tourism destination, known for its diverse experiences, rich culture, and warm hospitality. We aim to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem that contributes significantly to our



Lola Ade John

private sector in driving the growth of tourism in Nigeria?

The private sector is crucial in driving investment, innovation, and service delivery in tourism. We envision the private sector will be the main driver for foreign direct investment and sustainable projects that will outlive governments for years to come. The private sector has the ability to instill confidence in the investors, in a manner that the government may not be able to.

Furthermore, developing and managing world-class tourism facilities, innovating in travel technology and digital tourism services, creating and marketing unique Nigerian tourism experiences as well as partnering in tourism education and skills development are some other areas I believe the private sector can aid in growing tourism in Nigeria.

Final Reflections

What message would you like to convey to stakeholders in the tourism sector regarding the Ministry's commitment and plans?

We are fully committed to transforming Nigeria's tourism sector into a major economic driver. Our plans are rooted in collaboration, sustainability, and innovation. We recognise the challenges, but we are also excited about the immense potential. We are here to lead, support, facilitate, and drive growth in partnership with all stakeholders.

measure, you cannot track, monitor and lastly plan for development.

Challenges and Opportunities What do you see as the biggest opportunities for tourism in Nigeria, and how is the ministry positioning itself to capitalize on them?

The biggest opportunities lie in our rich cultural diversity, untapped natural beauty, and growing middle class for domestic tourism. With a population of over 200 million people, we have the market to capitalise on domestic tourism, and specifically community-based tourism to harness socio-economic development. This is our immediate focus through partnerships at all levels of government and private investors.

In light of the challenges faced, what role do you envision for the

How can the public and private sectors work together more effectively to enhance Nigeria's tourism landscape?

I can assure you that we are actively seeking and initiating private public partnerships across the country. From the development of the national tourism policy to the creation of the ministry's database and website, promotion of Nigeria as a top tourist destination and community engagement projects; we are pushing for collaborative efforts.

The government cannot do it alone and we have been very privileged to have the interest of private sector stakeholders with vast knowledge, experience, passion and resources to help us venture into this great feat.

Tourism: Minister To Lead Nigeria's Delegation To WTM In London

The Honourable Minister of Tourism Lola Ade-John has signalled that that Nigeria will return to the prestigious this year's edition of the World Travel Market [WTM], holding from Tuesday 5th to Thursday 7th of November in London marking the country's first official participation in over a decade.

In a meeting held on Wednesday 16th of November 2024 in Abuja, the Minister met with key tourism stakeholders to finalise plans for Nigeria's involvement in the global event.

The meeting gathered notable representatives from various tourism organizations, including Friday Anumba from the Nigeria Tourism Development Authority [NTDA], Nkereuwem Onung, President of the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria [FTAN], Yinka Folami, President of the National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies [NANTA], and Hajia Bolaji Mustapha, President of the Nigeria Association of Tour Operators [NATOP].

In her address, the Honourable Minister expressed appreciation to NANTA for its role in previous WTM events and emphasized her goal for 2024: to lead a coordinated effort among Nigerian stakeholders for a unified and impactful representation. She commended FTAN's President for facilitating the gathering and



Nkereuwem Onung, President, Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria [FTAN]

fostering collaboration among the attendees.

Nkereuwem Onung noted that although NANTA had initially planned to attend the WTM independently, he is optimistic about aligning their efforts with the Ministry's overarching

strategy. NANTA has committed to sharing its plans with the Ministry to develop a cohesive representation for Nigeria.

Also present was Ola Wright from the West Africa Tourism Organisation.

This collaboration marks a significant step in ensuring that Nigeria's presence at the World Travel Market is well-organized and prominently showcased, enhancing the country's profile in the global tourism arena.

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CONTENTS



CONFERENCE 3052
 HOZE JRU HOZE W99862Z
 L880Z CONFINGURS TO Pg 4



Nigeria: Despite Economic Reform Hardship, Domestic Tourism Is Growing Pg 6



Lagos Continental Hotel, Writing A Different Story Of Hospitality Business Pg 7



At EbonyLife Place, Our Business Is Entertainment And Hospitality Pg 9

Lagos Continental To Host 7th Hotel Managers Conference 2025

The 7th edition of Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa 2025 will take place at Lagos Continental Victoria Island Lagos from July 12th to 13th, 2025.

This prestigious event solidifies Lagos State's reputation as Nigeria's premier destination for business and leisure. Lagos State's unique blend of economic vitality, cultural richness, and innovative spirit makes it an ideal location for the conference.

As Nigeria's economic hub, Lagos offers unparalleled access to industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. The city provides a fertile ground for knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration.

Lagos Continental's selection as host venue underscores its exceptional standards. Recently crowned "Hotel of the Year" at the 2024 Hotel Managers Conference, Lagos Continental boasts state-of-the-art amenities.

The hotel's luxurious accommodations and advanced conference facilities ensure a seamless experience. Its prime location on Victoria Island ensures easy access for delegates.

The Grand African Ballroom, spanning 1400 square meters, offers an ideal setting for keynote addresses and award ceremonies. Six additional meeting rooms provide flexibility for breakout sessions and workshops.

Delegates will enjoy stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean, Lagos creek, and the city from the hotel's 23 floors. Lagos Continental's commitment to excellence is evident in

its numerous awards.

General Manager Karl Hala's leadership has driven this success, emphasizing technology integration. The Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa 2025 will bring together industry experts and innovators.

Delegates can expect inspiring speeches, interactive sessions, and valuable networking opportunities.

Lagos Continental's exceptional dining options cater to diverse tastes. The hotel's recreation centre provides a welcome respite for delegates.

The Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa is a premier annual event that brings together the crème de la crème of Africa's hospitality industry. The conference provides a vital platform for hotel managers, industry experts, thought leaders, and innovators to share insights, best practices, and trends shaping the hospitality sector.

With a focus on embracing innovation, sustainability, and customer-centric strategies, the conference features keynote addresses, panel discussions, interactive sessions, and workshops. Renowned industry experts and thought leaders share their expertise, providing delegates with actionable knowledge and inspiration to enhance their professional skills.

The Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa also recognizes and celebrates excellence in the hospitality industry through its prestigious awards ceremony. The awards honour outstanding hotel managers, hotels, and

hospitality companies that have demonstrated exceptional service, innovation, and commitment to excellence.

Categories include Hotel of the Year, Hotel Manager of the Year, Best Luxury Business Hotel, Best Boutique Hotel, and Sustainable Hotel of the Year, among others. The awards serve as a benchmark for excellence, encouraging hospitality professionals to strive for superior standards and innovative practices. Past winners have included renowned hotels and hospitality companies from across Africa, showcasing the continent's growing influence in the global hospitality industry.

As a premier industry event, the Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa offers unparalleled networking opportunities for delegates. With over 500 industry professionals in attendance, the conference provides a unique platform for connection, collaboration, and business development. Delegates can engage with peers, potential partners, and industry leaders, fostering valuable relationships and partnerships.

The conference also features an exhibition showcase, where hospitality companies and service providers showcase their products and services. With its rich content, inspiring speakers, and valuable networking opportunities, the Hotel Managers Conference & Awards Africa has become a must-attend event for hospitality professionals seeking to stay ahead of the curve and shape the future of Africa's hospitality industry.



Olugbenga Sunday, Lead Consultant Tojum Hospitality and Convener Hotel Managers Conference.

We are enhancing skills and professionalism in the industry through partnerships with the Ministry of Education, the National Orientation Agency, educational institutions and National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism [NIHOTOUR].

Investment Attraction:

The Ministry is stimulating private sector investment by creating an investor-friendly framework, facilitating public-private partnerships, and establishing a tourism investment fund across state governments in Nigeria through collaborative efforts.

These initiatives are designed to address the challenges we face and create a more stable, efficient, and attractive tourism sector in Nigeria. While the process is complex and ongoing, we are confident that these efforts will significantly improve our operations and position Nigeria as a premier tourist destination.

Office Infrastructure

What steps are being taken to ensure the Ministry has a befitting office space?

The Federal Ministry of Tourism has allocated space in the Federal Secretariat that is currently undergoing renovations to allow for better synergy amongst the departments and adequate space utilisation. Working out of the Secretariat will increase the seamless flow of work between the agencies, MDAs and the ministry staff at large. In the interim, we are utilizing the facilities of our agency NIHOTOUR, who have been kind enough to offer us a very comfortable space.

How does the current office environment affect the ministry's operations and staff productivity?

Despite my current office being outside the Secretariat, this has in no wise affected the operations of the Ministry, as we have developed a system to ensure good co-ordination between the Secretariat and my office.

Furthermore, I operate an open-door policy which promotes staff motivation and invariably, productivity.

Staffing Requirements

What is the current staffing situation in the Ministry, and how does it compare to the required



Lola Ade John

staffing levels?

We are currently operating at an optimal staffing level. As a small team, we are efficient and I have no concerns here. As the Ministry stabilizes and grows over time, we will assess the need for amendments, if required.

How does the Ministry plan to enhance the skills and capacities of its staff to better meet the demands of the tourism sector?

The Ministry staff undergo a series of regular trainings to enhance their roles and capabilities through comprehensive capacity building programmes in the sector.

These include but are not limited to the UN Tourism and NIHOTOUR professional training initiatives.

Nigerian Tourism Development Authority [NTDA]

What is the current relationship between the Ministry and the NTDA? Are there areas for improvement?

The Ministry and NTDA maintain a good working relationship. We are working to enhance coordination and reduce duplication of efforts. It is essential to establish clear lines of communication and responsibility to ensure more effective collaboration.

How is the NTDA involved in implementing the Ministry's tourism strategies?

The NTDA plays a crucial role in executing the strategies of the Federal Ministry of Tourism as it represents one of the two key agencies currently under the ministry, particularly in areas of product development, quality assurance, standardisation and destination marketing.

National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism [NIHOTOUR]

How is the ministry ensuring that NIHOTOUR and NTDA



Lola Ade John

partnership with Cavista Holdings. This will form the basis of all the efforts of the ministry and further inform our decision-making and strategy development.

Digital Transformation:

The Federal Ministry of Tourism is enhancing its online presence by developing an integrated website to hold all tourism related information from relevant sites in the country; optimising our social media platforms; creating a user-friendly mobile app for tourists and virtual reality tours are other ongoing projects.

Community-Based Tourism:

In line with the Renewed Hope Agenda, we are empowering local communities for economic diversification through initiatives like the 'Doctrine According to Tourism' and the 'EcoGenesis Incubator Series.' The focus is sustainable, community-driven tourism development to ensure that every Nigerian has a stake in the development and benefits of the sector.

Infrastructure Development:

We are conducting a nationwide audit of tourism assets and working to incentivise state governments to provide counterpart investments in bankable tourism sites in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda. Additionally collaborative efforts are being undertaken with key Ministries to resolve some of the underlying issues.

Marketing and Promotion:

The Ministry is developing a strong "Brand Nigeria" for tourism, highlighting key areas of tourism to include adventure, cultural, eco-tourism, culinary and medical tourism. We are also leveraging digital platforms for targeted marketing campaigns. The Ministry is actively and organically building a strong presence on several social media platforms.

Economic Impact:

The maximisation of Nigeria's tourism contribution to Nigeria's economy is being implemented through innovative revenue models, establishing a National Tourism Development Fund, and creating job opportunities in the sector through collaborative efforts.

Human Capital Development:

comprehensive National Policy on Tourism and Nigerian Tourism Development MasterPlan. This involves a thorough situational analysis and the establishment of a dedicated implementation task force from the public and private sectors. The policy is undergoing the final stage of review with hopes to go to Federal Executive Council [FEC] and be published before the end of 2024. From this, the Nigerian Tourism Development MasterPlan will be concluded thereafter.

Data Management:

The Ministry has embarked on the creation of a centralised tourism database to consolidate information from various ministries, states and agencies through public private

and enhance stakeholder engagement in Nigeria's tourism sector. Central to our efforts is the reactivation of the Presidential Council on Tourism [PCT], chaired by the President. We are also redefining roles within key committees to ensure effective coordination at all government levels. This includes the PCT steering committee comprising State Governors and key Ministries, and the revitalised Committee of State Commissioners and MDAs. Additionally, the National Multi-disciplinary committee on classification and grading of accommodation establishments has been established and is working with ECOWAS to align our

hospitality standards with regional benchmarks. This effort is crucial for enhancing the quality and competitiveness of our tourism offerings in the international market.

These measures are designed to create a more cohesive, efficient, and responsive governance structure for Nigeria's tourism sector. Our ultimate goal is to unlock the full potential of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, positioning our nation as a premier tourist destination while ensuring the benefits of tourism are widely shared among all Nigerians.

Strategic Planning:

We are developing a new,



Prof. Wasiu Babalola

IPADA Carnival 2024 Will Add Colour To Lagos Tourism Offerings - Prof. Babalola

Professor Wasiu Babalola is a renowned expert in the field of hospitality and tourism, serving as a Professor of Hotel Management & Tourism at Atiba University Oyo, Nigeria. His leadership roles include being the President and Chairman of the Council of the Institute for Hospitality Accountants and Revenue Managers [IHARM] and the 2nd National Vice President of the Nigeria Hotel & Catering Institute [NHCI].

Additionally, he is a Council Member at the Association of Tourism & Hospitality Consultants of Nigeria [ATHCON], Association of Tax Practitioners of Lagos [ATPL], and the Certified Board of Administration of Nigeria [CBAN], among others.

Professor Babalola has a wealth of experience in the

global hospitality and tourism landscape, having spoken and contributed to numerous international discussions on the industry. His expertise makes him uniquely qualified to offer valuable insights into the

Ipada Carnival Celebration, as he understands the potential of such initiatives to drive economic growth, cultural promotion, and tourism development in Nigeria. His extensive background in managing tourism and hospitality initiatives positions him as a key figure in elevating major attractions both locally and internationally.

According to Professor Wasiu Babalola, The Ipada Carnival initiative is a commendable private sector-driven effort aimed at promoting Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, tourism, and hospitality industry. It seeks to leverage Nigeria's diverse cultural

resources to foster unity, economic growth, and global recognition.

Scheduled from November 29th to December 8th, 2024, will likely be a colourful showcase of Nigeria's vibrant culture, featuring music, dance, fashion, and traditional festivities. This event provides a unique platform for celebrating Nigeria's cultural diversity while also encouraging tourism, both locally and internationally. The initiative underscores the importance of cultural tourism as a driver for development.

He noted that Ipada Carnival is poised to significantly boost both international and local tourism in Nigeria. By attracting a global audience to experience Nigeria's culture, the carnival promotes Nigeria as a

tourism destination, showcasing its potential beyond the typical narratives of business or challenges.

The event could open doors for international partnerships, investments in the tourism sector, and provide a platform for Nigerian artisans, entertainers, and businesses to reach a broader audience. On the local front, it will increase domestic tourism, as Nigerians rediscover their culture and traditions, encouraging local businesses and boosting regional economies through the hospitality, transport, and service sectors.

However, there is the need to implement the Ipada Carnival initiatives on a sustainable, long-term tourism strategies. While it might draw attention to Nigeria for a brief period, the real issue lies in sustaining

this interest post-carnival. Tourism requires a consistent stream of activities, investments, and infrastructure improvements. A single event, no matter how grand, may not be sufficient to address the larger issues facing Nigeria's tourism sector, such as security concerns, policy consistency, and a lack of promotion of lesser-known attractions.

For the first time in Nigeria, the President is coming out boldly to collaborate a private sector initiative in tourism, by being the global Ambassador of Ipada Carnival and Ipada Initiative, what signs does that portend for the industry?

The President's decision to serve as the Global Ambassador of the Ipada Carnival and Ipada Initiative is a landmark moment for Nigeria's tourism industry. It sends a strong message about the government's commitment to partnering with the private sector to promote tourism as a key economic driver.

He noted that the choice of La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort as the venue for the Ipada Carnival is fitting, as it is one of Nigeria's premier eco-tourism destinations. Located along the Atlantic coast, the resort blends African culture with luxurious accommodations in a serene natural setting, making it ideal for a cultural carnival.

Professor Wasiu stated further that the resort offers attendees a unique experience that merges traditional African hospitality with modern tourism facilities, enhancing the overall appeal of the event. The location is also symbolic of Nigeria's coastal beauty, and hosting the event there promotes Nigeria's underutilized beachfront as a viable destination for international tourists.



Moyo Ogunseinde

Nigeria: Despite Economic Reform Hardship, Domestic Tourism Is Growing

By Moyo Ogunseinde

It's no secret that the Nigerian economy is going through some challenging times. Inflation, foreign exchange volatility, and declining oil revenues have had their toll across various sectors. But one area that continues to show incredible resilience—and even growth—is the hospitality and tourism industry, especially domestic tourism.

I've witnessed an exciting shift in recent years. Domestic and even within-the-city tourism has taken off in ways that, 10 years ago, we wouldn't have imagined. Back then, many Nigerians looked abroad for entertainment, but today, with exchange rates soaring and a growing desire to explore what's right here at home, we're seeing a resurgence of interest in local experiences.

The sight of new food and beverage outlets springing up in Lagos and Abuja, even in these tough economic times, makes one wonder if a recession truly exists in Nigeria. It's a

testament to our spirit and our unwavering commitment to 'enjoyment,' regardless of the circumstances. After all, we always believe tomorrow will be better.

In response to this increasing appetite for luxury experiences, hotels and hospitality businesses are having to constantly innovate. Gone are the days when domestic travellers settled for less; now, they expect the same world-class service they'd receive at international destinations—and rightly so. This shift has been particularly fascinating to me, as I've explored ways to meet these evolving needs, creating tailored experiences that blend luxury with local flavour.

For those of us in the hospitality space, the mandate is clear: we must deliver deeper, more meaningful experiences, especially in these times of low morale. The opportunity to curate offerings that showcase local culture, heritage, and cuisine is enormous. Whether through partnerships with local tour operators or providing guests with exclusive

access to cultural events, the future lies in offering something uniquely Nigerian yet world-class.

Think about it: authentic culinary experiences that highlight our diverse flavours or eco-tourism ventures that connect people with nature in a way that's both luxurious and sustainable.

Beyond the individual experience, the broader economic benefits are profound. Domestic tourism supports local economies, creates jobs, and drives infrastructure development. For us in the hospitality industry, it provides a stable and growing customer base, less reliant on international visitors and insulated from global travel disruptions.

It's genuinely exciting to be part of this transformation. This new direction has opened up countless opportunities for me and other entrepreneurs to explore - from boutique hotels to adventure tourism and cultural retreats. I'm energized by the possibilities, and the future looks brighter than ever for those of us willing to innovate and invest in the potential of Nigeria's domestic tourism market.

Carnival Calabar To Perform At CANEX In Algiers

The first Carnival Calabar Dry Run 2024 was held on the 13th of October as Gabe Onah announces participation at the Afrexim CANEX in Algeria, scheduled from October 15th to 19th, 2024. The first Carnival Calabar Dry Run was flagged off by the Governor who was represented by the Speaker of the Cross River State House of Assembly Honourable Elbert Ayambem.

He was joined by band leaders and some members of the State Executive Council and the newly posted Commissioner of Police.

As usual, the Carnival season starts with the first dry run when all bands try the Carnival route. Some non competing bands like the University of Calabar band joined in the fun. Some tourists and tour operators were in town to watch the dry run.

At the opening ceremony, the Chairman of The Carnival Commission commended the spirit of the citizens who have sustained the Carnival for 20 years. Commenting further after his opening remarks, the chairman, Sir Gabe Onah PhD, disclosed that carnival Calabar will be participating in the CANEX weekend event holding in Algiers, Algeria.

"CANEX WEEKEND is acronym for Creative Africa Nexus [CANEX] and is actually a Travel Trade & creative sector exhibition event promoted by the AFRIEXIM BANK to harness the opportunities in the creative & cultural industries sector to engage our future generation meaningfully as one of the quick wins to activate community action.

"This is therefore a big stage for our carnival Revellers to perform for the needed visibility for this great product of our heritage, CARNIVAL CALABAR – AFRICA'S BIGGEST STREET Party. We are hopeful that this performance is on a global stage in recognition of our renowned goba product is a true representation of brand association following discussions now at advanced stage for AFRIEXIM BANK to come on board as title sponsors of carnival Calabar leading to its renaming for a period of time say 3 to 5 years depending on the agreement by both parties.

It is on this note that I announce that this will now become AFRIEXIM Bank Carnival Calabar."



Lola Ade John

Inadequate Funding Remains A Significant Barrier To Tourism Development And Promotion - Lola Ade John

In what many stakeholders perceived as a lack of capacity within the standalone ministry, Minister of Tourism LOLA ADE JOHN discusses the challenges that lie ahead in this interview with LUCKY ONORIODE GEORGE, Publisher and Editor of African Travel Times. Excerpts:

Stabilisation of the Ministry

Can you elaborate on the key challenges that have prevented the Ministry of Tourism from stabilising?

The Federal Ministry of Tourism is committed to unlocking Nigeria's full tourism potential, but we face significant challenges that have hindered our progress and stability.

A major hurdle is our outdated National Tourism Policy and Nigerian Tourism Development MasterPlan. We urgently need

streamlined policies to attract investment and ensure seamless coordination. These regulatory bottlenecks often discourage vital private sector involvement.

Moreover, the Ministry struggles with a lack of comprehensive tourism data, hindering our ability to formulate data-driven policies and projects. The limited digital presence and lack of consolidated information from all tourism related sites further compound this issue.

Most important, a lack of adequate funding remains a significant barrier. The tourism sector requires substantial investment in infrastructure, marketing, and community engagement, but often receives limited budgetary support. This directly impacts the scope and effectiveness of our projects. Infrastructure deficiencies are another pressing concern. Many of our tourist sites, road networks, and airports need urgent upgrades to meet international standards and enhance visitor experiences.

Other challenges include complex visa procedures, limited global and regional air connectivity, and high airfares, all of which affect our competitiveness in the international tourism market. Lastly, security concerns remain a significant deterrent for tourists.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts across various sectors, strong public-private partnerships, and a long-term commitment to tourism development. While the path to stability is complex, we are dedicated to transforming these challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation in Nigeria's tourism sector.

What specific strategies are currently being implemented to address these challenges?

At the Federal Ministry of Tourism, we have deployed a comprehensive 10-point strategic agenda aimed at transforming Nigeria into a top global tourism destination. This extensive plan aims to create a sustainable and competitive tourism industry, which will diversify and boost the economy. This strategy outlines the following:

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement:

The Federal Ministry of Tourism is implementing overarching measures to strengthen governance



Africa: Accra City Hotel Unveils Renovated City Lounge Bar

Accra City Hotel is excited to announce the grand reopening of its newly renovated City Lounge Bar, offering patrons a refreshing experience in the heart of the city.

To mark the occasion, the hotel is offering a 50% discount on selected drinks, giving guests a chance to enjoy the upgraded ambiance while savouring their favourite beverages.

According to a press release by the hotel, the bar operates 24 hours and is designed for relaxation, entertainment, and unforgettable experiences.

Located in the heart of the city, the City Lounge Bar has been transformed into a vibrant and cozy space, perfect for unwinding after a long day or celebrating special moments with friends and loved ones.

The revamped City Lounge Bar boasts a modern and inviting ambiance that captures the essence of comfort and style.

The new design elements create a warm atmosphere, with plush seating, soft lighting, and contemporary décor that make every visit a

delightful escape.

“Whether you are stopping by for a quick drink or planning a night out, the City Lounge Bar offers the perfect setting.

“At the City Lounge Bar, there is never a dull moment. We have curated a diverse lineup of entertainment options that cater to every taste. Each day of the week offers something unique. Start your week on a soothing note with our skilled pianist, whose melodies set the tone for a relaxing evening.

“Enjoy the energy and rhythm of our live band, bringing a dynamic mix of genres to keep the night alive on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Saturdays, join us for the Saturday Night Live Show as we showcase your vocal talents or express yourself through spoken word during our lively karaoke nights. Immerse yourself in the sound of live music sessions, featuring talented local artists who will captivate you with their performances

End your week on a high note with our outdoor highlife band, bringing you the best of traditional Ghanaian music in a laid-back outdoor setting during our Sunday Lunch

Buffet with a wide variety of mouthwatering dishes. Sunday nights are all about smooth jazz, perfect for those who appreciate the finer things in life.

“To make your experience even more enjoyable, we offer an irresistible Happy Hour from Monday to Friday. During this time, guests can enjoy a 50 percent discount on selected drinks, making it the perfect opportunity to sample our wide range of cocktails, wines, and spirits. Happy Hour at the City Lounge Bar is the place to be whether you are settling down after work or starting your evening.

The City Lounge Bar at Accra City Hotel is more than just a bar, it is a destination. With its new look, varied entertainment options, and unbeatable Happy Hour deals, it is the ideal spot for both hotel guests and locals to gather, relax, and have fun. We invite you to experience the City Lounge Bar for yourself and discover why it is quickly becoming one of Accra's favourite hangouts. Stop by anytime, day or night and let us show you what makes the City Lounge Bar at Accra City Hotel truly special.”

Transcorp Boss Bags Hospitality Award

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Transcorp Hotels Plc, Dupe Olusola, has been inducted into the Seven Stars Pantheon of Hospitality and awarded the prestigious title of Seven Stars Woman of the Year 2024.

Olusola is only the second recipient of this esteemed honour in the 12-year history of the awards.

In a statement released on Thursday, the organisers of the award noted that the recognition celebrates Olusola's outstanding leadership and transformative impact on the African hospitality industry.

“Earlier this year, Olusola was honoured with the Hospitality Leadership Award by the Africa Hospitality Investment Forum. Under Olusola's visionary leadership, Transcorp Hotels Plc has become synonymous with innovation and excellence. Her dedication to raising hospitality standards in Nigeria and across Africa is evident in the numerous accolades the company continues to receive.”

The statement further read, “The Seven Stars Woman of the Year Award is one of the most coveted recognitions in the hospitality industry, awarded to leaders who demonstrate excellence, innovation, and a commitment to pushing boundaries.

Olusola's induction into the Seven Stars Pantheon of Hospitality acknowledges her remarkable achievements and the positive impact of her leadership in driving Transcorp Hotels' impressive growth trajectory.”

Reflecting on the honours, the Transcorp CEO expressed that the award symbolises a shared success for the Transcorp Hotels team, noting that it also serves as an inspiration to continue redefining hospitality in Africa.

“I am deeply honoured and humbled to be recognised among the leading voices in global hospitality. This award represents the hard work, passion, and commitment of the entire Transcorp Hotels team to redefine what it means to deliver luxury in Africa. It is a shared success, and it inspires us to continue our mission to reshape hospitality across the continent,” she said.

Meanwhile, Khalil El-Mouelhy, Chairman, President & Founder of the Seven Stars Luxury Hospitality and Lifestyle Awards, stated that the ceremony recognises “the innovation and dedication that defines our industry. We are proud to honour those who are setting new standards in luxury hospitality.”

Honorary Chairman Andrea Luri also remarked, “The Seven Stars Awards represent a global network of exceptional hospitality. It is inspiring to witness such a diverse array of talent being celebrated tonight, affirming the importance of collaboration and excellence across borders.”



Lagos Continental Hotel, Writing A Different Story Of Hospitality Business

Lagos Continental Hotel, located in the heart of Nigeria's bustling commercial capital, is an upscale hotel that offers a blend of luxury and modern amenities. It has rapidly become a premier destination for high-profile guests, weddings, and weekend getaways, thanks to its exceptional facilities and services.

Close to key business districts, entertainment venues, and cultural attractions. Its strategic location makes it a favourite for both local and international visitors, with proximity to the coast and major roads.

The hotel boasts of variety of accommodation options, catering to different preferences and needs from deluxe rooms, elegant and spacious rooms that are equipped with modern amenities,



Karl Hala, Group General Manager, Continental Hotel, Nigeria.

offering comfort and style.

The executive rooms are designed for business travellers and provide additional space, as well as enhanced amenities,

including dedicated work areas.

Lagos Continental features several suites that offer luxury living spaces, complete with separate

living areas, premium furnishings, and stunning views of the city.

The Presidential Suite without a doubt is a pinnacle of luxury, this suite includes exclusive services, expansive living spaces, and top-tier amenities, making it ideal for high-profile guests.

It offers a range of dining experiences, each with a unique ambiance and culinary offerings. The View Restaurant known for its panoramic views of the Lagos skyline serves a variety of international and local dishes, prepared by top chefs.

Also, the Sky Lounge a chic rooftop bar offering a selection of cocktails, wines, and light bites, perfect for unwinding after a busy day, while the Café Continental serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, featuring both buffet and à la carte menus.

The hotel has some decent meeting halls and rooms well-equipped for conferences, events, and weddings, featuring a ballroom that can accommodate large gatherings, ideal for weddings and corporate events.

Also too are several well-appointed meeting rooms are available, equipped with modern audiovisual technology, high-speed internet, and flexible seating arrangements.

Event Planning Services: The hotel's dedicated events team offers professional planning services to ensure seamless execution of events.

The hotel's staff is known for their professionalism and attentiveness, creating a welcoming atmosphere for all visitors. Trained to provide exceptional service, the team ensures that guest needs are met promptly and efficiently. Their commitment to hospitality has helped establish the hotel as a trusted choice for discerning travellers.

Without mincing words, Continental Hotel feature among the top three facilities providing luxurious accommodations, diverse dining options, state-of-the-art meeting facilities, and top-notch security in the city of Lagos.

With a dedicated staff and a prime location, it has become a new pride in the Lagos metropolis, attracting high-profile guests and providing an ideal setting for weddings and weekend retreats.

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Nigeria: Tourism Contributes N4.1trn To Lagos GDP - Report

The Lagos State Tourism sector has contributed N4.1 trillion to the state Gross Domestic Product, GDP, in recent years.

The Oniru of Iru land, Oba Omogbolahan Lawal, disclosed this at the World Tourism Day celebration last weekend, organised by the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, disclosed this.

The State's Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Ope George, had recently, revealed that the State's GDP has moved from N27 trillion to N41 trillion within four years of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration.

Lawal, who was the former Commissioner for Agriculture as well as Housing, in the state, at the World Tourism Day celebration, themed: "Tourism and Peace," said that the tourism sector contributes 10 per cent to the state's GDP annually.

Lawal, while presenting a lead paper, stated: "Currently, the tourism sector is expected to contribute approximately 10 per cent to Lagos' GDP, which is projected to increase in the coming years.

"Eko Atlantic City 500,000 visitors, National Arts Theatre, 300,000 visitors, National Museum, 150,000 visitors, Tafawa Balewa Square 200,000 visitors, Badagry Heritage Museum, 150,000 visitors, Lekki Conservation Centre, 120,000 visitors annually.

"The Lagos beachfront attracts an estimated 1.2 million visitors annually through Lagos State Tourism Board, 500,000 visitors during peak season.

"The total investment is over N100 billion, Land area is about 300,000m2, vendors were over 400, employee per vendor was between 5 and 80 with over 10,000 jobs created.

"However, the tourism sector in Lagos faces challenges, including inadequate infrastructure and security of property rights concerns.

"Efforts to address these challenges have included investments in infrastructure and security enhancements, creating a more conducive environment for tourism."

Also at the event, the state Commissioner for Tourism, Arts Culture, Toke Benson-Awoyinka, affirmed that "Lagos is not only committed to promoting tourism as an economic driver but also a tool for fostering peace."



Wale Ojo-Lanre, Director-General, Ekiti State Bureau of Tourism Development.

Ojo-Lanre Commends NTDA's Hotels And Hospitality Accreditation Initiative ...as NTDA Team arrives Ekiti State

The National Tourism Development Authority [NTDA] has made significant strides in the realm of hospitality as it commenced its hotels and hospitality accreditation and enumeration exercise in Ekiti State.

The NTDA's team which paid a visit to the Director-General of the Bureau of Tourism Development, Barrister Wale Ojo-Lanre on Tuesday 15 October 2024 including Director of Hospitality and Travel Trade Mrs. Deborah Gwatyap and her colleague Mrs. Lola Adeyemi, presented their mission.

Barrister Wale Ojo-Lanre described the accreditation exercise as "timely and apt," particularly as Ekiti State is in the process of formulating its Tourism Policy and Tourism Development

Master Plan. This initiative marks a pivotal moment in enhancing the standards of hospitality and tourism in the state which is an integral part of the government's strategy to boost local economies and improve tourist experiences.

The meeting saw attendance from Hon. Akin Abimbola, the Secretary of the Ekiti State Hoteliers Association, who expressed enthusiasm about the initiative and emphasized its shared benefits for all stakeholders involved. The team elaborated on the numerous advantages that hotel accreditation and enumeration can bring, including improved service quality, customer satisfaction, and a stronger brand image for Ekiti State's hospitality sector.

Hon. Akin Abimbola pledged unwavering support from

members of the Hoteliers Association, agreeing that the initiative would provide the necessary framework to elevate the hospitality industry in Ekiti State to national standards. "Our collaboration with the NTDA is essential for creating a prosperous future for our tourism sector," he stated.

The exercise will not only enhance the credibility of hotels in Ekiti but will also play a significant role in attracting more tourists and investors to the region.

The NTDA team expressed gratitude for the warm reception from the Ekiti State officials and looks forward to a fruitful partnership aimed at establishing a robust tourism infrastructure that benefits both local businesses and tourists alike.



Michael Williams

marketing to a more personalised form of marketing, which we perform using:

- Storytelling and copywriting: We use storytelling to create video content and copywriting to create digital and print flyers. We aim to protect the products and services we offer from a value perspective.

- Cross promotion: this strategy relies on the difference in target audience per outlet at EbonyLife Place. While some outlets have similar target audiences, we cross-promote our products and services that complement the guests' experience. e.g: A guest at The White Orchid Hotel may take advantage of the Movie Marathon package offer we created for the in-house guests to enjoy on the weekends. This deal was a collaboration between the hotel, cinema and Turaka.

- Brand collaborations: we cross-promote across communities of different brands. EbonyLife Place currently has a barter deal with 4 radio stations that ensure we reach their communities through radio interviews and jingles.

- Influencer Marketing: We created the EbonyLife Place Influencer

community to actively take control of the narrative on social media. Our community of influencers are engaged in generic, campaign, and event purposes.

Other strategies we use include email and SMS marketing, Google and social media sponsored advertising.

How do you utilise social media and other digital platforms for promotion?

We utilise our digital platforms by:

- Creating our independent database.
- Cross-promoting across our social media platforms, thereby reaching out to our different target audiences simultaneously
- Creating video and digital flier ads played on our online platforms, in the lobby and screening rooms.

Are there any recent or upcoming marketing campaigns or special events?

Campaigns we are currently working on:

- TripAdvisor campaign to boost The White Orchid Hotel's TripAdvisor page
- December campaigns across all

EbonyLife Place outlets

Special events

- Jinja and Turaka website building and launch
- ELC website development.

FUTURE PLANNING

What are your short-term and long-term goals for the facility?

Short term:

- To increase maintenance repair time by commissioning a maintenance spare store

Long term:

- Construction of 6 new toilets and 2 bathrooms for staff members to reduce the pressure on guest toilets.
- Extension of Jinja poolside to accommodate a minimum of 60 guests

Are there any planned upgrades or expansions?

Planned facility upgrade:

- Construction of 28 outdoor waterproof seats and tables for Jinja poolside.
- Implement routine monthly maintenance, fumigation, equipment shutdown maintenance, weekly deep cleaning, etc.

Refurbishment of cinema screens:

- Walls and floors
- Seat tray upgrade

Planned power upgrade:

- Installation of power dedicated line:

To guarantee a minimum of 20 hours daily power supply to the facility and reduce the cost of generator use and diesel consumption.

How do you stay informed about industry trends and incorporate them into your facility's strategy?

- Follow industry publications and blogs
- Attend industry conferences, expos, and trade shows
- Join industry associations
- Monitor competitors and market leaders
- Leverage social media and online reviews
- Adapt based on feedback

CHALLENGES

What challenges have you faced recently, and how have you addressed them?

1. More than a 100% increase in energy cost for the facility.

Remedy: Charted a working arrangement between the facility and energy supply company for a harmonious and economical energy cost. This reduced

our energy cost by 70%

2. Increase of monthly footfall from 10k customers to 13k persons.

Remedy:

- a. Employed a lift operator to regulate the recommended number of passengers per time.
- b. Retrained janitors on compulsory 30-minute cleaning routines for all toilets and public areas with accurate records system.
- c. Retrained facility maintenance team to increase daily routine inspections to twice daily and perform on-the-spot corrective maintenance and overnight repairs where necessary.
- d. Painting maintenance is done every night to correct affected areas before dawn.
- e. Equipment repairs are done overnight to ensure functionality by the next day.

What else do you have in place for improving the overall facility management?

Additional facility improvement:

- The maintenance team are training to prepare for 20,000 monthly guests by streamlining operations and minimising repair delays.

Double waterproofing of the rooftop floor, to solve leaks due to heavy rainfall.

The recent initiative to improve guest experience:

Hotel:

- An additional cooling unit was installed in the restaurant to improve cooling, especially for arriving guests.
- A 10hp cooling was added to Jinja restaurant to improve the cooling during events.
- A 10hp cooling system was added to Victoria Hall to improve cooling during events.

All these were done after careful consideration of guest feedback. So far, the feedback has been great in those spaces.

Improvement of facilities management:

- Daily on-the-job training
- Weekly team training
- External training on safety and facilities management.



Michael Williams

At EbonyLife Place, Our Business Is Entertainment And Hospitality

In this interview with LUCKY ONORIODE GEORGE, Publisher/Editor of African Travel Times, General Manager MICHAEL WILLIAMS shares the advantages of combining both elements in one location. Excerpts:

ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT

How many rooms/suites are available in your accommodation facility?

- 19

What is the average occupancy rate over the past year?

- 70-85%

What types of rooms/suites do you offer?

- 1 Suite with a living room, balcony with lounge seating
- 1 Junior suite with a living room with two balconies
- 14 Deluxe rooms

- 3 Superior rooms

Can you describe the process for handling reservations and check-ins?

- Walk-ins
- Phone calls
- Email
- O.T.As

- Website

Reservations.

- Guests book online or by telephone and make payment through the site or via bank transfer.
- After the reservation, the guest will receive a pre-arrival message a few days before arrival.
- Upon arrival, the guest completes a pre-filled registration card detail, signs it, and provides identification, while sipping our signature welcome drink.
- The porter shows guests to their rooms, helps with their luggage, and gives them a tour of the resort.

How do you ensure high standards of cleanliness and maintenance in the accommodation areas?

- We adhere to global standard operating practices for cleaning. Our team members are well-trained and adept at handling industrial cleaning products and equipment.
- We carry out routine checks to ensure proper hygiene.

What amenities are included in your rooms, and how do you decide on updates or changes?

- Our room amenities include fruit bowl, toiletries, dental kit, bathrobe, slippers, free Wi-Fi, smart TV with streaming channels, free minibar with soft drinks.

What is the typical guest profile [e.g., business travellers, families, tourists]?

- We have corporate guests, families and leisure guests from around Nigeria and the world

CINEMA OPERATIONS

How many screens do you have, and what is their seating capacity?

5 screens

Cinema 1: 108 seats

Cinema 2: 104 seats

Cinema 3: 108 seats

Cinema 4: 28 seats

Cinema 5: 89 seats

Total: 437 seats.

What types of films or screenings do you offer [e.g., mainstream, indie, special events]?

- Hollywood
- Bollywood
- Nollywood
- Blockbuster films. These are high-budget, widely marketed films, often featuring well-known actors and directors. These appeal to a broad audience and are typically action-packed or have mass appeal.
- Animated Movies: Catering to both children and adults

How do you schedule film showings and manage ticket sales?

- Films are scheduled from 11:00 AM-10:00 PM (weekdays) and 10:00 AM-10:00 PM (weekends).



Michael Williams



- VIP Cinema bookings allow guests to choose their preferred movie and showtime. This includes a two-course meal, cocktails, popcorn, and soft drinks.
- Tickets can be bought online from our website www.ebonylifecinemas.com and Nairabox.com, or from the box office in the foyer.

What measures are in place to ensure a high-quality viewing experience [e.g., sound, projection]?

- Digital Projectors: We are a modern cinema with 4K high-resolution digital projectors, which provide sharp, clear images.
- Laser Projection: Laser projectors offer brighter images with better colour accuracy and contrast than traditional bulb projectors.
- Regular Maintenance: Projectors are regularly calibrated and maintained to ensure consistent picture quality.
- Advanced Surround Sound: Our cinema has advanced surround sound systems like Dolby Atmos, and 7.1 surround, which provide immersive audio experiences, allowing viewers to hear sound from all directions.

How do you handle customer feedback and complaints related to cinema operations?

- In-Person: Customers can approach the team members, supervisors or the manager to express concerns or give feedback during their visit.
 - Feedback QR: Customers fill out a feedback form to review and rate us. Feedback is collected through the cinema's social media pages and via Google reviews.
 - Cinema Hotline: Guests call our cinema line to make inquiries, make suggestions or complaints.
- P.S. We train cinema staff to handle complaints professionally, focusing on empathy, active listening, and problem-solving using the LAST approach.

What partnerships or promotions do you have with film distributors or local businesses?

- We partner with film distributors to offer exclusive pre-screenings or advance screenings of highly anticipated movies, attracting fans who want to see the film before the general release.
- We also collaborate with producers for special events like meet & greets, Q&A sessions with directors, cast appearances, or

themed parties related to a specific film or franchise.

- Promotional Merchandise: Distributors provide promotional items (e.g. standees, posters, tabletops, figurines, media walls, T-shirts, etc.) for in-cinema promotions. However, we give away some merchandise to our guests as part of promotions.
- Cross-Promotions: We use our restaurants and the hotel to offer joint promotions.
- Digital and Social Media Campaigns: Running social media campaigns and posting on all our social media platforms
- We appear regularly on radio programmes to promote films.

LOUNGE MANAGEMENT

Describe the ambience and design of your lounge area?

We have beautifully curated meeting rooms, with stunning original art. The rooms offer a breathtaking view of the Atlantic Ocean during business meetings, high-level conferences, presentations, seminars, training, or casual gatherings

What services and amenities are offered in the lounge?

The private and secure meeting rooms have comfortable seating and a swift Wi-Fi connection. The rooms have a capacity of 20-25 people and access to three different restaurants in EbonyLife Place

How do you manage staffing and customer service in the lounge?

We have stationed staff for all outlets, and they are all trained in customer service

What types of events or activities are hosted in the lounge?

Business meetings, high-level conference presentations, seminars, trainings, birthdays, bridal showers or casual gatherings

How do you manage inventory and supplies for the lounge?

- An inventory management system tracks all items. This helps in monitoring stock levels.
- Inventory is divided into categories like alcoholic beverages, non-alcoholic drinks, snacks, and consumables (napkins, straws, etc.) to make tracking and managing easier.
- Minimum stock levels are established for each item to avoid running out of essential items.
- Daily or weekly physical stock counts are done to ensure the inventory system matches the actual stock on hand.
- FIFO is used to prevent wastage due to expiration.
- The sales report is used to track which items are selling quickly and which aren't. This helps in adjusting stock levels to avoid over-ordering

- Maintain good relationships with suppliers and regularly audit deliveries to ensure we get what we ordered in the right quantities.
- Historical data helps to forecast demand, especially for events or peak periods.

What strategies do you use to maintain a welcoming and comfortable environment?

- Warm and friendly staff members
- Comfortable seating and layout
- Ambient lighting
- Background music
- A clean and tidy environment
- Pleasant scent and air quality
- Temperature control

How do you gather and respond to guest feedback across all areas [accommodation, cinema, lounge]?

- In-Person Feedback: Staff members have been trained to ask guests about their experience directly during their stay or visit.
- We send guests follow-up surveys via email after their stay or visit using Google Forms or TripAdvisor links
- We gather reviews on social media platforms and online review sites, where guests share their experiences publicly.
- We encourage specific feedback by including specific questions in surveys and asking open-ended questions
- We use data analytics to track

- patterns or recurring issues and respond to feedback promptly. Responses can be public or private
- For negative feedback/suggestions, guests are informed of the steps taken to improve the situation and we offer compensation
- To encourage guests to leave feedback, we offer small incentives like discounts, free drink vouchers for the lounge, or a chance to win a free stay or movie tickets.

What loyalty or rewards programs do you offer, and how effective have they been?

We have SureGift cards, and they have been effective. However, we are still searching for better loyalty systems that align with our resort's needs.

Can you describe any recent initiatives to enhance the guest experience?

- Personalised services
- Cross-selling within the resort
- We integrated popular streaming platforms (like Netflix) into the in-room entertainment systems, allowing guests to log in and enjoy personalised content during their stay.

- The cinema has invested in premium seating with reclining chairs, more immersive sound systems and a larger range of concession items to create a luxury experience
- In-Room Spa services
- Hosting pop-up events, such as art installations, to enhance the overall atmosphere and provide a distinctive guest experience.
- Real-time messaging using apps like WhatsApp to give quick responses to guest inquiries or requests, creating a seamless and responsive communication channel.

How do you handle guest complaints and resolve issues promptly?

- We listen to the guests
- Understand the issues
- Promptly respond and figure out a way to fix the issues
- We contact guests to inform them of the steps we have taken to resolve the issue and offer a compensation, if needed.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY What are the key performance indicators [KPIs] you track for each part of the facility?

- Hotel:
 - Occupancy rate
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR)
 - Revenue Per Available Room

- (RevPAR)
- Length of Stay (LOS): Longer stays can indicate higher guest satisfaction and value.
- Cancellation rate
- Online Review Ratings
- Cinema:
 - Box office and retail sales
 - Number of guests
 - Revenue per guest
 - Spend per guest
 - Comscore (cinema box office data for west Africa)
 - Restaurant:
 - Number of guests
 - Net sales figure
 - Average spend per guest
 - F&B cost
 - Overall Facility
 - Employee Satisfaction and Turnover
 - Operating Costs
 - Social Media Engagement

How do you ensure effective communication and coordination between accommodation, cinema, and lounge staff?

- A dedicated internal messaging system (WhatsApp) where all departments can communicate in real-time. This helps in sharing

- updates, issues, and requests quickly.
- Hold regular interdepartmental meetings to discuss operational updates, upcoming events, and any issues that need addressing. Daily or weekly briefings help keep everyone informed and aligned.

- Cross-departmental planning: Events involve multiple departments, and everyone is prepared and aware of their roles.
- SOPs show clear procedures for common scenarios that involve multiple departments, such as guest requests for special amenities, coordinating large groups, or handling complaints.
- A shared calendar (Google Calendar) is used for event scheduling.
- Team-building activities bring staff from different departments together to build rapport and improve collaboration.
- Staff recognition and rewards: Recognising and rewarding teams or individuals who excel, to encourage personal development

What software or technology

systems are in place for managing reservations, scheduling, and other operations?

- Opera (hotel)
- Micros (restaurants)
- Google Calendar (events)
- Reach (Cinema)

How do you manage and control operational costs?

- Budgeting and Forecasting
- Monitoring and analysing expenses
- Regular financial reviews
- Efficient staffing
- Inventory management
- Negotiating with suppliers
- Seeking competitive pricing
- Bulk purchasing
- Energy and resource efficiency
- Implementing cost control policies

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

What marketing strategies are used to promote the facility and its various offerings?

- Personalised Marketing
This year, our goal with marketing at EbonyLife Place is to transition from social media and traditional