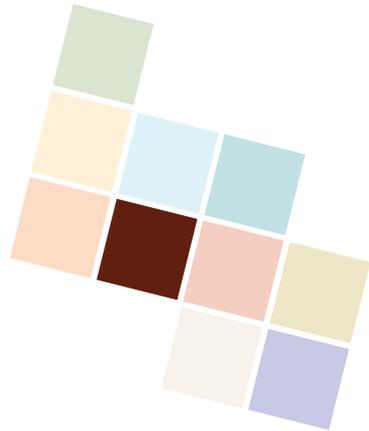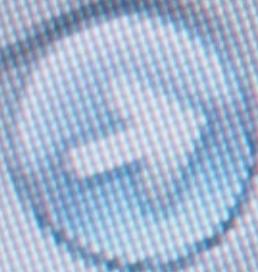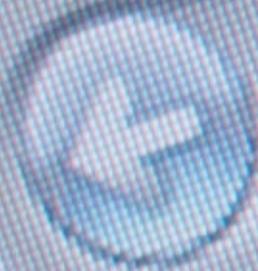# TOOLKIT

Website Planning

Tourism Enterprise Programme

A helpful guide to understanding what should be included in a website as well as increase your confidence in developing a website and working with the Internet.

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Access to information is consistently noted as both a large concern and gap for tourism SMMEs. To address this gap in the market, TEP developed a number of practical toolkits in 2006. DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism) then approached TEP to create an extensive Toolkit Project.

The objective of the project is to identify and address the needs of Tourism SMMEs for information and skills through the production and national distribution of practical and relevant toolkits in five (5) official languages. This will enhance skills and enable entrepreneurs to be more successful in business, resulting in job creation in the tourism SMME sector.

The project aims to provide adequate and user-friendly information to the SMME Tourism Industry in South Africa.

Through this expansion, TEP has a series of eight (8) Toolkits which includes:

•   Legalities and Compliances in the Tourism Industry
•   Website planning and development in the Tourism Industry
•   Business Planning in the Tourism Industry
•   Marketing in Tourism
•   Quality Assurance and Customer Care
•   Tourism Channel
•   Communication in Tourism
•   Business Administration in Tourism

WEBSITE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The information in this toolkit as been compiled to steer you through the maze of information on the Internet, on the different types of websites, search engines available as well as giving you a clearer understanding of the importance of the internet and website for your business. This Toolkit is targeted at small businesses, people wishing to enter the tourism industry as entrepreneurs and existing businesses within the industry who wish to ensure that they understand what should be included in a website as well as increase your confidence in developing a website and working with the Internet. Although the information is of a general nature, we are sure that it will guide you towards ensuring that your company meets with industry standards.

We look forward to assisting you to grow within the tourism industry.

Yours in tourism,

TOURSIM ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME
Toolkit Project Team

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1. WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet was established in the 1960s as a communication infrastructure by military agencies in the US. In the 1970s it began to be used by the research community for sharing data. With the creation of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s, the Internet became available to businesses and was opened up to general commercial use. Organisations that started using the web to publish simple electronic brochures soon began using the Internet in almost every imaginable way and the number of users grew exponentially over the following decade. Since its inception in the 1960s, the Internet has thus evolved from a communications medium to a highly sophisticated commercial marketing medium. For more detail on the development of the Internet see Hobbe's Internet Timeline on www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline.
Most people today connect to the Internet on a regular basis for a variety of purposes. These include booking a flight ticket online, doing online banking or using the Internet for research. This toolkit is aimed at a person who wants to use the Internet to upgrade their existing website or start a new website.

2. HOW TO CONNECT TO THE INTERNET

There are various means of connecting to the Internet. The most common are:
- **Dial-up:** This is when your computer's modem is connected to your telephone line. By selecting the dial-up option, your computer connects with your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to give you access to the Internet. An ISP is a company that provides Internet hosting services. In South Africa these include MWeb, Telkom Internet, Storm Internet and RSA web, to name a few.
- **Broadband:** This is any connection that gives you faster access to the Internet than that of a dial-up line. Examples of broadband include ADSL (a connection that gives you permanent connectivity and still allows you the use of your telephone line - offered by MWeb and Telkom), wireless connections that use radio waves (such as iBurst and Sentech) and 3G, which connects you to the Internet via the cell phone network (Vodacom and MTN both offer this type of connectivity). The costs vary depending on the speed offered as well as the amount of data downloaded per month.

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It is important to consider the connectivity of your target market when planning the design and layout of your website. The same applies for the size of e-mails you send. Your connection may either be slow or fast, but what connection is your target market using?

3.   DOMAINS

Typically, Domain Names operate like telephone dialling codes in reverse. The first portion of the name points to a specific site, the second points to the broad category the site falls into and the third portion is the country code where the site is registered. For example, absa.co.za refers to Absa Bank's website. This site is registered in the commercial (co) domain in South Africa (za). Various other domain types are also available. These include:

• .com
• .biz
• .net
• .travel

A .co.za domain costs a minimum of R 250 to register (once off) and then R50 to renew annually when registering it with Uniforum, the South African domain authority. When registering your domain with an ISP, they will do all the administration and will, therefore, charge a service fee for their efforts.

It is important to try to get a domain that is as close as possible to the name of your business. Try to avoid very long names or using hyphens in your domain. For example, should your business be called "African Wildlife Outings", try to stay away from using the domain www.african-wildlife-outings.co.za. Rather consider the following options:

• www.wildlife.co.za
• www.wildlifeoutings.co.za
• www.africanwildlife.co.za

Since it is possible that the name you have in mind may already be taken by another business, it is a good idea to have some alternatives lined up. If registering a .co.za domain, you can visit http://co.za/whois.shtml to see if those domain names are available.

Your ISP will then "host" your website. This allows your website to be accessed via the Internet. ISPs charge monthly or quarterly hosting fees for this service.

4. INTERNET TERMINOLOGY

Below is a list of the most commonly used Internet terminology, some of which is referred to in this toolkit.

ADSL - Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
ASCII - American Standard Code for Information Interchange
ASP - Application Service Provider
AVI - Audio Video Interleaved

Bcc - Blind Carbon Copy

CGI - Common Gateway Interface
CMS - Content Management System

DB - Database
DHTML - Dynamic HTML
DNS - Domain Name System
DSL - Digital Subscriber Line
FAQ -Frequently Asked Questions
FTP - File Transfer Protocol

GIF - Graphic Interchange Format

HTML - HyperText Mark-up Language
HTTP - HyperText Transfer Protocol

ICANN -Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
IMAP - Internet Message Access Protocol
ISDN - Integrated Services Digital Network
ISP - Internet Service Provider

JPEG/JPG - Joint Photographic Experts Group

LAN - Local Area Network

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Netiquette - Etiquette on the Internet

PDF - Portable Document Format
PHP - PHP: Hypertext Pre-processor
POP - Post Office Protocol or Point of Presence

RSS - Real Simple Syndication

SEO - Search Engine Optimisation
SMTP - Simple Mail Transfer Protocol
SQL - Structured Query Language
SSL - Secure Sockets Layer

TCP/IP - Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol

URL - Uniform Resource Locator

VOIP - Voice Over IP
VPN - Virtual Private Network
VM - Virtual Machine

WAN - Wide Area Network
Wi-Fi - Wireless Fidelity
WAP - Wireless Application Protocol
WWW - World Wide Web
WYSIWYG - What You See Is What You Get

XML - Extensible Mark-up Language

ZIP - compression technology

5.   WHY HAVE A WEBSITE?

Why should a business have a website? Is it because most businesses have websites?
Maybe it is because the owner believes that having a website can generate
additional business. There are, in fact, several purposes that a website can serve, only

one of which is sales.

Others include:

5.1   Marketing

For any business or person selling a service, product or a concept, marketing remains one of the biggest aspects of their operation and also one of the biggest expenses. Here, the Internet can play a major role in adding value to your marketing efforts and cutting costs at the same time.

A detailed description of your offering and its USPs (unique selling points) is a must on your website. You should take the opportunity to inform your prospective clients about your unique service and why they should choose your product or service rather than the others they have come across.

Online brochures, downloadable documents, games, screensavers and sound or video clips can all add to the marketing of your organisation online. Marketing-related uses for your company's website include:

o   **Marketing copy:** Your company's product or service description is often required for advertising, articles and inclusion in various types of documents such as exhibition directories, tour operator brochures, etc. Placing approved versions of your product or service offering's description on your website ensures that the message that goes out is always consistent, of high quality and is controlled by your organisation rather than left to outsiders to decide.

o   **Contracts:** Agent and wholesale agreements, commission structures and other relevant documents can be made available for download from a "trade zone" on your website. These documents can be provided in Adobe Acrobat format, making it impossible for anyone to alter any important details such as rates and dates.

o   **Logo and image downloads:** Companies often have to supply their logos for print and various types of online advertising. Rather than mailing such logos or even emailing them, the corporate section of the company's website can be utilised for this purpose. This will ensure that the colours, style and

quality of the logos are always utilised in the correct manner. Different sizes as well as different colour combinations can be made available for download.

o **Media / news section:** Here, you can place media specific information about your business. Press releases with photos can be made "live" on a site's media section to coincide with traditional media releases. The site can, of course, be the company's press section for latest news on the company and its people, products and services. Companies not in the position to employ a full time spokesperson or public relations company can utilise such a tool very wisely. Once your clients, suppliers, partners, sponsors, investors and the print media know about the media section of your website, they will visit it regularly to get updated news on recent developments.

5.2 Sales

Because you are in the business of selling a product or service, your website should be an extension of your sales team. Many small businesses rely very much, if not solely, on their websites for sales. Whether you run a bed and breakfast, are a tour operator or offer airport transfers, your website can easily be your most valuable sales "person".

The marketing aspect of a website centres on providing information about your products and services. Although this is very important in assisting future clients in their decision making process, it is useless if it cannot lead to new business. This can be compared to a beautiful glossy brochure that does not lead to sales. A website, like any good brochure, should entice the user to buy your product. If your website does not allow for this to happen, you are not capitalising on the true value of your site as a sales tool. So, how can you turn a web surfer into a client?

a) **Encourage a sale; a "call to action"**
    Place an "enquire now", "bookings here", "let us quote you" or similar call to action on every page of your website. If a visitor to your site is looking at rates or prices, he/she is obviously interested in what you have to offer – more so than someone browsing the "About Us" section of your site, for example. A clickable button leading a person to a booking / enquiry form improves your chances of converting this person into a client. There are few things more frustrating than wanting to buy something from a website but not knowing

how to do it.

b)   **Always guarantee a reply**
Offering a guaranteed reply will force your staff to take web enquiries seriously and will show the web user that you consider the Internet to be as important a sales tool as the phone, fax machine or even a sales person. A guaranteed answer to an enquiry on your website within twenty-four hours, for example, will go a long way in showing your prospective client or guest how serious you are about the Internet (and about their business). Where possible, be sure that the enquiry gets delivered to more than one person in your organisation in order to deliver on that guarantee. An enquiry that is answered within three or four hours will, therefore, be considered as exceeding, rather than simply meeting, the client's expectations.

Offer the prospective client various options for your reply. Although the enquiry was made via your website, the client may prefer to be contacted by phone or even to receive rates or product information by fax.

c)   **Offer special rates, discounts, upgrades and rewards for Internet business**
Internet business is easier to manage and cheaper to administrate, making it worthwhile for you to pass on some form of savings to your guest or client. It is, however, true that certain industries (including tourism) are cautious of offering lower rates or prices on the Internet in order to protect their existing channel partners and delicate relationships with existing clients. Where a price incentive is not possible, upgrades and other offers can increase the chances of converting an enquiry into a sale. For example, instead of offering a discount a restaurant could offer a bottle of wine on the house (i.e. at no charge) with every Internet reservation for a table for two. A hotel or guesthouse could either offer a discount on its rack rates or a room upgrade for all Internet reservations.

d)   **Make someone responsible for online enquiries**
Ensure that certain staff members are responsible for all Internet enquiries, reservations and requests. This should include enquiries sent to the company's info@company.co.za email address. This will ensure that all email and website enquiries are taken seriously and have a person responsible for either

answering such enquiries or channelling them to the right people within the organisation. It will make the process personalised and will make the user feel more comfortable when transacting over the Internet. Because spammers (see note below) are using software programmes to harvest email addresses from websites, it is not considered a good idea to have personal email addresses on your website. It is suggested that a general email address rather be set up for the specific purpose of Internet enquiries. You can, however, send reply emails from the personal email address of the person dealing with that type of enquiry. Future communication can then be much more personalised between the prospective client and your organisation.

Toolkit note:
Spam is unsolicited or junk mail. The practice of sending unwanted e-mails with any type of offer is considered spam. Spammers are people specialising in sending out such unwanted e-mail.

e) **Ensure that all of your organisation's contact details are on your site**
This includes telephone and fax details as well as email, postal and physical addresses. Many users prefer to use the Internet for information, but then revert to a phone call or a fax to make a booking, reservation or purchase. A common question from management (who have to allocate funds to the development, maintenance and marketing of an organisation's website) is "How do I quantify my Internet enquiries?" This is very easily measured by means of various advanced website analytics and statistics packages. Some of the better known ones are:

- Webtrends: www.webtrends.com
- Clicktracks: www.clicktracks.com
- Google Analytics: www.google.com/analytics

Other solutions for tracking website enquiries include:

o   Have a dedicated website enquiry email address. Should your company's general email address be info@mycompany.com, then set up a web only email address such as webinfo@mycompany.com. Provide this email address to prospective clients in your contact details on your website. That way everyone in your organisation will know that all emails directed to that address originated from your website.

o   Set up a separate phone line for Internet enquiries. Because many users still

prefer to use the Internet for researching a product or service but then follow up by making a phone call, this will be a worthwhile exercise.

f)   Design your website with different markets in mind

More often than not, a company's website is aimed at just one of its target markets or client groupings. For instance, consider the restaurant that caters for corporate business but has a website that is aimed only at leisure business. Although a website can have different sections (each aimed at different target markets or client groupings), the site should still be developed with its primary market being the major focus.

A lot of websites are developed with the purpose of cutting out the "middle man". The fact remains, however, that many tourism businesses have agents, operators or other intermediaries through which they derive business to some extent. Some ideas that can easily be applied to accommodate this include:

o   **Confidential pricing and information** can be stored on password-protected pages for viewing by selected clients who are granted access via a dedicated username and password.

o   **Terms and conditions** for the different market segments can be detailed on that segment's section on the website.

o   **Contact forms for more information:** These forms typically gather information from individuals seeking more information about the company. A dedicated form for different users / industry members could contain fields that relate specifically to the requirements of that sector of your target audience.

o   **Product specifications:** For the individual or home user, viewing photos of a beautiful resort at the coast and reading a few lines of text is often enough to generate a sale. For a large corporate client planning a conference or company incentive at a hotel, however, more detail will be required.

This detailed information should be aimed specifically at the corporate client, making it easier for the relevant decision maker to place that order or make that purchase. This also eliminates a great deal of administration for the company with regard to calls, faxes and emails. For example, details such as hotel and room configurations, conference room layouts with room sizes and seating plans, etc., can all be provided on the website. Downloadable black and white versions for printing purposes can

also be added so that the prospective corporate client can access them easily.

5.3 Recruitment

As businesses become increasingly specialised, it becomes more difficult to source the types of skills and people that meet their exact requirements. Anyone who has gone through the extensive process of placing job advertisements, sifting through CVs and then conducting interviews will understand the frustration of ending up with a shortlist of people that may have the skills you require, but who are not the right fit for your organisation (or vice versa). Having a "careers" section on your website can go a long way to ensuring that you attract the right kind of people for your organisation. This section can fulfil the following functions:

o   Accept CVs: A section where CVs can be submitted need not only be active when your organisation is looking to hire. Keeping this section active at all times will ensure that you always have résumés of people wanting to work for you, rather than going to the expense and effort of having to place job advertisements when you need someone.

o   Tell the prospective employees more about the company: How did the business start, what is the corporate culture, services offered, what types of people work there, what are the job prospects, standard employment terms and conditions, success stories of people who have risen through the ranks, etc.

o   List specific positions available: Detail those jobs currently available and list job descriptions, specifications and minimum requirements. The prospective employee can be asked to fill in an online form with all of their basic details before being contacted for an interview.

o   Allow the prospective employee to contact a designated person in the company via email or telephone.

o   Each applicant can also be offered the opportunity to subscribe to the company's electronic newsletter. This serves two purposes: the future employee stays up to date with company developments and every prospective employee also becomes a prospective client.

Dedicated online career service providers now make it easy for organisations to provide the offering mentioned above on their websites, saving organisations from having to attend to all the detail required to set up such a section.

5.4   Client relations and communications

Your website can be utilised as an effective communications tool, serving the various stakeholders and other parties or individuals interested in your business. Some forms of communication include:

a)   Online News

An online news section on your site has several advantages for your business. Besides being an excellent way to communicate with your customers / guests and cultivate a long-term relationship with them, a news section is inexpensive to manage and easy to update. Various content management programmes exist, allowing for in-house management of your news. Company news can be posted any time of the day or night, making it a source of truly current news.

This should, of course, go hand in hand with regular, "subscription only" email newsletters. Since many Internet users still read newsletters online rather than subscribing to email newsletters (for fear of congesting their email in-boxes), newsletter contents can also be posted and archived on your website.

b)   Community Building

"Community Building" refers to a virtual community sharing a joint interest through some type of online medium. The Internet is a perfect platform on which to create these interest groups, while a blog is a very good medium that can be used to build such online communities. When creating an online community through your website, it is important to:
•   Find a common topic of interest.
•   Try to relate this topic to your business in some way. A game lodge, for
         instance, could have a virtual community sharing their views on culling.

Although there is no direct business benefit from creating an online community, it is an excellent way of creating awareness for your business. Online communities can also be used for direct marketing purposes.

c)   Online Polls

Another way of using your website for communication is to post online polls that

focus on the individual user, customer or client, providing a platform for such users to communicate with you. For examples, a poll could ask the customer to give comments on your product, services, facilities, rates and prices. This feedback is invaluable in providing your customers with services they want and need. In addition, the cost saving with online polls and surveys is enormous as there are no printed materials or handling, mailing and processing costs.

Toolkit tip:
Make sure that your website caters to your specific business requirements in line with the requirements and expectations of the most important person - your website user. Do not add features simply because other websites may be using those features.

6.   WHAT SHOULD YOUR WEBSITE CONTAIN?

Once you are sure that you actually need a website, it is important to decide what you wish to have on that website. Your reasons for having a website should guide you in determining this.

6.1   Content
There are those who believe content is king. What this means is that the better the quality of the content on your website, the better your website will be at serving those who use it. Be it information about your services, your product offering or what to do in the area, content is vitally important for any travel and tourism business website. It should include:
•   Details about your product or service offering
•   Details about your company: ownership, years in operation, business philosophy
•   More information about your area in general
•   What else to do, see and experience while there
•   Links, memberships and affiliations

6.2 Images / photos
•   Photos, video clips, picture galleries and virtual tours all help to create an idea of what the customer can expect. This is particularly true in the travel and tourism industry.
•   Schematic layouts of rooms and conference venues as well as seating

arrangements in buses and restaurants can all aid the prospective customer in making a decision to use your business.

6.3 Sales and enquiry options

- Although your website can assist in marketing, communications and recruitment as mentioned above, most businesses expect their websites to generate sales or leads.
- Rates, fees and booking or enquiry forms are essential to any tourism related website.
- Make the enquiry forms easy to fill in and easy to find on your website. Ideally, every page on your website should have an "enquire now" or "book now" link.

6.4 Contact details

- Once you have gone through the exercise of developing a website and marketing it, make it easy for people to contact you.
- Do not assume that because someone is on your website that they only want to email you. Provide telephone number, fax number, email address(es), postal address, physical address and a map of how to get to your place of business.

Toolkit tip:
Set up dedicated email addresses in order to assist you with your administration when dealing with enquiries. For instance, for conferences have a conferences@ myplace.co.za email address and for jobs use jobs@myplace.co.za.
In order to avoid spam you may wish to have different options in the drop down menu of your enquiry forms or list your email addresses as jobs<at>myplace.co.za.

7.   HOW DO YOU GET PEOPLE TO COME TO YOUR WEBSITE?

Just having a website to market your business is no longer sufficient. You actually have to market your website in order to get people to know about it. This can be done either by means of traditional marketing methods or electronic or online marketing, referred to as eMarketing.

7.1   Traditional marketing methods

- Enforce a rule that your website address must be printed on every piece of stationery that is exposed to people outside your organisation. This includes

letterheads, business cards, compliment slips, invoices, etc.
- Place your web address on all advertising. Traditional media advertising is expensive and, in the case of radio or television, one usually has very little space or time to communicate a message. Your website can fulfil this role. Your web address should be on posters, print adverts, flyers, newsletters, billboards and all promotional material such as pens, writing pads, apparel and banners at sport events. It should also be mentioned on radio and television advertising or during promotions or interviews.
- Even though a company may have a website, people still phone, fax, email or even write to obtain more information about the business. Rather than mailing them a brochure, sending a fax or even spending time on the telephone explaining the details of your services, refer them to your website. Once you have spent money on having a website developed, you should try to get maximum use out of it.
- Where possible, display your web address on company and staff vehicles as well as other company assets.
- Always encourage as many people as possible to go to your website for details and information on your organisation, its products and services.

7.2   eMarketing

Using electronic means and, more specifically, the Internet itself to promote your website opens a wide spectrum of marketing possibilities. The most common are:

a)   Search engine optimisation (SEO)

Search engine marketing has become one of the most important tools in the overall eMarketing sphere.

This is the marketing of your website by means of search engines. Ensuring that your website can easily be found by means of search engines will greatly increase the traffic (visitors) to your website.

Why is search engine marketing so important? When a user is searching for a product, service or even just information, that person is in *search mode*. This means that they are actually looking for information on a certain topic, product or service. This type of marketing is also referred to as pull marketing rather than push marketing (as is used by television, radio and printed advertising).

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There are a number of actions to be taken to ensure that a website is optimised for search engines.

These include:
- Doing proper keyword research: determining what users type into search engines when looking for a service such as the one your business offers
- Writing search engine friendly text for the site: writing the content on your website in such a way as to allow search engines to rank your site properly
- Adding title and meta tags, page titles, header tags and alt tags: technical aspects of SEO that allow the search engine computers to identify information on your site

Toolkit note: Write down the twenty phrases that most aptly describe your business. These are the phrases that you cannot do without! Now do keyword research for these phrases.

- Setting up a linking strategy: Linking forms a very important aspect of eMarketing and deserves extra attention.

The www is an internet URL (web address) that stands for **W**orld **W**ide **W**eb, so called because everything is linked the same way as in a spider's web. This interconnectedness adds to the overall value of the internet as a resource for research, entertainment, online purchases, etc.

It is very important that your site be linked to other websites whose content and information can enhance your website. (A link is an image or a line of text on a page within a website that will take the user either to another page within the same site or to a completely different site. Linked text is usually (but not always) underlined within the text of a paragraph or as a freestanding word or phrase.) Links within your site can also enhance your site's searchability and usefulness. Search engines consider a link to your website from another website as a vote of confidence in your site. Google, for instance, places a very high value on incoming links to a website. Important factors to consider when implementing links:
- Ensure that your site's navigation is replicated in the text.
- When a link is in the form of an image or a logo (which is great for branding and recognition), it should be accompanied with optimised text to the linked page.
- A one way link is always better than a two way, or reciprocal, link.

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- Focus on getting links from websites with a higher page ranking on the search engines than your own website. This will elevate the status of your own website.
- The history of a link is becoming very relevant; the older the link, the more valuable it will be
- Relevance of links is gaining more importance. For example, a link from a guest house's site to a restaurant's is a relevant link.
- A link with the actual text of the section (anchor text) within one's own site, or the referred site, is important. A link from a restaurant website to a winery should refer to a wine in its anchor text, as mentioned previously. Using the same word over and over, however, will be viewed as a link building effort and will not be favourable to that website.

What to avoid in order to achieve better search engine rankings

Search engine optimisation involves altering your website in such a manner as to allow it a more favourable ranking on the search engines. Because the search engines use computers to analyse and rank your site, it is quite possible to manipulate a website to achieve a ranking it would not ordinarily achieve. There are, however, a number of tactics that are in direct violation of the search engines' webmaster quality guidelines that specifically ban the use of deceptive search engine marketing techniques. Implementing one of these tactics could lead to your website being blacklisted by the major search engines. These tactics include:

- **Mirror Sites:** Where two websites with the exact same design and content are hosted under different URLs (website addresses).
- **Gateway Pages:** A web page may present information to the search engine but obscure it from a casual human viewer. The gateway page exists in order to allow a website to present one face to the search engine and another to human viewers.
- **Keyword Stuffing:** The repeating of keywords and keyword phrases in META tags or elsewhere.
- **Hidden Text:** Text on a web page that is visible to search engine spiders but not visible to human visitors. This is sometimes done by setting the text in the same colour as the background on the web page.
- **Multiple domain names for one site:** The use of several extra domains to provide gateway pages or gateway sites to the main site.

- **False or misleading meta data:** A web page retrieved from a search engine or directory that is not relevant to the query used.
- **Cloned pages:** This is where two pages are made to appear exactly the same.
- **Cloaking:** The hiding of page content. This is normally carried out to stop page thieves stealing optimised pages.
- **Link farming:** This is where websites are set up with the sole purpose of linking to other sites that all agree to link back to each other.

a) Paid listings

A paid listing (or inclusion) is when a result on a search engine is secured by being paid for. This can be achieved by bidding for a keyword or phrase and is not dependant on the search engine optimisation of a website. Ideally, one should use paid inclusion together with organic search engine optimisation, email marketing, viral marketing, web PR and other means of marketing one's website.

Examples of organic listings are on the left and paid listings are on the right.

These ads appear once the results for a certain word or phrase are listed by the search engine. Only once a user actually clicks on the text box will the advertiser be charged for that ad. A click on that ad takes the user to a website or dedicated landing page as set up by the advertiser. An advertiser has to bid for a position on the page. The price of the ad is determined by the demand for that slot. Take the following steps in order to get your advertisement on the paid listings:

- Identify the key phrases you wish to utilise in your campaign.
- Do the required keyword research to establish whether your keywords are relevant.

- Determine your desired cost per lead or acquisition.
- Develop a campaign-specific landing page.
- Write a punchy advertisement that will stand out from the others and will evoke a response.
- Put proper tracking in place.
- Bid for the ads in line with your cost per lead budget.
- Determine what your daily budget should be.

a)   Online advertising

There are two primary uses for online advertising which, if utilised correctly, can be very effective marketing tools. The first is as a brand building medium and the second is to drive sales, reservations or enquiries. Ads are paid for on a cost per impression basis and are charged per thousand impressions. This is called the CPM. A CPM of R300 means each impression costs 30 cents every time someone sees the advertisement.

- **Horizontal banner**
  A graphic that appears on a web page that is usually hyperlinked to an advertiser's website. This may be in a variety of formats including GIF, JPEG, MPEG, Flash, HTML, Java, JavaScript & more.
- **Skyscrapers**
  These are vertical banners - a type of ad unit that is much taller than it is wide. It is often used in columns of web pages where there is a lot of unused vertical space but limited horizontal space.

- **Buttons**
  A type of advertising unit that is smaller than a banner and is usually placed in parts of a web page where space is limited such as in narrow columns on the left or right side of a page.

- **Pop-ups**
  This type of advertisement is automatically displayed in a second smaller browser window upon loading or unloading a normal web page.
- **Pop-unders**
  This type of advertisement is automatically displayed in a second smaller browser window behind the current window upon loading or unloading a normal web page.

WEBSITE PLANNING

- **Contextual links /text ads**

  While lacking some of the advantages of graphical ads, text-based ads have some powerful advantages of their own. They download almost instantly and are not affected by ad blocking software.

- **Sponsorships**

  In this type of advertising an advertiser pays to sponsor a section of a website. It may take on the form of the typical banner and/or text that mentions "this section sponsored by".

- **Rich media**

  This is technology that often includes richer graphics, audio or video within the advertisement. Some popular types of rich media banners are created with HTML, Shockwave & Flash.

- **Micro Sites**

  A micro site is, in effect, a customer's own section within another website. This should be promoted throughout the main site for the micro site's duration.

Toolkit tip:
To make banner ads work for you it is essential to keep the following in mind:

- Place your advertisement on a website that you know is visited by your target market.
- In the case of a campaign, ensure that your banner has a relevant offer.
- A well-designed banner with a good offer is much more likely to be "clicked" on.
- Ensure that the details of the offer are clearly stated on the page to which the banner is linked.
- Negotiate a good rate with the web publisher where your ad will be placed.
- For a list of advertisers who share the number of impressions their sites get, visit www.opa.org.za.

a) Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing is the online version of rewarding referrers for business or leads

generated as a result of their efforts. It puts the internet's connectedness to work for you by creating links into your website from other sites. The concept and success of referral or network marketing is well known and documented. This type of marketing has been used for many years and has helped manufacturers of certain products and brands gain a place in the market without having to utilise the traditional retail channels.

How does it work?

- You - the product owner (merchant) - get other websites (affiliates) to place a banner or link to your website on their website.
- When a user then clicks on that ad, arrives at your website and makes a booking, you pay the affiliate a commission.
- You may also choose to pay the affiliate a fee per lead. You would then convert it to a sale, booking or reservation.
- You can also let your site become an affiliate and earn commission for leads or sales you generate for other websites.

PREFER HERTZ AFFILIATES

Welcome to the Prefer Hertz Affiliate Program!

By becoming a Hertz affiliate you will get the opportunity to earn commission by referring visitors to book a car with Hertz.

WHY PROMOTE HERTZ?

One of the most globally recognised travel brands, Hertz is the world's largest and longest established vehicle rental. A pioneer in car rental, Hertz invented the fly-drive concept and many initiatives since. Hertz, the World's #1 Car Hire Company has a comprehensive fleet and extensive range of services available to satisfy the needs of both the business and leisure traveller.

Hertz has appointed Quirk eMarketing as the facilitators of the "Hertz Affiliate program" who have a long standing track record with Managing and Marketing of Affiliate programs.

IMPORTANT!

Intellectual Property Rights and email restrictions.

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

- Access to over 7400 locations in 154 countries, including all major cities and airports.
- Wide range of the latest models from the world's leading manufacturers.
- Flexible booking features.
- Limited Km rates with Super Insurance waivers.
- Instant booking confirmation.
- Road Atlases and Route Guides.
- Emergency roadside assistance 24/7 in specially equipped vehicles.
- Instant Return services at many locations.

AFFILIATE BENEFITS

- Earn up to 10% per booking for all upfront sales.
- A 30 day cookie for all traffic.
- A complete range of graphical and text creative available, including HTML search banners.
- Available formats include: 468x60, 120x60, 200x200 and 120x600.

The affiliate sign-up page of Hertz in South Africa

a) Viral marketing
Viral marketing is the electronic version of the concept of "word of mouth". Viral marketing focuses on building your brand image whilst creating a list of qualified prospects with whom your organisation can communicate. The word "viral" refers to the way the message is spread like a virus when passed on from one recipient to another.

Upon receiving a message, the recipient forwards the message to friends, family and work colleagues. Each person that receives the email, in turn, forwards it on to their friends, family and colleagues if they think that the nature of the message will appeal to those they forward it on to. These messages can be in the form of a competition, a video or sound clip or an interesting section or feature on a website.

A carefully planned campaign with a specific goal can yield great results in terms of creating awareness, building your brand and generating sales. Kulula.com is very good at using viral emails to promote special offers.

b) Email marketing
Email marketing can be a very effective business tool to market your business or service and special offers. It can also maintain relationships with your existing clients and others interested in hearing from you.

Great success can be achieved by having a well structured email marketing plan in place. It is imperative to note that you cannot send email newsletters or bulk mail to someone without their permission; these newsletters could be confused as spam (the sending of unsolicited email). The ECT Act (http://www.acts.co.za/ect_act/index.htm) clearly stipulates what one can and cannot do in terms of sending such emails. There are a number of ways to build up your database:

•   Add a newsletter subscription form to your website. Be clear about what your newsletter will contain and how often the recipient will receive it. Request the prospective recipient's name, surname, email address and at least one or two additional pieces of information relevant to your service or product.
•   Whenever exchanging business cards, ask the person if you can add them to

your email newsletter database.

- Contact your existing clients, one by one, getting their permission to include them in your email database.
- Place subscription forms in printed publications such as magazines and newspapers and on flyers at trade fairs and exhibitions.

What your newsletter should contain:

- Your newsletter, be it a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly edition, should not be seen as an opportunity to just send out special offers. Although it is acceptable to include information about new products or special offers and promotions, this should not be the sole reason for your newsletters.
- Your aim is to increase readership with every edition. You will only achieve this if the news is relevant to your business or industry and if the information is new and interesting.
- Get assistance from professional copywriters where possible.
- Engage your subscribers by asking for contributions from them.
- Invite guest authors to contribute.

Personalisation

One of the main principles of email marketing is the degree of personalisation it allows the sender. The days of sending emails with ***Dear subscriber*** or ***Dear member*** in the salutation are over! It should be your objective to make every newsletter as personalised as possible.

The idea is to get as much information about your subscribers as is possible without upsetting or annoying them. You should attempt to get small bits of information over a period of time.

When a person subscribes from your website, you can request the following basic information:

- Name and surname
- Email address
- Telephone number with code
- Cell phone number (can also be used for SMS if you request permission)
- One preference that relates to your service or product

Reporting

When sending regular email newsletters, one of the most important aspects is that of reporting. Proper reporting and analysis of such reports will enable you to determine which of your subscribers actually reads your newsletters, what sections they read, who sends it on and how such newsletters are impacting on your overall website traffic and even on your overall web related business.

a)   Web PR

Getting good PR (public relations or press) has always been a challenge for every business. This is even more so for smaller businesses that can not afford the services of a PR agency. This is where Web PR comes in. Writing articles about interesting happenings at your business, big deals signed, awards won, etc. and then having these articles placed on other websites with links back to your own is what Web PR is all about.

b)   What is a blog and how can you benefit from having one?

Blog stands for Web Log. This is basically a website that is run by a company, a group of people or most often an individual. This site is posted by its author (the blogger) on topics that relate to the blog's theme. It may be tourism, politics, pets, music, sports cars or any other topic out there. It gives readers the opportunity to interact with the blogger and read about his / her passion, interest or business.

Writing about your business will give your clients insight into how you operate and will get them closer to you. Free blogging software is available for download on the internet:

- www.Blogger.com
- www.blog.com
- www.24.com

See an example of a blog:
www.emarketingblog.co.za
to the right.

8.　DESIGNING A USEFUL WEBSITE

Websites are really meant for the people that will be using them - your customers - not you or your design team. They must enable customers to achieve their goals (or at least the goals that make business sense for you). If a website does not work for the user, it simply does not work. Internet users are notoriously impatient and with so many alternatives open to them, they will not tolerate confusing navigation, a cumbersome booking facility or slow responses to their email enquiries. It is, therefore, particularly important that the experience users have on your website is efficient, effective and satisfying enough for them to continue using it. To achieve this is not easy, but this booklet is designed to provide some of the tools to assist you in achieving that objective. If you understand that the Internet is really about connecting and collaborating with your customers, then you are on the right track.

- **Saving yourself time and money by taking a user's perspective**
  The typical way of building the website - where the owner has several sessions with the designers, bashing around a couple of ideas and only at the end considers the users - tends to lead to problems being built into the website. To fix these problems is far more difficult and expensive than to build your website with the users in mind from the start.

  The challenge is, therefore, to adopt a user's perspective of your website. There are a number of user-centred design and evaluation techniques that you can use in the design, development and evaluation stages. Of course, to have real users performing real tasks and getting their feedback is perhaps the most informative, but it is also the most expensive and time consuming. You and your design team will, however, already have a sufficient idea about your users and their likely needs.

- **Defining your users and their requirements**
  Having a website potentially opens your business to millions of online customers. Instead of trying to determine what the "average" user might be like or trying to cater for everybody that might arrive at your home page, it is better to focus on those who are your most important customers. If your website can cater for them, then there is a good chance that it will suffice for the other 20% that might use your website. You know these key customer

groups fairly well because you have met them in person. What you need to do is articulate what you know of these key customer categories in a way that will help you to build or enhance a website to suit them.

Example

Typical Customer: International Tourist (perhaps a British couple in their 50s)
Set User Goals: Book all the parts of a holiday in South Africa
Deciding on key points of access: WWW, email, agent brochures, travel guide

- **Building a scenario of use**

   Now we have to give life to the users we have profiled by creating a scenario of use. A scenario of use is a concrete narrative description of activities that the user engages in when performing a specific task. Here you use your own experience, market research and other insights from experts to flesh out a collaborative story of how a particular kind of person will try to achieve certain goals and how your website might respond to him/her.

   In short, a scenario of use describes an **Agent** pursuing certain **Goals or Objectives** in a particular **Setting** (at home or at work using a desktop with 17" monitor and 56k modem access to the Internet), woven into a **Plot** (a sequence of actions and events).

Example

British couple in their 50s are on a 14-day trip to South Africa. Arriving in Johannesburg. Travelling by rental car to Mpumalanga. Staying in luxury lodge. Flying from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Travelling to Garden Route and staying in 3 – 4 star hotels along the way.

Benefits of thinking in scenarios include:
- They allow you the freedom to think beyond what you and your website are currently offering - to capture everything that your customers have indicated they want.
- They allow you to look at other websites for solutions to problems highlighted by the scenario.
- They give you a means to compare your website against your direct and indirect competitors' websites. This also gives you an idea of with whom and

how to partner, align or affiliate with other players in the industry.
- They allow you to measure your site improvements objectively.

- **Giving substance to your website**

After having walked in the user's shoes (so to speak), you will be able to see what these users will need in order to accomplish their tasks and achieve their goals on your site. The next step is to break the scenario up into a sequence of steps that they will need to take in order to accomplish these objectives. A generic series of steps is given by the consumer decision process:
- Problem or need recognition
- Information search
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase decision
- Post purchase behaviour

The next step is to determine what you need to have or what you can provide on your website. Below are some of the key supporting elements that you ought to consider when building a website.

8.1 Finding the website (Information Search)

You may have an excellent website but if no one can find it then it may as well not exist. Although many aspects regarding creating an Internet presence are covered under the topics of eMarketing, there are some additional points that need to be taken into account early on in the designing of your website.

Firstly, if customers know the name of your company, can they guess the URL? In other words, how does the URL relate to your company name or brands?

Secondly, will customers be able to find your URL by searching on the name of your company? Also, what key terms are going to be used by them to find your website if they cannot remember your company or product name?

It is important to make sure that your website URL is consistently and prominently represented across all your promotional material. In addition, it is good idea to make sure that the email addresses you use to communicate with users are related to the domain name: www.companyx.com = info@companyx.com

8.2 Content (Evaluation of Alternatives)
In order to make some kind of comparison between your various offerings or to compare what you have against your competitors, content is essential. Below are some of the basic areas of content that you might want to think about including:

8.2.1 General Products/ Services/ Operations Link or Section(s): This can be a distinct section (i.e. separate from careers, investors, about us, etc.) on the website or a link to another website(s) (other than the corporate website) that offers products/services/ related information. Here the user will expect to find a summary or overview of your entire offering range with links to more detail on each of them (see 8.2.3 below).

8.2.2 Target market: An introductory statement(s), section titles and other elements that contribute to a clear indicator of the site's intended customers or target market(s). A defining moment would be when the user is able to definitively answer what the company is offering (e.g. hotel accommodation or car hire services). If your offerings are spread out across several sections and subsections, then the user will have to go through each of these to get an understanding of what your company offers. Perhaps the best place to have this is either on the home page or on the page containing 8.2.1 above.

8.2.3 Marketing Mix: Specific Product/Service/Operations information. What content you decide is important will be determined by the scenario, but the 4 Ps of the marketing mix ought to be your starting point:
- **P**roduct/Service: A good description of your offering(s) and their salient features. It is important to realise that at the moment in time when the user is online looking at your website, what they see represents your entire organisation and its products. As such, it is going to be very important to capture all the core, actual and augmented features in your offering information. This will be important even if your customers have booked through more traditional channels and are using the website as a means of validating and deepening their understanding of your offering.
- **P**rice: You may not want to give prices away to competitors but you will need to address this important information requirement. If the rates/prices are buried in the booking engine you could lose customers who are unwilling to go through the process just to see how much your product / service costs. Internet users are expecting to get cheaper prices or better value than if they

went through some other traditional channel, primarily because they are coming to you directly; this needs to be dealt with. Bear in mind that the Internet gives them access to many sources of prices with which to make comparisons. Your specials and discounts would also be in this part of content.

- **P**lace: If you have a booking or reservation functionality on your website, the website becomes part of your "distribution channel". Even if you do not have this, you should at least be able to direct them to booking and reservation facilities so that it is an easy transition from your site to where they can act on the information provided.

- **P**romotion: With promotions, the concept of **AIDA** will apply to the way that you write your material. Press releases, press clippings and newsletters are important considerations too. They must be consistent with your other promotional material. To articulate a proposition that has unique value is particularly important for your offerings or your company.

8.2.4 *Details of purchasing/ordering process:* Provide details on how to purchase or order the product (e.g. a reservation or bookings link). This includes entering details or requests and submitting / applying / viewing availability details.

8.2.5 *Customer Support (e.g. Compliments or Complaints):* Information about how praise for a particular staff member or a complaint regarding a service, for example, can be filed, how they are dealt with and so on.

Whatever you decide to put on the website, it is important to note that you need to strive for transparency. Online users are not passive receivers of carefully crafted marketing hype and a lack of authenticity (apparent within a website or in contrast to others) will turn them off.

8.3 Content Flexibility

8.3.1 Specifications / adverts should be available in html and in downloadable form.

8.3.2 Multimedia presentations of product/service or operations: To make your offering more "real" for the users, you may consider providing multiple pictures, video, web cam, or 3D panoramic views of your offerings.

8.4 Content Aids

8.4.1 Language choice: Not all visitors are English speaking. How well does the site cater for foreign language speakers? For example, is there a facility to render the site text in another language? A weaker alternative is the translate button on Google, but you should check how well this works on the site first.

8.4.2 Archive: Does the website provide a navigable and searchable archive of historical content (if relevant and potentially helpful)?

8.5 Site Accessibility: This refers to those features of the website that make its content available to those who have visual impairments or are using a different browser

8.5.1 The ability to change font size

8.5.2 Word alternatives to images and graphics

8.5.3 Site Navigable in Black and White

8.5.4 Home Page viewable in FireFox

Measures of Usability

Having good content is one thing. Organising it into easily located places on your website is another. One easily measurable way to determine the organisation of content is to count the number of clicks it takes to get from the home page to any one piece of content relevant to the scenario and then the number of clicks between that content. This is called "website navigability". The idea is that the longest number of clicks (about three) should be from your home page to any one piece of content relevant to the scenarios. There should, however, be only one click between these pieces of information so that they form a "cluster" of information relevant to a scenario.

Scrolling is another measure of usability. Users tend not to expect to have to scroll to find the link to a page containing important information or to have to scroll down the landing page to find the information they are looking for. Scrolling is, of course, dependant on the screen size and resolution: the base line is 17" monitor with an 800 x 600 pixel resolution.

Logical Navigational Elements (menu and submenus)

Structuring the content into the main menu (the global navigational element that is visible no matter where you are in the site) and sub menus (local navigational elements) must also take into account the clusters of information. Within the global

navigational sections, the website's local navigational elements (those links that appear as sub menus) will contain all or most of the information relevant to the scenario.

A site map on any website will summarise the global and local navigational elements. The scenarios will give you guidance on the label terms of global and local menu items that will make sense for the intended users and their tasks. They will also prevent you from coming up with labels that relate to how you see your products.

8.6 Dynamic Functionality (Purchase Decision and other Actions)
This is defined as the ability of the website to accommodate specific user interactions and multiple uses of the website. It allows a person to act on the content provided. To better address individual needs, a site can be designed to be altered by the user or by the organisation. Tailoring of the website initiated by the user is called personalisation – the user personalises the website around their requirements. Tailoring initiated by the organisation is called customisation – the organisation customises the website for the user or group of users. A third dimension to dynamic functionality is the facility (or facilities) associated with supporting the transactions that the website allows for.

> **8.6.1 Personalisation** (tailoring by user): This dynamic functionality enables the user to modify website elements based on consciously articulated and acted upon preferences.
>> 8.6.1.1 Content and layout configuration: The ability to select offering options and compare them on marketing mix elements. Selecting and viewing products by price, place, specifications, etc. This should facilitate company, product and feature comparisons.
>> 8.6.1.2 Account registration facilities and account details - password and user name
>> 8.6.1.3 The facility to creating a profile
>> 8.6.1.4 Ability to rate offerings
>> 8.6.1.5 Configuration of products or services: For example, putting together a unique package of offerings.
>
> **8.6.2 Customisation** (tailoring by the organisation): This refers to the design and creation of content or facilities that meet a target customer's (or a group's) specific needs. It entails determining a user's interest based on his or her

preferences or behaviour, constructing business rules to select relevant content based on those preferences or behaviours and presenting the content to the user in an integrated, cohesive format.

    8.6.2.1 Identification of the user either through cookies or after logon

    8.6.1.2 Recommendations based on past purchasing behaviour

    8.6.1.3 Recommendations based on other users' behaviour

8.6.3 Online Transactional Facilities: How flexible is the way in which the visitor can manipulate the options to get changes in quoted price, having all costs included and obtaining detailed times and dates? The transactional facilities should follow a clearly defined and efficient process. For example:

Step 1: Registration

Step 2: Configuring and adding offerings to a Shopping Cart

Step 3: Entering into a secure section in which personal and bank information is entered

Step 4: Purchasing

Step 5: Tracking the status of one's order

Step 6: Selecting Delivery Options (e.g. printing a ticket or picking it up at the airport)

8.6.4 Supporting content: This is content not central to the purpose of the site, but that is useful as supporting information and for the protection of the company and the visitor. **Three categories** of this kind of information are made:

    Service related information

      o   External assessments and ratings. A visitor might want to see if any accolades, awards or ratings are published on the site. This could help in determining the quality of service independently of the usual marketing hype, which seasoned consumers treat with some circumspection.

9. HOW TO GO ABOUT GETTING QUOTES FOR DEVELOPING YOUR WEBSITE

If you do not yet have a website or if you are in the process of having one developed, it is important to know how to go about getting quotes for your website and which service provider to choose. There are a number of important factors to consider when embarking on such a project.

•   Be sure to know who your target market is and what you want your website to do.

- Write a proper brief detailing what you want your website to contain before meeting with prospective website developers.
- Identify web agencies with good records and contactable references.
- Contact at least two or even three different website companies.
- When meeting with these companies, give them your brief for the site and ask them to come up with innovative ways of getting your website to fulfil its objectives.
- Keep in mind that a website has three major components: design, development / architecture and marketing. It may, therefore, be necessary to appoint more than one company to deliver the end product and the ongoing marketing.
- Compare quotes with reference to the company's experience, referrals, price and ongoing support and backup.

10. WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HELP

There are numerous websites that can assist you in learning more about the Internet and how to make your website work for you. Your best option is to use your favourite search engine to look for additional information about how to develop a good website, what emarketing services are available, why you should have a website, etc. Some helpful sites for understanding search engine marketing, web PR, affiliate marketing and other related topics include:

www.searchenginewatch.com
www.adglossary.com
www.affiliateguide.com
www.peppersandrogers.com
www.search-this.com
www.sethgodin.com
www.viralchart.com
www.1to1.com
www.wordtracker.com

11. RECOMMENDED READING

The e of marketing, published by Juta and written by Japie Swanepoel is a very useful tool for anyone wanting to learn more about eMarketing and its applications

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in South Africa. It covers online marketing strategies as well as search engine marketing, viral marketing, online advertising, blogging, affiliate marketing and email marketing. The book is available on Kalahari.net and Loot.co.za as well as at selected Exclusive Books stores.

Japie can be contacted on 082 443 033 or japie@24.com

WEBSITE PLANNING

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Internet

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CONTACT DETAILS

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Woodmead Business Park, 145 Western Service Road,
Woodmead, Johannesburg
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P O Box 409, Wendywood, 2144
Telephone   : 011 804 5750
Fax   : 011 802 8448
Email   : info@tep.co.za

KwaZulu-Natal
Regional Representative :
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2nd Floor, Tourist Junction Building,
160 Pine Street, Durban
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Mpumalanga
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Free State
Regional Representative :
Ceder Investments CC
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78 Victoria Road, Unit 2, Willows, Bloemfontein
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Northern Cape
Regional Representative :
Ceder Investments CC
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3 Chapel Street, Kimberley
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Eastern Cape – Port Elizabeth
Physical Address :
108 Tourism Centre, Cnr Walmer Boulevard,
 Mitchell Street, South End
Telephone   : 041 582 2150
Fax   : 041 582 2234
Email   : pe@tep.co.za

Eastern Cape – East London
Physical Address :
59 Western Avenue, Sanlam Park, Vincent
Telephone   : 043 727 0480 or 011 832 2014/5
Fax   : 043 727 1002 or 011 832 2030
Email   : eastlondon@tep.co.za

Limpopo
Physical Address :
Standard Bank Building, 49 Landdros Mare,
 Polokwane
Telephone   : 015 295 7287 or 011 832 2014/5
Fax   : 015 295 7294 011 832 2030
Email   : limpopo@tep.co.za

North West
Physical Address :
2 Joule Street, Industrial Site, Mafikeng, 2745
Postal Address   : P O Box 130, Mafikeng, 2745
Telephone   : 018 381 1660 or 011 832 2014/5
Fax   : 018 381 1667 or 011 832 2030
Email   : northwest@tep.co.za