

Business Events Africa

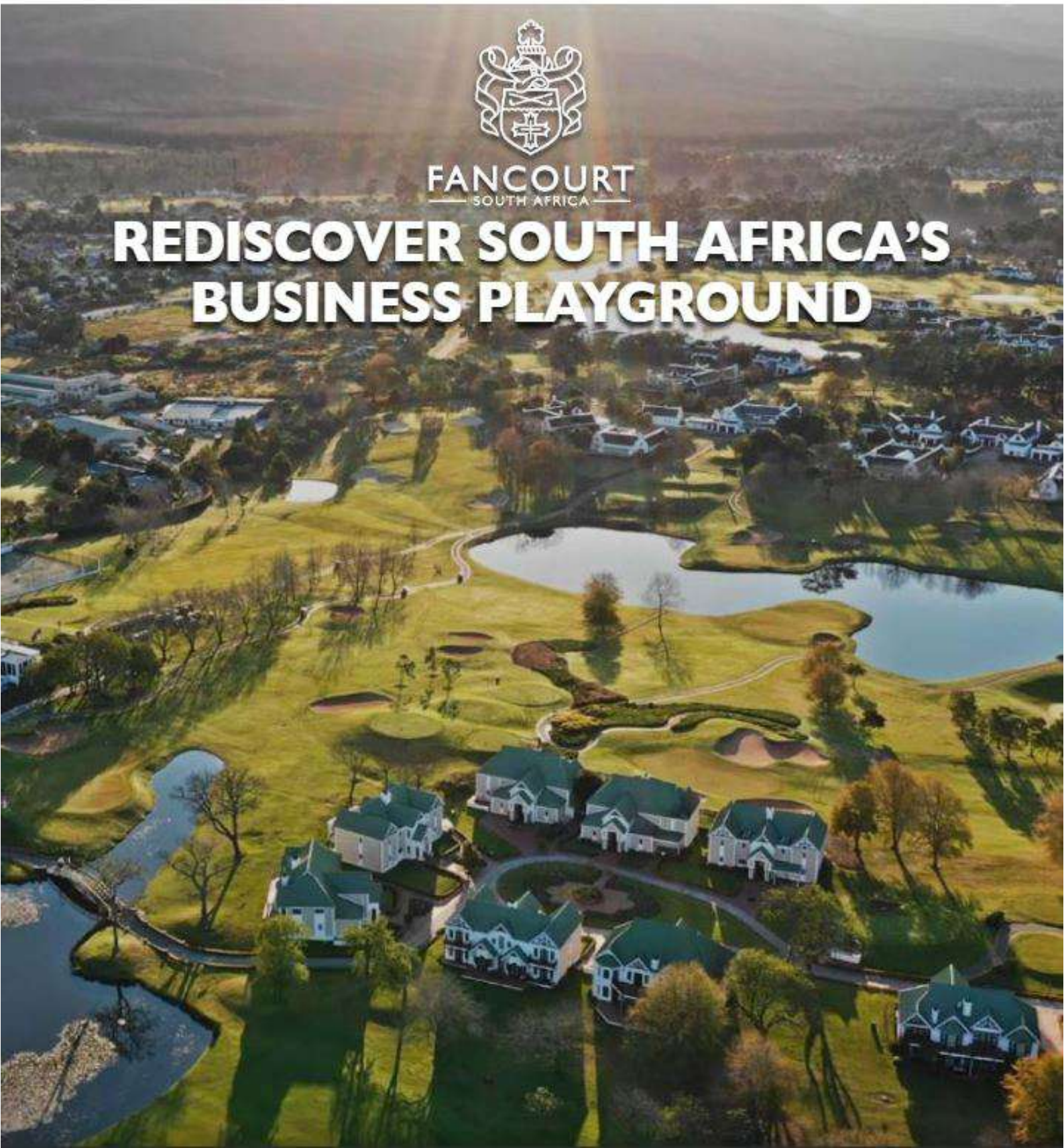


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FANCOURT
— SOUTH AFRICA —

REDISCOVER SOUTH AFRICA'S BUSINESS PLAYGROUND



This industry is all about the people

Humble Jacqui Nel, the International Exhibition Logistics Association (IELA) board member and chairperson of the Industry Relations Working Group (IRWG) and director of Exhibition Freight GSM South Africa has been in the exhibition industry for over 20 years.

"My career in freight forwarding began in 1981, in the logistics division of Safmarine, where I worked my way through to the exhibition industry by joining RE Rogers in 1993.

In 2002, my late husband, Clive, and I started Exhibition Freight GSM South Africa, together with our colleagues at EF-GSM UK.

"My love for the exhibitions industry allowed me to get involved with EXSA where I became chair in 2005 with the aim to grow the number of members in the Western Cape. I have always believed that being a member of an association is vital to keep up with the changes and challenges that are happening around the world, not to mention that it brings credibility to your business within the industry.

"When I joined IELA in 2017, I joined the IRWG and quickly became involved wherever I could. I believe that the logistics knowledge we all have is key to the success of the exhibitor at an event as well as passing this knowledge on to others.

"During 2019, the IRWG launched the Ambassadors Program and the success we have seen is because we have connected other associations around the world with IELA, through our ambassadors in those associations. It has been very exciting to watch as countries begin reopening and returning to normal. The Ambassadors have begun interviewing the various associations on their success stories, so that we are able to motivate other countries to follow suit."

Where do you see the exhibitions industry in South Africa at present and where do you see it heading in the future?

Sadly, on a global scale, our industry together with tourism has taken a huge knock with Covid-19 and has left most of our industry without work, while we continue to see exhibitions and various events being postponed to 2022 or even cancelled.

We recently held the 36th IELA Congress, which took place online, and learnt that no one is able to foresee the future. We are living in uncertain times. The best course is to take one day at a time, attempt to anticipate and do what you are able to do today with openness, humility and respect.

Globally, how do you see the exhibitions industry at present?

Many countries are in the same situation as South Africa. However, we are beginning to see small local exhibitions taking place again, with China and Dubai leading and other countries, such as USA and Mexico, slowly following suit. Dubai is allowing visitors into their country and this is a big step in the right direction.

Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Johannesburg, where I worked for several years before being transferred to the Cape in 1997. I attended Greenside High School, and following this, I attended RAU and obtained my advanced diploma in road transportation.

Where did your career begin?

My career began the Standard Bank Forex



Division, as I was initially interested in studying chartered accountancy. However, life took me on a very different route!

How long have you been in the sector?

I have been in the logistics side of shipping for too many years and it was a pure coincidence that I went for an interview to work at RE Rogers. This is where I began working within the exhibition industry, moving goods to and from exhibitions.

What do you enjoy most about it?

Although entering the exhibition industry

has been very exciting, it has been working alongside some amazing people that has been very special. This industry is all about the people and I love every moment of it.

What has been the biggest change you've seen in this sector?

The biggest change I have seen is that many of our entrepreneurs have retired, taking with them their skills and stories. These stories entail so many trials and tribulations that deserve to be shared. As with many industries, we face the challenge of not enough young people entering our industry.

Were you always involved in this sector?

No, I was in shipping for many years, and I still get to do what I love for another type of industry. I find it thrilling to move cargo around the world and the challenges it brings. Being a part of IEA is really such a privilege and it allows me to meet people from around the world who enjoy it as much as I do.

Are you married?

I was married to an amazing man, Clive for 33 years. Sadly, he passed away in 2015.

What role does your family play in your life?

My family is very important to me and without their love and support, I would not have been able to have a successful career. They assisted me in maintaining a balanced home life and even though my son is married, he and his wife continue to be there for me.

What would you change in your life – if you could – when looking back?

I would not change anything, as I have had a very blessed and exciting life. While it hasn't always been easy, the bumps in the road make you stronger, wiser and more resilient to navigate your next journey.

Do you have any hobbies?

Only the usual hobbies, walking my dogs, reading, yoga, painting. I stay very clear of the adrenaline type sports.

Do you play any sports?

I used to participate in athletics, gym and hockey. However when you are building a

career, running a home and family, it is not always easy.

What is your favourite sport?

Day/night cricket, rugby and golf. My favourite sportsman is Gary Player. He is such a testimony to hard work, perseverance, learning your skill well, being focused, and, when reaching the top, giving back to communities.

What do you do for leisure?

Enjoy the many wine farms around the Cape.

What is your secret to success?

Be passionate about what you do. You must love going to work. Be very good at what you do, learn your skill well. Be humble and always remember that you didn't get there by yourself. There were many people who believed in what you were doing and who were part of your journey to being successful.

What has been your biggest challenge in this sector?

People's misconceptions about freight costs and the time it takes to move goods to and from an exhibition, including the time for customs clearance. The lack of attention to the documentation required and thinking that customs will approve incomplete documents.

What is your pet hate?

People who try and cover up their mistakes. Be human, and just own the mistake, fix it and move on.

What is the most memorable place you have ever been to, and why?

We hired a car and, with my family, had great fun travelling through all the small villages of Scotland.

What type of holiday would you avoid at all costs?

An adventure holiday. Holidays are a time to have fun and rest up.

If you could be anyone for the day, who would you be and why?

It would be myself. I really enjoy what I do. I am blessed to have wonderful family and friends around me.

What is your favourite city?

I have two favourites. Venice, Italy. With the charm of its

canals, the architecture and beautiful bridges, not to mention the food.

Cape Town – South Africa, for the natural beauty of the mountains, beaches and the lovely diverse culture of people who live here.

What is your favourite book?

For fiction, I enjoy all the Dan Brown books. He is such a good writer.

For non-fiction — it would have to be two books, *Losing my Virginity* by Richard Branson and *21 Laws to Leadership* by John C. Maxwell.

How do you relax?

I spend weekends away with my family.

What is your favourite food?

Pavlova.

Who is your favourite movie star?

Denzel Washington. He is such an amazing actor.

What is the most impulsive thing you have ever done?

Dune riding in a 4x4 in the desert.

Who is your role model?

Richard Branson. He is the most inspirational person.

What advice do you have for anyone starting out in this industry and hoping to follow in your footsteps?

Firstly, you must love what you do, and do it very well. In order to be an exhibition freight forwarder, you have to learn about the basics of air and sea freight logistics and, whilst you may learn about it through doing a course, join a shipping company and learn the practical side well, because when you are on an exhibition show site, your client, who could be the organiser or the exhibitor is going to expect you to be a logistics specialist and be able to solve some of the logistic problems that may arise.

What is your dream for the future?

That exhibitions return to their full capacity, thus enabling the people in our industry who lost their jobs to be re-employed, continuing with the work they love. I think that the hybrid part of exhibitions will stay, as a value-added service for those visitors who will be unable to travel. ■