

E-commerce penetration in Kenya ramping up travel



By Josephine Wawira

9 Feb 2018

Online buying and selling of goods and services, online transactions, high mobile penetration, fast connectivity, a digital savvy population and an increased consumer spending power are among factors increasingly fueling the penetration and growth of e-commerce in Kenya. One of the sectors consequently affected by this disruption is the travel industry, in part because of the growing confidence in e-commerce sites such as online travel agents.



Image: Rawpixel.com (Image Supplied)

These have brought with them the efficiency often sought after by travellers who otherwise are overly occupied and thus have little time to research their destinations and make a booking for either a hotel or flight online. These travellers' resolve and ability to purchase services on the move has, as a result, increased the reliance on mobile devices, thus giving service providers who invest in easy-to-use apps a rising edge.

Speaking during the Kenya Travel Awards 2018 held on 1 February in Nairobi, Jumia Travel's Country Manager Cyrus Onyiego noted that in Kenya, "mobile bookings are on an upward trajectory, standing at 44% in the company's Q3 2017 report, as compared to 41% in the second quarter of the same year."



He, however, emphasised on the need for effective mobile-centric marketing strategies and customer engagement by service providers including hotels, a tactic Onyiego believes will “increase trust in the otherwise deemed ‘risky’ online businesses.”

Other trends in the Kenyan travel market

In his presentation, he also highlighted other trends in the Kenyan travel market, with a majority who book via the travel agency still opting for the three-star hotels (34%). Furthermore, business and leisure travellers make up 44% and 88% of total bookings made on Jumia Travel respectively.

With the leading internet penetration in Africa at over 80% according to the [Jumia Travel Kenya Hospitality Report 2017](#), the growth of e-commerce in the country is bound to continue in 2018. Kenyans will, therefore, travel more locally, leading to a boom in domestic tourism and more so in online booking trends. Consequently, the time is still ripe for retailers to advance and incorporate fully consumer-centric approaches.

ABOUT JOSEPHINE WAWIRA

Josephine Wawira is a consultant in communication and public relations with over six years of progressive writing and broadcast experience. She is currently a writer for Africa's online hotel booking portal, Jumia Travel, focusing in the areas of travel, tourism, and hospitality as it relates to Africa.

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