

Cape Town Tourism's Find Your Freedom sparks tourism revival, generates R147m and job opportunities

Cape Town Tourism's Find Your Freedom global marketing campaign has made a substantial contribution to shielding the city's tourism industry from the epidemic's unfavourable consequences. The campaign's first-ever interactive travel experience generated roughly 755 new employment and R147m in direct and indirect spending.



Source: ©armentorp via [123RF](#)

Considering arrivals at Cape Town International Airport, just over 370,000 international visitors were welcomed between January and March 2023, with March boasting a 105% recovery rate when compared to the same period in 2019. Additionally, the Mother City welcomed close to 800,000 domestic visitors over that same period, recording a 75% recovery in March.

Leigh Dawber, chief marketing officer at Cape Town Tourism, says the campaign aimed to harness a choice-driven experience to strongly and aggressively drive tourism to the Mother City. "The results of our Find Your Freedom experience far exceeded what we ever expected. The gamified interface resonated with millennials and brought over 5,000 international bookings through Expedia in a very short period, generating close to R50m in direct expenditure."



Cape Town Tourism utilises gamification in new international campaign

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The Find Your Freedom campaign's success also contributed to the city's accommodation recovery story. Average occupancy in February was 85%, compared to 78% in February 2019, and average room rates increased to R2,567 in February this year, up from R2,026 in 2019. Dawber states that the campaign was successful in attracting countless visitors to the Mother City and created 248 direct employment opportunities when many were in economic turmoil following the chaos caused by Covid-19.

The creative experience earned Cape Town Tourism numerous global awards, from the Destination Industry Award at the International 2022 'X. Awards' to the title of 'Most Viral Campaign' at the [Supersonic New Generation Awards](#), and also being recognised at the City Nation Place Awards with the highest commendation in the category of Best Communication

Brand collaborations and smart partnerships

Dawber adds that by pushing the right buttons at the right time, Cape Town Tourism was able to reignite travel to Cape Town just in time for high season. "We needed to be innovative in our approach to grab the interest of those wanting to travel. Find Your Freedom has proven to be our most important, most immersive and most successful travel experience to date. But what added to this success was our brand collaborations and smart partnerships.

"By collaborating with TikTok, Expedia and exciting GoPro content creators, we managed to transform the way the Mother City is marketed and showed how innovative partnerships can help revive a tourism industry that was rocked by the pandemic."

Alderman James Vos, mayoral committee member for economic growth at the City of Cape Town, says the results have been staggering. "Our goal with Find Your Freedom was to fuel faster recovery in the visitor economy. Following the pandemic, people worldwide were itching to explore, do more, and reclaim that sense of purpose. We wanted to encourage individuals in our key source markets to jump on a plane and come to Cape Town to find their freedom.

"This campaign really hit the mark not just in terms of being something original and fun, but most importantly, being enticing enough, to result in actual bookings."

Dawber concludes: "As Cape Town Tourism embarks on its next chapter, we remain dedicated to attracting visitors and supporting the Mother City's vibrant tourism sector. With a focus on providing unique experiences for travellers and bolstering the local economy, Cape Town can continue to thrive as a leading global destination."