

Sandton Sun and Sandton Towers awarded Platinum Status

Following comprehensive environmental management and legal audits, sister hotels Sandton Sun and InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers have both been awarded a Platinum Status, with overall scores of 96% and 95% respectively.

On the heels of this outstanding achievement, the two hotels were also jointly presented with the Best Overall Environment Management System at the annual Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards held on 31 October 2012.

Critical success factors that have resulted in this achievement are undoubtedly the efforts by the established environment committees and their continual monitoring and improvement of the environmental management system (EMS) and its integration into the hotels' operations.

The integrated approach to environmentally sustainable and responsible business practice as encompassed in the EMS is what grabbed the attention of the judges when awarding the Best Overall Business Management System.

Going green sets the standard

"Going green is vitally strategic for businesses as it sets the standard against which our competitors will be measured in the future. We regard this as an operational imperative and as such our greening efforts extend outside of the hotel, with numerous eco-friendly projects managed by the hotel's dedicated environment committee forming but one pillar of our overall EMS," says Peter Davidson, GM of Sandton Sun.

Integrating various aspects of environmental management into one inclusive plan does present its own challenges, but through the joint cooperation between the two sister hotels, both brands were able to optimise use of resources and maximise efficiencies. Such activities include:

- Procurement practices have been environmentally aligned to ensure minimal packaging and reduction of deliveries through bulk purchasing for consolidated procurement areas at the Sandton Sun and InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers.
- Formalising relationships with conservation partners, Sandton Sun has worked with the Owl Rehabilitation Centre in the rehabilitation and reintroduction of owls into their natural environment. InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers' partnership with FreeMe Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre has also seen fruit with the recent unveiling of a new tortoise enclosure.
- Transport management systems which monitor projected guest, supplier and employee emissions have been

implemented with the expectation of reducing the same by 5%. These include complimentary shuttle services to Gautrain station and enforced idle-free zones in all delivery and drop-off areas.

- The two hotels manage their resources through a strict reduce, reuse and recycle philosophy.
- Energy consumption is measured daily, and measures have been implemented to reduce electricity consumption.
- Storage and disposal of hazardous materials is carefully controlled and recorded. This includes reduction of oil disposal to zero, and other strategies such as fluorescent globe crusher, battery bins, copper bins and recycling of printer cartridges and toners.

"The EMS has progressed in leaps and bounds and we are exceptionally proud of our passionate environment committees and all staff for their efforts and support of this worthy endeavour. Being recognised by Heritage and Imvelo in such a substantial way not only serves as a veritable acknowledgement of what we have achieved but it a great motivator for us to continue to make a sustainable impact on the environment," says Josiah Montsho, GM of InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers.

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