

Business Connect by Europcar - moving the SME way

Europcar SA has launched a new offering, Business Connect, which is set to energise the SME sector.



"We're thrilled to release a product for SA's often-neglected SME sector," says Europcar SA COO Martin Lydall. "We take SME businesses seriously and want them to enjoy all the benefits they should. The potential of SMEs as a major growth engine for SA's economy is close to our hearts. That's the origin of our business and the Imperial Group, of which we're part, and that energetic, entrepreneurial culture is still very much present in Europcar SA today.

"We decided to devise a tool that sets a new benchmark for our industry, while addressing SMEs' unique needs and challenges. Our new Business Connect tool gives them better and simpler control over costs and logistics when they need staff to travel and drive their business growth. For us, this is putting the Europcar pledge, 'Moving your way', into action for SMEs."

Business Connect makes booking and paying for car-rental easier and safer for both SME owners and staff from its streamlined online booking (indicating real-time rental availability and saving time with call-centres) and its three key fast-track advantages when collecting the rental car.

First, no queuing thanks to Europcar's Ready Service at all major airports. Second, no time wasted signing paperwork. Third and most importantly, collecting the rental car using only a valid driver's licence. No personal or company credit-card needs to be produced - previously a major barrier to uptake of car-rental in this market.

"Another payoff for the SME owner is better business practice, with Business Connect becoming an all-in-one time-management and payment solution," says Lydall. "We understand how business owners are often very much stretched, since they have to multi-task as managing director, financial director, sales, marketing and HR executives, all while they drive their business to greater growth.

"We believe SMEs deserve a service traditionally reserved in SA only for corporates, larger businesses and government departments. That includes enjoying all our usual products - plus a lower, preferential business rate and electronic invoices and statements to meet business need for financial control and management."

Signing up to Europcar's Business Connect is quick and easy - online, naturally. Guidelines for joining Business Connect are fairly flexible to allow for SMEs' highly variable structures. SMEs should have:

- Company registration number from the CIPC
- Annual turnover of less than 45 million

- Less than and up to 200 employees
- Credit card

"Only when applying for Business Connect must the SME owner make a credit card available," says Lydall "Rentals are automatically billed to the one approved credit card, but it doesn't need to be produced when rental car is collected or returned."

Once signed up to Business Connect, the SME owner receives a unique login and password to create the own business profile so that they can conveniently manage both their own and employees' bookings.

"What matters to us at Europcar SA is ensuring our customers enjoy a rental experience tailored for them, concludes Lydall, "and that we help support the nation's entrepreneurial spirit and growth."

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