

New approach to airport lounges will keep Standard Bank customers flying effortlessly into 2017 and beyond

Johannesburg, 30 November 2016: Bustling day and night, South Africa's major airports are cities in their own right. Spread over hundreds of hectares of land, their buildings offer more than just places to wait for flights; they are 'destinations' where there are more restaurants than in many shopping malls, banks, shopping concourses and, of course, the airport lounges passengers a respite from the halls catering for thousands of passengers every day.

The need for quiet refuges in these bustling 'aero-cities' is reflected in the passenger figures recorded in South Africa. As the busiest airport in Africa, OR Tambo International in Johannesburg catered for 9 546 326 passengers during the facility's 2014/15 financial year. Of these arrivals and departures, nearly 4 000 000 people were from foreign shores, nearly 500 000 were from regional African countries, and more than 4 750 000 went through the domestic arrivals halls.

Cape Town, one of the most desirable tourist destinations on the globe, and also the third-busiest airport in Africa, attracted more than 8 600 000 during the financial year. Durban's King Shaka International makes it into 11th place on the continent's 'Top 13' catering for about 4 500 000 passengers every year.

"With the changes and enormous growth of South Africa's airports has come a major change in traveller's habits", says Nontokoza Madonsela, Head of Marketing for Personal and Business Banking for Standard Bank South Africa. The airport lounge, once the exclusive domain of major airlines and their 'privileged' business class, first class and frequent flyer passengers, has become a place offering a welcome respite to many other travellers.

"For Standard Bank, our airport lounges have become facilities where our customers who are frequent or casual flyers can relax before flights, simply by activating the lounge privileges which are benefits attached to their use of qualifying bank products."

"Recently, however, our research showed that although our existing facilities are well patronised, a fresh look at the needs of air travellers was really needed."

"Ultimately, the challenge presented to the bank as lounge owners and operators lay not just in meeting the expectations of existing base of lounge users, but in acknowledging that individuals approach air travel in different ways and that a more flexible approach to providing facilities was needed."

"Some people arrive well in advance of their flight times and want to relax; others prefer to reduce the time they spend waiting for a flight, but want to be able to work using electronic access. Still others literally want nothing more than to grab a snack or beverage on the way to the boarding gate."

To meet these needs Standard Bank has developed three pioneering lounge concepts for its qualifying users at OR Tambo domestic departures. These new facilities include:

- The **LibraryLounge**, which brings a timeless, tranquil and slightly indulgent feel together with superior hospitality to airports for the first time. The lounge, offering the best that can be expected in any airport facility, with free high-speed Wi-Fi connection, premium beverages and freshly prepared, quality meals, will open mid- December. The **LibraryLounge** caters specifically for the needs of Standard Bank Wealth and Investment, Signature Banking and Family Banking customers.

- **CaféBlue**, which opened mid-November, is ideal for those who want grab a snack, or pick up a cup of coffee before they go on their way. A host(ess) and experienced barista's make the stop short in duration, but very satisfying, with a variety of refreshments available at no charge. *CaféBlue* will be open to Wealth and Investment, Signature Banking, Family Banking and Professional Banking customers.
- **The ConnectionHub**. Conveniently situated opposite *CaféBlue*, this facility focuses simply on providing customers access to high-speed Wi-Fi and power points and seats, so that those last few urgent tasks can be dealt with before boarding. The *ConnectionHub* will be open for use by all domestic airport visitors, irrespective of card status or whether or not they are Standard Bank customers, and will be operational by mid-December.

Access to the *LibraryLounge* and *CaféBlue* will be controlled through concierge staff located at the front desks, and a card-tagging system, while *ConnectionHub* will be unattended and open to all domestic travellers.

"The emphasis on launching this new approach to air travel, as well as an entry level lounge open to non-carded Standard Bank customers, and non-Standard Bank customers, is to offer travellers the opportunities they need to either relax or attend to last-minute needs. Crowded airports and the rush of getting to departure points can be taxing. Our new lounge facilities at Africa's busiest airport are aimed at extending our end-to-end banking propositions to make our customers journeys easier and more pleasurable," concludes Ms Madonsela.