

MANAGEMENT » DAVID MUTURI

## Do not give room for self-doubt, fear during trying times

When you lead it is naive not to anticipate very tough times from time to time. Some will be career threatening, or business threatening. The magnitude may vary but the threat will be eminent. When you anticipate such times you will learn to deal with facts and not fiction.

In the midst of tough times it is very easy to start freaking out, based on the possibilities rather than what actually is. That is why it is important to get all the information about what is going on and to only deal with facts, regardless of what your assumption may have been.

Over time you come to realise that most of the things we worry about never actually happen. You therefore risk wasting time and energy worrying when you let your imagination get ahead of reality.

Tough times are a good opportunity to rethink your business. They provide an opportunity to make hard decisions about what is working and what is not. This is the perfect time to pause and really reflect on your business and make the changes that you know deep down you will have to make.



When riding a tough time you do well to learn from the experience. Without abdicating responsibility, you must remember it is of no use beating yourself up for things that go wrong.

Instead, it is far better to take a step back and learn from the experience. It is a lot more helpful to ask yourself what you would have done for the sake of the future. It is helpful to ponder what clues that you should have picked up on. This will help you to ensure that this never happens again.

When you are faced by challenges and difficulties, being

# Kenya can attract 5m visitors yearly: KTB boss

STRATEGY » SECTOR IS BANKING ON DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS FOR REVIVAL

**Tourism marketing agency's new chairman says with greatly improved security the industry can only look up**

BY MATHIAS RINGA

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**F**or the past two years, tourism has been performing poorly due to terrorist attacks and ensuing travel warnings by key source markets.

As a result, the government has embarked on a recovery campaign last year in a bid to breathe life into the industry which has the potential of attracting 5 million visitors annually, according to the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) chairman Jimi Karituki.

Kenya brought in 1,785,382 tourists during the peak season of 2011 earning the exchequer Sh97.9 billion. Last year, 1,180,546 international holidaymakers visited the country bringing revenue of Sh84.6 billion.

In March, President Uhuru Kenyatta appointed Mr Karituki as KTB chairman for a three-year term taking over from Mr Kitithi Mbathi, who is now the director-general of the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Currently, Mr Karituki, 49, is the marketing and sales director at Sarova Hotels.

In an interview with the *Smart Company* in Mombasa, the KTB boss said the country has the potential to attract five million international visitors yearly.

Mr Karituki said the country's abundant wildlife in national parks and game reserves including the Big Five are among Kenya's main selling point.

He said the country has world beaters in athletics, friendly people, world-class hotels, lodges and tented camps and unexploited new products such as the World War 1 battlefields in Taita Taveta County.

The chairman said his first assignment at the board is to spearhead tourism recovery campaigns to help the government achieve this year's target of 1.6 million international tourist arrivals.

"We have categorised our source markets to make it easier for our marketing team to link up with partners so that we can attract large numbers of tourists to the country this year," he said.

KTB has earmarked Sh500 million for tourism recovery marketing locally and internationally this financial period.

Marketing campaigns will be carried out in the United Kingdom, the US and Germany while presence will be maintained in Netherlands, Italy and Scandinavian countries.

Russia, Poland, China and Brazil have been categorised as development markets while Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and United Arab Emirates fall under investment markets segment.

Mr Karituki said the board would continue to woo locals to visit the country through the Tembea Kenya initiative as well as target tourists from Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

Marketing drives include Kenya's participation in leading global travel shows such as the World Travel Market, London, United Kingdom in November. Others include road shows in key European cities as well as advertisements.

Mr Karituki said KTB is capitalising on the peace that has returned to the country to win over the confidence of leading tour operators, travel agents and tourists across the world.

He said the agency is also taking advantage of the government incentives such as the Sh1.2 billion charter incentive programme, waiver of visa fee for children under 16 years and the reduction of entry park fees from Sh9,000 to Sh6,000 to bring in more visitors.

Other positives that KTB is banking on include the government's withdrawal of 16 per cent Value Added Tax on tourism services which is expected to bring down safari costs. Mr Karituki said the

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The number of tourists that Kenya targets to bring this year.

### TARGETS

#### Numbers

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board is taking advantage of the recent visits by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to attract more tourists from the two countries.

KTB is also doing joint marketing with flag carrier Kenya Airways to attract travellers from other African countries to come to the country for holidays.

"We want to leverage on our national carrier to woo travellers from the destinations KO operates flights to increase the number of tourists visiting the country," he said.

The marketing agency is also promoting the country in Eastern Europe, the target being the emerging markets of Poland and Czech Republic.

In addition, KTB is expected to partner up with TUI Poland in marketing the country in Poland this month to sustain charter flights from Warsaw to Mombasa.

The industry is expected to perform better than last year bolstered by a rise in international tourist bookings from overseas markets.

Currently, lodges and tented camps in the Maasai Mara National Reserve are enjoying roaring business in the wake of the wildebeest migration spectacle.

And at the Coast, hotel bookings have improved following the resumption of charter flights from Europe to Mombasa.

Before his appointment, Mr Karituki served as an executive member of Kenya Tourism Federation from 2003 to 2004 and a board member of Kenya International Convention Centre from 2004 to 2006.

He also comes from a family which has investments in the hotel industry with his father Mr John Ngata Karituki being among the founders of Sarova Hotels and the current chairman of the hotel group.

He holds a masters degree in business administration from the Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town, South Africa and a bachelor of science degree in marketing from Huon University, USA, London Campus.



**WE WANT TO LEVERAGE ON OUR NATIONAL CARRIER TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITING THE COUNTRY,"**  
KTB chairman Jimi Karituki

thrive, you may have to make significant changes to your leadership style. By focusing on the end goal, you can start to detach yourself from fixed ways of getting there, allowing yourself more freedom to explore different means to the same end. It helps to develop a thick skin for the critics who will be out to annoy and irritate; not that they have any solutions to put on the table, they only want to annoy you and to make you unhappy like they are.

Muturi is the CEO, Kenya Institute of Management.