

HEART OF AFRICA EXPEDITION

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Heart of Africa S.r.l. is an Italian Digital Start-up focused on promotion and development of tourism in Africa.

Our project intends to promote African beauties in the World, and increase the amount of visitors in the continent; provide to our partners, tools and marketing that will help them to maximise their profits and face the new shapes that the market is moving through; and be an active part of the transition to a new future of sustainable and more profitable tourism.

THE NEW WAY OF TRAVEL IN AFRICA

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1. INTRODUCTION AND MARKET ANALYSIS

Search engines and aggregators.

Originally, there was the birth of "horizontal" search engines such as Yahoo®, Iol®, Bing®, Google®.

These tools allow you to search for **keywords** all over the World Wide Web and have in response a list of all the sites and pages linked to those keywords. However, such search engines have some limitations, among which, most important of all, is the lack of **possibilities to contextualize the search**.

To make it clearer what it means, let's take a real case used in 2005 by **Jeff Bezos**, founder of **Amazon®**, to explain the difference between a horizontal and a vertical engine: *"If, then, we had searched for "Vioxx" on Google we would have obtained mostly results related to the legal theme; Vioxx is, in fact, a drug that in that year was withdrawn from the market because it is harmful to health."*

This was the birth of so-called "vertical" search engines, sites **that specialize** in specific research and content. These tools were born mainly for two reasons:

- **Economic nature**, due to the impossibility of affecting the horizontal engine market, as it is dominated by the web giants;

- Resolution of the problem of **research contextualization**. Always quoting the example made by Bezos, looking for "Vioxx" on PubMed, medical-scientific results would have been obtained, which would not have appeared on a horizontal engine.

Subsequently we were able to witness the emergence of **e-commerce aggregators**, services similar to vertical search engines, in which the offers of companies operating on the web in the same sector are collected, also allowing the comparison of the prices of the various platforms for same and similar products.

On the line of "e-commerce aggregators", we have seen in recent years the birth of **"Bid aggregators"**. With this term, we can group those online services that allow the user to search for all those companies that offer a certain product/service within a certain geographical area of reference. The main disadvantage of these tools is that companies are not automatically indexed on the platform, but must sign an agreement with the platform itself to appear in searches. The advantage, and perhaps the most important component, is that it is not necessary for those who offer the service to be present on the web with a proprietary site, as the platform stands as an intermediary between the user and the affiliate.

Booking.com® is one of the best and more known name we can use as example.

The impact that Bid Aggregators have on society.

For the users we can say it was like receiving a kiss from the girl you fell in love with, while celebrating your birthday on Christmas Day. In a short time, there was access to an online booking system that was unparalleled in the previous history. A website that supported price, offer and flexibility in bookings.

So, can we claim that the "Bid Aggregators" have revolutionized the way of travel? Undoubtedly.

- However, what impact do they have on the quality of the offer today?

If being the ultimate goal of an aggregator is to give answers to user researches; are somehow aggregators turning the tourism market into a "*bid race*"? If the request of the market is to have cheaper and cheaper offers, are they pushing more and more the advertiser partners to reduce their profits thus running behind the customers, and bending so, the tourism market of the nation, to diverge into mass tourism?

The passive growth of tourism undermines its future. The current market model depends on receiving more visitors each year to survive.

Mass tourism consists on the assembly, distribution and consumption of packaged products. Consequently, one product is substitutable for each other. What before was unique, by the application of industrial cost cutting strategies of homogenization, standardization and automation is further stripped out from any difference.

In most youthful destinations, low barriers of entry and zero regulation encourage rapid growth and speculation. Governments and operators benefit from this growth, but rarely stay long enough to have to cope with the crises caused by overcapacity and volatile demand. Residents of tourism hotspots, who may have welcomed the first influx of visitors, soon find that cheap travel does not reduce their costs. Visitors cause land, food, water, and housing and infrastructure prices to increase at a rate closely correlated with the decline in tourism operators' margins. Sadly, more tourism often means less benefit to the host communities.

Technological connectivity and price comparison engines have shifted purchasing power to consumers, who have been convinced, by repeated discounting, that cheap travel is now a right - not a privilege. This accelerates the downward pressure on prices and yields. Tourism products are a time-based service, and cannot be stocked. Therefore, when capacity goes up and demand declines, price discounting is the adaptive tactic chosen.

*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality.
To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."*

-- Buckminster Fuller -

2. HOAEXP.COM

Let's begin to talk about **Heart of Africa Expedition**.

Hoexp.com is a new on-line platform that wants to unify the services of African tour operators, with the needs of travellers who are passionate about an increasingly growing genre of tourism in the world.

Through the booking made on the portal, Heart of Africa Expedition offers the opportunity to book, not only the preferred structure for accommodation, but also recreational and sporting activities, car rental, etc...

The platform has been designed with the ambition of regrouping all the African realities involved in tourism, starting from the hotel structures (making a selection from those that respect standards of eco-friendly and local-friendly tourism) scattered throughout the territory from the beaches, to the savannah and the forests, up to the excursions' companies to the feet of Kilimanjaro.

The aim is to connect all the eco-sustainable realities of the continent with the largest number of travellers, safeguarding advertisers more, helping them to grow and providing avant-garde tools for the management and implementation of their activities, and protecting travellers by directly selecting the associated businesses.



3. BUSINESS MODEL

The introduction of different affiliate categories for advertisers makes the platform “equal” in the relationship between the intermediary and the affiliates, and, shifts the focus of the aggregator from the offer for the user, to the business growth of the Partner

The registration to the platform is free, and the Partner can choose between different kinds of membership:

Lion: Free membership. Zero activation costs, 7% sales commission, up to seven products/services that can be uploaded to the marketplace. Some limitations on the personal dashboard.

Crocodile: Pay per use membership. Zero % sales commission, up to 7 products/services that can be uploaded to the marketplace. Some limitations of the personal dashboard. The concept of pay per use is a new system that we are developing in Heart of Africa. The partner pays one \$ to access for 24 hours to his dashboard, where he can upload his offers that will be run by the system to users, and will only pay one\$ for any subsequent logins. With this membership, we want to reach all the small companies with very low budget, independent tour guides, etc. that with a small marketing budget can be competitive on the market and grow up using it.

Leopard: Affiliation memberships. Cost: 100\$ per year. This membership offers Zero % commission on the sales, 50 slots for upload products/services, and no limitations on the dashboard.

In Heart of Africa, We do not want to hit only on the on-line market.

In addition to the platform that will suit and regulate automatically the needs of the online market, a cloud-based management system will be on a side.

This will create a single large database of travel offers for Africa, which travel agencies around the world will be able to consult and use to sell innovative products to their clients, assemble tailor made packages, and purchase them safely and with the most competitive prices on the market, directly from local tour operators.

“We expect to be able to reach travelers who are not used to on-line booking, by providing our affiliated travel agencies with new products with a quality/price ratio currently absent in the on-the-road market “.

4. A.R & V.R.

The last but not least innovation of **Heart of Africa Expedition** will be to develop for our customers (affiliates and end-users) the opportunity to "preview" the desired experiences using **Augmented Reality** and **Virtual Reality Technology**.

The portal will offer the opportunity to live a preview of the activities, accommodations, safaris and all the other attractions, both from home, and from your trusted affiliated travel agent, whom will provide the customer with **VR glasses** to optimize the experience. This new system will bring the marketing for tourism to a next generational level, and will combine promotional, educational, conservational and recreational purposes.

This will lead to the introduction of a new sales system in the world of travels, which will surpass the old photographic previews and catalogues, and introduce the concept:

“WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO LIVE IS WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO BOOK”

5. ADVANTAGES

Benefits for the Partners.

Being a partner on our platform and using our Memberships plan will maximize our partners' profits in a very autonomous way, and will accompany them into the market, stronger. Their products will be promoted all over the world, and they will be connected to thousands of travellers. All our travel agents will have access to their B2B and B2C rates, and will sell them to customers.

Benefits for the Travelers.

With our business model, travellers will be able to find the best deals on the market for classic itineraries and new destinations, booking directly and securely from affiliated partners. All our partners are companies that have been selected following eco-friendly and sustainable tourism criteria. All the registered partners are reliable and pass through a strict selection.

Benefits for Africa.

With **Heart of Africa**, we want to send an important and innovative message.

We are certain that in the future **Hoaexp.com** will be the first platform in the world for travel in Africa, and the point of reference for all travellers that love this continent.

Once the project is up and running complete, our wish will be to donate the project to the African continent, giving a 1% share of the company to each individual country, so that we can consolidate the advantageous position of our business partners, who will be better protected by a majority of shareholders (54%) with a common purpose.

The revenues generated by the project can be reinvested by governments for the creation and development of infrastructures required for increase the quality of incoming, and the company's headquarters, relocated to Italy, will allow to access to European investment funds, which will be used to boost tourism on the continent.

6. COLLABORATION

Grow up together for a better Future.

We must slow down the descent to an irreversible crisis caused by mass tourism.

With the support of the African Governments, we aim to achieve widespread partner coverage, so that everyone can benefit from a more equal and profitable system, and start to impose a change to the trends of the market. Moreover, more profits for companies will be reverted into more taxes collected and the Big Data of the system will provide real time statistics about tourism and companies, giving a strong help in regulation and monitoring of the market.

*“We are the first marketplace for travel in Africa conceived and developed
To support the growth of Africa and Africans as a United Continent. “*

THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION

We hope to have the opportunity to discuss the project in detail.

