



## INTRODUCTION

For many people from other continents, an African safari is the ultimate travel experience. They arrive in the bush with high expectations of game sightings, rustic yet luxury accommodation, and memorable customer service. At the heart of turning such expectations into reality, is a rather prosaic necessity: systems and processes that ensure the smooth running of the tour operator's business.

"When the payroll doesn't run as it should and staff are paid late, the impact on their lives is direct," says Dine-Marie De Sousa, payroll manager of Wilderness Safaris. "The care with which you get paid, is a message about your value to the company. Our staff's customer service levels depend on their morale, which is directly related to how we manage and pay them and that, in turn, depends on our systems."

For the past six years, Dine-Marie and her colleagues have been relying on Sage 300 People to keep Wilderness Safari's staff – and customers – satisfied.

## THE COMPLEXITY CHALLENGE

The staff at all its camps are Wilderness Safari employees, meaning that some 2 500 people, most based in remote locations, depend on the company's systems for their professional wellbeing.

"The different countries in which we operate makes our business complex," says Dine-Marie. "Regular taxation changes in especially Zimbabwe complicates regulatory compliance, and exchange fluctuations are constantly in play as we have local-currency and USD-earners in all our regions. Payroll management would be near impossible without the right systems and platforms."

Wilderness Safaris' Sage 300 implementation started in August 2016 with the operations office in South Africa. The regions followed in phases and currently only Kenya and Mauritius are still to be integrated. The employee self-service (ESS), HR and Payroll modules have been implemented.

## CUSTOMER SUMMARY

Founded in 1983, Wilderness Safaris is a sustainable eco-tourism business that offers luxury tented camp safaris to travellers from mainly America and Europa, but increasingly also from Asia. With its head office in Mauritius and operations being run from South Africa, the company owns and operates tented camps in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Kenya. Its offering in the Seychelles operates via an affiliate.





While every region has its own HR person, Dine-Marie is most often relied upon to extract data and draw reports given that as the system superuser she has access to all company information.

The ease with which information can be exported into data manipulation and reporting platforms such as Excel is another valued feature, as is the ability to access information remotely. "I no longer have to wait for a colleague in another country to answer a question," says Dine-Mari, "I can find what I need by myself."

Real-time information is available at the click of a button or two and the system makes it easy to find historical data in the back-up systems. "We have a wealth of information at our disposal now, which is quick and easy to turn into business intelligence and, as a bonus, the financial reports look much better than in the past too."

## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

Wilderness Safaris' Sage 300 implementation was done by Sage Global itself, but in 2019 XFour came on board as the company's preferred Sage business partner. "When Sage Global moved to its indirect business model, we started working with an implementation partner, but they soon admitted that they couldn't cope with the complexity of our business and referred us to XFour," says Dine-Marie. It was a partnership that yielded immediate results, and continues to do so.

Fast, efficient and thorough support is what Wilderness Safaris wants most in a business partner, and XFour never disappoints. Whether it is a PAYE report that refuses to run or a gremlin that suddenly gives one region sight of another's confidential information, the XFour team does not rest until a solution has been found. "I rely completely on the XFour team; literally can't get by without them," says Dine-Marie. "All it takes is an email and they're on it, troubleshooting and testing until we have an answer. I consider XFour my business partner in every sense of the word."

In addition to support, XFour also assists with any setups, configuration and training that Wilderness Safaris may need.



"Sage 300 is an amazing program that works so well," enthuses Dine-Marie. "It is exceptionally user friendly, which suits me down to the ground as I like to play around and find all the ways in which the system can make my life easier."

**Dine-Marie De Sousa**

Payroll Manager



XFour's service philosophy is built on the understanding that on the other side of a support request is a human being whose ability to do their job directly impacts other human beings.

"We don't tick boxes when we clear support requests; we respond to people we care about."

