Tourvest prepares for global expansion with Michael Raasch as Chief Growth Officer



Tourvest's facility in South Africa

Tourvest Retail & Catering recently announced the appointment of Michael Raasch as Chief Growth Officer. Raasch joins Tourvest with more than two decades of international leadership experience across aviation, travel, digital commerce and technology-enabled solutions. In the new role, he will be responsible for driving growth across Tourvest's diversified portfolio, spanning airline food & beverage solutions, duty free and airport retail, logistics, warehousing and expanding catering operations. With Raasch at the helm, the Johannesburg, South Africa-based company is positioned to expand in the aviation market.

Building on its established market position, Raasch says the company is poised for significant growth, supported by Tourvest's comprehensive capabilities–from end-to-end retail and technology expertise.

This enables Tourvest to offer different models, from in-sourcing to hybrid or outsourced technology solutions. One of the biggest assets, Raasch says, is that retail technology and data analytics are developed in-house solutions.

"Tourvest brings experience serving both low-cost carriers, such as Fly Safair, in South Africa, as well as the buy-on-board programs for major carriers such as British Airways," he explains. "We also

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deliver the premium programs for Virgin Atlantic on long-haul journeys. These are strong foundations to build upon."



Michael Raasch, Chief Growth Officer, Tourvest Retail & Catering

On top of that, he adds that Tourvest recently also got a warehouse location in Feltham U.K., Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, that will further support its expansion in the supply chain and logistics market.

"We have gone into operating and managing the warehouse using technology to optimize all the forecasting and stock management in the supply chain," explains Raasch. "There is now a huge potential to grow the company in the airline retail space."

He calls this a "game-changing" phase in the passenger journey.

"With the connected cabin, there is a huge opportunity and possibility to expand retail into different new areas, not only retailing on F&B and duty free products, but to actually have a marketplace and start retailing a lot of other different products and services through passengers," Raasch says.

He notes that Tourvest, as a tour operater, has done trials on some of its partner airlines with its own travel related destination portfolio, which has proven a significant uptake.

For Raasch, this move aligns with evolving passenger expectations.

"Travelers are used to shopping on marketplaces with inspiration from brands on different channels and now they can have that onboard in a connected cabin as well."

Expanding ancillary revenue

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High Life Shop Group offers buy-on-board products for British Airways

With airlines increasingly focused on ancillary revenue, Raasch sees the biggest opportunity for growth within onboard retail space as destination marketing, noting that many airlines are introducing holiday propositions and travel packages.

“I also see a huge opportunity in connecting the silos,” he explains. “At the moment, some airlines are unfortunately still very fragmented in their decision making. It is very important to consolidate the offerings and ensure you are reaching the passengers at the right time in their journey.”

Currently, Raasch also reports seeing significant growth potential for sales in the back end on airlines’ websites and e-commerce sites versus what the passenger can see when flying in the future.

“You can see diverse shopping behaviors based on personas, destinations and segmentation reflected in the data,” he tells *PAX*. “It is important to use that retail data and we translate it, so the airline can make changes on the offering and the customer journey on how to improve that digital and physical retail touchpoints.”

He emphasizes that these touchpoints are not just in the cabin but begin in the booking flow and extend into the airport lounge, onboard and after the journey concludes.

Raasch highlights Tourvest customer, Fly Safair, as an example of an innovative onboard retail program that stands out from competitors.

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“They do an excellent job of communicating promotions to passengers. Fly Safair sends WhatsApp messages before the flight so you know where you can order and what is offered during the journey. They are the biggest low-cost carrier in South Africa and we are running the tech and the full onboard program for them,” Raasch explains. “It is achieving a very high spend per passenger. So obviously they—and us—are doing something very right there.”

Supporting sustainability goals

With sustainability remaining a top priority across the aviation industry, Tourvest is aligning its catering and retail offerings with airline sustainability goals—without compromising on passenger experience.

“As a company, we have a moral obligation to reduce waste,” Raasch says. “Food waste is definitely one of the biggest things we are focusing on because we are also entering the catering market, opening up our own catering facilities in South Africa.”

He notes that preselect and preorder are the most impactful ways to support that waste reduction.

“Engaging passengers to make these selections more frequently before a flight is one of the areas where airlines should focus—we see that there is room for improvement there,” Raasch says.

Tourvest takes on WTCE 2026

At the World Travel Catering and Onboard Service Expo (WTCE), Tourvest will exhibit at booth 1F101, showcasing the company’s different service pillars, from technology to catering to retail to warehouse and operations.

“We applied a lot of thought and technology into the supply chain in the warehouse. We are opening up catering stations in South Africa. From a retail point of view and from a tech point of view are showing end-to-end data. Tourvest can provide a retail experience at every technical touchpoint along the passenger journey. These are the main areas we will showcase [at WTCE],” Raasch summarizes.

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