



# Manage Moola with your Mobile



The truth is that we live in a world where you need to keep a very watchful eye on your money and the slightest drop in concentration will lead to financial loss, as many South Africans are experiencing with growing incidents of armed robberies and credit card fraud.

Every day the media is filled with reports of credit card fraud and how people are being robbed of thousands of rands because their credit card details were stolen or their cards were skimmed.

The hospitality industry, it could be argued, is among the hardest hit industries when it comes to crime and not enough has been done to find ways of combating credit card fraud. On the other end of the scale, cash heists and armed robberies are unfortunately the flavour of the week in South Africa. If you thought it was tough being a security guard in a bank or armoured vehicle, try being a restaurant owner or waiter at cash-up time.

The truth is that hospitality managers need to have the security of their staff and their patrons as a number one priority when it comes to money, by eliminating the potential for credit card fraud and minimising the amount

*We're all too familiar with the phrase "cash, cheque or credit card?" But the truth is that all three of these payment methods are becoming increasingly unsafe or expensive to use and South Africa, especially, needs an alternative way to transact.*



of cash passing through the establishment. Technology is, however, on our side as financial institutions find new and innovative ways to protect the hospitality industry and its patrons from crime and to make paying for hospitality services as convenient as possible.

Although many would say that cellphone banking and cellphone payments are too infantile to be a viable way to make and accept payment for services rendered, the potential exists to open up a world of safety and convenience using mobile technology to make and receive payments. Already a number of restaurants in and around Johannesburg (including Bellini's in Illovo and Wandi's in Soweto) accept cellphone payments to pay for food purchases, negating the need to hand over cash or even swipe a card of any sort.

The benefits extend to hospitality employees as well. Imagine being able to pay your waiting staff and kitchen staff by cellphone fund transfer, eliminating the risk of them being targeted by robbers on payday or when leaving a bar or restaurant late at night after a shift.

Research suggests that SMEs – many of which are restaurants and bars - make up as much as 60% of South Africa's business

the economy and as alarming as it may seem, 80% of SME restaurants' employees and suppliers are still paid by either cash or cheque. While many hospitality industry suppliers have already reverted to accepting Internet payments for stock, there is an increased need for businesses in the hospitality industry to get a handle on bank fees – especially those exorbitant fees charged by the banks for processing cheques, as well as debit orders and debit card payments from customers.

To this extent, electronic fund transfers (EFTs) are the most cost-effective method of paying a person or business, but not all restaurants and bars have an Internet connection. WIZZIT Bank, a Division of The South African Bank of Athens Limited, is one such institution that has pioneered the use of cellphones in banking the unbanked of South Africa, to the point where the bank has managed to make major inroads into industries such as construction, farming, security and education. Next on its list of market verticals is hospitality.

The main aim of WIZZIT is to eliminate cash and cheques from the equation altogether, by using simple and cost-effective bank accounts allowing employers to pay their employees or suppliers in total security using either cellphones or the Internet as a payment channel.



By opening cost effective and easy-to-use bank accounts for their workers, hospitality businesses are able to pay their staff electronically rather than in cash. Apart from the security and convenience benefits to the employers, employees also feel safer not carrying large amounts of cash and have the added benefit of having somewhere to keep their money safe. In addition, WIZZIT has pioneered the use of cellphones as a method of banking, essentially turning the mobile phone into a one-stop-shop for banking services.

Cellphones are prolific in South Africa and the adoption of mobile telephony is growing exponentially every year, even amongst the lower income earners of the country. Cellphone literacy is relatively high in lower income groups as well. So using the cellphone as the primary method of banking makes logical sense.

To this extent, restaurants and bars are able to eliminate the need to accept cash or credit cards altogether by accepting cellphone payments for bills, which has the knock-on effect of deterring credit card fraud. The business benefits from having instant, easy access to its money via a cellphone or WIZZIT's iWIZZ Internet banking platform or a Maestro debit card. Employees can also have their salaries or tips paid to them via a WIZZIT-to-WIZZIT or WIZZIT-to-non-WIZZIT transfer, eliminating the risk of potentially being robbed of cash as they leave the establishment late at night.

The truth is that the hospitality industry needs to take innovation to the next level. Being innovative in the kitchen will definitely win you customers, but being innovative in the back office or at the front desk is the only way to keep them feeling safe and coming back. 

