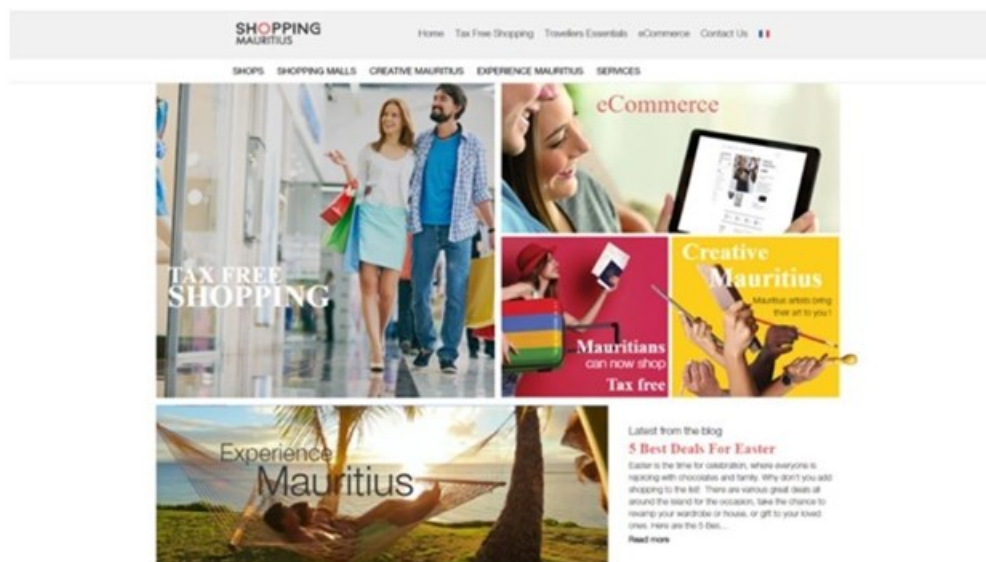


Mauritius: E-commerce service launched to promote local operators

The e-commerce service of the tax-free shopping digital portal Shopping Mauritius, an online platform to showcase products of tax-free shopping operators and handicrafts operators of the Creative Mauritius on a 24/7-hour basis, was launched on Friday, 11 May 2018 at the seat of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (MCCI) in Port Louis.



The Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, Soomilduth Bholah, the chairman of SME Mauritius Ltd, Peter Neubert, and other personalities were present at the event.

In his address, Bholah stated that this platform marks a milestone for the local handicraft sector, adding that the initiative – which is a joint collaboration between the private and public sector – will promote the local handicraft sector. The e-commerce service, he highlighted, will provide an unparalleled visibility to local talent and know-how, with an access to the tourist market which will represent a significant advantage for craftsmen. He commended the dedication, vision and resilience demonstrated by MIPSIT Digital Ltd, the e-commerce partner which will provide the e-payment system on the tax-free digital portal, and Mauritius Post Ltd, the logistics partner which will provide courier service to shop operators.

Bholah emphasised that the e-commerce service on the tax-free shopping platform will support the shops and the handicrafts operators to deliver seamless shopping experiences locally as well as internationally. Operators, he underlined, will have the opportunity to sell a large selection of products at competitive prices to an unlimited market at any time. He said that the new service is a source of national pride as Mauritius is now positioning its rich handicraft culture on the global market via the tax-free shopping portal.

He pointed out that currently 126 artisans from Mauritius and Rodrigues have been selected by the SMEs to join the platform and provisions are being made for more operators. The craft operators will have a webpage of their own with a description of their products, a photo gallery and their contact details.

Meanwhile, Neubert highlighted that the objective of the e-commerce service on the digital portal is to support the genuine creative industry of Mauritius and Rodrigues, and help unveil craftsmen's talents to tourists. He recalled that the MCCI launched the tax-free digital portal www.taxfreeshopping.mu in 2014 with the aim of facilitating tourist shopping with a network of operators engaged in VAT refund and downtown duty-free activities. He expressed optimism that the e-commerce service on the digital portal will boost sales of all operators on the platform, increase tourist spending as well as contribute to economic growth.

The e-commerce service on the taxfreeshopping.mu digital portal provides a wide range of opportunities for tax-free shopping and Creative Mauritius operators to sell their products online. It will also allow tourists, the Mauritians diaspora as well as local citizens to buy products online and get their goods delivered anywhere around the island or at the airport. Passengers in transit at the airport will also be able to buy online and get delivery from the MCCI tax refund counter at the airport.

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