Beks Ndlovu opened his first camp in 2006, when Zimbabwe was writhing in economic turmoil, and has now established 15 luxury camps in eight parks in three countries. And whenever he can take time away from work, he goes on safari.

His success, in part, is due to his ability to think laterally and make strategic decisions. But a large part of it comes down to Beks’s people skills and creativity.

That was how it all started out, really. When Beks was a teenager some of his older friends went to work in safari lodges and, suffering from serious FOMO, Beks volunteered at camps in Hwange during his school holidays. “You know the term ‘gofer’? Well,” he laughs, “that was me.” Beks was the guy who fetched the firewood. The one who pumped the water and kept the donkey boiler going. He was the one who carried water to guest tents for their bucket showers; then he started to do the wake-up calls by delivering tea and coffee. After a while, Beks was the one polishing the Land Cruiser and packing the drinks box. “And if I was lucky,” he recalls, “I’d end up on a game drive, sitting beside the guide and learning from him as we went.”

By the time he completed high school, job offers were rolling in. Beks went from wearing khakis and veldskoens at boarding school to wearing khakis and veldskoens in the bush. “I’d gained insight into the life of a safari camp and realised that it was possible for me to have a career in the safari industry.”

Experience Matters

All that gofer-ing turned out to be seriously good schooling for what was to come, and Beks worked his way up from trainee to qualified guide to camp manager to manager of three safari operations. He had gathered an intimate understanding of how every aspect of safari camps ran, from choosing the site for a camp to building and maintaining one, to interacting with guests, marketing at trade shows, and eventually managing teams and working with systems.

Seven years after leaving school, having worked at some of Southern Africa’s most prestigious camps and making a name for himself as a respected guide, Beks set up his own private guiding business. “I recognised that Africa was a big continent – and didn’t want to be stuck in one geographical area,” he explains. “I also wanted to get involved in going out and attracting the clientele and crafting my own journeys.”

Find the Gap

While leading private guided safaris, Beks was exposed to a wide range of camps across the continent and he noticed that most safari camps didn’t offer guides the sort of freedom and experiences he wanted his guests to enjoy. “After five or six years I thought, what I’d really love to do is set up my own camp – an iconic camp that would attract other safari guides who are equally as passionate – and they would be my first support base.”

So, in 2006 Beks secured a concession in Hwange National Park and built Somalisa, a camp with views across the savannah. “I did it with very little money,” he says. “We cleared out our home in Bulawayo and basically set it up again in the bush.”

Although rudimentary compared to what it is now, the camp still had its own charm. Beks has always had an eye for design and loves to collect antiques – it’s his personal style that has helped to shape the signature bush-luxe ambience that his camps are now known for.

Not only was Somalisa a magnificent space to be in; through his own experiences Beks knew exactly how to make his camp the top choice for independent guides travelling with clients. “I was able to give my former peers the
另一个两座营地。投资顾问帮助他们扩大了ABC的投资组合，通过建立与合作伙伴和额外资本的联系，Beks创立了非洲荒野营（ABC）。在那时，Beks决心投资他的业务，那时他的业务已经“以一种严肃而强大的方式”被人们所熟知。他说：“我开始了真正的拼图游戏。”他说，“我就是将这些拼图放在一起。”

### Don’t Go On Gut Alone

在2010年，他在寻求扩大业务的时候也遇到了同样的问题。Beks邀请了两位知名导师加入。

Beks回忆道，“他不仅在投资者中建立了一定的声誉，而且在非洲南部地区建立的每一个营地都是一个真正的豪华目的地。”

### Think Laterally

Beks在2013年邀请了一位新的投资者，他决定重组他在津巴布韦和博茨瓦纳的七个豪华营。ABC是被邀请到了下个水平。其中的两个营地被扩建，其余的营地被重新装修，每个营地都以豪华的方式重新开业。Beks说：“我们想创建一个一体化的旅行，人们可以在不同的地方体验不同的非洲南部。”

### Take Others With You

在2006年，Beks邀请了两个知名的向导加入，Somalisa和African Bush Camps是希望在8月开放一个新的营地。Beks已经投身于这个业务，他希望与投资者建立联系，并且已经不可替代地帮助ABC成功。他说：“我从未停止过询问和寻找，为的是在不同的情况下获取不同的观点。”

Beks说：“我有一个关于飞机的课程，因为我太忙了，我无法保证投资，ABC也建立了航空公司的基础。那时，我们真的谈到了要让每个人都知道我们正在做些什么。”

### Think Strategy

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### Recognise The Challenges Early

### Have A Unique Selling Point

### Appreciate Your People

### Be Flexible

### UPGRADES

Beks的商业建议

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