

## 'Personalisation is emerging as the epicentre of millennial travel audience'

Personalization for the travel industry is undergoing a major evolution. Now the experiences a traveller looks for must be deeply customised, tailored according to their requirements which in turn helps create loyal lifelong customer base for a business. In an insightful article, **Anil Parashar - President and CEO - Interglobe Technology Quotient** shares his view on how crucial is personalisation for sustenance of any travel business

**S**taunch support of personalization by travel service providers and embedding personalization with latest tech is the imperative need of the hour. Personalization presents an ideal view of future of travel industry and aligns it right next to the modern industries backed by innovative technology; say for instance cab-booking service industry. While Uber and other similar companies are personalizing short and long-haul travel by road, OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) like MakeMyTrip are personalizing travel by flight. But with personalization becoming a decade old game now, what is the one thing

that is making the ball drift further sideways and land in tech space. Let's have a bird's eye view at this.

In technology dominated industries of this century, data is the all-prevailing god, second to artificial intelligence which thrives on data. The question therefore is, can travel industry join the race, evolve with it and make the most of this surging trend? Can it use data analysis, align it with business intelligence and offer a personalized solution to its millennial travellers? The answer is a resounding yes.

To exemplify the current scenario, consider this statistic- Travelpart processes between ten and twelve

billion searches a day from travellers researching or booking trips. Taking this mount of a data, feeding it to machine learning systems and aligning the reports with a GDS (Global Distribution System) platform can lead to a phenomenal AI backed personalized interface. Through this interface, travellers can receive real time travel suggestions or predictive choices based on their intrinsic need and/or wish; further supported by subsequent hotel and car booking options at unbeatable prices. This will in time prove an excellent opportunity for travel agents to increase their revenue streams and make a strong base of loyal

customers.

Just like Rome wasn't built in a day, a personalized AI platform for travel industry carries its own deterrence and challenges to delay the cause. Take for instance the intrinsic human characteristic of resistance to change, especially when the change is expected or thought to be expected to make certain methodologies redundant. Top this with the mind-set of handing the baton directly to travellers and eliminating middleman, which in all manners is an unlikely scenario, at least for the next few decades. Speaking of the latter, personal human touch will never go obsolete, especially in travel industry where different cultures, languages and habits among others carry high significance.

In the interim, a little tinkering with the current systems can uplift personalization and in turn can make travel booking a worthwhile experience for travellers. In all likelihood, personalization offers sanguine prospects to millennial, and most especially to travel agents, including small and medium, when considering a recent squeeze in air commission rates. With personalization in picture, travel agents can enjoy greater revenue by ensuring quantity without compromising on quality.

That brings us to the inevitable. To evolve with the industry and make technology a benefactor of success in travel, agents need to wean off the traditional methods and bring personalization to forefront; more so, if they wish to cater to the millennial audience. In a nutshell, key strategy to adopt when catering to millennial audience is to request embedding GDS with an online platform - like what InterGlobe Technology Quotient does with its customizable product, Adhvan - and enable travellers to make direct bookings; and perhaps, with time, back it with big and small data and AI to improve results.



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