

RENDERING SIMPLIFIED TRAVEL SOLUTIONS

Travel Heights in conversation with Sandeep Dwivedi, COO, ITQ got an insight into the company's major markets, awareness campaigns, services offered and much more

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◀ SANDEEP DWIVEDI
COO, ITQ

Travelport recently became the sole GDS provider for Air India's Domestic and International flight content. This was a great milestone for ITQ. How will ITQ-Travelport's seamless services help Air India achieve better?

SD It is indeed a remarkable feat, and we have been deeply involved in making the transition and the execution- easy, convenient and profitable for both, the airline and agencies. For Air India, this move has already started reaping rewards in cost and ease of operation, leading to a growth of 22% and reduction in cost by Rs300cr. To help Air India distribute its content seamlessly and achieve its projected saving of Rs 3,200 crore (\$451 million) in five years, we are focusing on flexibility, advanced technology, cost-efficient & customized innovative solutions, elevated merchandizing ability, extensive distribution, richer content and branding to ultimately create value for all parties.

Travel Unified Campaign was launched in March 2019 by Travelport to promote the usage of DPNA SSR code for passengers with intellectual disabilities on its Global Distribution System (GDS). It is going to be almost a year now, since the launch of this campaign, how has been the response?

SD We have witnessed a phenomenal surge in assistance requests for airline passengers with intellectual disabilities following Travelport's awareness campaign. To talk in numbers, Asia saw a spike of 762% (until the end of 2019) when compared to the same period in 2018; with India and Hong Kong recording the highest spike of 458% and 243%, respectively. Further recorded was a historical feat with seven countries in the continent, namely Israel, Kuwait, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan and the UAE using the code for the first time through Travelport. Naturally, this did not happen overnight. ITQ and Travelport have been rigorously engaged in creating awareness through multiple campaigns, including educational 'sign-on-alerts' and graphical 'prompts' which were shared over 10 million times with hundreds of thousands of travel agents across the world

through Travelport Smartpoint.

Travelport is the global company but in terms of market share and consumer base, what are the top countries on the list? What are the regions or sectors of the industry that the company is planning to tap into?

SD If we look at the global aviation industry today, Indian aviation is one of the fastest growing markets and is expected to become the third largest civil aviation market in the world by 2024. In that light, India undoubtedly remains at a prime spot on Travelport's list. Currently, Travelport with ITQ is operating extensively in 6 Asia-Pacific countries including India, namely Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Mauritius, Maldives and Nepal, and is planning to further expand its presence in these budding economies. Talking about our cumulative plans of expansion in terms of market and portfolio, there are quite a few things in the pipeline that include expanding on - and in markets capable of accommodating - advanced technology. Plans are also in place to continue simplifying travel technology and solutions for OTAs (Online Travel Agencies), TMCs (Travel Management Companies) and travel consultants. With technology as the predominant theme, we are steering towards making GDS more advanced, accessible, comprehensive and far-reaching.

What are the services offered by ITQ that are unique to Travelport when compared to other Global Distribution Systems (GDS) across the world?

SD As a global brand, Travelport has always respected its position as a leading distributor of airline and other content; and been a front runner when it comes to offering advanced technology, latest insights and reports and creating value for all parties included. When offering services, especially in India, Travelport with ITQ goes deeper into the market to assess intrinsic needs and come up with such services and products as is needed by the market at that point in time. And so, with consecutive advancement of its trademark technology, Travelport Smartpoint, it offers exclusive services such as

integrated payment solution - API suite, live updates, and competitive management and analysis, among others.

How can travel agent improve their performance and achieve more through Travelport Smartpoint, offered by ITQ in India?

SD There are ample opportunities for travel agents, irrespective of the size or location, to seize on Travelport Smartpoint. For starters, there is a wide pool of branded fares and ancillaries from over 270 airlines, and real-time content from over 400 of the world's leading network airlines and LCCs (Low Cost Carriers), including exclusive content of IndiGo and Air India. Agents can do a lot on Travelport Smartpoint to both manage their agency business, and stay competitive and grow. For former, they have management overview in Travelport Smartpoint, and an array of ITQ's customized integrated solutions such as ITQ Financial to manage their finances, and Adhvan to offer services online to end-consumer, corporates and sub-agencies and manage their vast agency network, among others. For latter, agencies have extended abilities to leverage such as competitor insights, global industry breakdown, and powerful analysis to list a few. ■

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