

Well established GDS players will continue to play a major role in the sector: Sandeep Dwivedi

Sulagna Ghosh

With the introduction of new airlines and capacity induction, travel industry is in top gear. Due to convenience and promotional offers available, more and more people are opting to travel by air. The airline industry has grown multifariously in the last few years and Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) have become the harbinger of this change.

According to Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Commercial Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), GDS continues to remain the only platform that offers multiple options to travel consultants to enable their decision with branded fares and integrated content. Be it the OTAs or the travel agencies, it is the single point of reference and information.

He said that technological advancement and innovation that eases user's functionality, reduces booking time, improves efficiency and provides an interactive platform are key areas that will drive the GDS market in future. "Also in today's time, the airlines and travel agencies need to look at alternative revenue streams which create the demand for ancillary services," he said.

Mentioning details about the new developments of ITQ, Dwivedi said, "We are really excited about the developments lined up for future. Making Travelport Smartpoint as an integrator/convertor of all other major program languages is a step towards making it more user-friendly. The easier it is for the travel agents to operate on our integrated platform, the better it is for their businesses and the travel industry in general. Not just ease, 'bookability' quotient is another major parameter measuring our success in the industry. Our technological advancement and innovation is working on these factors to ensure enhanced benefits for our customers."

Dwivedi gave an example of their product Universal API that offers aggregated content from



Sandeep Dwivedi

multiple sources and makes it available through a single source. Also accessible through it is the business logic that includes search, pricing and profiling functionality which resides in the platform in a shared environment and complementing this are a range of powerful pull and push data feeds that capture and deliver all the travel information for richer business intelligence.

ITQ in the recent past has initiated a joint training for soft skills in partnership with Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI). Sharing more details, Dwivedi said, "Through our association with TAAI, we have been able to reach out to the agents and offer them soft skill training on various skill sets. This is a very unique and significant initiative which has allowed us to contribute something back to the industry." He also expressed interest in developing association with other prominent federations in the industry and using their network to reach out to travel partner in this initiative.

Commenting on the marketing strategies un-

dertaken by ITQ, Dwivedi said, "Our focus has always been on providing new technology to make our partners successful and efficient. Technology continues to be the backbone of all that we do and we would continue to do, in order to redefine the future. Adaptability has always been our core mantra and we have invested a lot to ensure that our products and services are truly world class."

Dwivedi mentioned that they are engaging with their customers more aggressively and using their digital platforms to stay connected at all times. "We are also creating solutions and technologies for travel agencies and online players and we would like to continue being a consultant to travel partners to bring in efficiencies and business opportunities for them," he added.

With time GDS has successfully created a sort of electronic supermarket that connected buyers and sellers by offering a plethora of options and saved cost and time of travelers as well as companies. The growth and the expanding reach of the GDS gradually made way for the internet travel distribution system.

Sharing his views on the future of GDS companies, Dwivedi said, "Today this industry is evolving by the minute. It is no more responsible to only book tickets on the system, but it is multifaceted. GDS today plays a major role in both leisure and corporate travel distribution. It continues to innovate and adapt to meet the evolving needs of travel suppliers, distributors, and ultimately travelers themselves, it will continue to shape travel distribution for years to come."

He further said that the major trends we have been witnessing over the past couple of years will continue to evolve. "Market forces will continue to drive us towards the implementation of new interfaces designed to deliver greater efficiencies, broader inventory and also to support new revenue models for vendors, travel agents and the GDS itself. Well established players will continue to play a major role in the sector," he concluded.

ITDC Chairman gives Rs. 18.88 crore dividend cheques to Union Tourism Minister

Wonderlust Bureau

Umang Narula, Chairman & Managing Director, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) on behalf of ITDC and Kumarakruppa Frontier Hotels Pvt. Ltd. handed over two cheques amounting to Rs. 18.88 crore to Union Tourism Minister Dr. Mahesh Sharma, towards dividend payment to the Government of India for the year 2014-15. Present on the occasion were Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; P K Aggarwal, V.P. (Finance), ITDC along with other senior officials.

It may be noted that ITDC, a PSU under the administrative control of the Ministry of Tourism has declared a dividend of 20% amounting to Rs. 17.15 crore for 2014-15, the highest ever in terms of amount and the highest since 2007-08 in terms of percentage and Kumarakruppa Frontier Hotels Pvt. Ltd., another PSU under the Ministry of Tourism has declared a dividend of 450% amounting to Rs. 4.39 crore for 2014-15. For the financial year 2014-15, ITDC



Team ITDC along with Umang Narula and Dr. Mahesh Sharma at the dividend presenting ceremony

posted a robust performance registering the net profit of Rs. 38.95 crore on a turnover of Rs. 504.19 crore, the highest since 2007-08.