



Sandeep Dwivedi
Chief Commercial Officer, ITQ

“There is enough scope for offline players too to exist in the travel space. However, there is need to embrace technology for them to bring in efficiencies.”

 **By PREM KUMAR**

Indian consumers have become primed to embrace higher value online purchases with packaged travel representing a significant opportunity to the industry in the region. India has an urban adult population of 240 million, of which 27%, or 65 million, take holidays. The country has 205 million Internet subscribers and 110 million smartphone users.

“During this research some of the key elements that came out very strongly were the fact that holiday travellers are young, highly educated and family oriented,” said Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Commercial Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient, distributor of Travelport in India and Sri Lanka.

It was also observed that the mix booking methods prevail with 52 % respondents inclined towards both offline as well as online booking. Demand for bundled product came out very strong with 2 out of 3 holiday travellers purchasing a package. “Content, inclusions, pricing and convenience play a big role in driving package sales. What is remarkable is that those travellers who booked packages – 63% of them booked

2/3 of Indian travellers book packages while buying biggest holiday of the year

The Indian travel market has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years with up to two thirds of travellers in India preferring to book packages when buying their biggest holiday of the year, according to a new Travelport’s research.

online,” said Dwivedi.

As per the new research, up to two thirds of travellers in India prefers to book packages when buying their biggest holiday of the year. Commenting on this trend, Dwivedi said, “The most important driver for pre-packaged holiday purchase is price. 43% of holiday travellers purchased a pre-packaged trip because they felt it was cheaper than buying the travel components individually. The inclusion of sightseeing activities and recommendations from friends/family were a motivating factor for four in 10 holiday travellers, respectively.” Other factors include the inclusion of meal requirements such as vegetarian options and avoiding the hassle of booking travel individually. It is interesting to note that while two out of three travellers selected pre-packaged holidays there was a section of 21% respondents who customised a travel package.

The research states that online travel bookings are expected to grow rapidly in 2016. Dwivedi said that among travellers who purchased travel components individually rather than as part of a package, OTA websites were the most popular booking channel, with roughly one third of travellers using an OTA to book air and hotel, respectively with OTA mobile apps being the second most popular choice. However travellers were more likely to rely on them for air (18%) as against hotel (11%) bookings.

“When booking directly with a travel supplier, air bookers were nearly equally likely to book over the phone versus using the-supplier website, with 12% choosing each method. Hotel bookers were slightly more likely to book by calling (9%) versus using

the supplier website (6%), but an even larger share opted to simply walk in to make their hotel booking (11%),” Dwivedi noted.

Online channels are also playing a sizeable role in influencing packaged travel purchases. Two thirds (63%) of travellers who purchased a pre-packaged vacation indicated that they booked the package online. However, actual payment methods for this group of online package bookers indicate that just 38% of this group actually used an online payment method, said Dwivedi. adding that all the above coupled with the fact that the smartphone penetration amongst this set of audience gives credence to the fact that it will only aid to driving this trend more aggressively.

Explaining the role of Travelport in future in fueling growth in the online travel marketplace in India, Dwivedi said that travelport is committed to develop and contribute towards the growth of the travel industry. Travelport’s vision is to be the platform that is redefining travel commerce for its customers. “Travelport’s focus is to deliver the best possible rich travel content through its Travel Commerce Platform which enables agents to search and book travel in real-time, through innovative point-of-sale technology which is both desk and mobile oriented,” said Dwivedi .

Last year Travelport rolled out its ground breaking Travelport Universal API which was launched to bring in efficiency and speed for developer and online community. We are delighted to inform that the product has been really appreciated by the online players and we can see more traction in the coming months.