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INTERGLOBE: REINVENTING TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE

Travel Heights continuing its focus on the impact of technology in travel trade business talks to Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technologies. He outlines his views on how InterGlobe is helping business with technology to achieve new heights through its specialized business unit - InterGlobe Technology Quotient. Here are the excerpts from his interview

Rajeev Suman | New Delhi

Tell us about your portfolio of services for the travel trade and hospitality industry?

IGT InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), a strategic business unit of InterGlobe Enterprises is a leader in aviation, hospitality and travel related services, contributing to the growth of market through innovation and service leadership by building businesses and represent global brands that deliver quality and value.

ITQ is an official distributor of Travelport in 6 markets across Asia Pacific region including India and Sri Lanka. Our company provides cutting edge travel technology solutions with unmatched inventory options to its customers helping them increase their productivity and business efficiency. With an extended network, over 500 cities having 20 dedicated offices and 14 REPs InterGlobe Technology Quotient reaches out to over 36,000 agency terminals, has a nationalized service center and 16

training centers with state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities matching international standards.

What is driving technology adoption in travel and hospitality sector, which is fiercely cost competitive?

IGT Travel and hospitality sector is right now thriving on automation and cost effectiveness. The most important quotient for effective utilization of a technological product is time management- the lesser time any software takes to deliver best solutions the better chances it must be accepted. Therefore, to deliver best results in minimum time frame you require ample investment in terms of research and insight. Focusing heavily on this, ITQ offers intelligent systems that not only minimize time frame but deliver end to end personalized solution fitted to the consumer requirement- both in aviation and hospitality.

With integrated platforms like 'Travelport Smartpoint' in place, we offer travel providers tools to meet and exceed the expectations of their clients. It is a ground-breaking technology product that enables airlines to display and market their best possible fares, ancillaries (optional services such as seats with extra legroom, lounge access, meal preference etc.) and brand proposition to travel agents. In hospitality, as the fourth largest hotel aggregator in the world, we offer over 675,000 unique hotel properties with over 1.5 million offers and 35,000 car rental locations across the globe.

How is your relation with e-commerce players in the travel and hospitality sector?

IGT In the last decade, the scope of online player in the travel market has become increasingly promising- growing with 25% to 30% CAGR against aviation growth in the range of 17%. Their easy reach to consumer and heightened internet accessibility has redefined the landscape of travel domain. However, these major players

are preferred not only for their reach but also for offering a combination of travel services in one go.

We work with all major OTAs like Ibibo, Yatra and our recent association with MakeMyTrip, highlights the value addition we bring to these major OTAs- unbundled ancillaries, scope for customization, preferred seat selection etc. Our enhanced tools support online players with high-class technological solutions that help them become one stop shop for travel requirements that span over a huge demography. After all, modern times demand integration and personalized solutions.

How are you positioned to target these opportunities?

IGT As a distributor of Travelport in 6 markets across Asia Pacific region, ITQ

device has created ground breaking shift in how travel commerce is being promoted and embraced.

India is the second largest nation in terms of mobile phone users and among them a huge majority belongs to the category of Smartphone users. This means that the consumer is educated and need all information handy. To match the demand, travel industry needs to adopt the latest technology and move towards Artificial Intelligence. ITQ is working on these directions and delivering desired solution to the travel fraternity.

Today is the age of disruptive technologies such as cloud, big data, analytics, and artificial intelligence. Players in travel industry globally are adopting these technologies. How necessary is the investment in technology for you?

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR IS RIGHT NOW THRIVING ON AUTOMATION AND COST EFFECTIVENESS. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUOTIENT FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF A TECHNOLOGICAL PRODUCT IS TIME MANAGEMENT

is making headway into transforming the way travel is bought and sold. We have emerged as a prominent aggregator of travel inventory through which travel agents (both offline and online) can sell well-planned, custom made, tour packages depending of their clientele's preference.

What is the role of technology in promoting tourism today? How has it made life easier both for tourists as well as service providers in the sector?

IGT Adoption of mobile business is the most important shift happening worldwide, irrespective of the domain of businesses. In tourism, be it a travel agent or a traveler, the hand-held

IGT Today's travel agent or should we say a Smart Travel Planner adds value for their customers/travelers by providing a personal touch. Great advice from an experienced and trusted source can prove to be far more valuable than an anonymous comment on a travel review site. It means an agent or travel advisor can recommend a flight at the right time, a hotel in the right spot with great amenities and the right ground transportation or a car or rail to get there. And that is where our opportunity and scope for better service delivery lies and why we continue to invest heavily to provide that unrivaled content to our customers. ■