

AGENCIES THAT ARE SMALL CAN DO BETTER WITH SMARTER SOLUTIONS: PARASHAR

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH WONDERLUST, ANIL PARASHAR, PRESIDENT AND CEO, INTERGLOBE TECHNOLOGY QUOTIENT (ITQ) SPOKE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRENT COMPETITIVE MARKET AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS SMALLER AGENTS CAN UTILIZE TO FACE THE COMPETITION. FOLLOWING ARE THE EXCERPTS.

Ravi Arora

How do you see the current status of travel and tourism sector in India?

Travel and tourism is the only industry which is growing at a good rate in spite of the stagnating economy. This major growth driver has significantly come into the forefront due to its rich cultural heritage and ecological variety in India. Not just that, the exquisite mix of technology in the field has made it even more attractive to the people both within and outside the country.

Government has also taken various initiatives to explore the potential of this industry to the fullest. E-tourist visa to 150 countries, reviving domestic airports in Tier II and III cities, infrastructural development and many more have ensured that this country is steadily emerging as a major tourism market in the world.

What are the key challenges the industry is facing presently?

Indian travel domain is presently in a state of flux. It is evolving technologically amidst poor infrastructure, substandard connectivity, and lack of human resources and so on. The level of service delivery is also not upto the mark. Then there are safety issues for tourists, proper communication base, and the huge gap between what the government provides and plans for and what actually happens.

However, although the market presently faces such enormous challenges, it has tremendous scope of growth. Increasing use of technology is already accessing the uncharted areas. Even in the sector of safety and transportation- the industry is using the help of technology to bring about an organized travel domain. Even the government is taking up opportunities to make use of all the resources like reviving airports and easing travel visa norms.

How do you view the status of technology adoption among Indian travel agents?

With the rise in adoption of OTAs, travel agents in India have also changed their take on the new traveller. They have realized the importance of going digital and offering smart services. The present market demands it. The travel agents have ceased to become ticket sellers, consultants who offer expert advice on destinations, sell tour packages, and understand customers' requirements. As a result of this, they have increasingly adopted hi-tech solutions and products that enable them to serve their customers better.

In fact, the favourable reception of Travelport Smartpoint across the country is an example in place highlights that the travel agents are making smarter choices for their businesses. Through advanced solutions, Smartpoint users are able to plan packages, offer best prices, queue their work conveniently, work on multiple windows at a single time, use GDS language with translator, and perform number of features that were not possible earlier.

With the emergence of online travel agents, business dynamics for small agents have changed and survival has become tough for them. In such a scenario is there any cost effective technology solution available for them that can help them to sustain in the market?

With the emergence of Online Travel Agencies the small scale agents have faced a number of problems in the market, but that has not in any way obliterated their presence. India is one unique nation which truly values trust and personal touch.

Agencies that are small can do better by choosing smarter solutions like Travelport Smartpoint and Universal API and cater to their new age



Anil Parashar

travellers with more options.

With every challenge emerge new opportunities. It does not matter whether the agency is small or big, it is important for every agent to explore opportunities in the market and make it act in his favour and grow.

Kindly share some of the future plans of ITQ?

InterGlobe Technology Quotient is a penchant of technological evolution. Our growth spectrum depends primarily on two very important parameters- advanced solutions and world class services. These two key factors drive our ideology to ease travel related workings that help our partners grow and help them create chains of loyal customers.

At ITQ, our expertise lies in identifying the future needs and analyzing scope of developments- thereby introducing smarter solutions that ease workflow and deliver the best possible results.

In addition, we focus on taking up multiple initiatives that can help our society. We have recently launched Skill development initiative for 300 underprivileged children across India to help them acquire skills required to enter the travel domain. We have also ensured that these students find a firm place to start work after the completion of this course. And with the support from the industry we will continue to drive similar initiatives in the future as well.