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Demand from business travellers in India for digital travel solutions escalating: Travelport

By TBM Staff | Mumbai

Tech-savvy business travellers in India are increasingly demanding, as well as using, advanced digital solutions that can enhance their travel experience, according to an independent study commissioned by Travelport, a leading travel commerce platform.

Commenting on the findings of the survey, Martin Herbert, Regional Managing Director for India and Sri Lanka, Travelport, said: “The results clearly show that business travellers in India now fully expect airlines, hotels, travel agents, and other companies in the travel ecosystem, to deliver effective and easily accessible support via digital channels throughout their journeys. The immediate areas digital solutions can support are those that are straight-forward or easily automated but companies also need to consider technologies like artificial intelligence-powered chatbots, which can execute more advanced tasks and lead to even greater increases in sales and reductions in operating costs.”

Sandeep Dwivedi, COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), Travelport’s Operator in six countries across the Asia Pacific region including India, added: “Digital solutions offer travel agents and travel providers a way to really elevate the customer experience and, in doing so, set themselves apart from their peers. For digital solutions to be successful, they need to compliment physical channels at every stage. This requires careful planning and proven technology but, when executed well, the impact digital solutions can make can be game-changing.”

The research was carried out by Toluna Research and based on responses from 8,100 regular business travellers across 25 countries.

According to the study, titled the Digital Business Traveller Research 2019, in the planning and booking phase, nearly three quarters (72 per cent) of business travellers in India have now used voice search, at some point, to investigate items like flight times, hotel options and the weather at their destinations. Two-thirds (66 per cent) have also researched and booked a business trip entirely on their smartphone.

In addition, three quarters of business travellers in India now feel a good digital experience is ‘very important’ when choosing a hotel (75 per cent) and airline (79 per cent). In fact, 72 per cent actively avoid hotels that still charge for WIFI. Furthermore, more than half of business travellers in India work for companies that now have travel policies allowing them to book or use shared-economy travel providers like Airbnb (57 per cent) and Uber (59 per cent).

The study also revealed that in the transit phase, two thirds (66 per cent) of business travellers in India now want hybrid support delivered through Live Chat functions on smartphone apps and half (52 per cent) find it ‘very painful’ when they are unable to access their booking information on all of their devices.

Once they have reached their destination, two thirds of business travellers in India now prefer to check-in via an app on their smartphone (65 per cent), rather than at reception, and have a digital room key to unlock their hotel room door (67 per cent).