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By admin - July 2, 2021  0

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Trust levels in travel suppliers and travel agencies in India will directly influence the speed and significance of the local travel industry's recovery, according to new independent research commissioned by worldwide leader in travel retail, Travelport. The research, released today, also revealed three key areas that travellers in the country say have the biggest influence over their trust: COVID-19 health and safety measures, price transparency and information credibility.

Enabling Retail

The study of 11,000 travellers across 10 countries, including 2,000 in India, was conducted by Edelman Data & Intelligence (DxI), the research and analytics arm of Edelman, which has studied trust for over 20 years through the Edelman Trust Barometer. It uncovered clear evidence that, in India, trust directly influences traveller purchasing behavior. Due to COVID-19, for example, half (50 per cent, versus a global average of 46 per cent) of travellers in the country said they prioritize trust over all other factors when choosing a travel supplier (such as an airline) – one of the highest proportions amongst the countries studied.

Many travellers in India also stated, when trust is in place, they will consider purchasing multiple travel-related items (47 per cent), upgrading their package (47 per cent) and buying non-travel-related items such as credit cards (42 per cent) – putting India amongst the countries with the strongest link between trust and purchasing propensity.

"The Indian travel industry has a golden opportunity to come out of COVID-19 strongly", said Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer of InterGlobe Technology Quotient, Travelport's official partner in India. "It's clear that building consumer trust can lead to commercial success. By focusing on the most important issues for consumers in India, we can accelerate industry recovery."

The Three Key Trust-Building Areas

COVID-19 Health and Safety

The most important trust-building area for travellers in India was whether a travel company had implemented COVID-19 health and safety measures, with 42 per cent

naming it a top priority. Going forward, however, around half said they would like more reassurance on how robustly some measures are being enforced, in particular, improved air filtration, contactless services, as well as managed boarding and queuing.

Martin Herbert, Senior Commercial Director – Operators at Travelport said, “The travel industry should be proud of how quickly and effectively it responded to COVID-19. What we learned from the study, however, is that travel suppliers and agencies will benefit from being clearer in their communication on certain measures, such as air filtration.”

Price Transparency

Another top trust-building area for travellers in India was having ‘no hidden costs’ (36 per cent), which came in just behind ‘long-term safety track record’.

“The importance of price transparency can’t be overstated”, continued Herbert. “To put it into context, having no hidden costs has almost the same impact on trust as an airline’s long-term safety record does. The request from consumers here is clear; the time has come to eliminate hidden fees and improve the overall transparency of pricing and communication.”

Information Credibility

The most trusted sources of travel-related information that travellers in India use when researching a trip are those perceived to have aligned interests: friends and family (59 per cent) and review websites (51 per cent). However, they were also trusting of other sources such as travel companies (49 per cent, versus the global average of 45 per cent) and traditional media like travel TV shows, travel magazines, and newspapers (48 per cent, versus the global average of 38 per cent).

When it came to trust in different types of travel-related information, customer ratings (55 per cent) and written customer reviews (52 per cent) were the most trusted, coming ahead of information like third-party certification (42 per cent) and third-party ratings such as hotel star systems (42 per cent).

“Reviews are a big part of the modern retailing experience”, pointed out Herbert. “You wouldn’t buy something off Flipkart without reading the reviews, yet there is no review functionality for the most part on online travel agency sites even though the data shows that’s the information travellers trust most.”

“Trusted companies make better retailers”, Herbert concluded. “When trust is combined with cutting-edge technology and effective sales, it becomes a powerful proposition. At Travelport, we will continue to invest in each of these areas in a bid to not only help the industry rebound from the pandemic but come out the other side more agile and stronger.”

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