

#Voices of Travel: Dev Karvat talks of dispelling fear in the minds of travellers

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In this ongoing series, we explore how humans of travel are mitigating the ongoing COVID19 outbreak. Today Dev Karvat, CEO, TrawellTag-Covermore tells us that the COVID crisis will encourage innovative disruption in the travel industry.

Travel and tourism as an industry has only been enhanced with time. 2019 was the year of new-age travellers with millennials leading the list. Adventure tours and experience-based trips churned out a considerable amount of revenue for the travel market. Not only did the industry witness a considerable inclination towards experience-based trips in 2019, but it also showcased promising growth in the leisure and business market. We were geared up with enhanced products, services and strategies that could manoeuvre customers needs in the right direction, way before the COVID-19 struck havoc.

This year, our focus continues to be majorly on understanding the emerging problems the travellers face and offering standalone products that would help them tackle new age risks such as gadget, wallet, baggage protection and providing unique and customized travel protection plans for cruise travellers and adventure enthusiasts. Furthermore, we are also constantly trying to refine our capabilities of using "optimisation algorithms" to better understand customer's likes, dislikes, buying behaviours and offer them the best possible products and services with the help of artificial intelligence and machine learning in 2020.

Considering the current situation, we reckon the tour booking will decline tremendously in the next 2-4 months. However, if travellers have tour plans booked before the governments travel advisory, we are providing them with cancellation benefits or rescheduling their travel protection plans, if they wish to postpone their trips.

The fear this outbreak has created in the minds of people has led to a huge number of trip cancellations and we are sure this slump will continue for a while. Our biggest challenge now is to reinforce confidence in the minds of travellers and getting the travel and tourism industry back on track.

We are constantly analyzing the situation and cascading necessary information to all our travel agents and partners regarding further steps. Moreover, given the gravity of the situation, we are requesting travellers to avoid all non-essential travels, and at the same time, we are helping customers with the cancellation of trips that were booked before the outbreak and supporting them with any possible help within our purview.

Even if this crisis goes on for months, our focus will always be to ensure the safety of all our stakeholders. In addition, we will do everything in our capacity to help customers in need and facilitate smooth redressal of customer queries.

We have urged all our employees to work at the safety of their homes as per the advice from the Government of India. We have also been sharing important information to our supplier and agents at regular interims and asking them to share it with their customers.

If we follow the necessary precautions and quarantine ourselves as advised by the Government of India, we are certain that the situation will get back to normal. However, travel will never be the same again and hence our goal has always been to make travel safer for customers and we will continue to do it.

Times are tough and we should stay strong and display resilience. Being the custodians of the Indian travel industry, let us play our part by spreading awareness about the situation, educate our stakeholders about the precautions to be undertaken and help them during this crisis.

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