

Presented By



Tourism, the next frontier for innovation



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As competition hots up and technology gets more cutting-edge, no sector is poised to change as overwhelmingly in India as the travel and tourism industry. There are hard facts that support this assertion. The next logical question to ask ourselves is how, as industry representatives, can we provide an impetus to what appears to be a natural progression. The answer to that has to be a multi-pronged approach. But I believe that a large part of this will be anchored on innovation - to enhance user interface as well as simplify

and complement the user's experience - and will ultimately distinguish the successful service-provider from the rest. Providers need to look at various ways of innovating - with payment and delivery options, providing a safe transaction environment (in case of web-sites), addressing customer concerns, maximising reach and access, and offering excellent search options. We were the first travel portal in India to offer 'search-book-pay' via SMS service for flight ticketing.

Recognising that personalised reviews are more impartial and unbiased, we introduced a section of comprehensive staff-undertaken hotel reviews. This includes reviews with actual images and videos of the rooms, bathrooms, conference facilities, etc. Innovation needn't necessarily be limited to the big things - it's the smaller touches that get missed out and often make all the difference.

Another interesting insight that we discovered was about consumer purchase behaviour. While most are happy to book air tickets and hotels online, for 'involved' products like holidays and tours they prefer having a human interface. Today, we have physical offices in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Kolkata and will shortly be opening in Mumbai.

We have just launched an aggressive affiliate strategy by way of which smaller sites (focused by region or destination) can be powered by the MakeMyTrip inventory in a seamless manner. We also plan to target non-travel sites like horizontals and other trade partners to power their hotel offering as well as to tourism boards. The internet presents a revolutionary platform to reach and service a huge number of customers in different geographies efficiently. Travel websites have helped spawn a new breed of travel agents living in remote cities and having access to the internet - that empowers them to get the best deals. ■