

Bangalore top market for MakeMyTrip.com

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Bangalore, June 12: MakeMyTrip.com, the online travel portal, announced the launch of its regional office in Bangalore on Tuesday.

Deep Kalra, founder and CEO of the travel company, said Bangalore has been topping the list of selling markets for MakeMyTrip.com in terms of sale of flight tickets and booking of hotel rooms. "The people of Bangalore have been early adopters with a 3 percent share of outbound market of the company, a figure we hope to raise to 7 percent by end of FY2009," he said.

Talking about the Indian online travel scene, Kalra said the travel and tourism sector contributed nearly 6 percent to the country's GDP, apart from providing millions of jobs. "The online travel market is worth \$1,325 billion this year and is expected to reach \$2004 billion by 2008, growing at 51 percent. The travel and tourism market in Karnataka is expected to grow from Rs 1,300 crore in 2007 to Rs 2,500 crore by 2009," he said.

MakeMyTrip.com netted a revenue of Rs 550 crore for

the year ended March 2007. Kalra projected a revenue of Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,200 crore this year. The company's second office in the country in Bangalore will be followed by regional offices at Mumbai and Kolkata.

The company is also exploring other channels of selling travel products by tying up with retail outlets. On a pilot basis, this has been done with Spencer's, BPCL and Subhiksha retail chains. It has launched an improved website called MakeMyTrip 2.0 with more interactive features.

Kalra said the company would shift focus from air travel bookings to hotel products. Booking through mobile phones has been launched. "The company, with a 40 percent share in the online travel market, will eventually go in for IPO, though that is a long term plan," said Kalra.

The company will tap into Bangalore's IT talent pool and hire several hundred IT professionals for its operations. The company now has a headcount of well over 600 people, a number that will be increased to 1,000 by 2009, added Kalra.