

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of TAAI

Friends, this is the final penning of my regular monthly column to you as President of our wonderful & premier Association. On the 3rd of August, my tenure in this dignified honorary position comes to its glorious end and elections for the term 2011 – 2013 are scheduled to be held.

I am proud to have led this august body from 2008 till 2011 as its President, not to forget my various roles as Regional Secretary & then Chairman of Northern Region for many years, two terms as the Vice President and again one term as Hon Secretary General. A multi-layered ladder climbing in official capacity that has so enriched me in the last 14 years and believe me, these years have passed by so quickly that it seems like only yesterday when I first took up the office of Hon Secretary of Northern Region.

Any successful association, institute or organization requires a number of ingredients : strong leadership, member support, dedicated committee members, to name a few. But above all, it needs a clear sense of purpose, direction, focus and concentration, as well as an overall purpose of achievement.

The Fight Against Zero

When I took over as President I had a clear purpose. With my previous experience of interaction with TAAI and its agendas, I was kicking and ready to go. The first was to ensure that zero commission does not get implemented so all of us got into action immediately.....

We got IATA agents, the biggest consolidators and OTA's in the country along with MNC's and the rank and file of Ours & all our fellow Associations to join hands in our struggle for a breakthrough in the commission imbroglio firstly with the domestic airlines, i.e, Jet Airways, Kingfisher Airlines and Air India. Soon all travel and tourism Industry Associations chiefs, as well as agents all over India were all smiles, as Jet Airways agreed as a special gesture to the agent community to give a commission of 3 per cent for all domestic and international tickets issued in India effective 08 December, 2008 along with parity in fares across all distribution channels.!! Immediately after this, Kingfisher Airlines and Air India also came around and followed suit.

This huge success was indeed a milestone achieved with the support of none other than all you dear members, who stood by my various decisions. Our unity and the solidarity of the agent community was established beyond a doubt. Colleagues, frankly what many thought was impossible was achieved by us by dint of sheer confidence in ourselves and working selflessly together !!

We continued to be strong as ever in our resolve to fight for our right to remuneration with those international airlines that had gone to ZERO. I would like to profusely thank all our members for the support they extended to us in this matter. These are insensitive airlines who do not understand that the relationship between the principals and the agents is an undying bond built over decades of trust and dependence. It was an uphill task - what with the scenario changing day by day. However, it was a real challenge, one that I was ready to face. We united with other associations and continued to demand for our legitimate right to



commission. On the one hand, airlines admit that IATA agents are their single largest distribution arm (constituting 85% to 90 % of sales of all airlines) & on the other hand some of them were not willing to concede to our request for decent remuneration in the form of commission. But having such a fantastic M C team & Chairpersons of Region & Chapters on my side was a feather in my cap. Each and every one of them worked very hard & contributed sincerely and that is our strength.

In this regard we met with the then Hon'ble Minister for Civil Aviation Shri Praful Patel, The then DGCA, Mr.Nazim Zaidi, MP, Mr. Milind Deora, the Tourism Minister, Tourism Secretary, Airlines chiefs et al.

To our utmost joy after several meetings with the DGCA the Minister passed a diktat dated 5th March 2010, directing all the airlines that had gone to zero to decide in consultation with agents on a suitable commission to be paid to agents. This victory was the result of a 5 hour meeting held in Mumbai on 7th December 2009, after months of crucial and critical meetings, debates and discussions.

But with a month on, after these airlines received the order from the DGCA and none of them coming forth for any settlement, an All Travel Associations' Meet (TAAI, TAFI, IATO, ADTOI, and ETAA) was held on 5th April, in Mumbai to discuss the future course of action. It was such a huge success with all India media coverage that we immediately got an appointment with Mr R. K Maheswari, Jt. DG, DGCA in the Ministry of Civil Aviation for further talks.

Next action ?

TAAI filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India claiming that the action of all the airlines to go to zero simultaneously was an act of cartelisation & monopolistic in nature which was against fair business practices and hence illegal. On receiving TAAI's plaint, the CCI had sought the opinion of the DGCA asking them whether they were in agreement with TAAI's petition & prayer to which the DGCA replied that it supported TAAI's stance on the issue and more importantly that according to the rules examined by them it is illegal for airlines to adopt a zero commission system and commission needs to be paid by the airlines to the agents and it cannot be replaced by transaction fee. This was indeed a huge shot in the arm to our ongoing efforts to reinstate commission for our members.

The CCI then examined the DGCA's point of view, as well as the airlines' stance and submitted an investigation report asking airlines to submit comments in 15 days and appear before CCI. The verdict is awaited. I am sure all of you must have received my mail on this development.

Friends, this was the fruitful culmination of our long tirade with the airlines and my team and I are proud that we will soon achieve the desired results we wanted and create history for the world to follow! It will be a victory for all our TAAI members and the industry at large and it would not have been possible without your support and patience.

Let us move on to other activities at this period of time.

The past 3 years have indeed been very hectic in other areas as well. Let me mention a few to indicate to you how we have been on our toes literally speaking ! TAAI as an association is constantly evolving.

- Meetings with DGCA- Continuous dialogues for resolving the zero commission imbroglio and other aviation matters.
- Interactive sessions with the CPO – regarding expansion of Passport Seva Kendras pan India
- Fruitful meetings with the Tourism Ministry – discussions for boosting Inbound /outbound tourism and enhancing domestic tourism as well and to discuss various important matters relating to the travel trade.
- The first historic Industry Roundtable Meet with MoT,
- Formation of CITTI –a welcome move as a Government initiative to economically enhance tourism growth
- National Tourism Advisory Council Meet – talks on lesser known destinations in the country needed to be developed so that the benefits of tourism activities reach far and wide.,
- Meetings with NTOs – planning and organizing of all India overseas destinations roadshows and special tie ups for outbound travelers
- The staging of successful Conventions in Dubai and Phuket –The Indian Travel Congress reaching new heights,
- Launch and organizing of ITTE 2010- TAAI's own travel and tourism exhibition creating a great network platform for the industry,
- Debut of the prestigious TAAI Travel Awards in 2009 and Awards 2010 –to recognize the initiatives of counterparts for their worthy efforts and reward deserving people from our own industry. (The Awards honors were always a dream project for me and finally it happened in Dubai amidst much fanfare & was the toast of the country)
- Addition of TAAI Chandigarh Chapter- enlarging the TAAI family,
- TAAI System One launched - TAAI's own platform for the benefit of the members by creating one e-distribution application body
- ADM workshops in Regions/ Chapters – to educate members on Churn bookings and abuse of ADMs
- TAAI representations at APJC – taking up issues vital to the agent community
- Handling of Ticketing Authority Process – TAP,
- TAAI IATA Joint Bank Guarantee Scheme - New procedures were laid down for the continuance / expansion of the scheme.,
- TAAI Membership Promotion,
- IATA BSP Training Programs for member agency staff - Training sessions by IATA officials in chapters and regions for better understanding of their working systems
- Media and Image Building Initiatives,
- TAAI Newsline , TAAI's popular monthly E newsletter
- A re-vamped website,
- All India Cricket tournaments,
- WATA event in India,
- TAAI at CITM 2010,
- Famtaastic Offer for TAAI members – an initiative which presented excellent value added services from hotels, cruise lines, attractions, transport companies for our members.
- TAAI & TASK Interactive Seminar -an interactive seminar in Mumbai to promote Jammu & Kashmir as a year-round safe tourist destination
- Education & Training Programs from TAAI - With a vision of educating and training our membership to compete with the current challenges, TAAI negotiated and has engaged some leading institutions and trainers to introduce new courses and systems

specially identified and designed to meet the need of the industry. (Read more on page 4)

The list goes on and on, What is important to note is that our Association is always active in being involved with our members and keeping your interest uppermost in our minds.

TAAI 60 Years Old

Friends, it is a proud moment for us all that your prestigious Association is in its 60th year. From 12 members in 1951 to 2448 members today, it has been a great movement indeed.!

I am sure that in the coming years too, TAAI will be equally committed to many more initiatives including the ones we have commenced in the last couple of years. We all shall work harder to meet our existing goals, create new opportunities and look forward to fruitful years ahead with grit, determination, hope, faith and trust in one another that will take this Association of ours to glorious heights!

Is It Good bye?

Members, How shall I end my column. ? Month after month, it has been a pleasure and an honor to have been able to share my thoughts and views on important industry matters with each and everyone of you through this column. It is really difficult to say good bye to any situation in life that becomes so vital and is at the top of your priority list as TAAI is to me. These years will have a special place in my heart. Fond memories will stay with me forever as it has become part & parcel of my life. Of course, I shall always be around for the Association in any which way it needs me. The Association that has molded me, guided me and shown me dark and bright days of an industry that is my bread and butter, will stand steady as a rock in the edifices of my mind. I know that as a travel agent TAAI has allowed me to grow more confident, more promising and as a human being it has taught me the values of discipline, fair trade and community culture. What more can I ask for?

THANK YOU TAAI !

And Thank you dear members, for giving me the best years of my life ! Yes, there have been dark days and alleys that I had to encounter but there was always a bright light at the end of the tunnel that beckoned me, all because of your trust and support. It has meant a lot to me

I want you all to know that each and every word I penned down in these columns came straight from the heart and it shall always stay that way !

A special word of gratitude to my fellow office bearers, my MC and Regional/ Chapter Chairmen/Chairpersons who stood with me all the way and supported me throughout these wonderful years - Thank you my colleagues. I also thank the TAAI Secretariat in Mumbai and TAAI liaison office in Delhi for all their dedication, commitment and initiative.

Let me also wish all of you, dear members - the very best in all your future endeavors. Remember, if you hang in there with all your might and hope, **YOU WILL REACH YOUR GOAL !** Let me end with a quote by

Rabindranath Tagore.

"You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water".

Good bye and good luck !

Rajji Rai
President

Editor's Note

Friends, our July issue comes to you firstly with our President bidding good-bye after a "glorious innings" as they say, with his term and that of his MC coming to an end. Our Chairman for Education & Training Council has been very busy arranging training sessions all over the country for our Regions and Chapters who feel they have greatly benefitted from this endeavor of TAAI for its membership. Read all about other TAAI happenings at the National level as well. These last years we have changed the layout of Newsline and have been communicating with you, dear members, every month, in the best possible way & have brought to you news of TAAI activities pan India besides from the trade throughout the years. We assure you TEAM TAAI Newsline will continue to do so.

We hope you have really enjoyed reading all our issues.

TEAM TAAI NEWSLINE

SECRETARY TOURISM CALLS FOR SPECIAL MEET

A very informal get together with trade bodies and airline representative was called by the Secretary Tourism Mr. R. H. Khwaja and present at the meet along with the officials from the tourism ministry were our President, Mr Rajji Rai, with his large delegation including V. President Mr. Jagdeep Rikhy and MC Member Mr Sanjay Datta, Mr. Ranjit Vig - Co-opted MC Member, Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, Chairperson - N. Region and Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Hon. Treasurer - N. Region.

Various issues were discussed and solutions to the same were suggested from all high ranking officials from the ministry. President Mr Rajji Rai presented his view points to the Sec. Tourism as follows:

1. The burden of Service Tax of 10% should be reduced
2. Taxes are very high for the Tourism sector in India but in other countries they are in the region of 5 to 7 per cent maximum. However, in India there is no tax rationalization of taxes, as different states have different tax structures, resulting in a tax in the region of 30 per cent, thus making India an extremely costly destination and resulting in a loss of tourist numbers.
3. International & LCC carriers are not paying the legitimate and traditional commission to Travel Agents, in India, to be reinstated through the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
4. Demand for infrastructure status for the Tourism industry. This is in keeping with its target of 1 per cent of global tourist traffic in the 12th Five year plan, and the infrastructure status for the sector will give great stimulus to Tourism development as the sector will be able to raise bank loans at cheaper interest rates.
5. Export industry status for Tour Operators earning in foreign exchange. Request for grant of Deemed Export Status for tour operators earning foreign exchange and the tourism sector at large.
6. Tourism police facilities to be created at all major airports for starters and later to be extended to all major Railway stations and prized Monuments
7. A proper place inside major Airports needed for the representatives of Agencies Travel, Tour and Transport Operators-to meet and assist their clients – Meet & Greet Facilities.
8. Palace on Wheels may be extended to other important tourist and cultural hubs.
9. Support from Tourism Ministry for Conventions and Events: There should be a laid down procedure depending on the size of convention/events conducted by various associations.
10. Convention facilities in major cities. No good convention/conference facilities in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai & Bangalore.
11. Need to regularize State Transport taxes as rates are different for each State & very high. Seamless travel is the order of the day.
12. India seriously needs the services of outstanding Professional Tourist Guides who have good knowledge about our Country, its history, growth, population and other relevant details.
13. TAAI has given a Presentation of joint TAAI / MOT QUIZ programme to the Ministry which is still pending with the dept.
14. Hoho Bus: Although the Hoho Bus has been in operation in Delhi since the Commonwealth games, the response has been poor. Some Incentives needed to be given to Travel agents to promote this facility .

All in all it was an enriching experience and the Secretary Tourism was at his best with his hospitality and his gesture in having this informal meeting was appreciated by one and all. This was a much needed meet and the interaction should definitely go a long way.

TAAI awaits the action plans for the views suggested and is positive that soon the dept will come out with the modes and means that will tackle these dogging issues.

TAAI MC MEET IN DELHI



The Fifth Managing Committee Meeting of TAAI was held on Monday, 18th July 2011 in Delhi.

TAAI EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL ON THE ROLL!

Training – Now More Demanding Than Ever

“The historic decision of TAAI to offer an Education and Training program for its members across the country has been justified with the very first response and acceptance of the program by our members,” says Chairman, Mr N M Sharafudeen who is extremely happy with the very encouraging feedbacks from participants wherein most of them are demanding for more such sessions. TAAI is proud to commence such programs which will be very useful to develop the confidence of our membership and to update their services to higher standards.



Mr N M Sharafudeen

Training by TRS Consulting Dubai – TAAI has signed an MOU with the leading Travel trainer based in Dubai. and approved them as TAAI's National Trainer. TRS Consulting is a key player in training the industry personnel in various modules spread from Selling Skills to Managing the Industry. Skill development and training is necessary to deliver services to the expectations of the customers and to keep the organization competitive and successful in business. TAAI Secretariat will be offering these training programs to all Regions/ Chapters free of cost as a membership privilege. Details of the above programs are uploaded on our website www.travelagentsofindia.com

E Learning Courses – TAAI has also signed an MOU with the leading E learning Institute in the travel industry – Tradewings Institute of Management (TIM). TIM will be giving a special discount of 20% on its regular course fee to the entire membership of TAAI. The entry to these courses will be controlled through TAAI website www.travelagentsofindia.com. A special banner has been linked to the registration page for the members and their registration details will be verified and approved by TAAI Secretariat for the special fee structure. Once the approval is granted by TAAI Secretariat, the user can select his choice of courses from various tables in the TIM website and proceed

further. Mr. Sharaf informs us that “TIM has many courses useful to the industry in multiple levels and the membership is getting one of the best opportunities to develop their business by strengthening the knowledge and skill base of their team. More than 30 members have already registered for various courses.”

Classroom Courses with KUONI Academy. TAAI has launched two courses for members with the leading travel management Institute Kuoni. The two courses are namely ‘Senior Management Program’ for owners and senior managers and ‘Integrated Diploma in Travel and Tourism’ for middle and junior managers. (More details on page 5)

Graduate Diploma in Aviation, Travel, Tourism & Hospitality – TAAI in association with Bird Academy – a leading Travel Academy in the country has launched a Graduate Diploma course as an E Learning platform. The course covering detailed modules of the industry process is available at a cost of Rs. 25,000/- and can be completed at the convenience of members.

All above courses will be co-branded with TAAI & appropriate certificates will be issued to proud members who have completed these courses in full.

NEWS FROM SOUTH GUJARAT



Inauguration of Training Session by Mr. Sharafudeen



Mr. Arvind Mistry, Sec. Elect, Mr. Sundar, Mr. Sharafudeen, Mr. Mukesh Patel, Mr. Shreeram and Mr. Kalpesh Shah

TAAI TRS Training Takes Off! South Gujarat Chapter Inaugurates Training Program

Good News – Members. The Education Council has rolled out the first TAAI Training program on 20 July 2011 at Baroda for the members of South Gujarat Chapter. The program was inaugurated in a function presided over by the Chairman Mr. Mukesh Patel in the presence of Mr. Kalpesh Shah and Mr. Shreeram Patel, Chairman- Gujarat Chapter. The Chapter held the Management and Staff Modules (2 days) on 20th and 21st July respectively and the training by Mr Sunder was apt, informative and appreciated very much for its value content. The responses from the participants are very positive and encouraging and all of them are demanding more such training to really make a positive change in their business. Mr. Sundar is a well experienced trainer who is working with many travel agents group in Middle East and India. **Following Regions and Chapters have already availed of the training in the first lap in July.**

*South Gujarat Chapter – Management and Staff Modules (2 days) *Gujarat Chapter – Management and Staff Modules (2 days), *M P & CG Chapter – Management Module(1 day), *Southern Chapter – Management Module (1 day) , *South Tamil Nadu Chapter – Management Module (1 day), *Eastern Region – Management and Staff Modules (2 days) The Chairman will soon be sending out an Evaluation form prepared for the written feedback of participants after attending the training. The Secretariat after receiving these feedbacks will then make certificates in the names and organisation of participants and send it back to the participant through the respective chapters.

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING SESSIONS

Dear Mr. Mukesh sir,
Thank you for arranging a wonderful training for us. The session is really so useful to us. This is the first time in my professional career that I have attended this kind of training and the experience was great. I hope you can arrange this form of Training for us in future. Also give my warm regards to "Sundar Sir" for teaching us such wonderful skills

Vivek Patel, Saibaba Travels, Nanpura, Surat-395001

Respected Sir,
I take this privilege to say thank you. This training has filled the gaps that we all were facing in the system of tourism. We (staff & Owners) should take this training frequently as it polishes the skills & increases the knowledge for overall smother performance of an organization. We would be fortunate if Mr. Sunder gives us training on different aspects so that we can be more confident to handle the tough situations with much more ease.

Soha Kadri, Marketing Executive, Ronak Travels & Tours Pvt. Ltd, Baroda

GUJARAT CHAPTER HOLDS TRAINING PROGRAMS



Virendra Shah, Chapter Secretary Elect 2011-13,
Chairman Shreeram Patel and Poonam Sheth,
Senior TAAI Member giving Vote of Thanks to Mr. Sunder



Participants being trained by Mr Sunder

After South Gujarat Chapter it was the turn of Gujarat Chapter and Mr Shreeram Patel & his team to gear up for the TRS Training for his Chapter members. On 22nd July the session was for Staff of agent members and the next day, 23rd July saw the Management staff coming in to be enthralled by trainer Mr Sunder. Both the modules were much appreciated by the participants and they found it extremely informative and interesting. "we need such training programs to enrich ourselves so that we can deal with our clients more confidently" said Chairman, Mr Patel.

TAAI- KUONI EDUCATION PROGRAM



Mr. Rajiv Duggal M.D. Kuoni Travel India
with President Mr. Rajji Rai

Understanding the new challenges faced by the Travel and Tourism industry and the need to make our members more educated and competitive, the Education and Training Council of TAAI was working to identify most suitable learning processes available in the country and outside.

One of the major threats in the industry nowadays is scarcity of qualified manpower. TAAI realises that unless we create and develop new talents by making an awareness of the potential of employment in the industry and providing quality education, the travel and tourism industry will be finding it difficult to survive in this highly competitive world.

TAAI has made a detailed study in this line and finally decided to associate with leading and most reputed institutions as partners.

Kuoni Academy is the largest institution with scientifically designed course modules both for Senior Management and Junior Management level programs. The course will cover with classes on Travel and Tourism Management, Marketing, Sales, CRS and Ticketing, HR Management, Financial Management etc for Senior Managers and History, Culture, Travel Management, Sales, Marketing, CRS and Ticketing, Soft Skills etc for Junior Management.

I am extremely pleased that we have tied up with a prestigious institution like KUONI to roll out the courses on an all India basis as KUONI has their establishments in many locations in the country. The entire membership of TAAI will be benefited from these courses, offered to them at a highly discounted cost and carefully selected modules.

TAAI has launched two courses for members. The two courses are:- a) 'Senior Management Program' for owners and senior managers and (b) 'Integrated Diploma in Travel and Tourism' for middle and junior managers.

I am grateful to Mr. Sharafuddin Chairman-Education & Training Council TAAI, alongwith Mr. Kapil Srivastava, Regional Head(North & East), Kuoni Academy who were both instrumental in bringing these courses to the TAAI membership. I am also thankful to all those who were involved in & supported us to launch this programme.,

Rajji Rai
President

NEWS FROM REGIONS & CHAPTERS

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN REGION



Mr. Sunil Kumar - Hon. SEC. General, Mr.P.Murugesan-MC & Adviser / Acting Chairman -SR
Mr.P.Saravanan - Co-Adviser / Chairman -elect-SR Ms. T.Devaki Thiyagarajan - Co-Adviser / Hon. Sec. Elect-SR



Southern Region Members with Mr.R.Sunil Kumar & Mr.P.Murugesan
(4th and 5th From left) at the Award Ceremony



Award to Mr.Sriram-Bharat Travels being presented by Hon. Sec.General

P.Murugesan, Member Managing Committee & Adviser-Acting Chairman-Southern Region informs us that TAAI Southern Region meet on 17th June had the presence of our Hon Secretary General, Mr. Sunil Kumar R who specially flew into Chennai to grace the occasion. The HSG interacted with members for more than two hours and was happy to answer many queries of Members in the Q & A session. He touched upon various industry based issues such as: - TAAI-IATA JBG SCHEME, - IATA RESOLUTION 810 I, - IATA RESOLUTION 818 G - APJC, - AOP, and WEEKLY PAYMENTS SYSTEM, A special Award was given to our Senior Member, Mr. Sriram of Bharath Travel Service Pvt. Ltd., Chennai for his 50 years of Membership with TAAI.

PUNE CHAPTER WELCOMES RPO



Welcoming the RPO

Pune Chapter welcomed the new Regional passport officer Mrs. S G Rane who comes on posting from Thane passport office. She joined on 04 July Mrs. Rane assured TAAI members that she will bring more efficiency in the functioning of the passport office. The members were introduced to Mrs Rane and shared their experiences and gave valuable suggestions. Mr. Desai the APO shared with the members news on the PSK services which will start in Nov 2011. Chairperson Mrs. Amarjit Lidder thanked The passport officer for sparing the time. Says Mrs. Lidder "such gatherings are important in that the interaction goes a long way"

WESTERN REGION MEETING IN MUMBAI

On the directions of the MC, The Chairman Elect, Mr. Jay Bhatia of TAAI - WR held a special meeting for the members on 13th July 2011 in Mumbai to update them on airline matters and other issues faced by the Agents in Mumbai. Hon Secretary General, Mr Sunil Kumar was invited specially to grace the occasion and the members appreciated his excellent presentation on Weekly Payment and IATA Reso 818(g) and the proposed JBG for larger Agents. Hon Treasurer, Mr. Mulla, also answered queries put to him. The Chairman apprised the members of the discounted training programs initiated by TAAI with TRs Consulting, Tradewings Institute of Management. Kuoni Academy and Bird Group.



From L to R Hon Sec General Mr Sunil Kumar, Mr Jay Bhatia Chairman- WR and Mr Iqbal Mulla Hon Treasurer

NEWS FROM SAURASHTRA KUTCH CHAPTER

Devendra R. Shah, Chairman, TAAI Saurashtra Kutch Chapter and his team organized their Chapter meeting on 11th June at Somnath this time.

Members discussed the present issues dogging the industry like the weekly settlement plan and other burning problems which were highlighted in details in the last Newslines and about the Passport Seva Kendra for Rajkot. as per information submitted by Mr Harkripal Singh from Delhi office as approved by the Chief Passport Officer This led to a detailed discussion in the house. Next matter taken up was about wrong ADMs being issued to the members and it was decided to seriously take up the matter with the concerned airlines and try to resolve them. One particular problem being faced by the members was that of Kingfisher Airlines not giving TDS certificate so the same has been intimated to the Airline. Members are hopeful the airline will look into the matter immediately Mementoes as a token of appreciation were presented to the Gen Manager and the Front Officer of the hotel for their excellent hospitality and for sponsoring the stay and all meals for the Chapter.

A special mention needs to be made about the event held after the meeting ended. The Chairman arranged a program titled Education Achievement Awards for the children of TAAI members as per their recent rankings in academics and guess who were in charge of this program.? Well - none other than the wives of the members !. The children were excited about their achievements being recognized publicly and the wives did a very good job of preparing the certificates and arranging the whole presentation. Way to go - wives !. The next day was all about visiting tourist spots like Triveni Sangam River, the famous Geeta Mandir of Lord Krishna ending at with the Somnath Mandir



Jitendra Lakhani, Hon.Treasurer, Devendra Shah, Chairman, Chirag Kakkad Hon.Secretary Elect 2011-2013



Mr Shah, Mr Lakhani & Mr Kakkad presenting mementoes to Pranay S Gaur, GM Hotel Lords for his excellent hospitality to Members.



Daxa Shah, wife of Devendra Shah presenting Education achievement memento to Bindra Kakkad, daughter of Mr P Kakkad of Yesh Travel for gaining highest marks in academics.

NEWS FROM KARNATAKA CHAPTER



The Chairperson addressing the Consul Generals & Karnataka Chapter members at the function

Mamta Nichani, Chairperson, TAAI Karnataka Chapter informs us that in continuation of their efforts to make their meeting more interesting and informative, the Chapter had, on 29th June, invited the Consul Generals and Honorary Consuls of all those Consulates located now in Bangalore for an informal get together. The Consul Generals and Hon. Consuls from France, Switzerland, Maldives, Ireland, Peru, Benin and Spain attended the function including the representative from Visit Britain. All in all, it was an enjoyable evening as there good response from members who appreciated Consul Generals taking time off to grace the occasion and interact with them.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."

THOMAS EDISON

GUEST ARTICLE

TENETS OF E-COMMERCE STRATEGY

A number of 'tipping points' have taken place in the Travel industry's e-commerce landscape, which are increasing the share of online bookings. Owing to these points, a majority of travel Products have embraced e-commerce as a mainstay of their commercial business policy.

The Airline Product itself has to its claim many "firsts," such as:

- The first industry to use Global Distribution Systems (GDS) / Computer Reservation Systems (CRS) that extended the air travel chain to all parts of the world
- The first industry to make use of magnetic strips in Any Time Payment (ATP) cards
- The first industry to implement seamless interline travel, which allows the use of a ticket number by multiple airlines
- The first industry to go paperless, enabled by electronic airline tickets and boarding cards
- The first industry to explore Online bookings through Online Travel Agents (OTAs)
- The first industry to adopt Low Cost Carrier (LCC) model to transform domestic / short haul air markets in most parts of the world by simplifying fares and using IP channels for booking processes

These aspects have re-defined the distribution channels and have added maturity to the e-commerce travel business, in general. Airlines use e-commerce for sales through online channels such as airline website (B2C and B2B interfaces), OTAs and joint airline websites. The same applies to hotels and other travel content aggregators.

Forecasts on the Airline industry becoming the world's first Web-enabled industry look realistic as online sales, e-tickets and a range of new technologies are increasingly gaining ground. North America is the leading region in online travel, with a majority of airline bookings made on the Internet. However, due to factors such as low Internet penetration, unwillingness of airlines to experiment with newer channels of distribution, etc., other regions such as Asia, Middle East, and to a certain extent, Europe are lagging behind North America in Online travel.

These trends will become applicable to 'non air' segment of travel products, which are fast moving on to increase their size of the e-commerce pie. The quality of passengers' journey, right from booking to check-in and boarding a flight, depends on the sophistication and integration of the airlines' IT systems with Online channels. It not only enhances passengers' experience but also reduces costs for airlines. Same trends become applicable to other travel products.

E-commerce for airlines can be defined as all sales that emanate from online channels such as airline website (B2C, and B2B interfaces), OTAs (Online Travel Agents), and joint product websites. As per the Survey 2010 conducted by SITA -- airlines sold 49.9% tickets through GDSs and 26% tickets through Web channels in 2010. The survey also projected that the figures for ticket sales through GDSs and Web channels are expected to change to 37% and 41% respectively by 2013. It also concluded that online ticket sales of LCCs were much higher than the industry average, while those of the mainline airlines were well below the average.

There is a vast difference in the way LCCs and traditional airlines leverage their online channels, which has led to a huge disparity in their online ticket sales.

As per surveys, the top factors inhibiting the growth of e-commerce are:

- low lookers to bookers ratio
- complexity of airline pricing / fare model
- lack of security and management support
- Lack of Financial instrument for transaction fulfillment

Marketing distribution costs for airlines reduced from 20% to 15% in 2009, primarily because commissions were cut from 9% to 0% in most parts of the world. Further reduction may concern using technological innovations like e-ticketing, e-commerce, etc. Travel agent managers & product manufacturers round the world are adapting to these changing tenets and distribution trends and have re positioned themselves in a value based relationship for the customer and the product supplier.

In fact he has managed to negate the inhabiting factors in the e-commerce story and become the "consulting" buffer for both the customer and the product manufacturer. We see a great value for the travel agent in this role and he will continue to enhance his role in these changing dimensions, as we align to retail trends in distribution

We are seeing the emergence of a stronger value chain in this episode. Watch this space for more

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NOTE: ABOVE ARTICLE CARRIES THE VIEWS OF THE AUTHOR ONLY AND NOT THAT OF THE ASSOCIATION