

Robust expectations

TRAVTALK brings to you an industry round up, where leading players in the travel trade relook at their success in 2010 and the expectations in 2011.

VIVEK SETHI

The year 2010 was very eventful, as it pushed travel trade in India to collectively innovate and streamline business processes to stimulate demand for travel consumption in India. It also helped rationalise the priorities and profitability expecta-

tions among all the stakeholders in the travel sector.

Fortunately, the business sentiment in travel trade circles and the broader economy remained bullish throughout. As a result, all the value chains in the travel industry ended the year 2010 with impressive performance. It has been made

possible largely due to various initiatives put in by the Ministry of Tourism in close association with the travel trade, which stimulated greater demand for travel and allied products.

Read further as we apprise you about expectations across different value chains in the industry.

AGENTS

Arjun Sharma, Managing Director, Le Passage to India (LPTI)

LPTI undertook giant strides to become the first principal tourism company in India to have its own opera-



Arjun Sharma
Managing Director
Le Passage to India (LPTI)

tions in Rajasthan in the year 2010. As part of first strategic move to give further impetus to our high end inbound business, the group extended its operations beyond Jaipur in Rajasthan and opened four new offices in the cities of Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. The group is also committed to further strengthen its network of strategic business units with niche business focus. It had launched a new Strategic Business Unit

named Dakshin Routes, which will focus on marketing South India.

It is a boutique brand that will endeavour to showcase innovative products from South India. The USP of the brand is the team's in-depth local knowledge and experience in creating personalised holiday products that involve community interactions. Also in the offing is a brand for the adventure business.

Dipak Deva, CEO Destination Management, India & South Asia, Kuoni

It was reassuring to see that holidaymakers did not give up holidaying. Experiential travel has fast caught on in 2010. Our latest product offering, Explore highlights this trend in depth and was a driving factor for our business in 2010. This new product line for leisure travellers features out-of-the ordinary tours for everyone in India and are based on principles of responsible tourism, social consciousness, environmental concerns, and unique cul-



Dipak Deva
CEO Destination Management,
India & South Asia, Kuoni

tural experiences that bring diverse communities together and increase mutual understanding. In 2011, I

am looking forward to the Indian growth story remaining strong. Experiential travel is turning out to be an important part of this story and will continue to drive business. India is a destination that delivers a very high level of 'experience' and offers impressions of a particular intensity. We will be focusing our attention on issues that remain crucial to KDM's long-term success - the importance of quality, technology and training.

Vikram Madhok, Managing Director, Abercrombie & Kent India

While we end 2010 on a positive note in both market sentiment and order bookings for 2011, I must report, the recovery to the levels of 2007-08 is yet to be achieved. The jump in our order book came about in the last quarter of 2010; but we witnessed lost ground in the first 3 quarters. Reasons attributed for the spurt in business, besides 'Incredible India' finding pride of place on the travelling public itinerary,



Vikram Madhok
Managing Director
Abercrombie & Kent India

there was also rationalisation in prices as our hotelier friends realised mid-year to

correct prices going forward to be able to shore up business. Simultaneously, many of us tweaked itineraries and inclusions, making India more affordable even in the luxury space.

Even though the feeder markets are still feeling the heat of a weak economy, but 2011 promises to be an excellent year. All in all, I am happy to see 2010 come to close as a bad dream!