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Our investments in India have started delivering results: Chris Ramm, VP – APAC, Travelport

Expects to increase share in the air side of the business to 65% with Jet coming onboard from April

By P Krishna Kumar| New Delhi

Travelport is hoping to increase their market share in travel distribution in India from the current 50% to at least 65% in the coming year on account of the new signings recently with Jet Airways and national carrier Air India. Jet Airways has entered into a long-term supplier agreement with Travelport which will come into effect from April 1, 2019. Travelport sees these new partnerships as a major success of their investments in technology and forging partnerships in the Indian market.

“India is larger and is growing faster than any market in the world. We have invested significantly in this market because we realise the potential it has. In the last six months we have seen the benefits of the relationship we share strengthening further,” said Chris Ramm, Vice President – APAC, Travelport, while talking to TravelBiz Monitor on the sidelines of the CAPA Aviation Summit.

Ramm said that India is only behind the US in terms of the business volumes for Travelport and might overtake even the US soon considering the rate at which it is growing. “It will be realistically happening in the next couple of years,” he added.

Speaking on the new distribution capability (NDC) road map of Travelport, Ramm said that the company’s focus on NDC has been consistent and progressive for many years, and Travelport was the first global distribution system (GDS) to have Level 3 certification and booking capabilities and production environment. It is only going to grow in 2019, he said, citing the recent signing of Qantas. Ramm said that Travelport expects their engagement with the airline companies to grow further in 2019 considering the 2020 vision of International Air Transport Association (IATA) to make at least 20% of the content of 20 leading carriers bookable under NDC-enabled application programme interface (API) by the end of 2020.

Commenting on the Indian market and commitment of the airlines to NDC-enabled API, Ramm said that although none of the Indian carriers are currently committed to NDC-compliant API, over a period of time they will also realise the benefits in terms of increasing the revenue, etc., and move to NDC API. However, he said that India is arguably the most impressive market where leading carriers are already using API. “API has been quite successful in this market, but not NDC. But it will happen over a period of time,” he informed. He agreed that there is still confusion in markets like India, but would be addressed as more and more carriers join the NDC API.

When asked about their strategies as Indian aviation sector is moving rapidly to regional carriers riding on the regional connectivity scheme of the government, Ramm said that Travelport has demonstrated its capabilities to enable travel partners and gained a leadership position in the Indian market in the past.

Citing their partnership with IndiGo, he said that the company is always ready to assist the industry with technology support. “We will not let the leadership position in the market to go away. We will continue to invest in content and technology to stay relevant to our customers,” he stated.