

# Hotel distribution on IGAT's list

**Sunil Talreja**, Vice President - Sales, InterGlobe Air Transport (IGAT), says that an optimistic outlook and proactive business strategy helped them sail through the difficult months of the pandemic. Now, IGAT is diversifying into hotel distribution, keeping its cruise distribution plans on hold for the time being.

Nisha Verma

For InterGlobe Air Transport (IGAT), COVID-19 struck early as they represent China Eastern Airlines and the pandemic started in China. However, owing to their diverse portfolio, they managed things well. **Sunil Talreja** says, "We have been true as an organisation and have retained our people as well as engaged them. While we see that this will take a little longer than people expected, there is light at the end of the tunnel and we will be seeing some green shoots coming our way." He adds that as they represent Delta Airlines from US, which is one of the key markets for India, they are

seeing some traffic starting there. There is even traffic to the UK that has started with Virgin Atlantic.

A big responsibility as a GSA is to keep agents constantly informed and manage the establishment well. "We have a sales team, a reservations teams and a robust HR department within InterGlobe. We are keeping them motivated and training them. We have re-skilled our people and we are looking at working differently. We are doing a lot of data mining. Hence, it's not only relationships, as a lot of data-driven calls are being done with people engaging on different digital platforms with the travel trade. We still want to be in the face of the



**Sunil Talreja**  
Vice President - Sales  
InterGlobe Air Transport (IGAT)

customer in a different way, and be present in their minds when things come back," Talreja shares.

He even points out that the subject of refunds has been spoken about a lot in the last six months. "All the carriers that we represent are proactive in processing refunds and engaging with customers be-

cause that's the time our travel agent friends need us. Their

We want to  
be in the  
face of the  
customer  
differently,  
and be in their  
minds when  
things return

money is stuck, and hence we try our best to process it as soon as possible, so that liquidity remains with them. That is the faith that as airline

partners we bring to them," assures Talreja.

As their way forward, he claims that they are adopting a targeted approach. "At this point one can't reach 1500 agents, hence, one needs to be very specific and focused. Over-reaching is a fruitless exercise, hence, we have a segmented approach. By staying focused, we are just trying to work smarter than before," he claims.

With safety as their priority, Talreja says that right now, they are talking more about safety than ever before because the reason people have stopped travelling is lack of safety. "There is too much pent up demand in India right

now. As soon as people feel they are safe, they will travel," he believes. In fact, IGAT is also building confidence about India at the same time amongst its principals abroad.

Talreja also reveals that they will be focusing on the hotel distribution business despite having plans to distribute cruises earlier, which have now been put on hold. "We are very keen on diversifying further in the travel space. We are in some advanced stages of discussion, and the next thing we are looking at is hotel distribution across the globe because that gels with our business model and we will be targeting the same end customer," he reveals.