

INTRODUCTION TO TRAVEL ECOMMERCE



Travel buying continues to transition from face to face consultations to the purchase of customised travel itineraries online. Choice, the ability to compare, and immediacy of confirmation drive this consumer-led demand.

Ideas, exploring destinations, building an itinerary or choosing from a variety of available holiday packages tailored for specific needs, all through a mobile device or personal computer, has made selling online travel a highly competitive industry.

Almost 50% of all travel related purchases globally are online, with some markets approaching 80% for leisure related travel. eCommerce receipts continue to grow at over 15% annually.

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BENEFITS OF TRAVEL ECOMMERCE

E-commerce offers endless benefits for small businesses when the focus is on meeting the specific needs of the customer by customising the purchasing funnel to make the user journey as smooth as possible.

AVAILABILITY 24/7

By giving the customer the option to make an online travel purchase any time that suits them can greatly increase sales.

Convenience is key for individuals who have busy schedules, especially during business hours when travel agents are open for face to face consultations. Sometimes the decision maker needs input from other individuals to make the decision. For example, an annual family holiday would need the input of all family members going. It's crucial to offer immediate online booking when the family's excitement is running high which is most likely to happen after business hours when family discussions take place.



LESS INVASIVE

Customers are bombarded with sales pitches and advertisements on a daily basis to spend money.

This constant pressure to buy breeds customers who prefer to avoid sales representatives. Most customers are wary of being “bullied” into a sale and prefer to do research in their own time. Only when they've reached a point where they're happy with the amount of information collected, will they purchase the holiday online.

INCREASE AUDIENCE REACH

With no limitation of a brick and mortar store with office hours, any customer across the globe, irrespective of their time zone, can make an online travel booking.

If the customer needs to interact with another individual to book a holiday, correspondence can be impacted negatively by delayed intervals in the communication flow. Customers have been conditioned with immediate gratification in all aspects of their daily lives with fast food deliveries, applying financial services online and reading or watching the latest news (as they happen) online. With this fast-paced mentality, customers don't have time to spend on a lengthy communication process to book a holiday. It's all about ease and efficiency.



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

As technology evolves daily, so does the way consumers buy products online. With such advanced e-commerce development, the majority of customers expect online booking options. By offering basic e-commerce options, you'll create a level of professionalism and industry differentiation with the customer. Stay relevant - don't get left behind.



It seems that e-commerce might be the holy grail of online travel, and rightfully so, but there are still a couple of additional things to keep in mind when offering the customer the option to purchase travel products and services online. The focus should be on a 360° customer experience and not just on website features. Not focusing on all aspects of the customer experience can have a negative impact on your brand and ultimately directly decrease sales. The points below are a great start to kickstart the customer experience



EXTENDED CUSTOMER SERVICE

When offering travel products or services for purchase online, it's essential to ensure that all the necessary information the customer might need is available.

Especially if there is no 24-hour customer service available to assist. If it's not possible to have a human representative to assist the customer, there are other useful tools, such as excellently structured FAQs or chatbots that can be used to alleviate this frustration for the customer.

INDISPUTABLE TRUST & CREDIBILITY

With a large number of businesses that overpromise and underdeliver, together with fraudulent websites, it's crucial to create a feeling of trust and credibility for the customer.

Be transparent and provide all the necessary information, such as available payment methods and return policies, that the customer might need. Build a credible reputation by adding security logos, reviews and feedback from existing customers will give the customer peace of mind and build a trust relationship.



EASYOTA SOLUTIONS GROW DIRECT BOOKINGS FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM BUSINESSES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN MARKETS, ADDRESSING THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.

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We focus on 3 core disciplines



Specialised booking engines for search, book and pay processes



Competitive advantage



Itinerary building capability - affiliate sales



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