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HARMANDEEP SINGH ANAND
JAGSONS TRAVELS

HARMANDEEP SINGH ANAND AND HIS BROTHER RISHIRAJ WERE THE PIONEERS IN CENTRAL INDIA TO INTRODUCE INTERNATIONAL TICKETS OF ALL AIRLINES. GLOBAL PANORAMA SHOWCASE, WHICH THEY HAVE FORMED, IS A LARGE KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM WHICH SEES THE BEST PROFESSIONALS AND LEADERS FROM THE INDUSTRY INTERACTING WITH TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS FROM TIER II AND III CITIES

Ahead of the race



A BRILLIANT young boy from Nagpur went to London aspiring to become the first Polymer Engineer of Indian origin. With a BE (Honours) degree from the London School of Polymer Technology, University of North London (now Metropolitan University) he came back and joined his affluent family in the business of running five distilleries and bottling plants and a newly made five-star category hotel in Nagpur.

Amongst their businesses was a pioneering travel agency, Jagsons Travels, housed right next to the three-star hotel owned by them. Harmandeep Singh Anand with his brother Rishiraj was the pioneer in Central India to introduce international tickets of all airlines. Always ahead of time, they devised their own accounting software and acquired a lease line to run 'Galileo', and grew fast, professionally.

Having initiated the TAAI chapter of Nagpur, he was the Founder Chairman (2008-2011) and thereafter became the Managing Committee member of TAAI, holding the portfolios of Tourism and Service tax from 2011-2012. From 2012 - 2014 he was the Honorary Secretary General of TAAI and initiated a drive to educate the trade about service tax rules and regulations.

Keen on gathering knowledge, the brothers used to travel extensively from as early as 1995 and attend travel related exhibitions and shows across the world and they deduced that the entire trade was neglecting the super-potential markets of India - the Tier 2, 3 and 4 segment which would eventually showcase immense potential. As early as 2006, they planned to initiate a show to unveil the tourism potential of Central India and initiated this with various



tourism boards and products by inviting them to Nagpur. The brothers launched 'Showcase Jagsons' in 2013 with 30 exhibitors, bringing in over 200 buyers from all over Central India to connect with them.

Showcase Jagsons was later rechristened as Global Panorama Showcase (popularly known in the travel industry as GPS, then a Division of Jagsons Travels Pvt. Ltd.) in 2014. GPS is also an acronym of their father's name - Gulshan Pal Singh, who, they acknowledge, as a steadfast support for all their activities till date. Till 2015 it was a single city event with focus to showcase Vidarbha to potential buyers who could promote the wildlife region of Central India. In 2016 GPS got wings. With a format change, the interaction happened across five cities in India - Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Coimbatore and Chandigarh.

The response from exhibitors and trade buyers from Tier 2 and 3 cities was extraordinary and this led the brothers to expand operations to eight cities in 2018 adding Pune, Hyderabad and Lucknow to the list.

GPS saw over 600 exhibitors coming in to meet over 10,000 trade buyers, all from Tier 2 and 3 markets that were unnoticed by the trade. A revolution of sorts, Harmandeep Singh Anand's vision had been realized and GPS established itself as a premier travel and trade interaction in India.

Harmandeep says, "I was always keen on showcasing the potential of the Tier 2 and 3 markets in India. While everyone focused on metropolitan cities, I envisioned equal

potential in the tertiary markets. Thus, Rishi and I decided to do something about this."

Rishiraj Singh Anand says, "GPS is not just a trade interaction but is a knowledge platform which sees the best professionals and leaders from industry addressing seminars for the benefit of travel professionals from Tier 2 and 3 cities. We ensure reaching out to most of the agents and exhort them to attend the seminars and GPS for their own benefit."

Having grown by leaps and bounds, it was necessary for them to identify a strong IT platform, which came in the form of CVENT. A complete IT solution for exhibitions, CVENT platform is being managed single handedly by Tanushka, Harmandeep's daughter. "I could make GPS a completely paperless and eco-friendly event. We made GPS a totally electronic travel show in the world as early as 2016" says she.

Madhu Saliankar, the Executive Director responsible for sales opined that foreign tourism boards simply loved the idea and jumped at the opportunity to participate. "Tourism Malaysia, Visit Britain, New Zealand, Phillipines, Singapore, France, Germany, Holland, Zanzibar, Ras-Al-Khaimah to name a few and many others participated only to continue their presence."

A high point was the decision of Genting Cruises to launch the Dream Cruise at GPS 2017. The launch that happened in Nagpur reinforced the belief of the brothers and they started working towards a practical education module for Tier 2 and 3 travel professionals.

EDWIN - Educational Destination Workshop International emerged as a practical tutor for travel agents. In 2017, EDWIN-Ladakh happened with 50 travel professionals who were taken to Ladakh and the sellers showcased their properties and services. In 2018, EDWIN@S.E.A., Bali, UK and Ladakh took place and 2019 will see many more additions.

Says Mohit Deshpande, Executive Director, "EDWIN is an ideal opportunity created by us for tourism boards to connect directly with Tier 2 and 3 operators and showcase their wares. Having experienced the hospitality and products, the operators are most likely to recommend these destinations for tourism to their customers."





Harmandeep is however focused on his primary objective; educating and uplifting tour operators from the Tier 2 and 3 cities and towns. Thus he introduced KIT talks in 2019 in collaboration with Brand Value media. KIT - Knowledge Inspiration Training - talks will feature success stories of industry leaders and will have a substantial impact on the young entrepreneurs in smaller cities.

CEO Raju Akolkar continues to ensure participation of various tourism boards in India. "Connecting with professionals in smaller cities will ensure substantial growth in tourism. 'A' cities are already connected and smaller cities have immense potential which needs realization." He says boards are now realizing the importance of GPS and gradually coming around to participate and connect with professionals.

GPS offers a platform to conduct own seminars for trade exhibitors and this platform is extensively used by international tourism boards.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Another Executive Director Sobinder Kohli who has been focused on developing skill sets of entrepreneurs says, "We want more and more entrepreneurs to be part of EDWIN and KIT talks so that they are empowered enough to become professionals at par with the best in 'A' cities. We are keen to educate and empower them with knowledge and practical experiences so they can offer better products to their customers."

With consistent strong support of their family, the brothers continue their march to become leaders on a national level in the travel trade.

"The growth in industry will come from better interaction, innovation in offerings and partnership amongst various players."

- Harmandeep Singh Anand, Co-founder of GPS

Leading professionals in the travel trade feel that the brothers have consolidated their products at the national level and are all set to cross the national boundaries soon. When will they do it is the big question!

ECO-FRIENDLY ATTITUDE

With ever growing rampant environmental issues, GPS has come forward showing care for nature and this gets reflected in their work and events. They have introduced and adopted an eco-friendly approach by including paperless culture in their workspace. This caring attitude gets seamlessly executed as they encourage their exhibitors to upload the brochures on their website and app and no paper is allowed, saving almost 1.5 tonnes of paper per event (in 2019 about 12 events under various GPS India formats). Even at the events people are required to exchange cards electronically and the GPS app adaption at the various events is as high as 80%. Ankush Nijhawan, an Executive Director based in Delhi says, "Foreign tourism boards are impressed with the eco-friendly attitude and are in tandem with our ideology. Connecting with the tertiary markets excites them and they are now keener than ever to be part of GPS and conduct EDWIN sessions in their respective nations."

