

Govt must change policy to facilitate OTA growth

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Dhaka : Syed Almas Kabir, President of BASIS has suggested that the government must come forward and make some necessary policy changes, especially for online air ticket transaction.

Furthermore, Kabir said banks should make the online payment methods smoother, quicker and hassle-free for the customers. With PCI DSS certification, banks/OTAs will be able to provide customers with OTP hassle-free online transactions where they only required to put OTP once not every time they book an air ticket.

Kabir said, now is the time to consolidate all travel agencies working in the country and jointly emerge in the digital era of travel. There is no alternative to technology in the future of travel. You must adapt in order to progress and flourish.

He said, with unique selling points, travel agencies must excel in the digital era which has already began. OTAs can integrate augmented reality and virtual reality experiences to the customers to showcase destinations in their portals. This will excite the customers and make their e-commerce experience even better.

Smart baggage tag to track luggage can be another unique service OTAs can bring to add more value to their services. Kiosks can be placed at airports and hotels allowing travellers to receive travel services online.

Digital marketing to tap into the online oriented segment of customers is key for OTAs to penetrate the market. With technology and big data analysing, OTAs can expand their package offerings to more personalised versions depending on each client.

User friendly interface should be at the frontline of priorities for OTAs because this is the most important tool to get repeat customers, he suggested.

Also, to build trust among the customers, OTAs can opt to go an extra mile in case of refunding tickets to passengers. At times when it takes longer for the airlines to refund tickets to agencies, OTAs can consider doing it from their own expense to win customer's confidence.

“Lastly, we have the necessary manpower, skills and resources to bring a new dimension to travel services. And BASIS is ready to help OTAs do it,” Kabir assured.