IATA Calls for Systematic COVID-19 Testing Before Departure

The International Air Transport Association ▲ (IATA) called for the development and deployment of rapid, accurate, affordable, easy-tooperate, scalable and systematic COVID-19 testing for all passengers before departure as an alternative to quarantine measures in order to re-establish global air connectivity. IATA will work through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and with health authorities to implement this solution quickly.

International travel is 92% down on 2019 levels. Over half a year has passed since global connectivity was destroyed as countries closed their borders to fight COVID-19. Some governments have cautiously re-opened borders since then, but there has been limited uptake because either quarantine measures make travel impractical or the frequent changes in COVID-19 measures make planning impossible.

The economic cost of the breakdown in global connectivity makes investing in a borderopening testing solution a priority for governments. The human suffering and global economic pain of the crisis will be prolonged if the aviation industry—on which at least 65.5 million jobs depend—collapses before the pandemic ends. And the amount of government support needed to avert such a collapse is rising. Already lost revenues are expected to exceed \$400 billion and the industry was set to post a record net loss of over \$80 billion in 2020 under a more optimistic rebound scenario than has actually unfolded.

Public Opinion

IATA's public opinion research revealed strong support for COVID-19 testing in the travel process. Some 65% of travelers surveyed agreed that quarantine should not be required if a person tests negative for COVID-19.

Passengers' support for testing is evident in the following survey results:

84% agreed that testing should be required of all travelers

88% agreed that they are willing to undergo testing as part of the travel process

In addition to opening borders, public opinion research also indicated that testing will help to rebuild passenger confidence in aviation. Survey respondents identified the implementation of COVID-19 screening measures for all passengers as effective in making them feel safe, second only to mask-wearing. And, the availability of rapid COVID-19 testing is among the top three signals that travelers will look to for reassurance that travel is safe

Practicalities

IATA's call is to develop a test that meets the criteria of speed, accuracy, affordability and ease of use and that could be administered systematically under the authority of governments following agreed international standards. IATA is pursuing this position through ICAO, which is leading efforts to develop and implement global standards for the safe operation of international air services amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evolution of COVID-19 testing is progressing rapidly on all parameters-speed, accuracy, affordability, ease of use and scalability. Deployable solutions are expected in the coming weeks. COVID-19 testing before departure is the preferred option as it will create a "clean" environment throughout the travel process. Testing on arrival dents passenger confidence with the potential for quarantine at destination in the event of a positive result.

There will be many practical challenges to integrating testing into the travel process establishing the protocols to safely manage large-scale testing across all industry stakeholders.

Prioritization

Air transport is not the only sector with a critical need for testing. "The needs of medical personnel must be the first priority. And we recognize that educational institutions and workplaces will also be vying for effective mass testing capabilities. Policymakers must consider the economic stimulus that only aviation can provide when prioritizing their testing resources. For example, re-establishing global connectivity will preserve travel and tourism jobs which account for 10% of global employment and have been hardest hit in this crisis. This is on top of the critical role that aviation plays in facilitating global trade and business.

News Courtesy: www.iata.org



Editorial

Corona Virus and the Travel Industry

All businesses in the country have been impacted by COVID-19 in one way or another, but few sectors have been as hard hit, or face a long road to recovery, mainly the airline and travel agency industry. Covid-19's massive impact on the travel industry continues to present unique challenges and new opportunities for airports, airlines, and travel/tourism companies. It's the fact that Covid-19 has become an existential threat for the aviation industry without 'any product to sell'. Travel demand has dropped globally during the pandemic, with every



region seeing a collapse in the travel and tourism business. While some people are less eager to travel because of fears over the virus, others who would be willing to venture — with precautions such as masks — are delaying trips because of the methods being used to control the pandemic, such as quarantines and blanket travel restrictions. It seems that if anybody is going to survive, maybe the big organizations with deep pockets, will stand a pretty big chance, otherwise, we see most of them are collapsing day by day. Nearly 200 million jobs in the travel industry could be worldwide the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new estimate by the World Travel and Tourism Council.

As stated above, travel agencies are facing an "existential threat" as continuing border closures, suspension of airports and aircraft operations, with business analysts predicting a big set back to the aviation industry to survive again. Thousands of planes have been grounded for the last six months. Even the lockdown has been lifted in many of the countries, the normal life has not come back, and the aviation space is continuing with restrictions.

We have seen some narrow developments of resumption of flight operations but with significant reductions in passenger numbers, therefore, it has resulted in flights being canceled or planes flying empty between airports, which in turn massively reduced revenues for airlines and forced many airlines to lay off employees or declare bankruptcy. Some have attempted to avoid refunding canceled trips to diminish their losses which in turn affecting the travel agents those supposed to refund the money

to the passengers as they are still not received these refunds from airlines, facing tough scenes from the passengers.

We will travel again - but differently

Aviation's post-pandemic recovery will require a new level of cooperation across airlines, airports, air navigation organizations, partners, security agencies, support services, commercial and retail services, regulators, and customers. We will travel again, but it will not be the same. Even if borders reopen, airports back to normal and the resumption of flights, travelers must trust that boarding a plane is safe and that they will be able to enter the destination country. New health safety protocols and systems will need to be in place, and these have yet to be defined as given below:-

"For the industry to recover, travelers will need to feel safe and confident that their health is protected"

Touchless travel

The most immediate and perhaps most visible change will be a shift to touchless travel from the airport to hotel check-in or the passenger homes. Even with strict cleaning protocols in place, exchanging travel documents and touching surfaces through check-in, security, border control, and boarding still represent a significant risk of infection for both travelers and staff. Despite these hassles, although the present may seem challenging for travel and tourism, most experts expect the industry to recover in 2021. While this recovery may look different from the industry pre-COVID, people's desire to travel is unlikely to disappear. In particular, experts foresee an increase in leisure travel and visits to friends and family as citizens seek to unwind and reconnect socially after prolonged periods of isolation.

Collaboration should be the key

It is not yet clear when the pandemic will be over, however many governments are already trying to restore health to national economies. This means deciding which industries should go back to normal operations, and redefining what "normal" means for each industry, including travel and tourism. In this time of unprecedented change, governments and industry have a unique opportunity to redefine travel and build a more sustainable, agile, and resilient industry. This will not be possible without collaboration. Governments around the world must align their policies and work hand in hand with the aviation sector to revive Travel & Tourism, so we can restore jobs and help revive the global economy when we see the aircraft in the skies again. In brief, reopening travel and tourism-related businesses and managing their recovery in a way that is safe, attractive for travelers and tourists, and economically viable will require coordination at a level not seen

Mantra

Corporate Arena

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Our trips now include a specially trained and dedicated Well-being Director to provide additional support and assistance during your travels. The Wellbeing Director takes a proactive approach to your welfare and dedicates their attention to the latest hygiene and physical distancing protocols throughout your trip. Up to date with the latest regulations from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), World Health Organisation (WHO) and local government authorities, they are always available to overcome any concerns

All of our premium escorted journeys include services to ensure your journey with us puts you at ease, knowing that we've already taken care of all of the details. Services include airport transfers, personal radio headsets, luggage handling, complimentary WiFi and more. No matter where you go with us, you can rest assured that you will travel in comfort and in style.

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Caesars Holidays, one of the largest holidays management companies in Kuwait, has expanded its portfolio by adding the quality services of Insight Vacation and Luxury Gold as GSA for Kuwait. Both brands are part of Caesars Holidays, one of the global leading tour operators.

Caesars Holidays now promotes and sells the products and services of Insight Vacation /Luxury Gold, to cater for the different needs of Kuwaiti and expatriate customers in the Kuwait market.

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Covid-19: A plan for tourism to survive, revive and thrive

To travel or not to travel? That is the question.

International travel came to almost a complete halt after the COVID-19 disease spread from one country to another in quick succession, forcing nations in its wake to shut doors on foreigners.



The World Tourism Organization said that the number of international tourist trips could dwindle by 60% to 80% in 2020. The dire prediction is in stark contrast to an earlier rosy assessment made before the eruption of the disease that global tourism is poised to grow by 3% to 4% this year.

It would have consequences for the world economy because the tourism industry has about a 10% share in the world's GDP and jobs market. It accounted for 330 million direct and indirect jobs worldwide in 2019.

Traveling, whether for fun or business, involves a whole range of sectors, from the small tour operators to big airlines, hotels and restaurants, cruise operators, local guides, and gift shops. As tourism dropped, all these segments came under the long shadow of the virus.

But even the murkiest situations are not without hope. And so should be the case of the post-pandemic tourism industry. As hundreds of millions of people have been forced to live under lockdown, the urge to move out and travel will be the strongest once the restrictions are lifted. The rush will create competition, and various companies might also offer more friendly travel packages.

Smart nations will use the opportunity and plan to attract more visitors once things get better. So, it is time to prepare for the future and capitalize on the new demand.

According to a recent study – countries are developing recovery mechanisms to support the tourism industry. "These include considerations on lifting travel restrictions, restoring traveler confidence, and rethinking the tourism sector for the future."

The study recommends a comprehensive tourism recovery package that includes stimulating demand with new safe and clean labels for the sector and information apps for visitors and domestic tourism promotion campaigns.

It means that tourism can rebound, but it needs a sustained and well-targeted policy. Since it is easier to convince domestic tourists to start visiting places of their choice, countries should first revive the local industry before attracting foreign tourists.

The almost complete suspension of international travel has been one of the major elements of the quarantines introduced during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While this has brought misery for those who love to travel, it's brought decimation for airlines, hotels, and tourism operators.

With quarantines easing and flight schedules reforming, tourism is showing signs of returning. But for the industry to return as a force for good for both the economy and the environment, we cannot return to business as usual. Here are four key recovery priorities for the tourism sector:

1. Local tourism

When tourism resumes, domestic travel will be the focus, putting destinations under the dangers of mass tourism, in which the number of incoming tourists exceeds a destination's capacity to hold them.



Viet Nam will be the first country in South East Asia to resume domestic travel, with discounted packages and promotions aimed at building demand. Other countries are also focusing on a few prime locations for attracting tourists. Rebuilding the tourism sector and providing tourists with rewarding experiences must be done by exploring alternatives to mass tourism, such as sustainable rural tourism, nature tourism, and theme-based circuit tourism.

2. Ecological protection

Unguarded protected areas and the diverted attention of governments has led to a rise in nature-based crime. With the decline in wildlife tourism,



revenue streams for conservation have also dried up. Stringent laws for biodiversity protection and illegal activities are needed. To protect the ecological balance from tourism, governments can consider:

Tourism highlights

increased focus and investment in capacity building and training; inclusion of sustainability taxes for tourists; protecting the sensitive community and Indigenous People's areas from exploitation; and including scientific frameworks for policy formulation.

3. Improved infrastructure

Infrastructure for the waste management needs to be improved and all public places must have provisions for the safe disposal of bio-medical waste.



Increasing access to clean water and sanitation services, along with the promotion of good hygiene practices like hand washing, would also help to stop the spread of communicable diseases. Incentives must also be made to internet service providers to improve connectivity in tourist destinations.

4. Rethinking flying

Tax reforms must be done, with consideration of tax levies for frequent flyers. Many aviation companies are nearing bankruptcy, leading to an



increased demand for government bailouts. However, this funding must come with conditions prioritizing environmental improvements. In France, for example, a €7 billion bailout for Air France came with the requirement for it to become the "greenest airline in the world." Other steps can include retiring inefficient aircraft, reducing the number of flights while demand is low, and providing carbon efficiency information for flyers.

Taken together, these strategies can help ensure that policy decisions are informed by careful and scientific formulations. Protecting the key assets of a region—the very reason for tourist arrivals—is a fundamental pillar of any recovery, ensuring we don't solve one problem by creating another. When planned and implemented strategically, tourism as a sector can match up to its potential of being a driver of social, economic, and environmental welfare.

Cruise Lines resuming their operations

Cruise Line Industry has very strict health and safety protocols that has allowed the cruise line to successfully resume its operations smoothly. The Cruise Officials reiterated the depth of the efforts the industry has taken to develop health and safety protocols. The safety protocols includes COVID-19 testing, protected shore excursions, onboard sanitation and health screenings. Cruise Line has worked to encompass every aspect of the guest's journey from

the moment of booking, embarkation and life on board through to disembarkation and the return home, while preserving the uniqueness of the guest experience. With all of these measures in place, Cruise line aim to offer the guests "the safest possible holiday."



Bijoy John - Cruise Specialist - Cruise Center

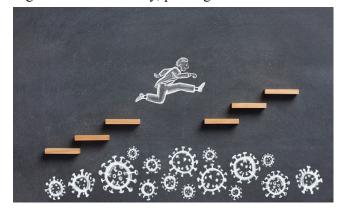
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COVID-19: Fast decision-making helps travel companies survive

The Company Album

The state of the travel industry

The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and humanitarian crisis, and it is also an economic shock. The outbreak has initiated an undeniable call to action for the travel industry to now rapidly assess these fast-changing developments, and the ensuing impact on their people, their customers, and their organizations. Currently, passenger travel and tourism



is a public health hazard as well as a global economic problem. Travel companies are now making rapid decisions that will affect their very survival.

What now? Reduce, restructure, rebuild.

The fall in demand and closure of borders has seen the travel industry reduce at an unprecedented pace. Cruises have stopped, many airlines have suspended all scheduled service and hotel occupancy is low. The industry is starting to restructure—and the fortunate travel companies will pass from restructuring to rebuilding for a new normal.

Next steps for travel companies

Because passenger air travel is the fastest vector for virus transmission, it is the most dangerous path for a resurgence of this economic crisis. Governments are recognizing this at different speeds, but the end outcome is clear: most, if not all, borders will be shut to people for as long as the virus circulates. The recovery for this crisis will only start when measures have been taken and travel is judged safe. Domestic passenger aviation will resume first, followed by international travel on a bi-lateral basis. When proven safe, national aviation systems will open back up to each other and the flow of people will again begin.

Government support is coming, with strings attached

Government support to economies is beginning in earnest. Travel companies need to be prepared to address the demands that will be placed on them when they accept the funding, irrespective of the source. Assuring public safety, creating wins for people and other themes can help travel companies 'reset' and potentially come out better than ever. The determination of those strings will be political, and the industry still has time to work with politicians and others to shape those demands for stronger, safer, and more resilient travel.

We anticipate these "strings attached" will be focused on creating "a new normal" for our industry, centered on the following themes:

1. Assure public safety

The public is understandably wary about travel now, and they need some assurance and instruction on how and where to return safely to traveling. We expect important regulatory bodies and travel industry participants to work together to respond to this health crisis in the same as they have to others: by engineering towards safety with prudent risk mitigation techniques.

In the short term, it is conceivable to expect health screenings just as we have security screenings in airports. Trusted, robust passenger information will be vital to helping ensure short-term traveler confidence and long-term public health.

What are the implications?

The industry members will need to work together to deliver personalized and relevant messages in coordination with regional health organizations as those organizations communicate that it is safe to return to travel. It is also very likely that the industry will be asked to gather and share precise traveler details and globally monitor macroeconomic, geopolitical, and environmental events, and asked to put formal, predefined contingency plans in place and then continuously update them based on these developments. In the event of a crisis, the industry should plan for the expectation that it will seamlessly coordinate a response and communicate corrective actions to customers.

2. "Wins" for the travelling public

Travel today is optimized for operational efficiency. All travel businesses are likely going to restart from near zero—will they just scale back what they had or rebuild it better?

While cost competition will always exist, crowded cabins may be perceived as a health risk for some time. Customers may expect airlines, hotels, and cruises to implement hospital-like hygienic practices for every change of flight, room, and cabin, and expectations around cancellation policies and refunds will surely change.

What are the implications?

Airlines will need to radically rethink their business model towards "customer-oriented" rather than efficiency-oriented. The average cost of delivering a trip will undoubtedly rise to meet new standards which means that back office cost reduction and efficiency will be required. AI-assisted customer engagement and a simplification of legacy systems, fare rules, and operational procedures will be required to help enable Travel companies to respond in a coordinated and aligned fashion to similar incidents in the future.

3. Truly human employment

The workforce in today's travel industry is not organized in a way that makes it easy to respond to events that generate over- or under-capacity. In the event of a crisis, companies lack the cross-training capabilities and scalable infrastructure to resize and shape the workforce up or down as needed and as a result, they can be forced to lower service level and/or reduce the workforce.

What are the implications?

Companies will be expected to take greater responsibility for the care of their people in both good and bad times. They will be expected to have plans in place that take into consideration the cultural and legal differences across regions. They will need the ability to shift large portions of their workforce from one role to another and enable them to work remotely.

4. High-speed one order

Travel bookings are currently disconnected across suppliers. While technology is available to stitch together the legs of an itinerary across air, car, and hotel, there is little to no information sharing to create an end-to-end transparency of the journey and to smooth out the handoffs between suppliers. This situation affects the customer experience under normal travel circumstances but has made it even harder for the industry to mitigate and respond to catastrophic events like COVID-19.

The underlying technology that supports the industry has evolved into a web of integrations that are limiting growth and creating barriers to better

service that make it less constructive to generate tourism in some markets.

What are the implications?

The successful rebound of the travel industry means that industry members need to regain the ground lost by COVID-19. This will require cooperation across the industry to make it as easy to purchase a two-week tour of a remote region as it is to purchase a round trip ticket between two major cities. It means that a single standard like "One Order" that evens the playing field for all markets to benefit must be established.

5. Anti-trust protection

The fabric of the travel industry will change significantly as a result of COVID-19. Expansion of services, mergers, and acquisitions will likely be part of the new normal. The number of competitors in each market may decline. This means that companies must be ready to rapidly and effectively adjust to market changes.

What are the implications?

The travel industry will be expected to maintain and ideally improve access to a wide selection of fairly-priced travel services. They will need to be able to expand and/or wind down parts of their operations. Furthermore, government participation or bail outs may lead to the introduction of "open access" and "fair price" regulation, creating the foundation to operate and regulate airlines as effective public concessions in a competitive marketplace. All of this must be done in a transparent way and adherent to antitrust laws globally.

6. Better than ever

Throughout history, crises like COVID-19, while adversely affecting an industry, have also been the driver of innovation and change. In the 2008/2009 automotive bailout, governments placed higher emissions and capital standards on the industry. The travel industry must be prepared to work in an environment where sustainability and operational requirements will become more stringent, and diversification into adjacent business models becomes even more important.

What are the implications?

Travel companies will need to carve out headroom in their operating model to foster innovation. They will need to build an innovation engine that runs in parallel to their everyday operations. They will need to show improvement in their contribution to the natural environment and human performance while also demonstrating they have a business model that can sustain the effects of another event like COVID-19.

Looking beyond the immediate future

The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in dramatic disruptions to Travel leading to new paradigms and many cases, permanent shifts. Companies will be forced to make quick decisions to ensure short-term confidence and longer-term business sustainability. What will be needed to meet the urgency of today and the demands of tomorrow? All Travel companies must immediately decide how they will improve in the six key themes we've outlined and address how to re-size and re-engineer their organization for a new normal. Many will apply new technologies to facilitate immediate responses, but these could pave the way for longer-term strategies that improve overall resilience and competitiveness.

Article Courtesy: Accenture

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The Loyalty Effect: Hidden Force behind the growth of Caesars Travel Group (An interaction with a Senior Staff)

Joyal employees are always an asset for our company. In this edition, we would like to spare an interactive session with one of our very senior staff, Mr. Gihan Attapattu, Branch In Charge - Caesars Travel Co. W.L.L., Jaleeb 1 Branch, who led a way to different developmental activities of our organization.

As a first question, would like to know about your educational & professional background?

After completing my studies at St. Sebastian's College Sri Lanka I got opportunity to work at Ceyline Shipping company as a Computer operator & after 2 years I joined at Browns Group Air Services (GSA for Continental Airlines , Scandinavian Airlines & China Southern Airlines) also as a Computer operator. During this period I have completed my Diploma in Airline Ticketing & Reservations at International Airline Ticketing Academy Sri Lanka. after this course I changed my career as a Ticketing & Reservations officer at Browns Group Air Services where I worked for 7 years before coming to Kuwait & joining at Caesars Travel.

What makes you passionate to travel domain?

As I mentioned above while I was working at Browns Group as computer operator I got exposure to how Airline Industry works & how interesting it is. That's the turning point for me to shift my career to Airline trade.

How was your first job experience in this travel domain?

Actually it was so interesting than I have expected & I can say I have learnt from zero to professional level of issuing tickets for global travel in my first job at Browns Group Air Services.

How is your experience with our company, better you can share your likes and dislikes?

I have joined Caesars Travel on 01 Sep 2005 as a Ticketing & Reservations officer & still I remember my interview with Mr. Kumar (CEO) in Sri Lanka & the information given by him about Kuwait Travel Industry, specially potential for growth in Kuwait. I



Gihan Atapattu - Branch In Charge - Jaleeb 1 Branch - Caesars Travel Co. W.L.L.

must thank here to Mr. Kumar for selecting me & making me to be part of this company. I also recollect here the guidance given by Mr. Stanley Fernandes (Manager) & Mr. Roy Thampy (Supervisor) during my initial days at Caesars & thank them for the same. To be honest since I have joined Caesars & until now I never felt any dislikes other than likes.

How was your career ladder in Caesars as you are one of the senior employees?

I started my career in Caesars as Reservations officer and within 6 years I was promoted as Counter Supervisor. After 5 years again I was promoted as Branch In Charge. I feel that I have been bestowed with more than I deserved and always grateful for the Company.

What are your major achievements and contributions to our company till date?

After joining at Jaleeb Branch, I have brought lots of Sri Lankan clients which has contributed for the growth of sales & familiarized Caesars travel among Sri Lankan community to some extent.

What is your expectation regarding travel domain in future?

Even though, at present the travel Industry is at setback due to pandemic, I hope in the future it will prosper again.

Travel market is getting more challengeable due to Corona outbreak, as a manager what is your plan or idea to tackle the situation.

As travel market is becoming more challengeable due to pandemic, I'm planning to find opportunity to do maximum within the available resources

Who is your role model and what is your dream?

I don't have anybody as role model & I always want to become a better person in my career & in my life too.

What is advice to the new staff who joined Caesars?

Caesars Travel is well known reputed organization in Kuwait and this will be the best platform for everyone joining at Caesars, and I advise especially to be loyal, sincere & hard working, then your future will prosper in this Trade.



HOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF "expressions"

By sending your submissions to "expressions" newsletter, including articles, photographs, aviation updates, personal information which can be released in our newsletter, etc. The next issue will be out in January 2021. Please send us your article or similar texts as soon as you can and it should reach us on or before 15th December, 2020. The contribution Articles should be submitted in Word format. All articles which are selected for publication will be proof read for content, spelling and grammatical errors. Also please note that it is not mandatory that these articles will be published in "expressions" newsletter as it is strictly subject to screening before publishing. Furthermore, we may make minor editorial changes or correct spelling mistakes. To establish the identity of the authors, your name will be published with your article.

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