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Travel News Digest Exclusive interview with Mr. Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director, RezLive.com

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Brief from rezlive.com

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Good morning Mr. Shah, it's a pleasure to have you with us today at Travel News Digest. Thank you for your time.

Please tell us a bit about your journey at RezLive.com, the vision and mission of the company

In 1999, I embarked on my journey in the travel industry as an outbound tour operator specializing in short-haul destinations. In 2001, Along with my father we established The Travel Designer Inc.'s first outbound consolidation division, Designer Packages, which focused on offering core destinations such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia to our travel partners. With several years of experience in the industry, I later diversified the business by launching RezLive.com.

RezLive.com is a leading B2B global travel wholesaler that offers a wide range of travel products and services to travel agents and tour operators around the world. Rezlive.com was founded in 2007 and has since expanded its reach to over 35+ countries, with offices in Dubai, India, Philippines, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The vision of RezLive.com is to become the leading global travel wholesaler by providing innovative travel solutions and exceptional customer service. The company's mission is to empower travel agents and tour operators with the best tools and technology to help them grow their business and provide their clients with unforgettable travel experiences.

To achieve its vision and mission, RezLive.com offers a range of travel products and services, including hotel bookings, transfers and sightseeing. The company also invests in the latest technology and digital tools to enhance the customer experience and streamline the booking process.

In addition to its core business, RezLive.com is committed to social responsibility and sustainability. The company supports various charitable initiatives and encourages responsible tourism practices that benefit local communities and the environment.

Overall, RezLive.com's vision and mission are centered on delivering exceptional value and service to its customers while promoting sustainable tourism practices and making a positive impact in the world.

How large is your customer network in India and worldwide?

RezLive.com is a leading B2B global travel wholesaler that serves travel agents and tour operators in over 35+ countries around the world. With above 15+ years of Online

presence Rezlive.com has a wide network of travel partners that includes small and medium-sized travel agents as well as large travel management companies. RezLive.com has also received several industry awards for its exceptional customer service and innovative travel solutions, which further speaks to the strength of its customer network.

Can you please share insights on RezLive's varied product portfolio and services?

RezLive.com offers a diverse range of products and services to meet the needs of travel agents and tour operators worldwide. Here are some examples of the company's offerings:

1. Hotel Bookings: RezLive.com offers a wide selection of hotels, from budget to luxury, across the world.
2. Transfers and Sightseeing: The company also provides airport transfers, sightseeing tours, and other ground transportation services in multiple destinations.

Overall, RezLive.com's diverse product portfolio and services are designed to make it easy for travel agents and tour operators to create and sell customized travel packages that meet their clients' needs and preferences.

What's new and what can users look forward to in the coming months?

RezLive.com has a history of innovation and continuously introducing new features and services to enhance its offering. In the past, the company has launched new products and services, expanded its network of suppliers, and introduced technology enhancements to improve user experience and streamline the booking process for travel agents and tour operators.

RezLive.com's commitment to technology and customer service suggests that users can expect new and innovative solutions in the coming months to help them meet their clients' evolving needs and expectations. This may include new product offerings, advanced booking tools, and enhanced customer support services. Travel agents and tour operators can stay up-to-date on the latest news and developments from RezLive.com by subscribing to the company's newsletters or following its social media channels.

What makes RezLive.com stand apart from other B2B reservation platforms?

RezLive.com is a leading B2B global travel wholesaler that offers a unique value proposition and competitive advantages that set it apart from other B2B reservation platforms. Here are some of the key factors that distinguish RezLive.com from its competitors:

1. Wide range of products: RezLive.com offers a diverse range of travel products and services that include hotels, sightseeing and transfer. This comprehensive product portfolio allows travel agents and tour operators to create customized travel packages for their clients.
2. Get More: RezRewards and RezVault are two innovative features offered by RezLive.com, designed to enhance the travel booking experience and provide added benefits to our travel partners.
 - RezRewards: RezRewards is an exclusive B2B loyalty program offered by RezLive.com to reward our travel partners, wherein they earn points for every single reservation they make through the platform. These points can then be redeemed for a variety of exciting rewards, through the dedicated RezRewards store.
 - RezVault: RezVault is a secure and convenient payment feature provided by RezLive.com. It allows travel partners to top up their RezLive.com account, eliminating the need to enter payment information for every reservation, for current or future booking, and enjoy a seamless and expedited booking process, saving time and effort.
3. Global network: RezLive.com has a strong global presence, with a network of travel partners in over 35+ countries. This enables travel agents and tour operators to access a wide range of products and services across multiple destinations.
4. Competitive pricing: RezLive.com offers competitive pricing on its products and services, which enables travel agents and tour operators to offer affordable travel packages to their clients.
5. Technology: RezLive.com has invested heavily in technology, offering a user-friendly interface that simplifies the booking process for travel agents and tour operators. The platform also provides real-time inventory updates and instant confirmation of bookings.

6. Customer service: RezLive.com is known for its exceptional customer service, with a dedicated team of travel experts that provides support to travel agents and tour operators around the clock.

Overall, RezLive.com's wide range of products, global network, competitive pricing, technology, and customer service make it a preferred choice for travel agents and tour operators looking for a reliable B2B reservation platform.

Please tell us a bit more about XML Connect.

We do offer XML Connect through XMLHUB.com which is a powerful and flexible API integration solution offered by RezLive.com that allows travel agents and tour operators to connect with the platform's vast inventory of hotel product.

XMLHUB.com, provides a seamless and secure connection between the travel agent's or tour operator's booking engine and RezLive.com's system, enabling them to access real-time inventory, prices, and availability information.

With XMLHUB.com solution, travel agents and tour operators can customize their product offerings to meet the unique needs of their clients. Additionally, the API provides instant confirmation of bookings, reducing the time and effort required to manage reservations.

XMLHUB.com also offers a range of advanced features and functionalities, such as dynamic pricing, promotional pricing, and booking cancellation and modification capabilities. These features allow travel agents and tour operators to optimize their pricing strategies and offer competitive rates to their clients.

Overall, XMLHUB.com is a powerful and versatile API integration solution that provides travel agents and tour operators with access to RezLive.com's vast inventory of travel products and services, while also offering advanced features and functionalities to help them streamline their booking processes and grow their businesses.

How has the pandemic changed travelers' preferences and expectations?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the travel industry, and it has significantly changed travelers' preferences and expectations. Here are some of the key changes that have been observed:

1. Health and safety concerns: The pandemic has made travelers much more concerned about health and safety when traveling. Travelers now expect higher standards of cleanliness, sanitation, and hygiene from hotels, airlines, and other

travel service providers.

2. **Flexibility:** Travelers now expect more flexibility when it comes to booking and cancellation policies. With uncertainty surrounding travel restrictions and quarantine requirements, travelers want to be able to change or cancel their travel plans without incurring significant penalties or fees.
3. **Domestic travel:** The pandemic has led to a surge in domestic travel, with travelers opting for destinations that are closer to home and within driving distance. Many travelers are also seeking out less crowded and more remote destinations that offer greater opportunities for outdoor activities.
4. **Sustainable tourism:** The pandemic has highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism, and travelers are now more aware of the impact that their travel choices can have on the environment and local communities. Many travelers are now seeking out eco-friendly and socially responsible travel options.
5. **Digitalization:** The pandemic has accelerated the trend towards digitalization in the travel industry. Travelers now expect to be able to book and manage their travel plans online, and they are increasingly using mobile apps and other digital tools to stay informed and connected while traveling.

Overall, the pandemic has led to significant changes in travelers' preferences and expectations, and travel service providers will need to adapt to these changes to remain competitive in the post-pandemic world.

What is your approach towards simplifying the post-pandemic travel needs for Indian travel agents?

Overall, the key to simplifying post-pandemic travel needs for Indian travel agents is to provide clear and updated information, offer flexible booking and cancellation policies, provide personalized travel recommendations, ensure health and safety measures, and offer digital solutions:

1. **Providing clear and updated information:** The pandemic has led to frequent changes in travel restrictions and regulations. Travel companies should provide clear and updated information on travel restrictions, entry requirements, health and safety measures, and quarantine rules to help travel agents and their clients make informed travel decisions.
2. **Offering flexible booking and cancellation policies:** With uncertainty still

surrounding travel plans, travelers are looking for more flexible booking and cancellation policies. Travel companies can simplify post-pandemic travel needs by offering flexible policies that allow travelers to change or cancel their plans without incurring significant penalties or fees.

3. Providing personalized travel recommendations: With changing traveler preferences, travel companies can simplify post-pandemic travel needs by providing personalized travel recommendations based on the traveler's interests, travel history, and budget.
4. Ensuring health and safety measures: Post-pandemic travel needs require a focus on health and safety measures. Travel companies should ensure that their travel partners, such as hotels and airlines, have implemented strict health and safety measures to protect travelers' health.
5. Offering digital solutions: The pandemic has accelerated the trend towards digitalization in the travel industry. Travel companies can simplify post-pandemic travel needs by offering digital solutions that allow travel agents to book, manage and communicate with clients online.

What are the various travel trends you have seen emerging for 2023 and beyond?

The travel industry is ever-evolving, and keeping up with the latest trends is crucial for businesses to stay relevant and attract customers. As we approach 2023, several travel trends are emerging, shaped by the pandemic, evolving traveler preferences, and technological advancements. These trends offer insights into what travelers are looking for and can guide businesses in tailoring their offerings to meet these evolving demands.

1. Sustainable and responsible tourism: Travelers are becoming more conscious of their impact on the environment and local communities, leading to a rise in sustainable tourism practices and a focus on responsible travel.
2. Personalized travel experiences: The demand for personalized and customized travel experiences will continue to grow, with travelers seeking unique and authentic experiences that match their interests and preferences.
3. Technology-driven travel: The use of digital technology, including AI and machine learning, will enhance the travel experience, from trip planning to in-

destination activities.

4. Local travel: There will be a greater focus on exploring lesser-known destinations and immersing oneself in local culture and experiences.
5. Health and wellness: The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a greater focus on health and wellness, with travelers seeking destinations and experiences that promote relaxation, self-care, and mindfulness.
6. Workation: Remote work has become more mainstream, leading to the emergence of "workations" where travelers can work remotely while enjoying a vacation experience.
7. Solo travel: The popularity of solo travel is expected to continue, with more travelers seeking the freedom and independence of solo travel experiences.
8. Multi-generational travel: Multi-generational travel, where families and groups of different ages travel together, will continue to be a trend in 2023 and beyond.

You recently participated in ATM 2023. What was your target segment at the show? Which segments would you be focusing on going forward?

ATM is a yearly event for us and RezLive.com has been participating in ATM since last 12 years now. Rezlive.com is a B2B product and deals with regional and global travel partners i.e. Travel Agents, Tour Operators, DMC, Wholesale Travel Companies. Going forward our strategy is very simple i.e. to focus on each segment and offer them something MORE i.e. RezVault (Digital Payment Solution) & RezRewards (Earn points on each reservation).

What are your marketing and promotional plans for 2023-24?

Ultimately, the marketing and promotional plans for RezLive.com would depend on our overall business strategy, market positioning, and customer preferences and vary from market to market, but in general we do certain standard set of activities such as:

1. Digital marketing
2. Content marketing
3. Partnership and co-branding
4. Trade shows and events
5. Enhanced RezRewards program

What is your message to the Indian travel trade?

Firstly, it is important for the Indian travel trade to continue adapting to the changing landscape of the travel industry, particularly in light of the pandemic. This could involve implementing new health and safety protocols, embracing digital technology, and diversifying product offerings to cater to changing customer preferences.

Secondly, building strong partnerships and relationships with customers is key to success in the travel industry. By understanding the needs and preferences of their customers, the Indian travel trade can offer tailored products and services that meet their unique requirements.

Lastly, with the rise of sustainable travel and responsible tourism, there is an opportunity for the Indian travel trade to embrace more sustainable practices and offer eco-friendly travel options. This could involve partnering with sustainable tourism organizations, offering sustainable tours and activities, and promoting responsible tourism practices.

Overall, the Indian travel trade has the potential to thrive by staying adaptable, customer-focused, and socially responsible in the years to come.

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