

# In Conversation with Mr. Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director of Travel Designer Group



## ■ ROHIT HANGAL

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As the Group Managing Director of Travel Designer Group, which was founded in 1999, Mr. Jaal Shah is a first-generation entrepreneur with over 20 years of expertise in the travel industry.

With the introduction of products like Designer Packages and Designer Indya, he broadened the group activity following a few years of practical experience. Furthermore, he founded RezLive.com, the award-winning global reservation system that has placed the world at travel agents' fingertips. In addition to promoting new high-tech company projects, he oversaw transforming Travel Designer Group into a strategic think tank.

RezLive.com, the flagship product of Travel Designer Group, was first introduced in India in 2007 and is currently one of the biggest and fastest-growing online B2B travel portals in the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. RezLive.com started small in Ahmedabad, India, and now employs more than 250 people across 32 offices in 18 different countries.

Voyager's World spoke with Mr. Jaal Shah on the future of travel technology and the changes he envisaged in the coming days.

### What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the online hotel/travel distribution industry in India today?

In the rapidly evolving landscape of online hotel and travel distribution

in India, B2B platforms encounter a myriad of challenges that demand innovative solutions and strategic navigation. Competition, rife within the industry, and experts' pressure on pricing dynamics necessitate continuous innovation to carve out a distinctive market presence. Moreover, the labyrinth of regulatory requirements, spanning from GST compliance to stringent data protection laws, adds layers of complexity to business operations, demanding meticulous attention to legal nuances.

### How does RezLive.com differentiate itself from competitors in the Indian and GCC markets?

Rezlive.com boasts an expansive inventory of accommodations and travel services across India and the GCC region. With a vast network of partner hotels, resorts, and travel suppliers, Rezlive.com offers unparalleled choices and flexibility to travel partners, ensuring they find the perfect accommodations and travel experiences tailored to their preferences.

Rezlive.com leverages cutting-edge technology to enhance the booking experience for travel partners and streamline operations for travel partners. The platform's user-friendly interface, advanced search functionality, and robust booking engine empower travel partners to seamlessly browse, compare, and book accommodations and travel services with ease. Additionally, Rezlive.com continuously invests in technological innovation to stay ahead of the curve and deliver superior value to its travel partners.

Rezlive.com prides itself on delivering exceptional customer service tailored to the unique needs of each client. With a dedicated team of travel experts and customer support professionals, Rezlive.com offers personalized assistance and guidance throughout the booking process, ensuring a seamless and stress-free experience for travel partners.

Rezlive.com nurtures strategic partnerships with leading hotels and travel suppliers in both India and the GCC markets. These partnerships enable Rezlive.com to negotiate competitive rates, access exclusive deals, and offer special promotions to travel partners enhancing the overall value proposition and competitiveness of the platform.

### What strategies have you implemented to adapt to the changing landscape of online travel booking, particularly considering recent global events like the COVID-19 pandemic?

Understanding the uncertainty faced by travellers during the pandemic, Rezlive.com has introduced flexible booking policies that allow travel partners to modify or cancel their bookings with ease. These flexible policies provide peace of mind to travellers and enhance their confidence in booking through Rezlive.com

In alignment with global health guidelines and recommendations, Rezlive.com has incorporated health and safety protocols into its booking platform. This includes providing information about hotels and travel services that adhere to

enhanced cleanliness standards and hygiene practices, helping travellers make informed decisions about their accommodations.

With a slight shift in customer preferences towards domestic destinations, Rezlive.com has focused on promoting domestic travel options within India and the GCC region. By showcasing a diverse range of domestic accommodations, attractions, and experiences, Rezlive.com encourages travellers to explore their own countries and support local tourism economies.

In solidarity with its travel industry partners, including hotels and other suppliers, Rezlive.com has offered support and flexibility during these challenging times. This includes facilitating communication between partners, assisting with rebooking and rescheduling arrangements, and providing financial relief measures where possible.

To adapt to the changing landscape of online travel booking, Rezlive.com continues to invest in technology and innovation. This includes the development of new features and functionalities to enhance the user experience, improve booking efficiency, and address emerging travel partner needs in a post-pandemic world.

### Can you discuss RezLive.com's approach to leveraging technology and innovation to enhance the customer experience?

Rezlive.com has developed a sophisticated reservation system that allows its travel partners to access a vast inventory of travel

products in real-time. The system is designed to be user-friendly, allowing agents easy access to bookings for hotels, tours, transfers, and other travel-related services.

Rezlive.com is actively working on a mobile app for its travel partners, enabling them to access their booking platform conveniently from their smartphones or tablets. This allows travel agents to manage bookings, check availability, and make reservations on the go, thereby enhancing efficiency and responsiveness.

Rezlive.com integrates with various third-party systems and APIs, allowing seamless connectivity with other travel technology platforms. This integration enables travel agents to access a broader range of products and services, streamline their workflows, and provide more personalized offerings to their clients.

Rezlive.com invests in advanced customer support systems, including chatbots and virtual assistants, to provide round-the-clock assistance to its travel partners.

An exclusive loyalty program of Rezlive.com, wherein you earn

points on every single vouchered transaction and redeem them through our state-of-the-art rewards store, has multiple voucher options to redeem, which are built in-house.

### **How does your company foster partnerships with hotels and other travel providers to expand your inventory and offer more choices to customers?**

We prioritise establishing strong, enduring relationships with hotels and travel providers. Our dedicated team works closely with potential partners to understand their offerings, values, and goals, ensuring alignment with our mission and standards.

Collaboration is key to our partnership approach. We engage in open dialogue with our partners to develop mutually beneficial strategies. By understanding their needs and objectives, we can identify opportunities for growth and innovation together.

Leveraging cutting-edge technology is integral to our partnership strategy. We offer seamless integration with our system, making it easy

for them to list their inventory on our platform. Our advanced technological infrastructure ensures efficient inventory management and distribution, benefitting our partners.

We emphasise the value proposition for our partners. By partnering with Rezlive.com, hotels and travel providers gain access to a global network of travel partners, increasing visibility, and marketing support. We strive to demonstrate the tangible benefits of collaboration, making it an attractive proposition for potential partners.

### **Can you share insights into your company's growth strategy, both domestically within India and potentially expanding into international markets?**

At Rezlive.com, our growth strategy is centred on expanding both domestically within India and potentially into international markets. We prioritise understanding the intricacies of each market, tailoring our offerings and strategies accordingly. Domestically, we focus on deepening our presence through

strategic partnerships, leveraging technology to enhance the user experience, and staying ahead of industry trends.

### **In what ways do you engage with and incorporate customer feedback to continually improve your services and offerings?**

Customer feedback serves as the cornerstone of our commitment to continually enhance our services and offerings. We have established a multifaceted approach to engage with our travel partners, including online surveys, feedback forms, email communication, and social media platforms, ensuring accessibility and convenience in sharing their thoughts and suggestions.

Our dedicated teams diligently monitor and analyse this feedback in real-time, identifying key trends and areas for improvement. We translate these insights into actionable initiatives, whether they involve refining existing services, introducing new features, or streamlining processes to better meet travel partner needs.