

## INTERVIEWS

### 'Real-time data distribution is at the heart of any agile enterprise today'

**Jaal Shah**, Founder of Ahmedabad based B2B online reservation system – [Rezlive.com](#), reveals how Indian hospitality industry is facing a series of new developments, both in consumer behaviour and operational technology, all thanks to the deep penetration of mobile devices pan India. **Akansha Pandey** speaks to Shah who also dons the hat of Group Managing Director at Travel Designer Group.

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**Jaal Shah**  
 Founder and  
 Group Managing Director  
 Travel Designer Group  
 Rezlive.com

**Q Highlight the latest trends in the inventory distribution of hotels in India, hotel guest booking patters, top performing cities and market segments.**

**JS:** India's hospitality industry is facing a series of new developments – both in consumer behaviour and operational technology – brought about by the high penetration of mobile devices across the country. Now majority of the hotels are online and are connected to different online and offline channels to sell their inventory and keep the occupancy level high.

On the other hand, travellers no longer do month-long planning for their trips. Fast decision making and instant fulfilment of plans is what they seek today. This is more relevant in cases of business travellers who plan their trips at very short notices. Travellers today prefer cities which are less explored and have easy access.

**Q How well have Indian hoteliers (across categories) adopted technology automation to drive improved revenues?**

**JS:** Apart from the sales numbers, Indian hoteliers are more focused on getting visibility in online channels. It doesn't matter in which channel a booking comes through, hoteliers appear to be happy as long as they are available to book in all online channels. Hoteliers look at the net yield per channel. Nowadays, a large amount of hotel bookings are made via OTAs. For a hotelier, this is not a positive sign due to the commission payout. But from a yield management perspective, hoteliers find it better than other channels.

**Q By what per cent have Indian hotels witnessed accelerated growth with real-time distribution technology? Has it also assisted in improving visibility and surging the average room occupancy as well?**

**JS:** Technology has brought the world so much more close bridging the gap between suppliers and travellers. Today, real-time data distribution is at the heart of any agile enterprise that wishes to be responsive to its customer's needs. The Indian hotels have expected good amount of growth with real-time distribution technology which helps hotels to manage room distribution business real-time, as now they are able to sell inventory through multiple channels, which ultimately improved property visibility and better room occupancy ratio.

**Q Highlight the challenges and opportunities in Indian hotel distribution.**

**JS:** In some respects and inevitably, the Indian hospitality sector is evolving differently as compared to the other parts of the world. Mobile is ballooning in the country and the middle class demography continues to grow. Most hotels in the country are online, with the sector as a whole reporting that 40-50 per cent of business comes via the web. Also, local travel service providers contribute a similar percentage share for their hotels.

As far as challenges are concerned, Indian hotel distribution market is very complex, cost is seen as an important factor when it comes to selecting a distribution channel. In India, a large number of people don't have a credit card and data service in their smartphones, though smartphone usage is high in the country. The end consumer here in India is not very sophisticated when compared to the west. So, overall the hoteliers need to look at real-time technology solutions that will help them stay updated on changing consumer dynamics and leverage the same to remain competitive.

**Q Tell us about the expansion plans of Rezlive.com?**

**JS:** RezLive.com is a global reservation system, as a result of which leading hotel chains are directly connected with us and at the same time we also have our own contracting with other regional and local hotels also, in order to offer better availability to our travel partners. We have already launched the new version of Rezlive.com which has been well appreciated by travel agents across the globe.

This year we will be basically looking at revamping RezLive.com and making the inventory even bigger than ever, by contracting with other leading hotel chains, in order to get the whole world at the fingertips of our travel partners. We are also actively looking at expansion into international markets especially Africa and Europe in order to get one step closer to the local travel trade. Furthermore, we have also revamped Designer Indya and Designer Packages as a one stop solution for the inbound and outbound travel needs of our travel partners.