



'The Superhero Team' movie formula for an accessible tourism endeavor.

Presentation abstract

In a year since our launch, we have:

- Organized a dozen social events in the offline world.
- Launched a pan India petition campaign to make restaurants accessible, garnering over 70,000 signatures.
- Created an online global interactive community with free membership to bridge the gap between those with special needs and the rest of the world.

Yes, we are an accessible tourism company. We are also a company based out of India, a region not immediately perceived as being travel friendly for the disabled, but we set out to change this perception.

In India, the data from the 2011 Indian census shows that people with disabilities has increased @ 2% per year in the decade since 2001 and is about 26.8 million. According to the census, 20.3% of the Indian population are wheelchair bound, 18.8% are vision impaired, 18.9% are hearing impaired and 7.5% are speech impaired.

Enable Travel powered by Cox & Kings, is India's premier accessible holiday specialist with a national and international footprint of 85+ destinations across India & the world. Before we crafted our specialized itineraries, it was important to get the right insights and understand the expectations for each disability - Wheelchair bound, visual, hearing and speech impairment. We engaged and consulted with various disabled travelers and non-travelers to identify barriers that discouraged people from travelling or made their journey an unpleasant one.

While this task sounds easy on paper, right from an early stage the Enable Travel team which included only able-bodied individuals, quickly realized that research and fieldwork can get you the information you seek but unless it has been actually field-tested, so to speak, no amount of marketing would work unless each and every aspect of these specialized travel options was directly endorsed by individuals with disabilities.

The problem with sharing information about a destination, food options or transport and activities is that every disabled person approaches these aspects in his or her own way. No two disabled individuals have the same needs. So, when we give them options from the real world, tried out by different disabled individuals who are part of the company their choices become much easier and members of the business execution team as well as third-party entities get the precise information, streamlining the travel process. Enable Travel created a panel of disabled experts who have contributed to its development, thereby making Enable Travel a product made by the disabled for the disabled. The panel included individuals who have travelled extensively and understood the requirements of travelers with disabilities.

Each of us experts brought a specific set of skills to the table and come from backgrounds as diverse as, media creatives, to performers, activists, social entrepreneurs, Paralympians and education. We are also very tough on ourselves and what we finally share with the outside world in terms of transparency.

In India and our global markets, we have assessed close to 350 Hotel properties and barrier-free stay options basis a customized assessment survey all of us created in-house. Every activity, hotel, transport

and food location has also been photographed and videos of the same are shared across our various platforms.

Just like in a superhero team movie, all differences of opinion, barriers we encounter, and business decisions are first collectively taken by us, the disabled experts. Our varied backgrounds have also helped develop a unique hybrid of both inclusive and affinity marketing of sorts. We are official partners with India's first online dating and match-making platform for the disabled. Our partners in accessible transport have made their services available to local medical as well as not-for-profit groups. For special schools and individuals on a budget our '70-trips to freedom' campaign offers day-trips, excursions and an opportunity for the able-bodied to nominate a loved one or a friend with disability for a holiday.

As a result, not only do we garner more attention as disabled experts, but there's an immediate connect with the potential traveler, when he or she is witness to us taking these challenges head-on for them and that level of trust alone makes for huge future potential.

To sum it up, Enable Travel can become as large as we wish it to be. Travel for the disabled is an untapped market which holds tremendous potential. Category creation and market penetration will be key. Being nimble and responsive to emerging requirements and needs will be important. The total inbound market for travel for people with disabilities is several million dollars. The domestic market remains untapped. Outbound will also contribute to the pie substantially. In a nutshell, you give the disabled traveler the facilities and support needed, and even more importantly if it's by the disabled for the disabled, they will travel!

Lead speaker : Rustom Irani

Organisation : Cox & Kings (Enable Travel)

City (Country) : Mumbai(India)

Biography : Wheelchair expert Rustom Irani is the Chief community officer and Expert in Research & Development at Enable Travel. Suffering from a degenerative motor-neuron disease he was confined to a wheelchair after a motorbike accident at age nine. Despite this disadvantage, he became a filmmaker, a writer and a newspaper columnist. His ten-part series "Mumbai On Wheels" for a popular daily earned him much needed exposure from people who felt similarly about disability issues. He has travelled across four continents and believes that a holiday is something to look forward to rather than something that you need to avoid. In keeping with this spirit, Rustom is dedicated to offering solutions and making travel more accessible for disabled travelers.

2nd speaker :

Organisation :

City (Country) : ()

Biography :