



Australian travel expert encourages operators to pivot and adapt amidst Covid-19 pandemic

A leading Australian travel industry expert has encouraged operators to pivot and adapt in order to survive, and even thrive, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Marten Labo Pudun, managing director of Blue Ocean Travel, believes in order to survive, travel operators must commit to following new hygiene and safety protocols including temperature checking and physical social distancing protocol, as well as a focus on promoting domestic travel to Australia's most iconic destinations

"The tourism industry is one of resilience, having faced, and recovered, from many unexpected curve balls in the past, including terrorism, tsunamis, and extreme climate change," said Mr Labo Pudun.

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, most tourism operators have been dealt with both the drying up of sales as well as the necessity to refund existing bookings due to the cancellation of travel from immigration border restrictions.

Blue Ocean Travel has taken care of 500 consumers during this challenging time, including 300 business clients and 200 Malaysian students who were stuck in Australia during the lock-down.

The travel agency looked after booking air tickets, hotel accommodation, airport transfers, amongst other arrangements.

Mr Labo Pudun credits his agency's efficient consultation regarding travel insurance policies for speeding up the refund process to clients.

"This has been a really effective approach in maintaining client loyalty and safeguarding the business in the long term," said Mr Labo Pudun.

Mr Labo Pudun said there are a number of procedures that all travel industry operators will need to follow in order to restore consumer confidence and safeguard the public from a Covid-19 second wave or other unexpected breakout.

"Most flights will remove all magazines and newspapers by introducing new ancillary products to emerging customer demand such as one-off lounge passes and extra fees to keep adjacent seats free," said Mr Labo Pudun.

"Hotels will modify their service procedures by closing buffets, gyms, indoor swimming pools and increasing distance between tables in restaurants.

"Most tourist attractions such as theme parks are committed to reducing crowding up to 30 to 50 percent of previous levels by introducing pre-registration schemes.

"This will lead to visitors providing health QR code issued by the Government based on previous travel histories and potential exposure to the virus."

Moving forward, Mr Labo Pudun strongly believes that all major Australian travel agencies will need to focus more on promoting domestic travel to our most iconic destinations including the Great Barrier Reef, Daintree Forest, Gold Coast, Twelve Apostles, Uluru, Kangaroo Island and Tasmania, as the international travel industry will take longer to recover.

"As Australia is enriched with a plethora of breathtakingly beautiful travel destinations, the domestic travel industry will recover more quickly than other countries lacking large domestic travel hot spots," said Mr Labo Pudun.

About Marten Labo Pudun

Inherited with Lun Bawang indigenous Dayak tribes of Borneo, Marten Labo Pudun is a zealous proponent for the Australian-Malaysian community. He is the first Lun Bawang Malaysian. Marten migrated to Australia to obtain higher tertiary education and graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce &

MBA in 1994 from Charles Sturt University. He has been working resiliently in the Australian tourism industry for two decades.

During his journey as a managing director of Blue Ocean Travel Pty Ltd, Marten has accomplished remarkable experience in recognising the challenges facing international students and visitors from multicultural and diverse backgrounds during their travels and studies in Australia.

Marten has made a remarkable contribution and display of support toward all of Blue Ocean Travel's thousands of clients, by not only proving to be a loyal service provider but also by showing his solidarity as a philanthropic Australian-Malaysian.

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