

IT TOOK US 12 YEARS TO BUILD AIRBNB ...



“Tourism as we knew it is over,” says Brian Chesky, CEO of Airbnb.

The crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic is affecting the tourism industry without precedent, and the latest to demonstrate its effect has been Brian Chesky, CEO of Airbnb. “It took us 12 years to build Airbnb, and we lost almost everything in four to six weeks,” said Chesky.

Airbnb was one of the fastest-growing companies in the last decade and was preparing to go public. Now, like many tourism-related companies, it faces an uncertain future due to international restrictions as well as fears of new outbreaks.

“Tourism as we knew it is over. I don’t want to say that the journey is over, but rather that the model we knew has died and will not return,” said the CEO of Airbnb in an interview on CNBC.

“People are saying they want to get out of the house, but they want to be safe. They don’t want to get on aeroplanes. They don’t want to travel for business. They don’t want to cross borders,” he said, later explaining that the trend will lean towards domestic and local tourism, close to the big cities or without leaving the country. “What they are willing to do is get in a car and drive a couple of hundred miles to a small community where they were willing to stay in a house,” Chesky adds.

Despite the devastating consequences, the CEO of the platform points out that the market “seems to be recovering”, but he’s wary of the consequences that new outbreaks and lockdowns can have. “We are recovering faster than we thought, but I don't want to have false hopes,” he says while warning that his company is not “absolutely out of the woods.”

A few weeks ago, Airbnb made its biggest cut since its founding and one of the largest in the tech industry during the pandemic, when 1,900 employees were laid off, or approximately 25% of its workforce. The company redefined its business strategy and cut back on non-essentials to survive this season, for example, in marketing and advertising.

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