

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Expedia agrees to remove narrow parity rate provisions; Accor and Bureau Veritas launch safety protocol label in Europe; recovery of traditional lodging vs. short-term rentals post-COVID crisis

By Greg Duff on 4.23.20 | Posted in OTA Update

In this week's Update, we've highlighted another story on a lodging industry leader who is taking the necessary precautions to prepare itself, other industry members and, ultimately, travelers for the post COVID-19 world.

Expedia Agrees to Remove Narrow Rate Parity Provisions

("Expedia parity-clause probe dropped, [Booking.com](#) review continues, Australian watchdog says," MLEX Insight on Apr 16, 2020)

In a very brief statement announced last week, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) suspended its ongoing investigation into Expedia due to Expedia's dropping of its "narrow" or direct channel rate parity provision in supplier contracts. Notably, with that same announcement, the ACCC made clear that its ongoing investigation into Booking.com was continuing. Hoteliers in Australia may soon be able to fully yield manage – on the basis of both rate and inventory – this important channel.

Accor and Bureau Veritas Launch "Label" to Signify Sanitary Practices

("Accor and Bureau Veritas Create Safety Protocol Label in Europe," Hotel Business on Apr 17, 2020)

Last week, we featured a [story](#) on steps being taken by cruise company, Genting, to develop and implement sanitation standards designed to provide passengers the confidence to one day cruise again. Last week, Paris-based Accor Hotels announced a partnership with testing and certification company Bureau Veritas to create a label to signify a property's adoption and implementation of stringent sanitation requirements. The draft standards, which were created with input from both doctors and epidemiologists, will soon be shared with relevant French and EU authorities with the ultimate goal of creating an operations manual that hospitality industry members may use to implement appropriate standards. Travelers may also one day be able to search a database identifying those hotels and restaurants in the EU that have been certified.

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Traditional Lodging vs. Short-Term Rentals: Who Will Recover First?

(“How Short-Term Rentals Are Faring Better Online Than Hotels During Crisis: New Skift Research, Skift Travel News on Apr 16, 2020)

Among the many COVID-19 questions being discussed by industry members today, the question of which type of accommodations (traditional lodging versus short-term rentals) will recover first is one we hear frequently. On the one hand, so the argument goes, traditional lodging with its established practices and protocols (and the consistency in practices and protocols afforded by branded properties) will provide travelers with greater confidence to resume traveling. On the other hand, short-term rentals afford travelers the ability to use the entire “facility” without the risk of being exposed to potentially infected fellow travelers. These are just some of the arguments being made. Research released last week by Skift suggests that short-term rentals (as measured by website traffic to online travel sites featuring traditional lodging versus short-term rentals), at least right now, may be beating (or perhaps better stated, suffering less than) their traditional lodging competitors. Let the debate continue.