

Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: Tripadvisor Plus announces initial hotel partners for its subscription service, and Booking Holdings reveals more details around their planned fintech business

By Greg Duff on 7.26.21 | Posted in Online Travel Update

It was a relatively quiet week in the online travel world. Booking's announcement last week about its launch of a new fintech business spurred several additional stories last week, two of which are included in this week's Update. Enjoy.

Much Ado About Nothing: Tripadvisor Plus Announces Initial Partners

("Tripadvisor Plus Signs Its First Hotel Chains But Those Missing Are a Bigger Story," June 14, 2021 via Skift Travel News) (subscription may be required)

Recently, Tripadvisor announced that it had signed its first three hotel groups to its subscription service, Tripadvisor Plus: Barcelo Hotels, Millennium Hotels and Pestana Hotel Group. While these three groups represent an additional 500 new hotels for the service, Tripadvisor Plus has yet to convince any major supplier to join the service. Tripadvisor claims it continues to have many "positive conversations" with major suppliers about the service, though, at least publicly, nothing has yet come from those "conversations." Until then, Tripadvisor will have to continue relying on rates and inventory sourced from other intermediaries like Trip.com, Getaroom and Internova. Suppliers wishing to avoid the new subscription service will need to remain vigilant in their efforts to monitor and possibly curtail the onward distribution practices of these (and other) existing distribution partners.

Additional Details About Booking Holdings' Planned Fintech Business Emerge

("Booking Holdings' New Fintech Unit Aims to Help Travelers Beat Banks at Their Own Game," June 9, 2021 via Skift) (subscription may be required)

In a recent interview with *Skift*, Booking Holdings' new fintech boss, Daniel Marovitz, shared additional details about company's plans for the new business unit. According to Marovitz, the new unit is intended to drive additional bookings, allow travelers to pay when and how they wish (using a variety of currencies and payment plans) and, of course, provide new revenue streams for Booking. According to Marovitz, elements of the new business are already being piloted across the Booking Holdings' portfolio of companies. We will continue to watch how this new business unit continues to evolve, how suppliers respond to the new unit – and,

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ultimately, should suppliers waiver in their support of the new unit and its tools, how Booking forces suppliers' use of the tools by conditioning participation in its traditional distribution platforms. Facilitated payments are just the beginning...

Other News:

Expedia in Latest Exit From Hospitality Tech Sells Alice

July 14, 2021 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)

Booking Holdings exited its hospitality tech business several years ago, and now Expedia Group seems to have done likewise by off-loading its Alice hotel operations platform. ASG, a unit of Alpine investors, announced Wednesday that it acquired New York-headquartered Alice, which provides a backend operations platform to hotel staff, from Expedia Group in a “carve-out transaction.”

Fintech, Superapps and Subscriptions Will Spur Flurry of Online Travel Copycats

July 14, 2021 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)

In its rough outlines, Expedia begot Trip.com Group while Kayak and ITA Software begot Google Travel. Get ready for a flurry of clones in fintech, superapps, and subscription services in travel.