

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **Online Travel Update: Life House raises an additional \$60 million; another business corporate platform quietly emerges; American Airlines offers GDS Alternative**

By Greg Duff on 12.10.21 | Posted in Online Travel Update

This week's Update features stories about a number of emerging corporate travel startups, all of which expect, in one way or another, to take advantage of expected changes in the post-COVID corporate travel industry. Is it just me or is corporate travel starting to get really crowded?

### **Life House Raises an Additional \$60 Million**

*("Kayak-Backed Hotel Startup Life House Raises New Funding at \$250 Million Valuation," December 2, 2021 via Bloomberg – News) (subscription may be required)*

Over the past year or two, we've featured a number of [stories](#) on New York-based [Life House Hotels](#), including its operation of the Kayak Miami Beach in partnership with meta search platform, Kayak. Kayak appears to be interested in expanding that relationship as it joins other investors in this latest Life House financing round. The round values Life House, which as of the end of November, held 51 hotel management contracts, at approximately \$250 million.

### **Another Business Corporate Platform Quietly Emerges**

*("Onriva CEO Ready to Emerge From 'Stealth Mode,'" November 23, 2021 via Business Travel News)*

It was only a few weeks ago that we featured a [story](#) about new corporate travel platform – [Spotnana](#) – quietly emerging from nearly two years of stealth operations. Last week, another corporate travel platform – [Onriva](#) – announced its arrival after nearly five years of stealth operations. Onriva, which offers a business travel marketplace featuring more than two million travel suppliers and wholesalers, is free to users but also offers paid membership levels for such benefits as cash back on bookings and agent support and reporting. Onriva currently sources inventory direct from suppliers (including airlines using NDC), online travel agents, GDSs and travel management companies. Using the platform's artificial intelligence and machine learning, users of the platform are directed to the "best" travel options while remaining compliant with the users' employers' corporate travel policies. Onriva also features several fintech products that provide suppliers to the platform with protection from user fraud,

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declined cards and chargebacks.

### **American Airlines Offers GDS Alternative**

*(“American Airlines Enables Direct Connection Through Winding Tree,” November 19, 2021 via Phocus Wire)*

American Airlines announced that it was offering an unidentified corporate client access to American’s fares and itineraries via a partnership with [Winding Tree](#), an Ethereum (decentralized, open-source blockchain) based platform. With the connection, employees of the client will be able to book both corporate and leisure travel directly with American Airlines without the use of any intermediary.

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Other news:

### **Hotel Engine Raises \$65 Million: Travel Startup Funding This Week**

*December 3, 2021 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)*

Last week, several startups of interest to the travel sector announced more than \$170 million in funding.

### **Meituan Makes Gains in Luxury Hotels as Chinese Government Reshapes Online Sector**

*November 30, 2021 via Skift (subscription may be required)*

The Chinese government, for better or worse, is exacting a toll on online platforms in its anti-monopoly drive. Meituan’s penalty amounted to three percent of revenue, and it is being forced to implement additional reforms.

### **Certares Invests in Agency Network Avoya Travel**

*November 23, 2021 via Phocus Wire*

Private equity firm Certares has become a shareholder in Avoya Travel, a network that connects consumers to travel advisors. Avoya Travel is No. 29 on Travel Weekly’s 2021 Power List. Certares joins two other shareholders: co-presidents Jeff Anderson and Michael Anderson.

### **The Wrap: Agoda Boosts Product Offerings, Airasia Introduces FACES, Garuda Strengthens Partnership With SIA**

*February 12, 2021 via WIT*

As an extension of its ‘Welcome Back’ campaign, Agoda has launched a multitude of products across the customer booking funnel to improve the accessibility of travel in a post-Covid landscape. One is the expansion of the alternative state quarantine packages, launched earlier

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this year in Thailand, for travellers to book accommodation for their mandatory quarantine needs across Asia.