

Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: The Travel Industry's Push on Climate Gains Traction; Online Platforms Continue to Diversify; and Expedia Releases Fourth Quarter Earnings Report

By Greg Duff on 2.18.22 | Posted in Online Travel Update

This week's Update leads with [an important Data Privacy Update](#) from Eva Novick, the newest member of our firm's privacy and data security team. If you currently operate a loyalty program (or plan to introduce one soon), I encourage you to read her important update. Enjoy.

The Travel Industry's Push on Climate May Have Legs

("Hotelbeds lays out eco and social initiatives, joins Amazon Climate Pledge," February 11, 2022 via Phocus Wire)

For some time now, we've all seen the many surveys of would be travelers (particularly, younger travelers) detailing the importance of the environment and climate change in today's travel decisions. Our weekly Update has recently featured a number of stories about this trend, including the recent launch of online [platforms](#) offering travelers carbon neutral travel. Last week, Spain-based bedbank, [Hotelbeds](#), released its annual Environmental, Social and Government Report in which Hotelbeds claims it has again (for the fourth year running) attained carbon neutral status through a combination of carbon reductions and offsets. At the same time, Hotelbeds also announced that it has joined Amazon's Climate Pledge, which features companies committed to eliminating their carbon emissions to zero by 2040. So what does this really mean? Will efforts like these mean enough to travelers to actually drive bookings or market share? With Hotelbeds feeling the heat from increased competition in its wholesale space (think Expedia EPS and soon, Priceline's equivalent offering), Hotelbeds is "banking" on it.

Online Platforms Continue to Diversify

("Online Travel Agencies to Tap Ticketmaster to Sell Live Events," February 8, 2022 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories)

("Celebrity Cruises launches hotel program powered by Priceline," February 7, 2022 via Phocus Wire)

For those of you still questioning the power of online travel and online travel platforms, we offer two stories this week. The [first details efforts by event ticketing powerhouse](#),

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[Ticketmaster](#), via a partnership with activities technology provider, Redeem, to make its event tickets available through travel resellers like TripAdvisor, Expedia and TUI. Why is this important? Ticketmaster estimates that 142 million people traveled two or more hours in 2019 to attend a live event. Our [second story features a new Priceline powered program](#) offered by Celebrity Cruises – Hotels by Celebrity – that offers passengers (and their travel advisors) improved access to accommodations for pre- and post-cruise stays. The program features upscale properties selected by Priceline and exclusive discounted rates. Bookings through the platform, however, are non-commissionable, which may doom the program from the outset given the high percentage of cruise bookings that are booked through travel agents and advisors.

Expedia Releases Fourth Quarter Earnings Report

(“Expedia Tops Profit Estimates Despite Omicron Disruption,” February 10, 2022 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories)

Expect a more detailed analysis in the coming week on Expedia's recent fourth quarter earnings release. In short, Omicron proved to be a wildcard for the online booking platform, but not to the same degree as previous variants. While volumes still lag behind same period 2019 levels, Expedia Group's CEO, Peter Kern, believes that those differences will be made up with the continued return of international and CBD travel. We've attached [last week's earnings call](#), which always proves informative.

Other news:

Travelport Plus Adds Southwest EarlyBird Check-In

February 11, 2022 via Business Travel News

Global distribution system provider Travelport now offers its travel-agent clients the ability to sell Southwest Airlines' EarlyBird Check-In through the company's Travelport Plus platform, the company announced Thursday, February 10.

Don't Expect a Huge Crisis Bounceback for Online Travel Agencies This Time

February 9, 2022 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)

The online travel space has always been super-competitive, but established players like Expedia Group and Booking Holdings face a growing roster of formidable competitors, including hotels, Google and Airbnb.

Hopper Ramps Up Hotel Inventory Via SiteMinder Deal

February 7, 2022 via Phocus Wire

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A new partnership between Hopper and SiteMinder means the hotel distributor's 33,000+ hotels in 150 countries can now opt to make their properties visible in Hopper's mobile marketplace.

Tags: Climate Change, data privacy, Online Travel Agencies, travel