

Duff on Hospitality Law

## Online Travel Update: Phocus Wire's Hot 25 Travel Startups.

By Greg Duff on 11.18.22 | Posted in Online Travel Update

Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, November 18, 2022, is below. This week's Update includes Phocus Wire's annual listing of its Hot 25 Travel Startups. The list always provides an interesting glimpse at what may be coming in the months and years ahead in online travel. Enjoy.

- **Phocus Wire's Hot 25 Travel Startups.** Phocus Wire's fifth installment of up and coming travel companies is here. This year's list features a variety of companies, the majority of which (14 of the 25) were started since the COVID crises began. Over the next few weeks, we plan to take a closer look at a few of the listed companies that caught our attention.
- **TripAdvisor Considering Plans to Revise TripAdvisor Plus.** New TripAdvisor CEO, Matt Goldberg, is apparently considering options for overhauling its much-criticized travel subscription program, TripAdvisor Plus. As many will recall, the program received little support from the major lodging brands for fear of undercutting their own direct channel efforts and/or violating existing third-party channel rate parity obligations. According to Goldberg, TripAdvisor may drop the existing \$99 annual membership fee. While dropping the membership may help address lagging membership numbers, TripAdvisor will have to address the concerns of suppliers whose participation (and inventory) will be critical to any hoped success.
- **Is Uber the Next Online Travel Distribution Platform?** Uber's travel-related offerings are expanding. When initially launched in March, the program (Uber Explore) allowed users to book activities (and an Uber ride to the activities) sourced through Yelp. With its new partnership with TripAdvisor's Viator (and other announced partners), Uber will add to the events and activities available on the app and expand the program to over 10,000 cities. Are events and activities a sign of things to come? Will users one day be able to book accommodations (and a ride to their selected accommodation) on the widely used application?
- **Yet Another New Payments Platform is Coming.** Add Amadeus to the growing list of distribution platforms planning to provide users new payment (fintech) options. Amadeus reports that it is making a "significant investment" in the launch of a new payment business, Outpayce. As part of its effort, Amadeus has applied to the Bank of Spain for an

eMoney license, which would allow Amadeus to provide regulated banking services in the EEA, including issuing payment cards.

Have a great week, and for those of you celebrating this week, Happy Thanksgiving.

### **Presenting the Hot 25 Travel Startups for 2023**

*November 15, 2022 via Phocus Wire*

It has long been said that creativity and innovation often arrive in times of crisis. Our selections of the Hot 25 Travel Startups for 2023 certainly validate that mantra. Of the 25 startups on this list, 14 have been founded since the start of 2020 when travel - and much ...

### **Tripadvisor CEO May Revamp Plus Membership Program**

*November 15, 2022 via Skift (subscription may be required)*

Skift Take Tripadvisor hasn't made any decisions about Tripadvisor Plus, but the traveler membership program may reemerge in a different form. Dennis Schaal Tripadvisor is considering revamping its Tripadvisor Plus membership plan, turning it into a free service in its initial stages, and then figuring out a more meaningful path ...

### **Uber Expands Travel-Related Offerings**

*November 15, 2022 via Travel Weekly*

Uber is making big moves to expand its travel-related offerings, including a partnership with Viator that will enable users to book its experiences and activities through the Uber app and the expansion of its "Uber Travel" service globally to more than 10,000 cities. The Viator integration is part of Uber ...

### **Uber adds Viator Content, Expands Uber Travel to 10K cities**

*November 14, 2022 via Phocus Wire*

Uber is making big moves to expand its travel-related offerings, including a partnership with Viator that will enable users to book its experiences and activities through the Uber app and the expansion of its "Uber Travel" service globally to more than 10,000 cities. The Viator integration is part of Uber ...

### **Amadeus Creates New Payment Business Called Outpayce**

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*November 14, 2022 via Skift (subscription may be required)*

Travel technology company Amadeus said it was making a “significant investment” by setting up a wholly-owned business called Outpayce, which will focus on “delivering a smooth and connected travel payment experience across the traveler journey and accelerating the pace of fintech innovation in travel.” It has also applied to the ...