

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **OTA & Travel Distribution Update - Feb. 24th, 2017**

By Greg Duff on 3.3.17 | Posted in OTA Update

This week's client OTA & Travel Distribution Update for the week ending February 24, 2017 is below. Several interesting OTA stories this week, including an update on another Seattle-based travel distribution company, Utrip.

- **Short-Term Rental Corporate OTA Launched [OTA / SHORT-TERM RENTAL]**. Not that we needed further evidence of the short-term rental's growth and maturity in the overall lodging industry, but BridgeStreet Global Hospitality announced last week its launch of an online platform dedicated to connecting corporate travelers with serviced (and "guaranteed") short-term rental properties. In my quick review of the BridgeStreet.com website this morning, I noted featured listings in Washington, London, New York, Chicago, Paris and Cleveland. A dedicated group booking platform for short-term rentals cannot be too far away.
- **Airbnb Moves Aggressively Into Luxury Rentals [SHORT-TERM RENTAL]**. In its first of many anticipated deals in 2017, Airbnb announced last week its purchase (beating competing offers from both Accor and Expedia) of the short-term luxury rental platform, Luxury Retreats. With its purchase, Airbnb gains access to Luxury Retreats' concierge platform and over 4000 luxury property listings. From the many recent acquisitions (and rumored future acquisitions) in the short-term luxury rental space, it is clear that luxury rentals (and their associated larger margins) are currently the focus of both distributors and operators in the short-term rental market.

### **BridgeStreet unveils OTA for business travel community**

BridgeStreet Global Hospitality says its development of an online travel agency for corporate travellers aims to bridge the gap between extended stay.

*Tnooz News Feed, Feb. 23, 2017*

### **Airbnb Acquires Luxury Retreats, Beating Out Expedia, Accor**

**Airbnb Inc.** bought Luxury Retreats in its biggest acquisition yet as the apartment-rental website takes steps toward becoming a full-service global travel company.

*Bloomberg, Feb 16, 2017*

**Seattle startup Utrip raises \$4M, adds ex-Expedia CFO to board**

Seattle startup Utrip raised \$4 million and added a former Expedia executive as a board director to make travel planning easier. The average traveler visits 38 websites before booking a vacation, an Expedia study found in 2013. Utrip's machine learning platform aims to give travelers a personalized itinerary in one.

*Puget Sound Business Journal, Feb 21, 2017*

**The Regulators Are Finally Coming for Airbnb and Uber**

Lawmakers are squeezing the Valley's darlings.

*Fortune Magazine, Feb 20, 2017*