

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update - May 5th, 2017

By Greg Duff on 5.12.17 | Posted in OTA Update

Our OTA & Travel Distribution Update for the week ending Friday, May 5, 2017 is below.

- **Industry To Again Focus Attention on Distribution Duopoly [OTA].** In an article last week, Bloomberg shared details from an AHLA board meeting where the Association discussed proposed plans for a wide scale lobbying effort of the FTC and incoming Trump Administration officials regarding the practices of on-line behemoths Expedia and Priceline. A consumer marketing campaign based on the popular Monopoly board game was also discussed. The AHLA's proposed plans also call for the Association and its members to better promote themselves as innovative and technologically savvy – words one often doesn't use when describing the lodging industry. It will be interesting to watch whether these previously voiced concerns (remember the industry's response to Expedia's Orbitz acquisition, anyone?) have a larger effect on Trump administration versus the prior administration.

[Hotels Plan Lobbying Push Over Priceline-Expedia 'Monopoly'](#)

Bloomberg Markets, May 5, 2017

The U.S. hotel industry plans to step up a lobbying and public relations attack on Expedia Inc. and Priceline Group Inc., hoping to convince consumers and members of the Trump administration that the travel-booking giants are monopolistic. The American Hotel & Lodging Association, an industry group whose membership includes Marriott International Inc., Hyatt Hotels Corp. and Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc., devised plans for a campaign saying the online travel companies use unfair practices in their search businesses, according to board meeting documents seen by Bloomberg. The trade group intends to lobby Federal Trade Commission officials on the issue and try to ensure that new members picked by President Donald Trump are friendly to hotels, according to the documents prepared for a January meeting of the group's board.

Other news:

TripTease shifts focus to direct booking and service management

tnooz, May 2, 2017

Direct-booking champion TripTease is opening what it hopes will be another weapon in the arsenal of ways to lure business away from online travel agencies. The launch of Direct Booking Platform: Ilio Edition follows a \$9 million capital-raise in April this year, in a Series B round led by BGF Ventures. The platform works behind the scenes of a hotel's website and manages a number of functions to, it says, "recapture the lost guest relationship". This comes in the form of handling parity issues across distribution channels, a messaging system between hotel and guest, front-desk tools and price intelligence and benchmarking services.

China's HNA Invested \$28 Million to Start a U.S. Online Travel Agency and Abruptly Closed It

Skift Travel News, May 2, 2017

HNA Group tried to enter the U.S. online travel agency market through Travana/Janbala and abruptly had a change of heart either because the startup didn't know what it was doing or because of some other dynamic in the opaque world of Chinese investors.