

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update - Booking.com goes back to basics; Booking Holdings expands metasearch platform

By Greg Duff on 7.20.18 | Posted in OTA Update

As our Update reveals, Booking Holdings monopolized the distribution headlines this past week.

Booking.com Goes Back to Basics

("Booking.com gets down to Basics, gets rates from other agencies," PhocusWire, July 10, 2018)

Hoteliers' ongoing efforts to rein in the sometimes abusive distribution practices of certain wholesalers just took on new significance. Booking.com acknowledged last week that it was testing a new service – Booking.Basic – which features deeply discounted rates for certain properties sourced from other distributors (as opposed to the hotels themselves). While initial tests indicate that this new service is largely limited to Asia and features rates obtained from Booking.com partners Agoda and Ctrip, the obvious question is how widespread will this service become. Will the practices of certain wholesalers mean that deeply discounted net package rates will soon find their way to the Booking.com website? Time to review those sourcing provisions in your favorite Booking Holdings contract.

Booking Holdings Expands Metasearch Platform

("Booking Holdings Buys HotelsCombined as Kayak Expands Into Asia Pacific," Skift Travel News, July 9, 2018)

Booking Holdings announced plans this past week to further its investment (and belief) in the metasearch space by acquiring Sydney, Australia-based, HotelsCombined. With this purchase (and addition to the Booking Holdings' Kayak division), Booking Holdings will greatly expand its metasearch presence (particularly, with hotels) in the Asia Pacific region. Booking Holdings has not announced yet whether it intends to maintain the HotelsCombined brand or fold this latest acquisition into one of its existing metasearch brands – Kayak, Momondo, Cheapflights, Swodoo, etc. The acquisition is expected to close by the end of this year.

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Other news:

[Views to be sought on revamp to EU's reservation systems conduct code, official says](#)
MLex, July 13, 2018 (subscription required)

Reform of the EU's code of conduct for computerised reservation systems will be subject to a public consultation until October, a European Commission official said today. It follows a recent commission decision not to act over surcharges on airline tickets introduced by Deutsche Lufthansa, a move which criticised by EU lawmakers and travel industry representatives.