

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Vrbo repositions itself as a family travel site; Expedia implements resort fee plan**

By Greg Duff on 11.22.19 | Posted in OTA Update

### **Vrbo Repositions Itself**

*("Expedia's Vrbo to Reposition Itself Beyond Vacation Rentals as a Family Travel Business," Skift Travel News on Nov 14, 2019)*

Fresh from its disappointing third-quarter financial results, Expedia Group's recently announced "repositioning" of Vrbo may be just what the doctor ordered. Earlier this month, Vrbo's new general manager, Jeff Hurst, announced that Vrbo (Expedia's short-term rental platform) plans to reposition itself as a family travel site offering vacation products and services (e.g., resort accommodations, in-stay services, etc.) beyond short-term rentals. Expedia provided few details about the new platform and no timeline for the planned repositioning.

### **Expedia Implements Resort Fee Plan**

*("Expedia Tells Hotels Adding Resort Fees Will Lower Your Listings on Its Pages," Skift Travel News on Nov 14, 2019)*

Months after announcing its plan for responding to Booking Group's decision to charge commissions on resort or amenities fees, last week, Expedia Group began to penalize hotels that impose resort or amenities fees by lowering the hotels' sort order rankings on Expedia and Hotels.com. All else being equal between two hotels, the hotel that charges a resort or amenities fee will now appear lower on Expedia than the hotel that does not.

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Other news:

### **Skyscanner Pivots From Original Model, Becomes Marketplace With Bookings**

*Phocus Wire on Nov 14, 2019*

Skyscanner is introducing what it calls a "marketplace" approach to the business, ending 17 years as one of the most successful search engines in online travel. The U.K.-based company insists it is "not becoming an online travel agency." Instead, it is offering a three-pronged approach to connecting users with air tickets.