

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Google continues to unveil new travel products despite pandemic; Choice Hotels enters into a strategic agreement with Hotelbeds**

By Greg Duff on 8.27.20 | Posted in OTA Update

This week's OTA & Travel Distribution Update includes Google prominently featured in the news and a new agreement for Choice Hotels. Enjoy.

### **Google Continues to Unveil New Travel Products Despite Pandemic**

*("Google Quietly Debuts Game-Changing Tours and Activities Advertising Product," Aug 17, 2020 via Skift Travel News) (subscription may be required)*

Last week, we featured a [story](#) on Google's release of new pandemic-related information on popular travel destinations. This week, we introduce you to Google's new tours and attractions advertising platform. Although the new advertising is viewable today by users in only a few select markets, the advertising, which appears higher than traditional search ads and organic results, is poised to do to tours and attractions what similar advertising did to hotels. The price to participate in the new advertising is not cheap; featured tours and attractions providers are rumored to be required to provide Google a perpetual license to use the providers' content. I'm sure this won't be the last story on this new Google travel product.

### **Choice Enters Strategic Agreement with Hotelbeds**

*("Hotelbeds Signs Strategic Agreement With Choice Hotels," Aug 20, 2020 via Hotel Business News)*

This past week, European redistributor (bed bank), Hotelbeds, announced that it had entered into a strategic agreement with Choice Hotels for the redistribution of Choice Hotels' guest rooms through Hotelbeds' network of 60,000 largely non-domestic B2B and B2C distribution clients. This latest announcement by Hotelbeds comes on the heels of similar announcements by Hotelbeds involving similar strategic agreements with Louvre Hotels and Radisson Hotel Group.

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Other news:

**Airbnb Files Paperwork for Its Long-Awaited IPO**

*Aug 19, 2020 via Skift (subscription may be required)*

Airbnb's on-again, off-again initial public offering is on again. The short-term rental platform announced Wednesday that it filed its S-1 registration statement confidentially with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for an initial public offering.

**Google Defends Its Debt Collection Practices in Travel**

*Aug 20, 2020 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)*

Google is feeling the heat over its unwillingness to discount travel advertisers' unpaid advertising bills that grew out of the COVID-19-induced economic collapse and its payment-collection practices, which include barring new advertising for nonpayment. Google believes that German and French companies that publicly called on Google in recent months to give them relief from their first quarter bills, when their advertising spending turned into a mountain of cancelled bookings, are looking for special treatment and one-off deals.

**Sounding Off: Google's Alienation of Travel Brands Masks the Ecosystem's Other Issues**

*Aug 21, 2020 via Phocus Wire*

Another week, another round of issues surrounding Google and its role in the world of travel advertising. As the story goes, at least one travel brand is getting heat from Google over unpaid bills for advertising and the heavies in the shape of Accenture have been sent in to sort things out.