

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Travelers seek increased transparency and Booking.com abandons BookingSuite effort

By Greg Duff on 10.23.20 | Posted in OTA Update

Travelers Seeking Increased Transparency

("Skyscanner, Expedia, Hopper on need for transparency in travel retailing," Oct 14, 2020 via Phocus Wire)

In a recent roundtable held at the Open Industry Summit: The New Reality of Flight Shopping hosted by APTCO, online platforms Expedia, Skyscanner and Hopper emphasized that today's travelers are seeking more than ever critical information about destinations' pandemic status and suppliers' health and safety practices, and flexible booking terms. At times, these "new" factors can be equally or even more important than price. Recognizing the systems challenges associated with providing much of this "new" information, the intermediaries stressed the importance of suppliers making this information as simple as possible.

Booking.com Abandons BookingSuite Effort

("Booking.com to axe hotel tools on BookingSuite," Oct 14, 2020 via Phocus Wire)

Another pandemic casualty? Likely. It wasn't that long ago that we featured a series of stories detailing Booking.com's efforts to broaden its product and service offerings (away from traditional online retailing) through a series of acquisitions. Former client, Seattle-based Buuteeq, was one of the several companies (Hotel Ninjas, Price Match) acquired by Booking.com in 2014 and 2015 that were combined to ultimately form the core of BookingSuite application platform. Last week, Booking.com announced plans to discontinue the platform's four main tools – WebDirect, BookingButton, RateIntelligence and ChoicePro (all products from the 2014 and 2015 acquisitions) effective November 30. According to the announcement, the BookingSuite application store will remain open, but resources dedicated to supporting Booking.com's four main tools will be redirected to Booking.com's core distribution businesses. Users of these products may want to begin the process of finding alternatives.

Other news:

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Why OTAs May Be Critical to the Travel Industry's Recovery

Oct 15, 2020 via Phocus Wire

According to new research from Expedia Group, as consumers begin traveling again, online travel agencies will play a key role in driving economic recovery for the industry.

Google, a Longtime Ally of Travel Sites, Is Now a Powerful Rival

Oct 15, 2020 via Hotel News Resource

Google has long been one of the biggest drivers of new business for travel websites like Expedia and Tripadvisor. Some of them say the Alphabet Inc. unit is also a big competitive threat. Berlin-based HomeToGo GmbH is an example of the bind facing many travel businesses.

Tripadvisor CEO Dismisses Concerns Over Rivals Amazon, Airbnb and Klook in the Experiences Business

Oct 15, 2020 via Skift Travel News (subscription may be required)

Although competitors have taken an ax to Tripadvisor's listings lead in tours and activities over the last couple of years, CEO Steve Kaufer still thinks his company's position is still considerably advantageous.