Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: Effects of Recent Egencia Acquisition Start to Unfold at Amex GBT; Uber Seeks Super App Status; and Expedia Group Now a Preferred Redistributor for IHG

By Greg Duff on 3.11.22 | Posted in Online Travel Update

What a week it has been watching the horrible events unfold in Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those in Ukraine or with family in Ukraine.

Booking Holdings Fourth Quarter Earnings Call
("Booking Holdings Inc. (BKNG) CEO Glenn Fogel on Q4 2021 Results - Earnings Call Transcript," February 23, 2022 via Seeking Alpha)
As promised, for those of you interested, attached is the transcript from the recent Booking Holdings' earnings call.

Effects of Recent Egencia Acquisition Start to Unfold at Amex GBT
("Egencia Adds Amex GBT Negotiated Airfares to Booking Platform," March 2, 2022 via Business Travel News - Top Stories)
Egencia has announced that discounted airfares previously available to customers through Amex GBT are now available to users of the Egencia platform. Just a friendly reminder that as distribution channels and platforms continue to evolve (through mergers, acquisitions, and other activity), one can never be certain where his or her inventory may appear.

Uber Seeks Super App Status
("Uber moves closer to super app, adds experiences bookings," March 2, 2022 via Phocus Wire)
With Dara Khosrowshahi at the helm, is it any surprise that Uber has announced plans to further diversify its offerings by adding events and activities? Called Uber Explore, the new functionality allows users of the ride hailing app to review, book and pay for activities in several categories – food and drink, nightlife, art and culture, etc. Users can not only purchase tickets for the activities on the app, but also request a ride directly to the activity location or venue. Uber Explore is now live in 14 markets in the United States and Mexico.

Expedia Group Now a Preferred Redistributor for IHG
("Expedia Group and IHG Hotels & Resorts Enter Preferred Partnership for Optimized Distribution," March 1, 2022 via Hospitality Net - Latest Industry News)
After the months of rumors of IHG pursuing a wholesale/redistribution deal with Expedia Group (part of the "everyone is doing it" narrative that I so often hear), the parties finally made it official with last week's announcement. According to reports from Skift, IHG is now only the second large chain to join the program. Notably, Expedia's announcement refers to Expedia's role as a "preferred" or "primary" redistributor of IHG's rates and inventory, and not an "exclusive" redistributor.

Expedia One of the First to Take a Stand Against Russian Aggression
("Expedia an Online Travel Standout Ceasing to Offer Russia Travel," March 2, 2022 via Skift Travel News)
Raucous applause for Expedia. Although the move to cease its Russian sales was largely symbolic, Expedia's decision to cease offering travel to and from Russia was one of the first in the online travel world. While many industry members have since fallen in line over the past few days (notably, Booking Holdings was among the last), Expedia's early decision sent a strong message throughout the industry. Those wishing to continue serving the Russian market may soon find themselves shut out regardless, as the Russian currency continues its decline and rumors swirl about Russia's possible imposition of martial law.

Other news:

Ryanair Teams Up with Booking.com
February 27, 2022 via Times Of Malta
Ryanair has announced a partnership with online hotel booking company Booking.com, so customers can organize flights and accommodation through the airline's website. More than 550,000 hotels and accommodation in 209 countries are available to reserve either at the time of choosing flights or directly through Ryanair.com at any time.

Tags: Hospitality, mergers and acquisitions, Online Travel Agencies