

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update - Airbnb announces first outside board member; California litigation against Airbnb not over yet; and Ctrip makes an appearance at World Economic Forum

By Greg Duff on 2.2.18 | Posted in OTA Update

This week's OTA & Travel Distribution Update is below and features a number of stories on Airbnb and its many recent announcements. There seems to be no end to the news coming out of Airbnb these days as it prepares for an apparent public offering.

[Airbnb Announces First Outside Board Member \[SHORT-TERM RENTALS\]](#)

("Airbnb brings on American Express CEO to board of directors," TechCrunch News, January 25, 2018)

Airbnb announced this past week the appointment of outgoing American Express CEO, Kenneth Chenault, to Airbnb's board of directors. Chenault's appointment is his second in as many weeks (the first was with another small ecommerce company called Facebook). Chenault's appointment is viewed by many as yet another step by Airbnb toward its highly anticipated public offering. In his statement announcing Chenault's appointment, Airbnb co-founder and CEO, Brian Chesky, also announced that Airbnb would be introducing in late February substantial improvements to its platform that would set Airbnb up for an "infinite horizon."

[California Litigation Against Airbnb Not Over Yet \[SHORT-TERM RENTALS\]](#)

("Aimco appeals court case against Airbnb over LA apartment rentals," Real Deal - LA Real Estate News, January 26, 2018)

Earlier this month we included a [story](#) about a California federal district court's recent dismissal of a class action brought against Airbnb by a group of Southern California apartment management companies alleging that Airbnb's listings violated the plaintiffs' tenants' leases. Recall that the leases contained express prohibitions against short-term rentals, including a specific reference to Airbnb in the subject language. Aimco, one of the plaintiffs in the recently dismissed suit, appealed the dismissal this past week to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, re-asserting its same breach of lease claims. We will continue to follow this appeal and update our readers when a decision is issued.

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Ctrip Makes an Appearance at World Economic Forum [DISTRIBUTION]

("Co-founder and Executive Chairman of Ctrip James Liang speaks at World Economic Forum," Feed Informer - M&A News, January 26, 2018)

I don't know about you, but I'm still not used to including Ctrip in my short list of powerhouse online booking engines. That may need to change. Ctrip co-founder and Executive Chairman, James Liang, spoke last week at the annual World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland. Liang was the only Chinese online travel company representative invited to attend the event. Liang spoke on several panels, including a panel entitled, "China: Open Up for Prosperity," where he discussed the connections between demographics, innovation and growth. I think we may hear a lot more about Ctrip and its Executive Chairman in the months ahead.

Other news:

Airbnb Doubles Down On Its Experiences Feature With A \$5M Investment

Fast Company news, January 26, 2018

Airbnb wants to be an "end-to-end" travel company. Can Experiences bring it even closer to that vision? Airbnb says it will inject \$5 million into Experiences, the company's take on tours and activities, expanding the offering to 200 locations in the U.S. The plan is to bring Experiences to smaller...

Hilton CEO Expects to Push Direct Booking Forever

Skift Travel News, January 22, 2018

Hilton has been working for years to keep customers booking on its website instead of with online travel agencies. Don't expect that to stop anytime soon — or ever.