

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update - March 17th, 2017

By Greg Duff on 3.23.17

With my bracket totally blown by Villanova's loss this afternoon, there is no time like the present to prepare this week's OTA & Travel Distribution Update. This week's Update features stories for everyone.

Discounted OTA Loyalty Program Rates Coming Soon? [OTA / Loyalty] Skift shared some interesting comments last week from Priceline Group's Executive Chairman, Jeffrey Boyd. According to Boyd (speaking at a Merrill Lynch consumer and retail technology conference in New York), Priceline Group has the "muscle and technology" to offer discounted loyalty program rates to its customers in the same way hoteliers are doing so today. While Priceline and its family of distribution platforms could possibly take advantage of the limited "closed group" discounting opportunities in the UK (and possibly the EU), it isn't clear how Priceline's muscle or technology might allow it to avoid contractual limitations or prohibitions on discounting.

Priceline's Boyd Says Company Has the 'Muscle' to Offer Private Rates Like Hotels Do

Skift Travel news, Mar 16, 2017

Priceline Group executives say their relationships with the major hotel chains are good and the impact of their direct-booking campaigns isn't acute. Then why is Jeffrey Boyd, the Group's executive chairman, talking about taking remedial actions? -Dennis Schaal

The Value of Loyalty Programs – According to Marriott [Loyalty] Speaking of loyalty programs, *Inc. Magazine* published last week highlights from its conversation with Stephanie Linnartz, Global Chief Commercial Officer & EVP at Marriott, who shared her perspectives on the value (and future) of Marriott's now behemoth loyalty program. Highlights include:

- Marriott's unmatched volume of loyalty program member data will provide it with unprecedented insights that will lead to better guest experiences.
- Size and scale matter. More scale means more investment, which means more consumer facing technology, which leads to better guest experiences (see a trend here?).
- Creativity is required when seeking to entice younger (less frequent and somewhat indifferent) travelers (think social media). Expect even greater efforts (and creativity) by

Marriott to attract younger travelers in the future.

Marriott on The Future of Hotel Loyalty Programs

Inc.com headlines, Mar 13, 2017

Stephanie Linnartz is the Global Chief Commercial Officer & EVP at Marriott International, as well as a futurist with a powerful vision on the evolution of hotel loyalty programs.

Other news:

Chicago Set to Begin Enforcing Tougher Short-Term Rental Laws

Skift Travel News, Mar 16, 2017

Airbnb hosts and other people renting homes on platforms like HomeAway and VRBO will have to pay a 4 percent tax in the future.

CEO Interview: Ctrip's Strategic Threat to Expedia, Priceline and Everyone Else

Skift Travel News, Mar 13, 2017

To a great extent, Ctrip is going to be preoccupied for years chasing Chinese travelers and servicing their every travel need, around the globe.