

Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: Competition Among Banks' Travel Platforms Intensifies, and Southwest Launches New Corporate Booking Portal

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This week's Update features stories detailing several new booking platforms and Choice's new direct billing product. Enjoy.

Competition Among Banks' Travel Platforms Intensifies

("Citi Launches New Travel Platform With Booking.com," August 19, 2022 via Phocus Wire)

Citi (f/k/a Citigroup) announced last week the upcoming launch of its new travel platform, Citi Travel with Booking.com, in partnership with, you guessed it, Booking.com. According to Booking.com, the new website and mobile app will allow users to search, view and book hotels, flights and car rentals and pay for bookings with their Citi card and/or Citi loyalty program points. Likely competitors to Citi's new offering include similar offerings from Capital One, American Express and JP Morgan Chase.

Southwest Launches New Corporate Booking Portal

("Southwest Promises Increased Efficiency With New Business Travel Portal," August 15, 2022 via Travel Weekly)

Once proud to shun its competitors' corporate travel endeavors, Southwest Airlines has come full circle. Following announcements by the airline in 2020 and 2021 to finally make its products and services available on traditional global distribution systems, Southwest was set to launch (August 24) a new corporate travel portal for travel management companies and other corporate travelers. The self-service portal will provide users new automated services, together with dashboards and other improved reporting. Travel fund management and expanded detail on travel sustainability will also be featured.

Choice Launches New Direct Billing Program

("Choice Introduces Consolidated Invoicing for Corp. Customers," August 15, 2022 via Business Travel

News)

Last week at GBTA, Choice launched a new direct billing option for its corporate customers in partnership with TreviPay. Customers enrolled in the Direct Pay program can receive weekly consolidated invoicing for stays across Choice's entire portfolio of brands. Enrolled customers will also receive access to a dedicated corporate customer portal that provides customers with real time information on invoices, charges and payment status and provides direct access to Choice's customer support team. Customers will still be able to use their negotiated rates and amenities. Bookings will be made directly (via website, app or call center) or via a customer's chosen agency. According to a press release from TreviPay, benefits of the new program include reduced credit exposure for corporate clients while hotels avoid the many risks associated with extending credit. Potential cost savings and improved customer loyalty also seem like likely benefits of this new payment program.

Other News:

Cosmopolitan Launches Travel Booking Platform Targeting Gen Z and Millennials

August 17, 2022 via Phocus Wire

Women's media brand Cosmopolitan has launched a travel booking service called CosmoTrips. Built in partnership with DH Enterprise & Associates, the platform offers instantly bookable, curated vacation experiences across the United States.

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