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Duff on Hospitality Law

Online Travel Update: Online Group Booking Platforms Evolve, Travel Influencers Effect on Social Commerce

03.20.23

This week's Update features a heavy dose of online group booking platforms and an interesting report on the growing importance of social media and in particular, travel influencers. Enjoy.

- **Wyndham Adopts Groups360's Online Booking Platform.** Wyndham is the latest large hotelier to announce its adoption of GroupSync, Groups360's booking platform that allows users to view, select and book blocks of guest rooms and meeting space online or via Groups360's so-called "Smart RFP." Wyndham properties will soon be available via Smart RFP and later this year via GroupSync's online platform. Marriott made a similar announcement earlier this year.

- **CVENT Set to Go Private - Again.** Well, its official, the rumored purchase of group booking lead generator and booking platform, CVENT, by Blackstone is happening. Blackstone announced last week that an affiliate (along with minority investor, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority) is acquiring CVENT for approximately $4.6 billion. The purchase price represents roughly a 52% premium for existing shareholders. According to Blackstone, the purchase provides another example of Blackstone's continued belief in (and investment focus on) the recovery of the events and travel industries. From my perspective, it will be interesting to see whether this change in ownership results in any meaningful improvements in CVENT's sometimes strained relationships with its largest hotel operator customers, particularly as Groups360 (partially owned by many of these same customers) continues to announce corporate-wide partnerships with the industry's largest players. Stay tuned.

Finally, we're thrilled to announce the arrival of our newest hospitality team member, Erin Snodgrass. Details about Erin and her practice can be found here, but in short, Erin rejoins our hospitality team after a 20+ year hiatus forming and leading her own women-owned law firm. While at her firm, Erin represented a number of hospitality and travel industry clients (Starwood, Expedia, Egencia, Amex GBT and others) and technology clients (Microsoft and Amazon). Erin's addition will add much needed capacity to our team in the areas of privacy, sales and marketing, distribution and procurement. Please join me in welcoming Erin.

Influencers and Social Commerce in Travel

March 17, 2023 via phocuswire.com

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The goal of travel industry marketers has always been to build efficient direct-to-consumer relationships by cost-effectively expanding brand reach, enhancing traveler engagement and maximizing customer lifetime value. Data privacy regulation is disrupting digital advertising by impairing the relevance of important targeting data, which which will further elevate the importance of direct consumer relationships…

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts Announces Agreement With Groups360
March 16, 2023 via Lodging Magazine

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts announced a new agreement with Groups360 to bring online multi-room bookings to Wyndham hotels in 2023. Powered by GroupSync, Wyndham hotels will have the opportunity to integrate the platform with their hotel reservation systems…

Cvent Agrees to be Acquired by Blackstone for $4.6B
March 14, 2023 via Business Travel News

Meetings technology company Cvent has agreed to be acquired by an affiliate managed by private investment firm Blackstone for approximately $4.6 billion, the company announced Tuesday. Once completed, Cvent again will become a privately held company and its common stock will no longer be publicly listed, the company said…

Posted in Online Travel Update

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