Foster Garvey

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Airbnb begins integration of traditional lodging products; Dutch authority suggests greater transparency is needed for certain gateway platforms; Booking.com's PR agency working overtime

06.05.19

Airbnb Begins Integration of Traditional Lodging Products

("Airbnb Tests Hotel Integration by Adding Some HotelTonight Partners," Skift Travel News, May 29, 2019)

As a critical first step in its integration of the newly acquired HotelTonight, Airbnb has begun adding limited hotel inventory from some of HotelTonight's hotel partners. At the same time, Airbnb has eliminated guest fees on new hotel listings (making the site more competitive with the host-only fee models of Booking.com and Expedia) and begun cross promoting its hotel inventory on both the Airbnb and HotelTonight platforms. Although full integration of the HotelTonight inventory on the Airbnb platform will take time (and require the platforms to reconcile their many differences), many believe it is only a matter of time before the former exclusively alternative accommodation platform transforms itself into fully fledged online distribution channel. Only time will tell…

Dutch Authority Suggests Greater Transparency Is Needed for Certain Gateway Platforms

("Tech giants forced to share data under Dutch plan to update competition rules," MLex Insight, May 31, 2019) (subscription required)

In an interview last week, Dutch State Secretary of Economic Affairs, Mona Keijzer, noted that online "gateway" sites (like Booking.com) should be required to provide EU regulators with greater transparency

© 2026 Foster Garvey PC. All Rights Reserved.

so that regulators may better monitor whether the sites are abusing their market dominant position and restricting consumer choices. The Secretary's comments came as she was submitting proposed changes to Dutch competition rules to the Dutch parliament.

Booking.com's PR Agency Working Overtime

("Booking.com is cracking down on hotel 'resort fees,' which are rarely included in the advertised room rate," MarketWatch – Top Stories, May 25, 2019)

Last week we included a story on Booking.com's widely publicized decision to begin charging commissions on resort fees and other hotel service charges. Not surprisingly, hotels reacted negatively to Booking.com's unilateral decision to drive ever higher the costs associated with this widely-used platform. While those critical of the change might assume that the decision was motivated by a desire to grow the platform's revenue, we now know that those assumptions would be misplaced. According to recent statements by several travel industry experts and traveler advocates, the decision was made in an attempt to force hoteliers' hands to do away with those "pesky" (traveler hated) resort fees and other similar charges. Boy were we wrong…

Other news:

Airbnb signs Shiji distribution deal to bolster China hotel strategy

Phocus Wire, May 28, 2019

Airbnb has another distribution partner to help bolster its hotel inventory. But this time it is aimed squarely at boosting its presence in China.

Sexual misconduct claims at Jamaica's resorts still buried on TripAdvisor

USA Today – Travel News, May 31, 2019

TripAdvisor's new safety tool misses dozens of sexual harassment and misconduct claims by women visiting Jamaican resorts.

Posted in OTA Update

Authored by

Greg Duff

Principal|Seattle

206.816.1470 greg.duff@foster.com

© 2026 Foster Garvey PC. All Rights Reserved.