Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update – May 26th, 2017

06.02.17

This week's OTA & Travel Distribution Update for the week ending May 26, 2017 is below. A short, but significant update this week.

- **Bi-Partisan Legislation Introduced to Stop Online Booking Scams [OTA]**. In an effort to curb the growing problem of misleading and fraudulent online booking websites, U.S. senators and representatives from both sides of the isle introduced legislation on Wednesday, May 17, entitled "Stop Online Booking Scams." A complete copy of the proposed legislation is available. If enacted, the legislation will require unaffiliated, third-party booking sites to post conspicuous notices prior to completing a booking that notify users that the sites are not affiliated with the subject hotel. Failure to post the required language would constitute an unfair or deceptive act under the Federal Trade Commission Act and allow for a variety of enforcement alternatives. It will be interesting to see if and how the hotelier in the oval office supports this important legislation.

Legislation Introduced to Combat Online Hotel Booking Scams

Lodging Magazine, May 18, 2017

A group of bipartisan Senate and House leaders introduced legislation aimed at stopping online hotel booking scams that are increasingly impacting consumers and hoteliers alike…

- **Google Introduces Travelers' Reviews [OTA]**. In its never-ending quest to provide users the most robust content available anywhere, Google began rolling out last week its planned graphical user interface featuring hotel guest reviews. The reviews, which first started appearing earlier this month, are broken down by traveler type (e.g. families, couples and solo business travelers) and category of service (e.g. rooms, location and services/facilities) and include reviews from Google and other well-known third party booking sites. The easy to use interface includes both summary scores (1 to 5 stars) and individual reviews by attribute. Interestingly, in my own use of the functionality this weekend on a variety of Seattle hotels, none of the reviews I found came from TripAdvisor. It will be interesting to see whether TripAdvisor (who has a history of strongly "discouraging" third-party use of its review content) becomes a willing participant in this new functionality, which if successful, could have a negative effect on its site.

Google confirms it's rolling out new reviews format for hotels

Search Engine Land, May 24, 2017

It's official, Google is rolling out the more graphical user interface for hotel reviews…

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Other news:

Expedia Is Now Selling Hotel Rooms in Cuba

Skift Travel News, May 23, 2017

U.S. online travel services company Expedia said on Tuesday it had started offering online booking for hotels in Communist-run Cuba, hoping to capitalize on a boom in tourism to the Caribbean island…

Posted in OTA Update

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