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Duff on Hospitality Law

Travel Innovations and Regulatory Moves: Singh's 'Perfect Trip' Vision and EU's Scrutiny of Tech Giants

04.09.24

This week's Update features two stories from local (Seattle) publications. The first, from Seattle's most well-known technology newsletter, *Geekwire*, provides a local perspective on Steve Singh's ongoing efforts to create the corporate traveler's "perfect trip." The second, from our local *Business Journal*, provides additional details on the management shakeup at Expedia Group. Enjoy.

- **EU Launches Investigations of DMA Gatekeepers**. This past month, the EU Commission has launched five investigations into gatekeepers' (Alphabet, Apple and Meta) alleged non-compliance with the Digital Markets Act (DMA). One of the two investigations of Google parent, Alphabet, focuses on whether Google's recent changes continue to prefer its platforms and channels (particularly around travel) over those of third parties.

- **Seattleite Steve Singh Leads Investor Group's Purchase of Direct Travel**. Former Concur CEO, Steve Singh, and other investors announced this past week the purchase of Colorado-based corporate travel management company, Direct Travel ($300 million annual revenue and 1800 employees). Following the purchase, Singh will serve as the company's executive chairman, a role he also serves with other corporate and group travel players, Spotnana , Center and Troop (all of which plan to partner with each other in the future). The purchase is the fourth piece (of five total) in Singh's effort to build the "perfect trip." According to Singh, the fifth and final piece will focus on tools to better manage hotel inventory and bookings. Stay tuned.

- **Expedia and Amadeus Announce NDC Partnership**. Expedia and Amadeus captured much of the industry's attention this past week with their announced 1-year technology partnership under which Amadeus will provide much of its NDC content to Expedia, allowing Expedia to offer travelers additional supplier products and services (e.g., airline seat selection).

Algorithmic price-fixing cases draw federal interest
April 5, 2024 via Travel Weekly

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After a series of lawsuits, newly expressed interest in a case by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission could signal more scrutiny over alleged hotel pricing collusion.

Special Report: Can the EC open up the gatekeepers?

April 4, 2024 via Travel Weekly

The European Commission launched major investigations into Google parent Alphabet and fellow 'gatekeeper' platforms Apple and Meta over non-compliance with the Digital Markets Act (DMA) last month.

Concur founder Steve Singh leads acquisition of Direct Travel in ongoing quest for 'perfect trip'

April 2, 2024 via GeekWire

Steve Singh is one step closer to the "perfect trip." The Seattle-based business leader and investor, former CEO of companies including Concur and Docker, is leading a group of investors in the acquisition of Direct Travel Inc.

Expedia Group and Amadeus Commit to Multi-Year NDC Technology Deal to Revolutionize Online Travel Booking

April 2, 2024 via Travel and Tour World

Amadeus & Expedia team up, bringing NDC tech to revolutionize travel retailing & enhance the booking experience for millions.

How Travel Metasearch Lost Its Mojo

April 1, 2024 via Skift Travel News

Advertising in travel metasearch used to be near the top of the list for online travel agencies and hotels. But then along came Google Hotels, YouTube, and TikTok, as well as hotel and online travel agency loyalty programs to deflate the value proposition.

More leadership changes at Expedia ahead of CEO's departure

March 29, 2024 via Biz Journal

The Seattle-based online travel company says the president of its Expedia Brands division is leaving the company after three years.

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