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What Booking Holdings’ B2B Consolidation Could Mean for Online Travel

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Good Sunday morning from Seattle . . . Our weekly Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, July 17, 2026, is below. It was another relatively quiet week in the online travel world with the only major news coming out of Booking Holdings over its anticipated consolidation of B2B programs. Enjoy.

Conversions (Not Followers) Matter Most. Hoteliers are getting smarter, at least when it comes to getting the most out of their influencers on social media. An examination of hoteliers' current expenditures in influencer marketing reveals that quality (conversion), not quantity (followers), matters most. Influencers with less than 20,000 followers now receive over half of hoteliers' total spend (as compared to less than 20% of such investments in 2021). So why the shift? New "affiliate" marketing programs allow hoteliers to better measure their ROI by counting the clicks and bookings that actually result from a specific post. Armed with these new tools, hoteliers are now able to identify the influencers who actually produce bookings. Frequently, these high-conversion influencers are those with a smaller, but more active, follower base.

Don't Overact over Recent Fee Disclosure Enforcement Efforts. This past week we featured a story detailing the FTC's recent enforcement efforts against Hopper. Much continues to be written about the FTC's efforts, including a story in this week's Update contrasting the FTC's approach against Hopper versus the Department of Transportation's recent curtailing of airline disclosure requirements. From my perspective, the two actions are easily reconcilable. Hopper's questionable practices around service fees and charges are well documented (anyone remember a certain much-publicized split between Hopper and a certain large Seattle-based OTA over the OTA's concerns regarding such practices?). From my view, the FTC's action against Hopper was an easy decision for the FTC and **should not be seen as an early indicator of increased enforcement activity** against travel platforms generally (this is particularly true given the Trump administration's general view of regulations as evidenced by the DOT's recently announced decision).

Booking Holdings Consolidates B2B Efforts. We've known for a while that Booking Holdings planned to consolidate its B2B efforts among its travel platforms - Agoda, Priceline and Booking.com. We now know a little more about the new consolidated effort, which will be led by Agoda CEO, Omri Morgenshtern. Given the success of Expedia's B2B program (as frequently heralded in Expedia's recent earnings release calls), it is no surprise that Booking Holdings is now seeking to formalize its efforts across its portfolio. If Booking Holdings is able to provide the reach of its closest competitor while at the same time providing the transparency that its competitor won't (all at competitive pricing, of course), Booking Holdings should have a real opportunity.

Have a great week everyone.

[AI Risk to OTAs is Margin Squeeze, Not Disintermediation]
July 17, 2026 via PhocusWire
Much of the recent debate around artificial intelligence (AI) in travel has been about how far online travel players might be disintermediated. Consumer research, alongside an audit of the AI platforms and initiatives from the online travel agencies, reveals the greater impact could be on their margins.

[Travel's Creator Economy Doesn't Need a Million Followers. It Needs Proof It Converts]
July 16, 2026 via Skift
Brands spent years building creator partnerships around follower counts. Now, they're increasingly after deals they know drive real sales.

[The U.S. Government's Split Signals on Fee Disclosure for Travel Sellers]
July 15, 2026 via PhocusWire
Travel checkout is a regulated surface. But regulations are not static, and they aren't necessarily consistent across regulating bodies.

[Booking Holdings Is Forming a New B2B Unit, Agoda CEO Is Overseeing it]
July 10, 2026 via Skift
Booking Holdings has an uphill climb to rival Expedia's scale in B2B, but the formation of a consolidated business unit could help Booking become a more formidable competitor.

Posted in Online Travel Update

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