



Press Release

For Immediate Release

HEDNA's Winter Conference Brings Together Global Hospitality Professionals for Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Las Vegas, Nevada, December 16, 2011 - During two information-packed days, attendees at HEDNA's Winter Conference learned how to "Cash In on Distribution" through social media, connectivity, marketing, and payment technologies. The conference, held December 5-7 at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, drew more than 200 attendees who came to learn, network and be inspired.

To kick off the meeting, Melanie Ryan Owens, president of HEDNA and of Orbitz Worldwide, announced the new vision and mission statements for the association:

HEDNA Vision: HEDNA will be known for creating an environment which fosters strategic collaboration toward business development in the global hospitality industry.

HEDNA Mission: HEDNA is the leading global forum to advance the hospitality distribution through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

"HEDNA's Board of Directors has worked diligently to ensure that the association continues evolving to meet the needs and expectations of its members," Owens said. "All of HEDNA's strategic goals will support the new vision and mission statements, developing an even stronger association geared to the ever-changing industry."

Snapshot of industry trends

There is good news for the hospitality industry. It is recovering, but slowly, said Pegasus Solutions' Julie Parodi, senior director, strategic planning and analysis and editor, *The Pegasus View*. North American corporate travel bookings are growing by a modest margin while ADR shows solid growth. Length of stay is being used by corporates to contain costs per trip, Parodi said. Corporate travel in the Rest of the World shows a similar pattern to North America with bookings outpacing the prior year. Leisure travel is showing resilience in North America, but in the Rest of the World, the impact of the economy is taking a greater toll. What does the future look like? Parodi sees continued growth in corporate travel with leisure demand spurring bookings and ADR growth.

Gleaning intelligence from guest reviews

Guest reviews are increasingly important tools for consumers and hoteliers. What kinds of

patterns are being generated by guest reviews? A study of more than 3,000 guest reviews conducted recently by Natasa Christodoulidou, assistant professor, department of management and marketing at California State University, looked at positive versus negative reviews. Among the findings: consumers who are extremely dissatisfied tend to expend more time and energy to extensively critique a property than those with a favorable review. While she believes that strong incentives should be developed to attract more balanced reviews of hotel properties, she encouraged hotels to use the negative ratings to uncover patterns of deficiencies and gain ideas for product and service improvement. Christodoulidou's study will be published soon in the *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*.

Brian Payea, head of industry relations at TripAdvisor, says his company uses built-in metrics to help hoteliers discover patterns in reviews, allowing them to understand the sort of people that are reviewing and how to benchmark against other property reviews. Surprisingly, only 7% of bad reviews have a management response, he said. In addition, because of the growing use of mobile, Payea encouraged hoteliers to make sure their mobile presence meets a high standard.

Defining business in 2012

There are three factors that will define the hotel business in 2012, said Henry Harteveltdt, chief research officer and co-founder of Atmosphere Research Group. Uncertainty is a large factor since economies are still in a delicate state. Fragmentation will impact the business because 7 in 10 guests have no sense of brand loyalty. Immediacy is the third factor, allowing guests to access information immediately, especially on digital devices.

Counting on the wisdom of friends

Social media is evolving and nowhere is this more evident than Facebook. The wisdom of friends is replacing the wisdom of crowds, says pioneer Facebook builder Janice Diner, founding partner of Horizon Studios. Facebook has realized this and is adapting its offerings, such as Open Graph, to reflect the changing reality. Open Graph allows third party applications to include arbitrary actions and objects. This move to Open Graphs is moving us to the wisdom of friends.

Sharing ideas

HEDNA's Knowledge Workshops on payment, marketing and technical issues allowed attendees to learn from the top experts in these fields. HEDNA Forums on Standards, Payment Technologies and Leisure Wholesale allowed members to contribute thoughts and ideas to HEDNA's ongoing efforts on behalf of the industry.

HEDNA Award of Excellence

Every year HEDNA takes time to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts by one of its members. Congratulations to Laury Anne Behrens of Worldwide Payment Systems on being the recipient of the 2011 HEDNA Award of Excellence. "Laury has worked tirelessly to bring change and improvement to the payment segment of the hotel electronic distribution industry," Owens said in presenting the award. "She has been the driving force behind HEDNA's UGI initiative, spending countless hours and effort moving the UGI project forward within the industry and working to make lasting change through better categorization of property data."

Spirit of Innovation Award

Congratulations to HotelTonight, the winner of HEDNA's Spirit of Innovation Award. The Spirit of Innovation Award recognizes a key travel innovator who is driving the industry in a new direction. During the "Meet the Innovators" session, the five nominees presented to attendees, who then cast their votes to recognize the best innovation in travel and the hospitality industry.

HEDNA on the Horizon

Looking at 2012, the momentum will continue with HEDNA's Spring Conference in Madrid, Spain on June 5-7 at the Hotel Melia Castilla.

HEDNA's Virtual Roundtable series and HEDNA U 1.0 sessions will be offered on a monthly basis in 2012. There will be Virtual Roundtables on corporate booking tools, merchandizing and revenue management, among others. HEDNA U 1.0 will be offered in a number of North American and European locations, bringing this excellent education offering to a wide range of industry participants.

In the Asia-Pacific region, HEDNA's newly formed ASPAC working committee is actively engaged in understanding the needs of the region and will roll out new strategies and initiatives in early 2012.

HEDNA's social media will continue to bring news of the association to followers on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. HEDNA's Blog is the place to check on all things HEDNA and for the latest industry news.

HEDNA's goal to learn, network and be inspired isn't just a one event philosophy. It's a driving force behind the association's daily work on behalf of the industry and its members.



About HEDNA

The Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA) is a not-for-profit trade association whose worldwide membership includes executives and managers from the most influential companies in the hotel distribution industry. Founded in 1991, all of HEDNA's activities are intended to stimulate the booking of hotel rooms through the use of GDS, the Internet and other electronic means. HEDNA brings all segments of the hotel industry together to evolve systems and services into electronic distribution that is easy and efficient. Additional information on HEDNA is available by calling +1 202-204-8400 or by visiting www.hedna.org.

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