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HEDNA Explains How to Navigate the Evolving Booking Environment in Online Group and Meeting Planning White Paper

June 15, 2006 Falls Church, Va. The Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA) recently published the latest resource in its White Paper Series: Online Group and Meeting Planning. Responding to the need of its membership, the HEDNA Executive Committee commissioned this paper to explain automation of the group booking process, the changing booking environment from face-to-face sales to more Internet based decisions, and advancements that are being made to the efficiency of the entire process.

HEDNA President Tiffany Topcik commented, "For many years, the business segment of group and meeting planning has not kept pace with the remarkable strides that we've made in the field of hotel electronic distribution. I am pleased that HEDNA has tackled this issue and can now educate the industry on the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead; this is a tremendous step toward full automation for this valuable sector."

As with other White Paper topics, Online Group and Meeting Planning was selected in response to the association's 2005 Membership Survey. HEDNA members prioritized critical industry issues and the Board of Directors swiftly responded with quality research to explain important aspects of each subject. Other White Papers that are also available include:

- Hotel Distribution Nirvana - Multi-Channel Approach
- Successful Content Management for Hotels
- Travel Search Engines Redefine Distribution
- Dynamic Packaging

The HEDNA Distribution Management - Group Committee was closely involved in each phase of the creation of Online Group and Meeting Planning. Chairman Ed Perry, director of ecommerce, WORLDHOTELS, said "Today, the group booking process is significantly manual. Thus there are immediate opportunities to optimize the online group booking process. Our subcommittee's objective is to integrate existing and future booking technologies to create an online group booking community. We will work with traditional and non-traditional distribution partners, including third-party online booking engines. We envision a community that has integrated inventory and instant availability access from the supplier to allow end-consumer, travel agents and meeting planners to shop their properties on a 24/7 basis."

Online Group and Meeting Planning is now for sale at the HEDNA online bookstore for 75 USD for HEDNA members and 100 USD for non-members. An Executive Summary of the publication is available for download at: [../educate/white_paper_series](http://www.hedna.org/educate/white_paper_series). Members of the travel press and media can obtain a complimentary copy of the White Paper by contacting Catherine McDonald at + 1 703 970-2064 or cmcdonald@disa.org.