



HEDNA and hotel distribution industry looks forward to 2010

Better economic climate seen, HEDNA launches Networking Lunches, HEDNA U

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, December 9, 2009 - Attendees at HEDNA's Winter Meeting expressed much enthusiasm about HEDNA's educational outreach plans for 2010 and were optimistic about a better market for 2010. HEDNA's Winter Meeting was held December 7-9, 2009 at The Wynn in Las Vegas, NV. Over 200 attendees were in Las Vegas to learn the latest about the industry and to network.

HEDNA is relaunching its popular HEDNA U educational effort, said Melanie Ryan, HEDNA President and senior director, Global Strategic Accounts for Orbitz Worldwide. The first HEDNA U session will be held in August 2010 in Omaha, NE followed by another session in December 2010 in Dallas/Fort Worth. Designed to educate industry up and comers as well as those in the industry who would like to learn more about electronic distribution. HEDNA U is being enthusiastically greeted by the membership. "We're really looking forward to HEDNA U," said one attendee. "It's a great opportunity for my staff," another said. It's one of the best products HEDNA has ever produced.

2010 will see HEDNA's Networking Lunch initiative begin, which will bring HEDNA to more locations on a frequent basis. The first Networking Lunch will be held February 17, 2009 in San Francisco. Other Lunches are planned for March in Phoenix, AZ; May in Chicago, IL and Dubai; June in London, UK; September in Toronto, Ontario; and October in Atlanta, GA, said Ryan.

HEDNA will continue its Virtual Roundtables in 2010. Upcoming webinars are being planned on social media and connectivity options topics.

Filling the glass

Barry Maher, noted author and inspirational speaker, had attendees on their feet and cheering during his presentation. Maher encouraged attendees to take a different viewpoint of current challenges. "Find the selling points in the negative" aspects of a situation, Maher said. The key to filling your glass is to acknowledge the negatives and turn them into assets. Maher showed attendees the power that a few changes in outlook and a positive attitude can have.

Economy in Transition

The worst is behind us, according to many of the speakers on the Economy in Transition panel. While the economic downturn certainly took its toll, many areas of the travel and hotel industry are seeing signs of rebound with 2010 described as an important transitional year.

Panelist shared their lessons of 2009. Some of those lessons were:

- Using social media as a low-cost marketing tool and getting stellar results.
- Emphasizing the importance of value as a selling point.
- Going back to basics including phoning customers and meeting them face-to-face.
- 2009 saw the return of the personal handshake.
- A return to service excellence as being an essential attribute for business.
- Creating an action plan based on what we've learned from 2009.

What does the future hold for travel?

Several current trends will continue into the near future, according to the Future of Travel panelists. Among the trends are:

- Content is here to stay. Travelers want to know everything about the experience
- down to the kind of shampoo in the room.

- Help consumers discover new experiences. Don't provide the same old destination options.
- Delivery an experience that people will want to share with others.
- Will the emphasis on reducing carbon footprints keep people from traveling? Perhaps
- North Americans might travel less, but new travelers from countries such as China
- are keen to experience travel and will do so.

With the scheduled closing keynote speaker unable to attend the Winter Meeting, Forrester's Henry Harteveltdt stepped in at short notice to provide attendees with a very astute reading of the industry. He reiterated that 2010 will be a year of transition. He reminded attendees that due to the downturn, travelers have evolved from consumers to "sellsumers." Consumers are looking for value and are willing to pay a bit more to get better value. Harteveltdt also said that the industry needs to do a better job of enticing travelers. "We do well with the steak, but there's no sizzle."

Committee sessions well attended

HEDNA's Committees - Group, Tour, Standards, UGI (Unique Global Identifier), and Payment Systems - were very well attended. Both the Tour and Payment Systems Committees will be releasing white papers in early 2010. The Committees reviewed the status of the initiatives and heard excellent suggestions on how to move these initiatives forward.

Attendees found the Working Group sessions to be very informative. Speakers from the GDSs and OTAs updated packed audiences on their individual efforts and took questions about upcoming products and services.

The worst is behind us, Christine DeZarn, enterprise services consultant, Rubicon Group said that data does show the industry to be on an upturn. Not all parts of the industry are rising at the same rate, however. Interestingly, volume has shown much growth for transient. Brand.com continues to hold on to market share although at a slightly lower level for transient sales.

About HEDNA

The Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA) is a not-for-profit trade association whose worldwide membership includes executives and managers from over 200 of 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 <http://www.hedna.org/>

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