



Vol. 2, No.2 Spring 2006

President's Welcome

As the hotel distribution industry evolves into new and innovative directions, HEDNA continues to accomplish its stated mission: innovating, influencing, and educating. This newsletter will provide both news about the association and insights into the dynamic world of electronic distribution.

I am honored to be recently elected as HEDNA President for 2006. Jimmy Suh has joined Club Quarters in a new and challenging role not related to distribution and unable to continue his duties as association president. We acknowledge the incredible contribution shown by Jimmy over the years and we wish him well in his future endeavors. Our current Board of Directors is eager to work for you and meet the association objectives to be innovative, educate and influence the hotel distribution sector. Please feel free to contact me or any Board member with your ideas and feedback. Go to (<http://www.hedna.org/connect/board.shtml>) to see our Board roster with contact information.

HEDNA's redesigned website, www.HEDNA.org, was recently launched and serves as the premier source of information for distribution professionals in the lodging industry. Open World, an award-winning e-commerce solutions company, was selected to create the new site. See article to the left for more detail on the features included in phase 1 with additional enhancements soon forthcoming in phases 2 and 3.

Another educational and compelling conference is quickly approaching, to be held in Frankfurt, Germany on the 21-23 May at the Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof. The agenda is packed with high-level keynote speakers and topics highly relevant to every distribution professional. We look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Tiffany Topcik

HEDNA Relaunches Website

We are pleased to announce the arrival of a new look at HEDNA.org. Phase one of the relaunch project has focused on offering a more elegant feel, increased functionality and more intuitive navigation. In order to deliver a leading online experience, HEDNA partnered with [Open World Ltd. \(www.openworld.org\)](http://www.openworld.org) to create a site that will position itself as the premier resource for electronic hotel distribution.

The new site has been carefully planned to ensure we have retained the features of greatest importance to the HEDNA membership including Conference information and online registration; publications with descriptions, executive summaries and order forms; a Job bank that lists available industry jobs and qualified distribution candidates; committee initiatives, projects, and resources; and, presentations from past HEDNA Conferences and events.

Go to www.HEDNA.org and save the homepage to your favorites.

• Register Today for the May Conference

The hotel distribution business is changing rapidly with the evolution new technologies, business models and marketing approaches to reach a growing global consumer. But which ideas should you leverage and which ones should you avoid to ensure your company succeeds with the changes confronting your business? Gain valuable insights from the leading distribution companies and visionaries at this year's international HEDNA conference.

Interactive panels, case studies and presentations will include:

- Working Thru the Challenges of Global Electronic Payments
- Keeping Up with GDS' and the GDS Alternatives
- Global IDS Evolution
- Transformation of Distribution and the Customer Experience
- Automation Progress with Group Travel
- Getting On-Line with Tour Operators
- RSS - What's the buzz?

Henry Harteveltdt, Vice President of Forrester Research, will set the tone by addressing key points on how to succeed in a the dynamic global distribution industry. **Dr. Lalia Rach**, director of the Tisch Center for Hospitality at NYU will moderate the popular IDS and GDS panels. Her reputation for asking direct and tough questions will ensure a frank and interactive panel discussion, and no doubt stimulate debate way beyond the realms of the HEDNA conference. Both of these 'experts in the field' have spoken at previous HEDNA conferences and received high marks by the attendees.

You don't want to miss a presentation by **Connie Penn** of MasterCard on the popular subject of credit card verification and its impact on hotel distribution. Many other high level speakers are currently being added to the schedule. Please check back to the Conference web page for regular updates. Note that the special HEDNA room rates at the Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof are provided for bookings **made before 27 March**. These rates will be provided on a space-available basis from 27 March - 3 May 2006.

Sponsorship Opportunities: To receive information about becoming a Conference Sponsor, email Catherine McDonald at cmcdonald@disa.org or call +1 703 970-2064. A Sponsorship Prospectus can be downloaded at http://www.hedna.org/pdf/06may_prospectus_final.pdf.

Go to this web page for complete Conference information:
http://www.hedna.org/communicate/future_meetings.shtml

• **Topcik Steps Into Role of HEDNA President**

Unanimously selected by the Board of Directors, the new president is Tiffany Topcik, Vice President of Supplier Relations, ABC Corporate Services. Ms. Topcik had previously served for over a year as Vice President of HEDNA, crafting two successful Conferences in Barcelona and San Francisco. This is the first time in HEDNA's 15 year history that a Board member from a travel agency organization leads the association.

Go to this web page to read about other elected HEDNA officers:
http://www.hedna.org/communicate/press_releases/feb2006_01.shtml

• **Are You Missing?**

Our 2006 HEDNA membership renewal season is coming to a close. Member benefits include discounted member pricing at HEDNA Conferences; discounts on white papers (5 to date) and other publications; a voice in the Distribution Management and Standards Committees; access to the Members Only section that includes Conference presentations for download and more!

Important Note: Only current HEDNA members have been sent their new Username/Password necessary to access the "Members Only" sections of HEDNA.org. If you haven't received yours, send an email to cmcdonald@disa.org so we can check the status of your membership.

• **HEDNA Alliances Grow**

Did You Know? Current members of HEDNA are eligible to receive discounts on other industry Conferences and events.

Go to this web page to view list of partnerships:
http://www.hedna.org/communicate/strategic_alliances.shtml

• **Hotel Shopping - The Next Generation**

By John Burns, CHA, ISHC, President, Hospitality Technology Consulting

It's been too long since my wife and I visited France together and we wanted to see more of the French countryside. So we decided that 2006 was the year to change that. The commitment made and the flights reserved (using frequent flyer points, of course), the next step was to book accommodation. Looking back, the process through which we did that was for me, as a traveler, surprising, and for me as a hotelier, startling.

This is not new. We are all using the Web for travel research, and often for travel booking. What caught my attention - and admiration - were the examples of how well the Web is being used by some properties to showcase their facilities and present a compelling argument for selecting them. We saw:

- Not only attractive photography but informative photos of every room type
- Photos of the view outside the room's window.
- 360' tours of guest rooms
- 360' tours of the front of the hotel, showing not only the entrance but the complete sense of arrival and some of the surrounding neighborhood
- Floor plans of every room type
- Photos of properties where you can click on a guestroom window and view pictures of the room's interior
- Detailed menus and wine lists with prices included
- Extensive neighborhood information, including nearby recommended restaurants, walks, attractions, and events
- Extensive multilingual descriptions (granted the French language descriptions were often more extensive and appealing than the English language versions)
- E-mail assistance from the property's concierge
- Links to city and regional tour offices and other information sources.

Peter Yesowich of Yesowich, Pepperdine & Brown predicts that personalization will be the future of the lodging industry. What we saw during our travel research gave us a glimpse of what he means. We had the photos and detailed, well-written descriptions with which to feel that we really understood what the properties we viewed have to offer, sufficient information to feel not only confidence in our choices, but also excitement and anticipation in our selection.

And this feeling of anticipation – and value as a prospective guest – was further heightened by prompt replies to our e-mails when we have questions. Replies usually came with 2-3 hours, often from evening and night staff that have been trained and tasked to respond to e-mails in a very timely manner.

Three other points are important here. The first is that after visiting a property's Web site, our next stop was a traveler review Web site – usually TripAdvisor – to read feedback from past guests. Their comments often led us to continue consideration, or immediately dismiss - a property.

• Seeking Your Insights!

We want to hear your thoughts on the issues below. Respond to one or respond to all.

- Your thoughts about Yahoo trademark restrictions for advertisers?
- Impact of AOL charging for email delivery - has this affected your communication strategy?
- What the banks did next? Tracking the 'automation' lifecycle. From tellers to ATMs and now the new USP....tellers! How do we retain personal service in the online environment?
- Are you facing the challenge of multi-lingual content? Do your customers demand it or expect it? How much influence does it play in sales conversion? Can a multi lingual strategy be supported across all touch points and channels or are we in danger of a single multi lingual channel strategy?
- If effective distribution relies on knowing your customer, then why is the issue of data collection, database management and data mining so underplayed in the distribution world?
- What is more important:
 - Connectivity and cost of connectivity?
 - Knowing whom you are connecting with and whom you want to connect with?

Go to talkback@hedna.org to share your insights.

Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors (as of 3/15/2006)

