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European hotels focus on rapid increase in direct web bookings

In 2007, more than 30 percent of bookings came from direct web bookings -a trend expected to grow as consumers make higher-value purchases online. This and other key Internet marketing trends were the focus of discussion for more than 200 European participants in three regional seminars hosted in September by **TravelCLICK**, the leader in hotel ecommerce solutions.

The seminars, drawing decision-makers from hotels in and around Athens, Budapest, and Vienna, were designed to illuminate the latest trends in Hotel Internet Marketing—and provide actionable strategies and tactics for general managers, reservation managers, and directors of sales and marketing in luxury hotels and resorts. Along with TravelCLICK hotel emarketing experts, local representatives of industry leaders including Booking.com, Coral Int., Google, www.griechenland.com by BSO, and MS - marketing & sales shared insights and best practices. For example, hotels need to:

- Incorporate consumer reviews and ratings into their marketing strategy, as these reviews are an increasingly important influence on consumer hotel purchase decisions
- Be wherever consumers are shopping on the Web; online shoppers visit at least three to four websites before making an online purchase decision
- Proactively monitor their position on search engines and online travel agencies, as well as track their consumer reviews.
- Leverage booking engines to increase the booking value of each reservation with add-ons, packages, and onsite services

“Our seminar participants understand the changing face of distribution and the increasing importance of the Internet,” said Jan Tissera, President of TravelCLICK International. “For hoteliers who want to stay ahead of the competition, Internet strategies are critical to driving demand and converting online bookings.”

For the first half of 2008, TravelCLICK empowered its hotels to achieve a 57 percent increase in revenue — 23 points higher than the overall market. The higher-than-market performance for European hotels is attributed to TravelCLICK’s industry-recognized best practices for driving revenue through electronic channels, personalized service to hoteliers, and an unmatched network of local market experts assigned to each hotel. Hoteliers can see the revenue and room night trends for their local markets online at www.travelclickworks.com. *Tatiana Rokou - Friday, October 24, 2008*