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TravelCLICK Helps Hotels Harness the Power of Social Networks

New Social Marketing Optimization service builds community and creates customer connections

CHICAGO (June 19, 2009)—Today, more than 150 million active users are on Facebook, the world's most popular social networking site. And 46% of those users are in the 18- to 34-year-old group, which includes the biggest-spending demographic for travel.¹ The power of the media is clear, but the best way to manage it is not yet so clear. Hotels must face issues related to resources, target demographics, online booking strategy, and more. First, a hotel must understand the social networking landscape, how it works, and where their hotel fits in. Social media is more about conversation, dialogue, networking, and information sharing. Marketers must be patient, honest, and non-manipulative in their approach and work to create strong relationships in these media.

To help hotels reap the benefits of Facebook and other popular sites, such as YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and Bebo, TravelCLICK has developed a new, personalized strategy and service offering—Social Marketing Optimization (SMO). The service is designed to open the door to online communities, engage consumers in interactive conversations, and drive traffic from numerous marketing channels.

“Networking will be the second-most popular online activity by 2012,”² says Aleck Schleider, Vice President, Internet Marketing Solutions at TravelCLICK. “It will overtake shopping and surpass communications like email. So hoteliers have no choice but to understand the channel quickly—or be left behind.” TravelCLICK also cautions hoteliers not to enter this area without careful thought and planning. “The worse thing a hotel can do is rush into social marketing without doing the research to understand what sites attract your guest profile and what content potential guests are looking for. Education is key,” Schleider notes.

TravelCLICK's SMO service will help hotels get ahead of the curve, taking the mystery out of social networking by providing a personalized strategy that targets the most appropriate sites—based on the hotel's target guest demographics. Its award-winning digital marketing team works with each hotel to build the right social network presence, leveraging user-generated content across all media, from blogs and guest review sites to video and picture-sharing sites, to deliver relevant, compelling content. The goal is to engage users in a dialogue that builds brand awareness and community, increases web traffic and search rankings, and ultimately delivers new guest connections.

The SMO service, which is part of a comprehensive hotel Internet marketing suite, is being introduced to the U.S. at the Hospitality Industry Technology Exposition and Conference (HITEC) on June 22–25 in Anaheim, CA, in booth #546.

To further hotelier education, TravelCLICK is offering HITEC attendees a *Viewpoint* on social networking. Part of its new educational series, *Knowledge Is Power*, *Viewpoints* are authored by TravelCLICK subject matter experts and address commonly asked questions in the industry. Attendees can get a copy of “*Viewpoint: Should my hotel have a Facebook page?*” at booth #546.

TravelCLICK is celebrating a decade of providing award-winning solutions and proven expertise to hotels throughout the world.

About TravelCLICK Inc. (www.travelclick.net) TravelCLICK, the leader in hotel ecommerce solutions, provides a continuous flow of high-value online bookings to hotels worldwide. A uniquely comprehensive one-stop solution, TravelCLICK offers market intelligence, distribution, electronic marketing, and media solutions delivered with personal attention and local market expertise. With revenue optimization experts in every global market, we help our clients make better business decisions, generate greater demand from the right mix of channels, convert more shoppers to high-value guests, and increase revenue and profitability. Serving the hospitality industry since 1999, TravelCLICK has more than 14,000 customers in 140 countries with offices in Barcelona, Chicago, Dubai, Houston, Phoenix, Melbourne, Shanghai, and Tokyo.

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1. PhocusWright reports that the 25- to 34-year-old age group spends more on travel per household than any other demographic (Consumer Trend Report Part One: Behavioral Trends, April 2009).
2. According to Google, 2009.

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