

# FastBooking News

January 2011



## Succeed on the Internet

**O**n behalf of the FastBooking team worldwide, I would like to wish you a happy and prosperous 2011.

All the indicators are positive and promise a bright future. And the future will be played out on the Internet. There is no doubt that the Internet, and in particular your hotel website, is the channel that generates the strongest growth, is the most profitable, and on which you should focus your efforts.

But another revolution is afoot. In the last two years, the rise of smartphones (soon to be followed by tablets) and the ever explosive growth of social networks have added a whole new dimension to the Internet and are bringing about deep-seated changes in the lifestyle of travelers and the way they consume...with a direct impact on online marketing.

Today's consumers are connected permanently by their PCs or mobile phones, and receive advice and recommendations from their friends and family, or the communities that are part of their social networks. While the power of sites like TripAdvisor remains significant, that of sites offering recommendations from "friends" appears to be incalculable. Facebook already has more users than Google, and more than ten percent of them use the site to make travel plans.

For the hotel industry, the opportunities to prosper on the Internet have never been so great, or so complex. You can no longer simply rely on search engines to boost the visibility of your Internet site. A global strategy is necessary, a strategy that makes the best of every platform on the value chain.

We have already spoken at length about the importance of investing in the mobile Internet. Now, it becomes essential to be involved in social networks: not only to reply directly and honestly to comments made by guests, but also to promote offers, and build relationships with fans through Facebook, a blog or Twitter.

Social networks are not a menace. Rather, they represent an excellent means of measuring performance in the market, identifying strengths and points that can be improved. They are also an essential source of information that teaches us how travelers behave, and give us insight into their tastes and their aspirations.

Ultimately, these various facets of the Internet help us give travelers the unique and individual online experience they seek...before, during and after their reservation.

The year ahead appears to offer exciting opportunities in the Internet space. We're looking forward to exploring them with you.

**Soraya Kefs**  
Chief Operating Officer

## Thanks to FastBooking, travelers can now plan their route

➤ FastBooking Engine will soon feature an interactive route planning module with a room booking function.

For hotel chains and groups, this new tool is a fantastic way to promote all their establishments and to improve the user's experience.

Travelers can use this module to plan their trip step by step, based on the number of days they want to stay in a location or the mileage they want to cover each day. Then they can select the hotel for each stage of their trip.

The system displays the available rooms and the prices of the hotels according to the planned departure date, the length of the stay and the number of persons. The system proposes several hotels for each

stage of the trip, including the departure and the destination. Travelers can compare the location of the hotels, their features and their prices before booking a room in the hotel that best suits them.

With the integrated booking interface, it is very easy for travelers to book their hotel rooms all along their entire route. The route module is based on the functions of Google Maps, including the function that allows the route to be changed by simply dragging it on the map. The hotels are identified by push pins. Clicking on a pin displays the essential information about the hotel.

The new route module will be released in March 2011.



## FastBooking opens subsidiary in Japan

➤ 2010 saw the creation of FastBooking's fifth subsidiary, in the prestigious Cerulean Tower in the heart of Tokyo.

FastBooking Japan is managed by Toshimitsu "Tom" Fukushima. Tom has more than 20 years of experience in the support and development of independent hotels, and previously served as Sales Director and Regional Director for Worldhotels, Pegasus and, more recently, The Charming Hotels (TCL Group).

FastBooking has been working with Japanese hotels for nine years. The customer and hotel interfaces of the booking engine have been available in Japanese since 2002.

Until now, the Japanese market was managed from Singapore. With this new subsidiary, FastBooking will be closer to its customers in order to offer more services, in their own language and in its usual spirit of partnership. The best possible way of reassuring future customers, who may hesitate when it comes to working with foreign providers.

"The Japanese market is totally mature in terms of e-commerce in the hotel industry, and the demand for solutions in the forefront of technology is high. But hotels are still far too dependent on the OTAs to market their rooms, both on the domestic and the international markets.

## Seen in the press

"Social media, like Facebook, with their 600 million users, will have a dramatic impact on how affluent consumers make their (travel) decisions."  
*Klara Glowczewska, Editor, Conde Nast Traveler*

"The last decade has seen significant changes in the way travelers book their trips. Our research shows that an increasing number of travelers plan their holidays on the strength of specific experiences that influence the manner in which they look for hotels online."  
*Carly Gotz, Sales and Marketing Director, Great Hotels of the World*

"Today's consumers will be loyal to the brand that speaks to their unique lifestyle. Marketers must put in the efforts to find out this information about the target customers. Then, they must bring back the answers and plug them into the company, the brand, its marketing communications, website and social media strategies."  
*Pam Dabziger, Unity Marketing*

"Social media allows hoteliers to not only engage with customers on a one-to-one basis, but also track behavior and loyalty to a greater extent than ever before."  
*Grahame Tate, Managing Director Asia Pacific, IDEaS*

"The Internet savvy hotel manager understands that the selection of a hotel almost always comes after the decision to travel to a specific area. Knowing this, they decide to provide the 'reasons' to travel to where the hotel is located. Travelers search the Internet for activities and places to visit; destination-focused marketing can help them to also find your hotel."  
*Neil Salerno, Coach, Council for Hospitality Management Education*

FastBooking's mission is to help them to develop their direct sales on their own Internet site," explains Tom Fukushima.

In addition to technology, FastBooking also has the capacity to attract European travelers with our Traffic Builder programs. "Our partnerships with the leading tourist sites and our proprietary network of booking portals will boost the international visibility of our Japanese customers," add Tom Fukushima.

## Negresco and Citéa call on FastBooking to boost the visibility and the performance of their web site

FastBooking recently completed two major Website Package projects: the creation of a brand new site for the Negresco Hotel, and a new version of the Citéa website.

Each project was conducted within a specific context, but they both took up the same challenge, which is at the very core of FastBooking's business: to significantly boost the visibility of official hotel websites and improve performance in terms of bookings.

"We do not create standard sites that simply change the color of our customer's logo," explains Damien Balbo, Senior Product Manager. "All our sites are made to measure and take the specifics of the customer into consideration. They act as genuine ambassadors for the brand.

"In terms of design, we do everything we can to be in perfect harmony with the customer's graphic guidelines and image."

FastBooking also meets these goals through the SEO of the sites we create in order to guarantee a top-of-page position on search engines and, thus, access to a qualified audience.

The sites are optimized for e-commerce thanks to the inclusion of booking links on every page and numerous spaces used to promote packages. We also pay close attention to easy, clear and intuitive

navigation that allows users to scan the content of the site easily. The combination of all these techniques results in outstanding conversion rates.

"Luxury and performance are not necessarily incompatible. On the contrary," adds Damien Balbo.

This challenge was at the very heart of the Negresco project. We had to develop



graphic guidelines for the Internet that were totally in line with this palace's new visual identity. In the creative phase, the FastBooking team did their utmost to convey the atmosphere and the quality of the hotel, in particular by publishing an unbelievable gallery of high-definition photos.

The challenge for Citéa was different. We had to optimize the site from a functional perspective, without breaking away from the existing version. FastBooking

succeeded in considerably improving the design and the merchandising aspects of the pages, in particular by promoting numerous special offers, while conserving the spirit and the reference points of the previous version of the site.

And the results fully met the customer's expectations. "FastBooking made a smooth migration to a site that is more attractive and modern, and in harmony with Citéa's visual identity. Every page was carefully prepared and checked to make sure that the keywords and expressions that are most frequently used on the search engines were included. And with the new CMS, we can easily update the content ourselves," explains Marie-Françoise Verdelet, e-Commerce Manager at Citéa.



Contact your Account Manager to make the most of our Website Package\* offer or for any other information.

### COMPANY NEWS

## FastBooking hails the arrival of two new Vice-Presidents

FastBooking is delighted to announce the arrival of Paul Ponçon and Pierre-Charles Grob, respectively Sales EMEA and VP Revenue Optimization Service.

Their arrival confirms the company's ambition to strengthen its customer advisory services and to better understand their needs so that we can offer the perfect solutions.

Both have broad-based experience in the management of sales and marketing teams, and customer relations.

After two years with Accor in New York, Pierre-Charles spent more than four years in charge of marketing and e-distribution with the Monte-Carlo SBM group, one of FastBooking's long-standing customers. He is quite aware of the importance of sales on the Internet, and he also

possesses a customer's experience. A significant advantage when it comes to continually improving customer service.

Paul has spent more than 10 years in e-business, and in e-travel in particular. He set up the eTravel France business at Amadeus. Under his management, it became Amadeus' biggest online activity in Europe.

### In your opinion, what is the most important differentiating factor of FastBooking?



Pierre-Charles Grob: "Hotels really need to exist individually on the Internet. This has always been FastBooking's watchword. And I really want to be part of this strategy and give them the keys to help them take the right decisions, without any intermediaries".



Paul Ponçon: "FastBooking has a visionary spirit and a capacity to anticipate the trends of the future and deliver concrete solutions very early. It combines the strike force of a multinational with the agility of a smaller company. I'm in the field listening to what hoteliers have to say... and we adapt our solutions to better meet their needs".

## With Hotels4U, FastBooking boosts customers' visibility with travel agencies



FastBooking recently entered an agreement with **Hotels4U.com** part of the Thomas Cook (group), one of the UK's leading online reservation site for hotels, villas or apartments in top resort destinations around the world.

Thanks to this agreement, FastBooking customer hotels participating in the Web Traffic Builder program will be accessible and reservable on the hotels4u.com and medhotel.com sites. This partnership makes these hotels visible to more than 8,000 international travel agencies working with Hotels4U and gives added impetus to the actions already taken with agencies *via* other partnerships and the FastBooking GDS offer. The agreement

also takes advantage of clients' strong presence in top metropolitan destinations to augment Hotels4U and Medhotels offering.

"Our goal is to increase our clients' online business. Our BtoC hotel reservation site, FastBooking.com, is a well-known resource for individual travelers. For some time now, we have been building notoriety and presence among travel agents, who remain an important influence in accommodation decisions, particularly among corporate customers. Our partnership with Hotels4U significantly improves our visibility with these two audiences," says Alain Hirschfeld, FastBooking Marketing Director, Business Development.

"The agreement with Hotels4U advances our objective to develop a quality distribution network for our hotel clients by working with selective partners," he adds.

Hotel4U also welcomed the news of the partnership enthusiastically. "The FastBooking portfolio is complementary to our offer. Our clients are looking for distinctive accommodations at competitive prices in top cities around the world. This agreement is the perfect response to market demands," says Doug Turner, Hotels4U.com Head of New Product Development.

The partnership is expected to be on line in Q2 2011.

## FastBooking enters 2-way agreement with GP Dati

FastBooking recently announced the creation of a two-way interface between FastBooking Engine and Scigno Management Suite, the modular management tool of GP Dati, Italy's leading PMS systems provider.

**"Bookings, availability rates and prices are managed in real time by the PMS."**

The agreement responds to a clear customer demand for integration between revenue management, PMS and online sales functions.

Thanks to this leading-edge technology, hotels will be able to

boost their sales on all their electronic and conventional outlet channels. The advantage is that bookings, availability, rates and prices are managed in real time by the PMS. Integration between other FastBooking solutions and GP Dati tools is also underway.

### NEW ARRIVALS



Alfa Fiesta, 4\*  
Budapest, Hungary



Hotel Ambasciatori, 4\*  
Venice, Italy



Relais Spa, 4\*  
Chessey, France



Moon @ 23 Dickson, 4\*  
Singapore



Montreal Furnished Apartments, 4\*  
Montreal, Canada



Grand Majestic Plaza, 4\*  
Prague, Czech Republic



Phoenicia Hotels, 5\*  
Bucharest, Romania



Mondial Hue Hotel, 4\*  
Hue, Vietnam



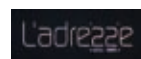
Innotel Hotel, 4\*  
Singapore



Maritim Park Hotel Riga, 4\*  
Riga, Latvia



The Bella Vista, 5\*  
Panchkula, India



Hotel L'adresse Paris, 3\*  
Paris, France

### NEW MEMBERS ON FASTBOOKING GDS



Formosa Park Apartment Hotel, 4\*  
Praia do Ancao, Portugal



Grand Hotel Adriatic, 4\*  
Opatija, Croatia



Hotel Slovenija, 4\*  
Portoroz, Slovenia



Baan Yuree Resort & Spa, 3\*  
Patong Beach, Thailand



Red Wall Garden Hotel Beijing, 5\*  
Beijing, China



Asia-TH-Grand-China-Princess, 4\*  
Bangkok, Thailand



First Hotel Paris - Tour Eiffel, 3\*  
Paris, France



Pearl of the Pacific Boracay Resort & Spa  
Boracay Island, Philippines



EuroAgentur DownTown Suites, 4\*  
Prague, Czech Republic



Cendeluxe Hotel, 5\*  
Tuv Hoa, Vietnam

## Ready to assist

FastBooking Headquarters	+33 (0)1 44 71 05 20	helpdesk@fastbooking.net
FastBooking Italy	+39 041 532 1919	assistenza@fastbooking.net
FastBooking Asia	+65 6223 2730	ashotline@fastbooking.com
FastBooking Japan	+81 3 5456-5484	japan@fastbooking.net
FastBooking USA	+1 212 5005950	usa@fastbooking.com
FastBooking Canada	+1 418-688-7113	canada@fastbooking.com
FastBooking South America	+51 (1) 655 24 15	samerica@fastbooking.com

www.fastbooking.net

