

Finding hotels at ITB Asia this week is about more than just a place to stay for some

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Ever found it hard to get a decent hotel room located near to a major travel trade show event? Most of you would be happy to find just one good room, at a fair price. But when I go to a travel trade show my objective is to find thousands of hotels rooms and then occupy them as often as I possibly can.

Who needs thousands of rooms? At Hotelbeds Group that's *our raison d'etre*: we consolidate hotel accommodation and I'm in charge of contracting the right hotels, at the right rates across Asia Pacific.

If you want to find out more about how we go about doing that, this Thursday at ITB Asia I will be participating in a panel discussion called *The future of travel distribution*. The debate will be hosted by Duncan Horton, CEO of Travel Weekly Group - part of Jacobs Media Group - and participating will be industry colleagues from Booking.com, KAYAK, Skyscanner, and Triptease.

We'll be discussing what it takes to succeed, and how to keep succeeding as the industry continues to move forward. What do you think will be the next big thing? Come along and join the debate, we'll be taking questions from the audience; it kicks off at 10am in the Knowledge Theatre at Sands Expo Convention Center B2.

During the rest of the three day conference - starting Wednesday and finishing Friday - my colleagues and I will be busy meeting with our hotel partners, who now number over 170,000 globally since both Tourico Holidays and GTA joined our Group last year.

In particular, I'm going to be speaking with hotels about how we can help them boost incremental sales by reaching niche B2B buyers such as airlines or points redemption schemes. Additionally, I'll be speaking with them about how to increase margins on those B2B sales by finding customers that cancel less, return more often, and spend more whilst in destination.

As always, this week we are also looking to negotiate more exclusive and unique deals with hotel partners, especially helping partners to stand out from the crowd. This is very important for the over 60,000 travel intermediary subscribers to our platform who crave differentiated content for their customers. What better way to attract special B2B buyers than by offering them something special for their customers?

For many hoteliers around the globe, but particularly those based in Asia Pacific, a significant part of their growth strategy going forward is focused on capturing Chinese travellers. For us at Hotelbeds Group we've been deeply involved in the Chinese market for many years and already it is our fourth biggest source market globally.

We've achieved success in the Chinese source market by embracing technology changes and working with our hotel supplier partners globally to help them adjust their offering accordingly.

For example, Chinese travellers require certain types of information about a hotel room - such as the room size or whether or not it has a kettle - that most hoteliers don't display; Chinese travellers also book much more last minute than hoteliers are familiar with. It's just as important to make sure that we have the right content on our platforms in the Chinese language. We achieve this by translating our hotel descriptions on our Bedsonline retail platform, as well as working through

distribution partners.

As Chinese travellers increasingly travel less in groups and slowly become fully independent travellers, technology becomes more important still. At a moment when Chinese travellers are still having their first tentative experiences - ones they could repeat with the same destinations and brands - it will be technology that either makes or breaks hotels in capturing them. Is your technology up to the job? Only time will tell, but in the meantime meet up with us and we can share our experiences.

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