

HOTBED OF RELATIONSHIPS

WOODS BAGOT CREATES ONLINE B2B DATING SITE FOR HOTEL INDUSTRY

Unveiled today at the Asia Hotel and Investment Conference (AHIC), in Macau, Woods Bagot has launched HOTBED – the hotel industry’s first B2B matchmaking service.

“Spearheaded by our Research & Design (R & D) team, six months of preliminary observations and investigative research told us that hotel professionals need an industry-focused tool, to find businesses with similar vested interests,” said Rob Steul, Global Hotel Leader, Woods Bagot.

A forecasted increase in global hotel activity and pervasive market volatility has made finding an appropriate business partner increasingly difficult and confusing. A hotel developer entering the Vietnam leisure market, for example, needs to be able to quickly find a financier with the same expansion strategy.

“HOTBED is the creation of an online facility that harnesses the power of an online social network with the accurate matchmaking capability of a personal dating site. It connects hotel chains with regional operators, introduces savvy investors to risk-averse financiers, pairs international developers with local construction firms, and puts owners in the same room as boutique management agencies,” explained Steul.

HOTBED has been launched with a particular focus on the Asia Pacific region, where leisure travel is expected to dramatically increase with the eruption of a burgeoning middle class and where business travel will increase with the influx of low-coast airline carries and broader access to online bookings.

So, how has this B2B matchmaking service come to fruition? Is it as transparent as online dating sites where participants are expected to clearly detail their profile and interests – including long walks on the beach? Well, almost.

Having registered their details with Woods Bagot, industry players can search for their perfect match on the HOTBED site by filtering contacts into appropriate groupings, depending on key characteristics. HOTBED users can openly view profile information and can communicate with other industry players.

So, why is a global architecture and design firm setting up a networking site?

“HOTBED is intended as a platform from which the industry can establish collaborative relations. We believe that collaboration is the solution to many of the problems we currently face in the 21st century.

A collaborative approach to hotel development will be crucial to advancing the broader quality of the industry, and will ultimately deliver more captivating and seductive guest experiences - with the introduction of HOTBED, Woods Bagot has taken that extra step to make collaboration much easier,” continued Steul.

The most successful hotels in today’s marketplace focus on the engagement of the customer, the offering of a unique experience, and the freedom of choice. This is in stark contrast with the destination hotels of yesterday in which guests were directed in a scripted experience.

Gone are the days of photogenic monumental hotels; in are the days of boutique lodgings that interact with their local communities.

“Guests’ wants and needs are different; collectively it is our job to provide for these various scenarios. Key is the coming together of very different groups – operators, developers, investors and architects; HOTBED seeks to do exactly just this,” explained Steul.

In addition to creating a B2B network, HOTBED delivers key findings that reflect future aspirations within the hotel industry, for example: 87% of respondents chose ‘value added’ over ‘cost savings’ in the context of hotels; and 32% of respondents will target business travellers, whilst 30% will target leisure travellers. The full Blue Paper can be viewed at <http://www.woodsbagot.com/IHIF>

AHIC is part of the International Hotel and Investment Forum Summit Series and offers senior executives of the hotel community three days of business-generating networking and participation in platform events that encourage knowledge sharing.

On Thursday 19th May, Rob Steul will be participating in a live panel discussion titled, “Will 2012 be a year of recovery or one of discovery when it comes to new ideas on profitability?” As a leading design expert for the hotel industry Rob’s input will focus around how design enhances the guest experience and ultimately increases return on investment.

Woods Bagot will also be involved in further IHIF events globally. These include the Russia IHIF conference (Moscow, 17-19 October 2011) and Europe IHIF conference (Berlin, early 2012).

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What to know more about Woods Bagot’s involvement at AHIC?

Keep up to date with all the action of AHIC by following us **#WBIHIF** or visit our website at <http://www.woodsbagot.com/IHIF>

About HOTBED

As part of the IHIF series, the Global Lifestyle Sector has partnered with AHIC's media sponsor, Questex. This has involved inviting over 40,000 industry contacts to participate in an innovative lifestyle sector research and presenting a blue paper of the findings to delegates at the conference.

A business to business (B2B) ‘matchmaking’ portfolio has also been carefully developed. ‘HOTBED’ harnesses the uniqueness of a B2B dating site and combines it with the power of an online social network.

About Woods Bagot

Woods Bagot is one of the world's leading architectural practices, with a global team of more than 700 working across North America, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East. The firm's unique "One Global Studio" philosophy drives unprecedented knowledge sharing and true collaboration across time zones, producing innovative, inspired and functional design solutions for our clients. Underpinning Woods Bagot's knowledge culture is PUBLIC, our propriety research brand, created in collaboration with leading thinkers and academics.

The firm's diverse portfolio of high-profile projects includes: Adelaide Convention Centre, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, Hilton South Wharf (Melbourne), Eccleston Square Hotel (London), Nakheel Tower (Dubai) and the ivy (Sydney).

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