



GLOBAL HOTEL ALLIANCE'S DISCOVERY LOYALTY PROGRAMME HITS THE 10 MILLION MEMBER MILESTONE

Alliance releases member data and research, which demonstrate the growing importance of DISCOVERY's contribution to its 35 independent brands

Dubai, 13 June 2017 Global Hotel Alliance ("GHA"), the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, today released a string of data and research about its multi-brand, shared loyalty platform DISCOVERY, as it prepares to welcome its 10 millionth member this month, demonstrating the power of their "sharing economy". GHA was created to help its 35 member brands to compete more effectively in the face of the huge consolidation among major hotel companies and the growing marketing power of the OTAs, in an era where big data and guest personalisation have become the key to customer loyalty.

The DISCOVERY loyalty programme is growing by **250,000 new members each month**. DISCOVERY's marketing efforts not only encourage **repeat stays in the same hotel or brand, which are forecast to hit US\$1 billion in 2017**, but they also incentivize "cross-brand" stays, with this incremental revenue stream forecast to exceed US\$100 million this year.

Chris Hartley, GHA's CEO, says that many participating hotels are getting **several points in incremental occupancy** at a much lower cost of sale, through this shared approach to data ownership: "We're seeing cross-brand revenue grow consistently at 25-30% a year, as our database surges and our marketing and data science gets more sophisticated. For some hotels, especially in key gateway cities, that can represent thousands of incremental room-nights, or as much as **5% in additional occupancy**."

DISCOVERY's 10 million members are incentivised to try different brands through unique *Local Experience* rewards. Outrigger Resorts joined GHA in October 2016, and overnight was able to expose its Honolulu properties as well as those in Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean to 4.5 million US-based customers and millions more globally. "That's instant incremental business at a very low cost of sale," enthuses Sean Dee, Outrigger's Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. "In just a few months we've already seen over 4,000 room-nights from DISCOVERY members enrolled by other brands; but on top of that we've now gained a sophisticated CRM platform to further strengthen our own loyal customer base, with zero capital investment requirement."

Kempinski Hotels, one of GHA's founder members and shareholders, is currently opening the first luxury hotel in Cuba, and it will be able to target that same US customer base, which will ensure instant visibility with an expectant audience. Xavier Destribats, Kempinski's Chief Operating Officer of The Americas and Managing Director of the Kempinski in Havana, explains: "Even as Kempinski opens its first hotel in the Americas, we already have access to millions of customers on our doorstep, most of whom have never set foot in Cuba, but have been longing for the opportunity to visit."

GHA launched its own DISCOVERY app in 2016, and this is now the fastest growing booking medium. "We've already received several million dollars of bookings on the app," affirms Folker Heim, GHA's Head of Loyalty, "but the most interesting thing is that 55% of those bookings



are customers trying new brands. And interestingly the number one booking source is not the US, but China." Indeed to reflect the huge growth of its Chinese customer base, who now number 700,000, GHA is opening a dedicated Chinese membership service centre, and last month it added a Chinese language website.

And according to GHA's CEO, they have exciting plans for the future: "Our next big investment will be in data science and artificial intelligence," explained Hartley. "There's no point in having a database of 10 million customers and sending them all the same content. While our marketing team can naturally spot trends, you need sophisticated algorithms to really figure out what drives behaviour and choice. Recently we noticed, for example, that Norwegians are the biggest customers into Berlin for weekends in the spring [GHA has 225,000 members in Norway, which is 5% of their population], but data science will enable us to spot thousands of these trends, and then make sure we're serving relevant content to those customers, that will drive bookings."

Likewise GHA is able to use extensive research with its DISCOVERY customer base to hone not just its marketing efforts, but also its development strategy. "France and Italy are our members' most popular destinations, but we have very few hotels in those markets, so naturally we're talking to potential member brands with a strong presence there, demonstrating that we can create instant demand for their hotels," concluded Hartley.

Peter Strebel, Omni's Chief Marketing Officer and a member of the GHA board, concurs: "GHA's continued success will be its members sharing their data, and then GHA becoming experts at using that data to drive cross-brand sales. As GHA gets bigger and better at doing that, fiercely independent brands like Omni, and our other GHA partner brands, have a chance of beating the OTAs and the ever-consolidating mega-groups in their own backyard."

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Editor's Notes:

About Global Hotel Alliance

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) is the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, bringing together 35 brands with 550 hotels in 76 countries. GHA uses a shared technology platform to drive incremental revenues and create cost savings for its member brands. GHA's award-winning loyalty programme, DISCOVERY, provides over 10 million members exclusive opportunities to immerse themselves in local culture wherever they travel. GHA's hotel brands currently include: Alila, Anantara, Art Series, Atura, AVANI, Corinthia, Doyle, Elewana, Eventhouse, First, GLO, Kempinski, Leela, Lungarno, Marco Polo, Meritage, Meydan, Mokara, Niccolo, NUO, Omni, Outrigger, Pan Pacific, PARKROYAL, QT, Rixos, Rydges, Shaza, Tangram, Thon, Tivoli, Ultratravel Collection and Viceroy. For more information, visit gha.com

About DISCOVERY programme

A memorable trip demands more than a comfortable stay. DISCOVERY, an award-winning global loyalty programme, provides over 10 million members recognition and perks across 550 hotels, resorts and palaces in 76 countries. Elite members have the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture through Local Experiences, distinctive activities that capture an authentic taste of each destination. For more information, visit discoveryloyalty.com

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