Hotel distribution is a race against time. Perishable inventory means that managing occupancy effectively to optimize revenue is the core of the hospitality business.

Over time, mastering this challenge has evolved into a whole discipline in the industry – distribution. Successful distribution is precisely connecting supply with demand. The industry has seen exponential growth in distribution business models in the past decade. The Internet has pushed GDS technology into a new environment, now crowded with OTAs and meta searchers.

We anticipate that the pace of change is only going to accelerate. There are two key forces that will transform hotel distribution in the coming decades:

1. **The shift in consumer behavior to mobile creates countless opportunities to be there and be relevant for travellers**

   We are moving rapidly from an Internet-connected world to a mobile world. Mobile is no longer just a trend. In many parts of the world, mobile is the standard behavior. As travellers’ consumer behavior shifts, the way to engage and transact with them shifts as well.

   Mobile has made trip planning both easier and harder for travellers. While we can search for flights waiting in line for coffee, the fear that we’re not getting the best price or making the right decision has also increased significantly. Any travel provider who wants to remain relevant has to put mobile at the core of their distribution strategy.

   At Google, we’re building products that improve travel dreaming, planning, booking and experiencing on mobile devices. At the same time we want to help partners connect with travellers in the right moments, the moments of intent when consumers are most likely to turn into customers and even brand ambassadors.

   For hotels, these moments represent a unique opportunity to engage with travellers early and constantly, beyond the traditional “moments of truth”. They happen digitally – on mobile, on a laptop, and someday may even happen through virtual reality – even before a guest arrives in your hotel.

   Connecting with travellers in a relevant way in every moment that matters is at the core of an effective distribution strategy, now and in the future.

2. **Programmatic technology enables personalization at scale to create and respond to more moments that matter**

   Investing in marketing and measuring results has traditionally been a challenging task for all marketers – especially in the hotel industry. Most hotel marketers have evolved to become best-in-class performance marketers. This is a huge strength in our industry, and we need to continue to lead the way. The next horizon in performance marketing will have all of us moving further up the funnel to master not just how to capture demand, but how to create innovative – and high performing – ways to drive it.
Programmatic buying allows advertisers to use technology and audience insights to tailor messages to the right person, at the right moment, in the right context. It helps advertisers respond to real-time signals on an impression-by-impression basis across screens and across channels. The combination of programmatic marketing technology with revenue management and CRM will increase yield and improve overall distribution efficiency for hotels.

The hotel industry needs to evolve and adapt to the dramatically changing consumer behavior and sales cycle. Travellers no longer follow a linear trip planning and purchase journey; instead they interact with hotel providers digitally through a series of moments across multiple screens and devices – preferences are shaped and decisions are made in these moments.

This is the new battleground for successful distribution – where hearts, minds and dollars are won. Your brand’s results will depend on two things: how well you can understand the consumer’s intent in the moment you’ve found him, and more importantly, how well the technology you’re using can adapt the product, marketing, message, and/or ad format to draw his interest and earn his attention.

In the past decade, as digital’s share of a hotel’s total distribution has grown, digital marketing’s complexity has similarly expanded. At Google our aim is to help all travel providers leverage Google’s scale, technology, data integration capabilities, and ad formats to reach better qualified customers at scale. By helping the travel ecosystem be more efficient at serving consumers and connecting them to travel service providers in the moments that matter, we believe that over time we can actually drive more travel and grow the market for all of us. And this means we all win in the long run.

Currently Head of Vertical Search for Southern Europe at Google, Javier Delgado Muerza leads the team that provides vertical specific solutions, i.e. hotel ads. His main focus in this position is maximizing yield from digital marketing and distribution investments for Google’s biggest & most sophisticated travel players in the region. Prior to joining Google in 2011, Javier spent over eight years in Expedia, where he held different managerial positions in lodging supply, air supply and white label distribution across Southern Europe and the Middle East. He started his career in Iberia Airlines and Gate Gourmet, later moving to Globalia, the leading travel services provider in Spain. Born in Pamplona, Javier holds a MBA degree from Cornell and ESSEC.
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Within the pages of this specially focused publication, CEOs and other senior executives from companies both within the hotel industry and serving the hotel industry will share their expectations for the tech trends shaping our future, changing our operations and improving our bottom lines. More information on this special edition will be made available very soon.
• This edition will be available from 7 November 2017

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• This edition will be available in October 2017