

Another year over? This year the missive from Mirall is massive

Submitted by AnnaMonreal on Fri, 28/12/2018 - 00:00

By Roman Townsend

For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of visiting our global headquarters in Mallorca, we are based near to Palma airport in a building called 'Mirall'.

And so I have the pleasure of writing another year's missive from the vantage point of our offices overlooking the runway. What could be more travel central than a frontline view of the 20 million passengers who pass through the airport every year?

A year might not sound so long, but some years count more than others and this one has been transformational for Hotelbeds. When I look back at everything that has happened, I realise this really is a massive missive (to use a rather laboured alliteration).

Following Tourico Holidays and GTA joining us in 2017, this year we've been integrating them into our business and that process is now close to being completed. In fact in late October we announced a new brand architecture and identity for the company under a refreshed Hotelbeds brand. As part of this, we launched our new integrated retail travel agent offering under a refreshed Bedsonline brand too.

Over the year we have put in place a strong leadership team, starting with the executive level and more recently moving down to mid-level management. Combining the best talent from across our organization, we now have fantastic sales, sourcing, retail, marketing and product management teams confirmed across all of our regions globally.

As part of our clear strategy to focus on our bedbank core, in March we announced the sale of our Destination Management division - which focused on the provision of in-destination services - to TUI for 110 million euros.

Even more recently, in November, we confirmed that we have acquired HolidayTaxis, the transfer bookings company. This acquisition is a reflection of our desire to expand our Beyond the Bed product line, where we offer ancillary services such as transfers and tours.

There have been many other great highlights too, such as the launch of our Corporate Volunteering Program, the continued growth of China as a source market, and the partnership with Singapore Airlines.

Our achievements have been reflected by an increased industry presence for Hotelbeds. Whether it has been on the podium at leading events such as Skift, Phocuswright, ITB Berlin, and WTM London, or in the pages of leading publications such as Skift, Travolution, Phocuswire, or more, I'm proud to say that we are leading the distribution debate.

But as John Lennon sang in *Happy Christmas* in 1971, "another year over, a new one just begun". Epic as the year has been, our New Year's resolution to the travel industry remains once more unchanged: to be the world's leading bedbank.

Happy New Year from all of us at Hotelbeds: may all your distribution dreams come true and technology resolutions remain resolute!

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