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Travelport, AWS launch global accelerator to tackle travel's retailing challenges

Travelport Accelerator will help in overcoming the challenge to innovate digital marketing solutions by personalising targetted offers to customers using AI and machine learning.

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Travelport, and Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS) announced the launch of a new global accelerator program, Travelport Accelerator, dedicated to addressing the travel industry's biggest retailing challenges.

“No single person or business has the solution to all of travel's retailing challenges,” said Tom Kershaw, Chief Product & [Technology](#) Officer, Travelport. “The most effective way to drive innovation, especially at pace, is to unite bright minds from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations and focus their energy on solving a specific problem. That's precisely what Travelport Accelerator will do. We look forward to working with companies across the world, both large and small, to drive the modernisation of travel retailing for the benefit of the entire travel ecosystem,” he added.

Travelport Accelerator

Travelport Accelerator will see tech start-ups and innovators looking to enter the travel space, aiming at a series of different travel retailing challenges, such as data protection, hyper-personalisation, and customer acquisition. Once the challenge has been set, companies with existing [technology](#) and products that are relevant to the challenge and use cases outlined on the accelerator



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A cohort of up to 10 companies will be selected to proceed to the next stage, which involves pitching solutions to an esteemed panel of judges from some of the world's most renowned travel companies, including [Internova Travel Group](#), Direct Travel, and Christopherson Business Travel. A group of up to three participants will ultimately be selected to move onto the final round, solving the challenge in collaboration with Travelport and AWS. Each will be given access to Travelport+, Travelport's next-generation travel marketplace.

Selected start-ups may receive up to USD 100,000 in AWS Activate credit and each participant will receive mentoring from travel domain and technical subject matter experts with deep experience working on AWS. The program also offers collaboration opportunities with AWS travel customers and members of the AWS Partner Network (APN) looking for technology solutions to their most challenging problems.

David Peller, Managing Director, AWS Travel and Hospitality, shared, "With millions of active customers, AWS enables organizations of every size, around the world, to innovate. Travelport Accelerator supports that effort by giving travel innovators the potential to pitch their technology to some of the most influential leaders in the global travel industry and to influence the future of travel retailing. We're proud to collaborate with Travelport on this as we work together to optimize Travelport+ and create a simpler, smarter, and better future for travel retailing."

The First Challenge

The first challenge set by Travelport, and AWS is to introduce cutting-edge digital marketing technology for



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demographic traveller data to deliver highly targetted and personalised, real-time offers to customers. The solution must complement the advanced capabilities of Travelport+, which, in a normal year, will process hundreds of millions of travel transactions and reduce the cost of customer acquisition and retention for Travelport's customers. Entry forms are available at www.travelport.com/accelerator. The deadline for submission is midnight Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) on Wednesday 22 September 2021.

Applications will be judged on several factors including the innovative and unique nature of the solution, the overall value it will bring to the industry, the creative application of technology to solve problems, and the team's ability to deliver on the opportunity with Travelport and its customers.

Jen Catto, Chief Marketing Officer, Travelport, expressed, "The sheer volume of channels that communicate messages to people today is breath-taking, as is the amount of content each pushes out. Our brains are therefore forced to prioritize the information they receive. If you're not compelling enough, you'll be at the back of the queue – forgotten, literally. To be heard, it's now table stakes for digital marketing to be highly targetted and hyper-personalised. Historically, this has been a challenge for travel companies because selling travel is complex: access to travel data has been limited; pricing is real-time; demand trends evolve rapidly and offers contain multiple products. Due to this, according to a recent study by Sojern, 84 per cent of marketing professionals in the travel industry now see AI and machine learning for personalisation of digital marketing as a high or very high priority. Challenges, however, are there to be overcome and we believe this challenge can be

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technology. We can't wait to get started!"

Travelport Accelerator is now part of [Travelport Focus](#), a Travelport innovation hub supported by AWS. The hub contains three pillars: Technology, Intelligence, and Customer Voice. Travelport Accelerator sits in the Technology pillar, alongside product telemetry, and is focused on creating experiences that redefine travel retailing. The Intelligence pillar sees Travelport, AWS and global analysts conduct and publish research, data, and insights that inform decision making and inspire industry change. Customer Voice lets Travelport's customers and developers have their say on product design and roadmap. Companies that would like to apply for a place in the Customer Voice research community can register their interest [here](#).

Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer at [InterGlobe Technology Quotient](#) said, "Earlier this year, Travelport introduced the brave change, now it is inviting innovators to partake in that change and create something extraordinary for the travel fraternity. With Accelerator, Travelport and AWS are inspiring innovations that will redesign the face of travel retailing and build it right up on the ground of modern technologies. The end-product will undoubtedly bring personalization to the forefront and make travel retailing highly customer-centric."

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