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Travelport Launches Global Accelerator Program

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06 September 2021

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Travelport has launched a global accelerator program in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS). Dedicated to addressing the travel industry's biggest retailing challenges, the Travelport Accelerator will see tech startups and innovators looking to enter the travel space take aim at a series of different travel retailing issues, such as data protection, hyper-personalization, 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 webpage will be invited to apply.

Tom Kershaw, Chief Product & Technology Officer, Travelport, said, "No single person or business has the solution to all of travel's retailing challenges. 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 modernization of travel retailing for the benefit of the entire travel ecosystem."

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 American Express Global Business Travel, Priceline, Internova Travel Group, Direct Travel and Christopherson Business Travel.

A group of up to three participants will ultimately be selected to move to 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 US\$100,000 in AWS Activate credit and each participant will receive mentoring from travel domain and technical subject matter experts with extensive 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, said, “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 set by Travelport and AWS is to introduce cutting-edge digital marketing technology for travel companies, which uses behavioral and demographic traveler data to deliver highly targeted and personalized, 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. Applications are open today and entry forms are available on Travelport’s website. 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, said, “The sheer volume of channels that communicate messages to people today is breathtaking, 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 targeted and hyper-personalized. 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% of marketing professionals in the travel industry now see AI and machine learning for personalization of digital marketing as a high or very high priority. Challenges, however, are there to be overcome, and we believe this challenge can be solved by bringing together the right people and the right technology. We can’t wait to get started!”

Travelport Accelerator is now part of Travelport Focus, an innovation hub supported by AWS that 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.

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