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New study finds hoteliers fear robot-run future yet believe AI is key to guest personalisation

London, UK– February 20, 2018– A white paper by SiteMinder and IDeaS Revenue Solutions has found that while hoteliers fear a future where their properties are run by robots, they believe artificial intelligence (AI) may be the key to delivering a highly-personalised guest experience. This finding was brought to light at a thought leader breakfast held during World Travel Market London in November, and during a December webinar, where leading hoteliers conceded that although robots could never replace genuine hospitality, they can decipher big data to learn about guests faster than humans.

Monica Or, Consultant at Star Quality Hospitality Consultancy and the facilitator of both events, says one reason for the sentiment is the recognition that hotel guest preferences have become more sophisticated over the last 25 years with the growing accessibility of digital technology.

"Hoteliers desperately need to get on board with the technological advances that we all, as consumers, are seeing and experiencing on the day-to-day. Guests today are more tech savvy, so what they have in their homes they now expect in the hotels where they stay," says Ms Or.

Hoteliers suggested AI could best enhance the guest experience through tailored pricing during the booking process, voice and face recognition upon arrival, and 24/7 customer service during the guests' stay. According to participants of the study, the future of hospitality should be one that combines technology with a human touch to create an enjoyable but authentic experience.

The unexpected challenge found was that many hoteliers continued to overlook the fundamental importance of integrating their systems to gain the insight they needed into their guest data.

"Hotels have a wealth of guest intelligence at their disposal. They have the opportunity to understand and analyse every point of the guest experience— and to make more innovative, more informed decisions—but they need information to flow seamlessly through their systems in order to make it work," says Ruairi Conroy, Managing Director - EMEA at SiteMinder.

"There is clearly an identifiable trend within the hospitality sector of leveraging technology to maximise both performance and the guest experience," says Fabian Specht, EMEA Managing Director at IDeaS. "While inevitably there will be IT challenges to be addressed, AI will play an ever-increasing role in

delivering bespoke services to guests—just as it does in other consumer-facing industries."

About SiteMinder
As the leading cloud platform for hotels, SiteMinder allows hotels to attract, reach and convert guests across the globe. We serve hotels of all sizes with award-winning solutions for independents and groups alike, wherever they are in the world.

SiteMinder's products include The Channel Manager, the industry's leading online distribution platform; TheBookingButton, a wholly-branded booking engine for direct bookings via the web, mobile or social; Canvas, the intelligent website creator for independent hoteliers; Prophet, the real-time market intelligence solution that takes the guesswork out of pricing rooms; and GDS by SiteMinder, a single-point of entry to a six-figure network of travel agents and the world's major global distribution systems. With more than 28,000 hotel customers and 550 of the industry's top connectivity providers as our partners, today we have presence in more than 160 countries on six continents.

For more information, visit www.siteminder.com.

About IDeaS
With more than 1.6 million rooms priced daily on its advanced systems, IDeaS Revenue Solutions leads the industry with the latest revenue management software solutions and advisory services. Powered by SAS® and with nearly three decades of experience, IDeaS proudly supports over 10,000 clients in 124 countries and is relentless about providing hoteliers with insightful ways to manage the data behind hotel pricing.

IDeaS empowers clients to build and maintain revenue management cultures—from single entities to world-renowned estates—by focusing on a simple promise: Driving Better Revenue.

IDeaS has the knowledge, expertise and maturity to build upon proven revenue management principles with next-generation analytics for more user-friendly, insightful and profitable revenue opportunities—not just for rooms, but across the entire hotel enterprise. For more information, visit www.ideas.com.