

Bright future for rail and a need to collaborate across travel industry laid out at Amadeus' rail industry event
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Amadeus, a global leader in technology and distribution solutions for the travel and tourism industry, has hosted its second annual Rail Forum, bringing together experts from the travel industry to exchange ideas and discuss current hot issues facing the rail industry, including the need for further collaboration.

The two-day event was held at the Amadeus Executive Briefing Centre in Nice, France and was attended by around 100 delegates from the rail industry, including directors and senior sales, product and IT managers from major rail networks, travel management companies, leisure agencies and airlines.

The forum included lively debate, panel discussions, breakout workshops, case studies and keynote presentations by some of the key players in Europe's largest rail companies, as well as interactive demonstrations of Amadeus Rail booking technology. Attendees welcomed the opportunity to discuss the challenges to improving ease of rail bookings, competition, customer experience and the opportunities presented by technology, among others.

Against a backdrop of increasingly demanding passengers, with business and leisure travelers expecting flexible bookings, and the ability to book 'end-to-end' travel utilizing multiple forms of transport, rail travel must continue to meet high expectations, delegates heard.

The need to facilitate easy-to-book reservations for rail or combined air and rail journeys was a key issue under scrutiny.

Increased 'intermodal' travel allowing passengers to book journeys using more than one mode of transport in a single booking and by issuing a single ticket is important, but further collaboration within the rail industry and with the air industry would be necessary to make progress in this area, the audience heard.

Amadeus currently offers its customers a fully-integrated inventory, pricing, reservation and distribution system, enabling domestic and international distribution for rail ticket bookings, alongside other forms of transport such as air or car. The need for such 'facilitating' technology is compounded by the fact that the rail industry is set for huge growth as the European high speed network undergoes expansion and amid increasing pressure on businesses to reduce carbon emissions.

'Amadeus can help by offering equitable information when comparing air and rail travel by providing better content, including real travel time when flying including the check-in time, security time, as well as informing about city-to-city travel, the carbon footprint and the availability of high speed and airport express trains,' said Jamel Chandoul, Head of Distribution at Eurostar, who spoke at the event.

Diane Bouzebiba, Head of Rail at Amadeus said: 'The Rail Forum 2008 has created an open dialogue for people in the industry on the hot issues in rail - and there are many. Amadeus is proud to be the facilitator of such an event, but the discussion must continue and we look forward to hosting next year's event. Feedback from delegates shows there is a general perception that Amadeus serves the distribution and ticketing technology needs of the rail industry,' she said.

To continue the discussion, Amadeus has launched the Amadeus Rail Forum 2008 Blog allowing guest bloggers comprised of Rail Forum speakers and visitors to the blog to share opinions and ideas.

About Amadeus

Amadeus is the chosen technology partner for providers, sellers, and buyers of travel. The company provides distribution, IT and point-of-sale solutions to help its customers adapt, grow and succeed in the fast changing travel industry. Customer groups include travel providers (airlines, hotels, car rental companies, railway companies, ferry lines, cruise lines, insurance companies and tour operators), travel sellers (travel agencies) and travel buyers (corporations and travelers). Solutions are grouped in four solution categories - Distribution & Content, Sales & e-Commerce, Business Management and Services & Consulting.

Amadeus has central sites in Madrid (corporate headquarters & marketing), Nice (development) and Erding (Operations - data processing centre) and regional offices in Miami, Buenos Aires and Bangkok. Amadeus maintains customer operations in 76 countries covering more than 215 markets. Amadeus employs over 7,800 employees worldwide, representing 95 nationalities.

More information about Amadeus is available at: www.amadeus.com

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