

ONLINE TRAVEL PORTAL LIMITED

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ONLINE TRAVEL PORTAL LIMITED APPOINTS BEENZ.COM MARKETING CHIEF AS MARKETING DIRECTOR

Online Travel Portal Limited, the new pan-European travel portal backed by nine leading shareholder airlines - Aer Lingus, Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia, KLM and Lufthansa - has appointed the new economy and branding specialist, Nicolas De Santis, as Marketing Director.

De Santis (34) was previously an initial member and SVP, Chief Marketing Officer of beenz.com, the innovative web currency, which was launched in March 1999. At beenz.com, De Santis created and built one of the biggest online brands, achieved over three million registered accounts worldwide, won several marketing awards and launched the brand in over 12 markets including the UK, USA, Japan, Australia, Italy, France, Greater China, Sweden and Korea.

He was also instrumental in financing and expanding the firm internationally, including a joint venture with leading Italian Portal Network Kataweb and Artemis (Francoise Pinault investment arm). Beenz.com was subsequently ranked third in the Sunday Times Top European Private Internet Businesses Survey.

Nicolas De Santis' Board-level appointment as Marketing Director comes just a week after Online Travel Portal Limited announced its new Chief Executive Officer, Giovanni Bisignani (former Alitalia CEO), on 5 February 2001.

Commenting on his appointment De Santis said, "This is a fantastic opportunity to shape the branding, consumer experience and future direction of Online Travel Portal Limited as Europe's most exciting Internet travel portal. In particular, I'm looking forward to applying my knowledge of managing a global e-commerce business and positioning Online Travel Portal Limited as a powerful consumer brand."

De Santis has over eleven years' experience of positioning global corporate and consumer brands such as Alitalia Airlines, British Airways, Iberia Airlines, The European Parliament, Banco Santander, Phillip Morris, Campofrio, Pirelli, Coca Cola and IBM. He is the founder of the international, London based brand consulting firm Twelve Stars Communications and was Vice President of European Affairs for Landor Associates, part of the Young and Rubicam Group.

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De Santis is an Italian citizen who was born in Madrid, Spain. He studied economics at the University of Los Angeles, USA and is a member of the Board of the European Gold Mercury Award for international commerce, whose recipients include Leonidas Breznev of Russia, Anwar El Sadat of Egypt, and King Juan Carlos of Spain.

Notes to editors

Online Travel Portal Limited's objective is to quickly establish itself as the market leader and be the first true Pan-European Travel Portal. The site will offer the most comprehensive range of flights to, from and within Europe, as well as complementary products and services for travellers – all with the reassurance that customers are dealing with established brands that they can trust to deliver.

Online Travel Portal Limited is a joint venture among nine leading European airlines. Online Travel Portal Limited's business will be a travel portal selling travel and travel related products and services primarily on the Internet. The shareholders in the joint venture are Aer Lingus, Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia, KLM and Lufthansa. Online Travel Portal Limited is an independently managed, stand-alone business and the shareholder airlines will continue to compete for individual customers. The joint venture agreement was signed on 18 August 2000.

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Photographs are also available from www.newscast.co.uk

Further Information

Online Travel Portal Limited Press Office

Natasha Tobin +44 (0)20 7413 3226 (mobile +44 (0)7990 517 415)
Email: ntobin@hillandknowlton.com

Mary Stewart +44 (0)20 7413 3705 (mobile +44 (0)7771 943 686)
Email: mstewart@hillandknowlton.com

John Rivett +44 (0)20 7413 3708 (mobile +44 (0)7768 036 492)
Email: jrivett@hillandknowlton.com