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Ensemble Travel® Group Launches New Cruise Booking Engine

One-stop shopping and booking platform showcases Ensemble's 1,500 cruise departures, amenities

LAS VEGAS, Oct. 19, 2011 (5:30 PDT) – Ensemble Travel® Group members can soon take advantage of the organization's newest business tool: a cruise booking engine designed to provide agents with the very best in one-stop shopping and booking.

Powered by technology partner Passport Online, the Tandem platform is free to all Ensemble agencies in the U.S. and Canada and will be accessible on ensembleagent.com, the organization's member-only information portal. Once beta testing is completed this fall, the booking engine will be rolled out to U.S. members by the end of the year and to Canadian members by end of first quarter 2012.

“When you closely examine what's involved in properly servicing a cruise client, the time factor alone can be significant,” said Libbie Rice, Ensemble Travel Group co-president. “With this new B2B software, which houses everything in one convenient and familiar location, members can look forward to increased productivity and profitability.”

In addition to the major time-savings, the technology gives members the ability to search and book in real-time Ensemble's preferred cruise partners and the extensive collection of Ensemble hosted, amenity group, and promotional sailings. The Ensemble Experiences (specially created complimentary shore excursions) and the Ensemble amenities will also be clearly displayed for booking to assure clients receive the popular perks.

The new cruise booking engine will showcase rich graphics, deck plans, itineraries, photo galleries, maps and destination overviews, and many other helpful features. From a marketing perspective, Passport Online's Agent Port will enable members to email itinerary options to clients, always with the members' branding in place.

According to Rice, Ensemble conducted a thorough search of all the cruise booking engines on the market before deciding on Passport Online. “We needed a partner that could fully support our 1,500 sailings and related amenities and Ensemble Experiences each year. Also, to the extent that we had different requirements for the Canadian market [primarily booking in Canadian dollars], that certainly

came into play as well,” said Rice. “Passport Online really listened to our needs and created a booking engine that’s a solid solution that works from a North American perspective.”

“Having worked closely with Ensemble for years on successful e-marketing initiatives, we have analyzed their member needs for a cruise booking product and worked closely to customize and create a Tandem solution for their agencies in the U.S. and Canada,” said Greg Kott, Passport Online president & CEO. “After collaborative efforts to provide a leading edge cruise booking solution for the Ensemble membership, we truly believe this latest initiative will help ensure that Ensemble members stay on the leading edge of Internet marketing and e-commerce.”

Ensemble Travel Group officially launched the cruise booking engine at its annual convention, held Oct. 19-23 at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. Passport Online executives were on-site to answer questions and sign up Ensemble members for the new booking tool.

About Ensemble Travel® Group

Founded in 1968, Ensemble Travel® Group is a proactive, member-owned international organization of approximately 850 professional travel agencies in the U.S. and Canada. With a membership that represents billions of dollars in travel sales each year, Ensemble Travel Group has achieved a 40+-year record of boosting members' profits and delivering high-volume sales to its preferred suppliers. To learn more about Ensemble Travel Group, call (800) 442-6871 or visit www.joinensemble.com.

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