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ABTS CONVENTION SERVICES LAUNCHES INDUSTRY CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF BOOKING OFFICIAL HOUSING THROUGH ASSOCIATIONS FOR MEDICAL MEETINGS.

Over fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000.00) lost due to ‘Around the Block’ booking in international housing alone means major detriment to medical associations’ annual meetings revenues.

Miami, Florida (December 3, 2013). **ABTS Convention services**, a global company specializing in serving medical associations in the US has developed “**Support Associations, Book Official!**”, a meetings industry awareness campaign designed to counteract increasingly larger industry challenges caused by ‘around the block’ booking. The campaign seeks to create awareness with associations, meeting planners, hotels and annual meeting attendees about the impact and financial losses to associations which result from booking outside official housing blocks and the steps which can be taken as an industry to protect against these.

Economic Impact- “Around the Block” booking impacts association revenue both directly, through attrition fees charged to associations for unused pre-contracted rooms, and indirectly through the loss of negotiating leverage. Guaranteeing room blocks give associations the opportunity to negotiate concessions, such as better room rates, less expensive food and beverage, VIP airport pickups, free Internet, rebates off the master bill, having a pre-set shuttle service, etc. Housing is a key component in how this leverage is measured and ‘around the block’ booking decreases the association’s negotiating power- ultimately making the meeting more expensive and more complicated. Higher attendance costs also translate into fewer attendees for the meetings, which in turn mean loss of revenue not only for the Association, but also for the hotels, restaurants, transportation companies and the venue city.

Unsolicited or **PIRATE** housing claims often confuse and disappoint members, registrants, and exhibitors and can lead to hidden penalties for them as well. When attendees stay outside the official housing hotels, they do not have access to room drops, announcements, free shuttles, free

or reduced meals, networking events and other happenings that are a big part of the annual meeting experience. These attendees often end up paying more in fees and transportation and disappointed overall with the experience.

With ‘around the block’ booking becoming a major industry challenge, **ABTS Convention Services’ “Support Associations, Book Official!”** awareness campaign will be introduced to industry leaders and will be rolled out to ABTS partners, clients, associations, colleagues and press through www.SUPPORTASSOCIATIONS.com, a sharable website designed build momentum in the industry. An onsite calculator will allow associations, planners and anyone interested to estimate THEIR OWN revenue loss and take action to support the campaign by sharing the information with their partners.

Davide Veglia, President of **ABTS Convention Services** estimates that of the 20 Associations ABTS currently services, international ‘around the block’ booking alone account for approximately 50 million dollars revenue loss per year for Associations, without taking into consideration an additional loss of at least 12 million dollars to the venue city associated with lost revenue from international attendees who cannot attend the meetings due to higher costs.

These numbers do not even begin to approach the staggering loss in revenue for the domestic market and for the industry as a whole. “Through industry support and unification as well as the right tool for international planners, we can steer the movement back in favor of Associations. Through awareness, support, action and accessibility to Association’s official hotel inventories, we can unite as an industry to protect our Associations, their face-to-face meetings, networking opportunities and education at annual meetings. We urge you to make an impact, book official and secure the sharing of ideas and the exchange of innovation at the global level.”

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ABTS Convention Services exclusively represents 20 major U.S. associations while serving association management companies and housing & registration partners with internationally friendly group housing, onsite support, and global sales and marketing strategy. With offices in Miami, Rome, San Francisco and Belgrade, our reach extends to the U.S., South America, Europe and Asia. The company is partnered with medical associations worldwide and our multilingual multicultural teams maintain a global network of over 15,000 international planners. ABTS also serves top pharmaceutical companies, communication agencies, and incentive houses throughout the world. ABTS has specialized in providing the comprehensive range of services essential for the creation of successful meetings, exhibitions and special events for almost 20 years.

www.abtscs.com www.supportassociations.com