

	<b>RESOURCE LIBRARY HOTEL OPERATIONS Rooms - Reservations</b>	<b>CODE:</b> 03.01.014
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## SELLING YOUR HOTEL THROUGH ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

### What is a GDS?

A global distribution system can be defined in two different ways.

It is:

***A company (largely or completely own by one or more airline) which operates a computer system for reserving air flights and other services.***

It is also:

***The community of users — travel agents, airlines, hotels and car rental companies and others — who are linked by that computer system. Together these GDS participants offer products and services, and reserve these products and services on behalf of their clients — the traveling public.***

Global Distribution Network

### GDS Marketing and Sales Opportunities for Hotels

We now begin a detailed examination of each opportunity available for use by hotels to sell themselves through the GDS - some of these can be exercised directly by hotel staff. Others are undertaken by corporate office employees often in response to requests by hotel staff. Before we begin this examination, though, it is important to know the **6 Commandments of Marketing a Hotel in the GDSs**.

#### **6 Commandments of Marketing a Hotel in the GDSs**

***Remember the world-wide audience reading and using your information.***

***Keep all information accurate and up-to-date - always!***

***Use clear, understandable comprehensive descriptions***

***Use appealing, sales-oriented words and phrases***

***Fulfil special requests whenever possible***

***Pay travel agents commissions promptly***

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This examination of GDS looks at four categories of marketing opportunities:

1. Hotel Data in GDSs
2. Chain Data in GDSs
3. GDS Marketing Tools
4. Related Sales Opportunities

Many of the GDS sales opportunities are identified in the GDS Features Summary on Page 9. Remember that information on the number of GDS terminals and their distribution around the world appears in Module 1.

## The GDS Sales Challenge

GDS displays combine words and codes to describe services available to travellers. The challenge for every hotel staff member is to combine those words and codes to present the property both accurately and in an appealing way. This challenge is illustrated in the following graphic which shows the guest room and then a very simple GDS screen which describes it.

Selecting the right words to communicate comfort, convenience, security and value is a continuing challenge.

### 1. Hotel Data in GDSs

GDSs contain a brief description of every hotel they list. This description is your electronic sales brochure, and the content is vital to the successful presentation, and selection of your hotel by the travel agent and traveller.

When a travel agent or any other user of a GDS searches for a hotel to book, they specify search criteria, sometimes called “search qualifiers”, to narrow the search from all the hotels listed in the GDS (which could be 20,000 or more) to just a few.

The travel agent “qualifies” the search by typing information about the desired location, travel dates, number of nights and number of guests. In addition, other search criteria can include information about chain code, room type, proximity to landmarks or points of interest, desired room amenities or hotel facilities, or a rate category -- maybe a special rate such as a weekend rate or a negotiated corporate rate.

The GDS computer searches the information you supply in your electronic brochure - your GDS hotel description - to determine if your hotel should be included on the list displayed to the agent of properties matching the search criteria.

The list of qualifying hotels is presented on a **Hotel Availability** display. Here is an Apollo/Galileo hotel availability or “HOA” display.

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Once the list of the hotels meeting the search criteria is shown to the travel agent, they may book one of the listed hotels immediately or they may decide to read the hotel's detailed property description. Guests select hotels based on "demand generators" that attract them to your location. Demand generators

include location, nearby attractions, events, convention or meeting facilities, and commercial or business locations. Describing these demand generators in a clear and appealing manner is vital to making the sale.

### **A. Hotel Description -**

Now we will examine each of the sections generally found in a **Hotel Description**. It will be useful to see a typical hotel description display. This sample is from SABRE, which calls its hotel description the "HOD".



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OTHER - -NO PETS ALLOWED  
- SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED BETWEEN HOTEL AND FINES SHOPPING MALL  
- OURTOWN HEALTH CLUB LOCATED TWO BLOCKS FROM HOTEL

GUARANTEE-  
- CERTAIN RATES MAY REQUIRE GUARANTEE. SEE HRD FOR

HOD22953

AR22953 PERFECT PLACE HOTEL

AIRPORT - PPA

178 DAWN DRIVE

PARADISE, HI 05201

FONE 204-748-0860

FAX 204-855-5401

\*\* DIRECT CONNECT PARTICIPANT \*\*

RAC A1Q

A2Q

B1K

B2T

D1D

C1Q

US GOVERNMENT SAFETY/FIRE APPROVED

OPTS- FAM-Y MEAL-N TAX-12 PCT RM /8PCT SALES/10 PCT FOOD

EXTRA FEES - RA 25.00 RC 25.00 CR .00 EX 25.00

FAM-N MEAL-N TAX -13

VISUAL - SEE SABREVISION

LOCATION- DOWNTOWN PARADISE

LOCATED AT CORNER OF DAWN AND SUNRISE DRIVES

TRANSPORTATION -

SUPER SHUTTLE SERVICE AVAILABLE AT PPA

AIRPORT /COST APPROX 16.00 USD/ AND STILL FIELD

/COST APPROX 10.00 USD/.

POLICY - CHECK-IN 3 PM / CHECK-OUT 12 NOON

MAXIMUM FOUR GUESTS PER ROOM

FACILITIES

- 565 GUEST ROOMS INCLUDING 75 SUITES. HOTEL HAS 10 FLOORS.

- SURFSIDE ROOM / ELEGANT 4-STAR DINING  
LUNCH MON-FRI 1130AM-230PM

SAT-SUN 12N-3PM

DINNER MON-SUN 5PM-1030PM

- BEACHBAR CAFE / VARIED MENU. 6AM TO 12AM

- SURFSIDE LOUNGE / NIGHTLY ENTERTAINMENT

- LOBBY BAR OPEN 9AM-1AM DAILY

- OLYMPIC POOL 24 HOURS DAILY

EXACT REQUIREMENTS



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- ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED / SEE HOD\*G
- TRAVEL AGENCY IATA/NAME/ADDRESS ACCEPTED FOR GUARANTEE
- COMPANY NAME/ADDRESS/TELEPHONE ACCEPTED FOR GUARANTEE
- BOOKINGS FOR \*CLUB\* MEMBERS MUST INCLUDE ID. NO. IN "SI" FIELD

CANCELLATION-

- SEE HRD FOR DETAILS ON LATEST CANCELLATION TIME TO AVOID NO-SHOW CHARGE


ATTRACTIONS-

DISTANCE FROM MAGNIFICENT HOTEL TO NEARBY ATTRACTIONS  
FINES DEPARTMENT STORE.....1 BLOCK  
OURTOWN CONVENTION CENTER.....3 BLOCKS  
OURTOWN MUSEUM.....5 BLOCKS  
COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS.....1.5 MILES  
BIGTIME COMPANY.....2.4 MILES  
H.S. LARGE AIRFORCE BASE.....5.5 MILES

INDEXES-

C	10NW	L	FWR	
C	1SE	L	OUR	
AZ C		0	0	OURTOWN
AC C		0	S	FINES DEPARTMENT STORE
AZ C		1W	O	OURTOWN CONVENTION CENTER
AZ C		1S	0	OURTOWN MUSEUM
AZ C		1SE	0	COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS
AZ C		3W	O	BIGTIME COMPANY
AZ C		5N	0	HS LARGE AIRFORCE BASE
AZ C		15S	O	PLAYLAND AMUSEMENT PARK
AZ C		17N	O	HEADQUARTERS RESEARCH PARK

A Note About **KEYWORDS**: Some GDSs require, or recommend, that hotel descriptions, and sometimes chain descriptions (we will learn more about these in the next section of this module) have a standard structure in order to keep the information organised. This structure is achieved by dividing the description into sections and giving each section a title, called a keyword. Some keywords are mandatory - they must be used and information

<div></div>	RESOURCE LIBRARY HOTEL OPERATIONS	CODE: 03.01.014
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	<div>&gt;HOA11FEB-5NTDEN/D-50M</div> <div>STAPLETON INTL CO 11FEB-16FEB 5NT 1 ADULT MI 1 Y RD HOTEL DENVER SOUTH \$ 6 S ENGLEWOOD CO 125 L USD A1K 105.00 B1K 100.00 SPL+ C1K-80.00 COR+ PKG-85.00 GOV-55.00  2 Y HI HI DENVER CO -SOUTH/ G S 3200 S PARKER RD 9S C USD B2D-83.00 C1K-83.00 N2D-83.00 P1K-100.00 COR+73.00 PKG-65.00  3 Y SI SHERATON DENVER WST \$ 4 s LAKEWOOD CO 15W L USD A1Q-95.00 B2Q-85.00 C1Q-95.00 D1Q-85.00 COR+94.5 &gt;HOA*PD] &gt;HOD].../BOOK]</div>	

supplied for them. GDSs may also have optional keywords, which you may use if you wish, to add extra information not appropriately listed under a mandatory key word. (A current list of the mandatory and optional keywords for each GDS, plus their policy on the use of keywords appears at the end of this Workbook.)

## Location

This section identifies the hotel's:

**name**  
**address**  
**telephone number**  
**fax number**  
**telex number (if one is available)**  
**ID code for nearest airport**

Some GDSs use the first few letters of the Location description to build other displays. Make your Location description as meaningful as possible. For example, rather than saying "Manhattan", be more specific and use "Midtown Manhattan"; if you are near a major landmark or in a well known district, list that information.

Remember, location is the most commonly used search qualifier in hotel selection.

## Roomtypes

Available roomtypes are shown using a standard code formula.

In this code, which has three characters, the first character describes the quality of the room:

<b>A</b>	<b>Deluxe</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Superior</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Standard</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Moderate or Minimum</b>

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The second character shows the number of beds.

<b>1</b>	<b>One bed</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Two beds</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Three beds</b>

And the third character shows the bed type.

<b>K</b>	<b>King</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Queen</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Double</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Twin</b>

## Suite Types

Three characters are also used to describe the type of suite.

The first character describes the quality of the suite.

<b>A</b>	<b>Deluxe</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Superior</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Standard</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Moderate or Minimum</b>

The second character describes the number of bedrooms.

<b>1</b>	<b>1 Bedroom</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2 Bedroom</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>3 Bedroom</b>

The third character describes the type of suite.

<b>S</b>	<b>Full suite</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Junior suite</b>

In some GDSs, additional codes indicate special conditions. Examples:

<b>P</b>	<b>Concierge/Executive Level</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Suite</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Non-smoking</b>
<b>A1K</b>	Deluxe room, one king bed
<b>N2D</b>	Non-smoking room, two double beds
<b>S1K</b>	Suite, one king bed
<b>ROH</b>	Run-of-house room

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Note: Your organisation's use and meanings given to the codes may vary. Contact your CRO for details.

### **Extra Charges**

These include charges for rollaway beds for adults, rollaway beds for children, baby cots/cribs, extra person charges for adults and for children, and the applicable tax rate(s).

### **Indexes**

Several GDS allow you to list "index" or reference points. These are places which a travel agent can specify as qualifiers during their hotel search. For example, a travel agent could ask for a list of hotels within 4 miles of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. Only hotels which list the Lincoln Memorial as an index point would be considered when the GDS makes its search for hotels, and only those within 4 miles of that landmark would be shown on the available hotel list displayed to the travel agent. Be accurate on the exact distance from your hotel to each point you list. Travel agents and clients alike rely on this information.

Your Index list should begin with the airline city code for the city where your property is located, then include the airline city codes for nearby cities and the airline codes for all nearby airports. All remaining listing possibilities should be used to list landmarks or important points for which guests visit your hotel. At least 12 "index" points should be listed. Some GDSs allow an unlimited number to be attached to your hotel.

Once you have used all Indexing opportunities permitted in each GDS, list all remaining points of interest under an **ATTRACTIONS** keyword in your hotel description.

Two GDSs - Apollo/Galileo and Worldspan - use geo-coding to automatically assemble indexes for all hotels in their systems while SABRE plans to add this feature in 1996. In geo-coding, when a reference point is specified during a hotel search, the longitude and latitude of that point of interest is instantly compared by the GDS with the longitude and latitude of all hotels in the same city resulting in a display of properties located within a predetermined distance of the reference point.

In GDSs which do not have an index function, you should list the index points for your hotel in the Location section of your hotel description.

### **Distance And Direction**

In some GDS you will be able to provide distance and direction for your index points. This is a sometimes misunderstood section of the Hotel Description. In this section you indicate, for each of the locations you name (such as each airport serving your hotel, the train or bus station, major landmarks or large company offices) the distance and direction your hotel is FROM THAT POINT! For Example ORLY AIRPORT - 6 KM NE (would mean that your hotel is 6 kilometres Northeast of Orly Airport). The most frequent error is to reverse the perspective and give the right distance, but wrong direction.



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### ***Transportation***

Describe the transportation available from major points such as airports. Include the distance, type of transport (taxi, limo, shuttle, hotel shuttle) and the approximate cost. If hours of operation are limited, show those as well.

### ***Guarantee/Cancellation Requirements***

Describe your guarantee requirements and policy on cancellations.

### ***Deposit Requirements***

Describe your policy on advance deposits, when required and the dates to which the deposit requirement applies.

### ***Payment Arrangements***

Describe your payment policy, including acceptance of checks and credit cards. Explain your check cashing policy.

### ***Policy***

Describe credit cards accepted, Family Plan details, cancellation/refund policy, Check-in/Check-out times.

### ***Room Descriptions***

Describe the rooms at your hotel associated with each GDS roomtype code. Explain that your A1K is, for example, a "large, bright room, with one king-sized bed, a comfortable seating area and views of the gardens". As much as possible, use room descriptions that apply to your own hotel, rather than more general "chain wide" descriptions and terminology.

### ***Facilities***

A comprehensive list of hotel facilities is essential. Remember, travel agents and travellers from all over the world will read this electronic brochure - usually it will be the only information they review about your hotel before deciding to book it or not. Do not assume they will know a facility is available - list it!

Examples of a hotel facilities list:

255 Rooms	4 Floors	24-Hour Desk
Disabled Access	Elevators	Colour/Cable TV
Meeting Rooms	In-room VCR	Microwaves Available

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Refrigerators Available	Tour Desk	Business Centre
Mini-bars	3 Restaurants	Cocktail Lounge
Health Club	Air Conditioning	Tennis Courts
Gift Shop	Golf Course	Beauty/Barber Shop

### ***Handicapped Facilities***

If you have facilities specifically designed for handicapped guests, describe them here. Also indicate how these can be reserved.

### ***Frequent Traveller Affiliations***

You may wish to briefly list the hotel, airline and other frequent traveller programs in which you participate. Also explain where the travel agent should indicate this information when making a hotel booking.

### ***Services***

Use the same guidelines in listing Services as for Facilities. Do not assume the reader of your Hotel Description will know something is available - list it! Examples of frequently listed services:

24-hour Room Service	Bell Desk	Baby Sitting on Request
Laundry & Valet	Dry Cleaning	Fax Service
Secretarial Service	Doctor Available	

### ***Format Style***

Now a word about the format of your hotel description. Some hotel companies or hotel representation companies have specific formats in which they list Hotel Description information, using the GDS keywords. Travel agents appreciate this consistency of information display within an organisation's hotel description. While you may prefer to have your information listed in one manner, you may be asked to make some adjustments to fit into the corporate style. This is not a major problem - remember that the most important issue is to list the information, completely, accurately and in a sales oriented manner.

### ***Other***

There is always additional important information about the hotel that you may wish to present in the Hotel Description. While you are the best judge of what will be of interest, here are examples of information frequently listed:

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- Nearby attractions
- Nearby major corporate offices
- Property opening and last renovation dates
- Credit cards accepted
- Ratings/Awards - list travel guide or hotel rate service grades (e.g. Michelin Four Star, AAA 3 Diamond)
- Packages and promotions
- Passport/Visa requirements
- Electric current

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## B. Hotel Rates

The rates you list for your property reflect many hours of planning about how you choose to position and price your property. As with the listing of descriptive information discussed above, it is essential that the rate information you list be as complete and accurate as possible.

A major and valid concern of travel agents is that some hotel rates - usually the low rates - are not always bookable in the GDS. When their clients telephone a hotel or CRO and are quoted rates lower than those bookable by the agent on their GDS terminal, it embarrasses the agent, reduces their credibility and makes your property less likely to be booked by that travel agent in the future.

The frequency with which rates can be changed varies from hotel organisation to hotel organisation. Some allow changes in rates as often as daily, others allow only one change per season. Additionally, some rates may be changed often, such as rack or some special rates, while others may be frozen for a fixed term. An example of such a rate would be a corporate rate or negotiated rate which is contractually guaranteed between certain dates.

Generally, GDS rates are changed by the GDS Update staff of your CRO once you have submitted a rate change instruction for the central reservation system.

Rates listed in GDS can usually be grouped into several categories: rack, speciality, negotiated, package.

### Rack Rates

The full price rates on which all other rates are based. They often vary from season to season.

### Speciality Rates

These include corporate, senior citizen, government, promotional (e.g.: Easter Week Special Rate), tour, weekend, military, clerical, association/club, convention, family, tour and travel industry.

Hotel organisations usually have several speciality rate programs in which member hotels must participate (such as corporate rates or government rates) as well as other optional programs where the decision to participate is left to

property management. In a time when travellers increasingly look for rates they feel are directed to them, senior citizen rates for example, it is wise to list as many speciality rates as possible in the GDS.

A note about travel industry rates. The words you use in your GDS Hotel Description, your "electronic sales brochure", can never compare with a visit to your hotel by a travel agent. Travel agents appreciate offers of discounts which permit them to stay at hotels and they often welcome a quick tour of the property. A travel industry discount, especially one bookable and immediately confirmed through the GDS is a powerful sales advantage for your property.

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## Negotiated Rates

Negotiated rates are also referred to as multi-level rates, multi-tiered rates, contract rates or secured rates. Negotiated rate programs have become a primary feature of global distribution systems in the past several years. This is because the negotiated rate function allows hotels to list special rates in the GDSs which are viewable and bookable **ONLY** by an authorised travel agency.

Increasingly, large companies have negotiated room rates with individual hotels or hotel chains. In some cases, travel agencies or consortiums of travel agencies may also have their own negotiated rates with hotels or hotel chains.

Once these negotiated rates have been established, only an authorised agent can use their GDS terminal to search for hotels offering a negotiated rate for them or their clients, after entering the appropriate ID code. The result will be a display of only those hotels offering a negotiated rate on the specified dates.

Negotiated rate codes are used more and more often in property searches. It is important that the negotiated rates for all of the companies and agencies with which you have negotiated rate contracts are entered by the GDS Update staff into the appropriate GDSs.

There may be a company near your hotel with which you do a great deal of business, to whom you give a very special local corporate rate which is not loaded in the GDS. If you want travel agents to be able to book your hotel for travellers with that company, it is very important that you ask your Marketing Automation Director or GDS Update staff to add your negotiated rate to the

GDSs and assign an identification code to it. You can provide that code to the client company, who can advise their travel agent of its availability in the GDS.

## Packages

These are special rates developed for a combination of services. A hotel package begins with lodging and can then include meals, transportation (airport pick-up, rental cars, etc.), facility use (health club, tennis courts, golf course, etc.) or any other components. They are often multi-night combinations which are not easily assigned a daily rate.

GDS databases do not accept multiple night package details easily, and selling these packages in the GDSs is not as simple as selling individual night stays. Nonetheless package bookings in GDS, like GDS bookings for leisure accommodation as a whole, are growing steadily. Your GDS Update staff can help you learn the capabilities of your reservation system and each of the GDSs to store and sell packages offered by your hotel.

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### C. Property Availability

In recent years the communication to GDSs of changes in property availability - the opening or closing of a room type - has been largely automated. Hotel CRSs of many chains and representation organisations now instantly transmit an inventory change message to all GDSs when a room type opens or closes.

Other organisations manually update availability information in the GDSs. In this case, when a roomtype is opened or closed by the hotel, someone types a message about that change into a GDS terminal.

GDS availability can be changed by opening and closing either room types or rate types.

## 2. Chain Data in GDSs

All GDSs contain a section where information on company-wide procedures and policies can be described. This chain data is maintained by hotel companies or hotel representation companies.

These information files have different names in each GDS:

Amadeus	Amadeus Information System (AIS)
Apollo/Galileo	Chain Keywords (HOD)
SABRE	Direct Reference Systems (DRS)
SAHARA	HOI
System One Amadeus	Genie
Worldspan	Global Reference System (GRS)

The role of these chain data files is to:

- Describe the programs, policies and service travel agents can expect for their clients visiting your hotels
- Communicate the distinctive characteristics of the hotel company and its properties
- Summarise your hotel organisation's operating rules and procedures for GDS bookings
- Explain the benefits to travel agents and guests of selection of this lodging provider

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- Practice salesmanship through appealing descriptions coupled with short, timely articles, reviews, contests and games which build brand awareness.

A hotels company's information is about the same in each GDS, usually with only minor variations due to different format rules from system to system. The information is usually divided into sections, with keywords or page titles. Some of the most frequently used ones are:

NEWS	Important news
INFORMATION	General chain information
ROOMTYPE	Explanation of the roomtype codes
CORPORATE	Corporate Rate policies
CONFIRMATION	Reservation confirmation policies
GUARANTEE	Guarantee policies
DEPOSIT	Deposit policies
CONTACTS	Chain office addresses and telephone numbers
TRAVEL	Travel industry discount details
COMMISSION	Commission payment program information
FAMILY PLAN	Program explanation
HELP	Who to contact to solve problems
DIRCON	Explanation of connection between CRO and GDS
GROUP	Group reservation booking procedures
CONTEST	Chain or property contests
FREQUENT	Frequent traveller program details

Increasingly, hotel companies are maintaining some parts of their chain procedure files in more than one language, for the convenience of GDS users whose first language is not English.

### 3. GDS Marketing Tools

There are several different types of advertising opportunities available through the GDSs, some provided free of charge, some at a fee. Each hotel company and representation organisation must consider which of these opportunities can provide meaningful results for them.

#### ***Sign-On Messages***

Each GDS offers the opportunity to place a message, two or three lines in length, on the terminal screens of all travel agents when they sign in to use their GDS terminal. Some GDSs use system-wide sign-on messages, others offer the choice of either system-wide or targeted messages directed at a specific geographic region, in the local language in some instances. The advantage of sign-on messages is that they can appear before every user of a GDS; the disadvantage is that usually only one or two hotel messages are shown per day in each GDS, so there may be a long wait before you can place your message on the GDS you wish to use.

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### GDS

Amadeus  
Apollo/Galileo  
SABRE  
SAHARA  
System One Amadeus  
Worldspan

### Product Name:

Sign-On Message  
Front Page News  
Sign-In Message  
Tag Lines  
Sine-In Message  
PrimeSine

**COST:** Yes. Charges depend on audience size. Regional messages are less costly than global messages; corporate or bulk purchase discounts may be available on some systems.  
**MOST** expensive - **MOST** visible.

**How to Use:** Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***GDS Bulletin Boards***

Each GDS provides an electronic bulletin board where information about hotel chain and property-level promotions and special offers can be listed. These bulletins average two to three lines in length and are generally shown for 3 to 5 days.

They are an excellent way to inform GDS users about special rates and discounts, or special packages at your property.

### GDS

Amadeus  
Apollo/Galileo  
SABRE  
Sahara  
System One Amadeus  
Worldspan

### Product Name:

Hot News  
TD/News  
System Hot  
HOW News  
Bulletins  
Associate Marketplace

**COST:** None

**How to Use:** Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***Brochure Text***



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This is an Apollo/Galileo feature which appears each time hotel availability is requested for a specific chain. It is a free, one line marketing message, typically used to reinforce brand awareness.

COST: None

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***Broadcast Messages***

Several GDSs offer the opportunity to send an electronic message to a predefined group of travel agents. It can be used to announce any type of property news, such as new rates, programs or promotions.

COST: Yes

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***Headlines***

Several GDSs offer a Headlines program. Headlines are one or two line promotional messages which appear on GDS availability screens for a particular destination for a specific date. With Headlines, it is possible to display a message about a special rate, for example, on the bottom of flight availability screen for a specific city or city pair, or on the hotel availability display for a specific city. Sometimes these single line Headlines are supplemented by an easily displayed information screen that gives further details of the special rate or offer.

Headlines are usually sold to several hotels in a city on a given date. The result is that, if three hotels are displaying headlines for that city on that day, each will appear on a random basis approximately every third availability display.

COST: Yes; corporate or bulk purchase discounts may be available.

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***Electronic Directories***

Apollo/Galileo offers travel agents the opportunity to subscribe to Spectrum, an electronic hotel directory. Spectrum contains detailed facility and service profiles of participating hotels. It also provides a fast and precise method for identifying hotels with specific features in any location.

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Additionally, it includes maps which indicate the location of hotels, as well as airports, major attractions and many points of interest.

**COST:** Yes; corporate or bulk purchase discounts may be available.

**How to Use:** Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

#### 4. Related Sales Opportunities

##### ***Conference Participation***

GDSs generally hold travel agent conferences every 12 to 18 months at which travel agents are briefed on the system's performance and coming enhancements. Some GDSs also hold smaller regional conferences. A trade show presenting the services of suppliers participating in the GDS, including hotels, is an important component of each conference.

Travel agent conferences are useful for several reasons:

- ◆ as an opportunity to promote your hotel(s)
- ◆ as a forum for discussion of issues with travel agents
- ◆ as an opportunity to hear travel agent needs and concerns described during panels and presentations
- ◆ excellent opportunity to gain competitive intelligence
- ◆ excellent opportunity to learn more about current and future services of that GDS

**COST:** Yes

**How to Use:** Conference participation is organised by your Marketing Automation Director. Sometimes there is an opportunity for a limited number of property staff to join the trade show booth team.

##### ***Type A Connectivity Marketing Messages***

Each GDS offers suppliers the opportunity to add a short marketing message to the end of the Type A reservation confirmation message it displays on a travel agent's CRT.

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COST: No

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director to discuss if and how that message could be used to promote your hotel.

### ***Mailings***

Lists of their travel agent subscribers are available from each GDS. In some cases these lists are also available as mailing labels.

COST: Yes

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director.

### ***Advertising Materials***

Always include your GDS 2-letter chain code and GDS property ID codes in all print ads and collateral such as rack and promotional brochures.

COST: None

### ***Clubs***

Several GDSs operate travel agent club programs which encourage agents in a city or region to meet from time to time. At these meetings they learn about new GDS features and discuss GDS usage techniques. GDSs encourage hotel participation in these events.

Whether it takes the form of hosting a club meeting, or just attending a training session, there is generally time made available to the supplier for a brief product presentation and to answer questions. Added to the opportunity to build product awareness among attendees is an improved understanding of the information supplied by the GDSs to travel agent, and a broadened appreciation for travel agent interests.

COST: Little, or none. Usually limited to providing a meeting space and coffee/snacks.

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How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director for further information.

### ***Mail Stuffing's***

Several GDS allow hotel companies or individual hotel properties to supply promotional brochures which they include in the envelopes used to mail monthly GDS invoices to travel agencies.

COST: Yes

How to Use: Contact your Marketing Automation Director for further information.

### ***Telephone Calls to Travel Agents***

Some Hoteliers have found it effective to telephone the managers of the travel agencies which send them the greatest number of bookings and say "Thank you". Not only do these calls help put a "face" to the hotel's "name", but they also provide the opportunity to mention any news about the property.

COST: Little or none.

How to Use: Travel agency production statistics and agency contact information is usually provided in hotel company or representation company monthly reports about booking production or agency commission payments.

### ***Commission Payment***

Pay commissions promptly. Agents situated outside of your country appreciate payment in their local currency. This can be accomplished through participation in any of several centralised commission payment programs.

### ***Familiarisation Trips / Site Visit Invitations***

A personal tour of your hotel is a far more effective sales tool than any print or electronic advertisement. Consider inviting your top producing travel agents for a weekend or participating in travel agent familiarisation trips operated by your local tourism Authority. Even if they are unable to participate, the travel agents invited will remember your property's invitation.

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## Corporate Marketing Automation Programs and Contacts

Find out the name of your hotel company's or representation company's Marketing Automation Director. That person is responsible for co-ordinating entry of all data in the GDSs, managing use of GDS marketing opportunities and planning participation at GDS conferences. They may be able to suggest many ways in which you can better utilise corporate programs and GDS marketing opportunities.

## Incorporate GDS Discussion into Travel Agency Sales Calls

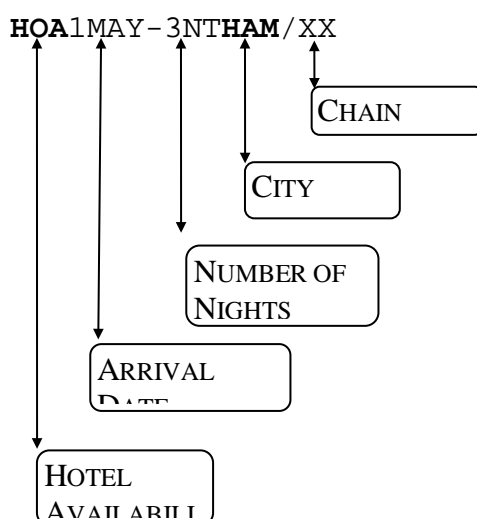
Hotel sales staff should always ask travel agents they visit about why they do, or do not book their hotel in the GDS installed in their agency. The answers they receive will help you fine tune the information about your property in each global distribution system.

### Understanding the GDS booking process

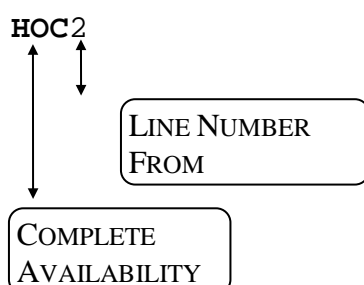
You will really understand how hotels appear in GDSs, how "selling" is possible and the concerns of travel agents after you have sat at a GDS terminal, searched for a hotel and made a room reservation.

The exact commands for a hotel search and hotel booking are provided in the HEDNA GDS Pocket Reference Guide. As an introduction to the shopping and booking process, here are the Apollo/Galileo commands for these steps.

Availability:

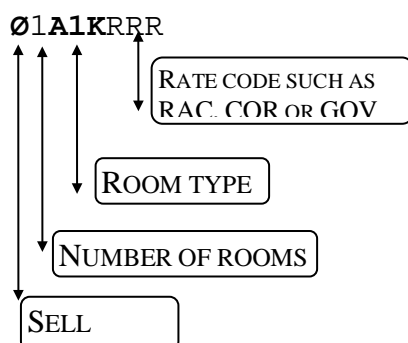


Complete Availability:



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Sell:



This module has:

- Given the 6 Commandments of Selling a Hotel through the GDSs
- Explained how Hotel Data is shown in the GDSs
- Described GDS Marketing Tools and Related Sales Opportunities
- Presented the process used by a travel agent to book a hotel in the GDS

Now . . .

Good luck in the marketing and sales of your hotel through the GDSs.

### Mandatory and Optional Keywords

Mandatory keywords and optional keywords available for use in property and chain descriptions.

**AMADEUS:** Mandatory Chain Keywords are:

POLICY  
NEWS  
HELP

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Mandatory Property Keywords are:

LOCATION  
 CORPORATE  
 DEPOSIT  
 EXTRAS  
 FACILITIES  
 FAMILIES  
 GOVERNMENT  
 GUARANTEE  
 MILITARY  
 POLICY  
 STAY  
 OTHER

Hotel chains and properties may create optional keywords at their own discretion.

**GALILEO:** Mandatory Chain Keywords are:

ADDR (Address)	Hotel company address
BOOK	Outlines general booking guidelines or restrictions for each rate category.
CANC (Cancellation)	Contains all relevant information regarding return of a deposit or guarantee based upon specific criteria for cancelling the reservation
COMM (Commission)	Defines travel agency commission policy.
CONT (Contact)	List names and phone numbers of hotel company personnel supporting travel agencies.
CORP (Corporate)	Corporate rate policies and instructions.
CRED (Credit Card)	Lists accepted credit cards.
DPST (Deposit)	Contains rules and guidelines for handling deposits.
FREQ (Frequent Guest)	Describes frequent guest programs, if applicable, including enrolment and booking procedures, travel partners, point accumulation alternatives, contacts, etc.
GUAR (Guarantee)	Contains policies and restrictions regarding holding reservations.
HOURL (Hour)	Hours of operation for help desk or

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ROOM                      other contacts.  
                               Descriptions of rooms and, in some  
                               cases, rate plan

Mandatory Property Keywords:

ADDR (Address)	Street address of property.
BOOK	Outlines general booking guidelines or restrictions for each rate category.
CANC (Cancellation)	Contains all relevant information regarding cancellation rules and restrictions.
CORP (Corporate)	Corporate rate policies and instructions.
CRED (Credit Card)	Lists accepted credit cards at the property.
DPST (Deposit)	Contains rules and guidelines for handling deposits.
GUAR (Guarantee)	Contains guarantee policies and restrictions.
FACI (Facilities)	Lists facilities and amenities for the property
LOCA (Location)	Description of the property location, including nearby attractions and reference points.
ROOM	Descriptions of rooms and, in some cases, rate plan.
TRAN (Transportation)	Available forms of transportation to/from the property.
TAXS	Applicable tax information including whether rates are tax inclusive or exclusive and the appropriate tax rate where applicable.

The following keywords are mandatory if family or meal plans are noted as an amenity:

FAMI (Family Plan)	Policy information regarding children staying with an adult.
MEAL	Food and beverage offered for free or as part of a package room rate.

**SABRE:**

Mandatory Chain Keywords:

INDEX	List all keywords and their location
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NEWS	Highlight news on topics listed in the DRS to receive special attention
INFORMATION	General information about company
ROOMTYPE	List of rooms offered by room code, including amenities offered
CORPORATE	Information concerning various corporate rate programs and who to contact
GUARANTEE	Guarantee and cancellation policies
DEPOSIT	Deposit requirements & cancellation policies
TRAVEL	Travel industry discounts offered
COMMISSION	Travel agency commission structure, including special incentives
HELP	Who to contact about booking through SABRE and how
DIRCON	Instructions concerning special procedures for booking via Direct Connect
GROUP	Group policies and how to reserve space
GLOBAL	Additional information, if any, to complete a global booking, i.e. documentation and/or qualifications
SHAARPPLUS	Information concerning types of rates loaded and how to have rates, negotiated/contracted, loaded into SABRE for booking

#### Mandatory Property Keywords:

Location	City where property is located
Transportation	Method of transportation from primary airport
Policy	Guidelines that apply to children, pets, check-in/check-out, maximum guests per room, etc.
Facilities	Physical features, number rooms, pools, restaurants, number of floors, etc.
Services	Hours and Services such as valet, room service, baby-sitting, etc. Usually at additional charge.
Other	Nearby activities and misc. information

**SAHARA:** In SAHARA, information is not loaded under keywords, but rather the display of information by keyword is based on its location within other displays. Keyword

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display is determined by the first three characters of an entry, so only three characters or the entire keyword may be entered.

The following are examples of keywords used in SAHARA:

#### General Information

ADDress  
CITy  
PHOne  
FAX Number  
TELex Number  
LOCation  
AIRport  
DIRection from Airport and City  
DISTance from Airport and City  
LIMousine  
TAXi  
TRAin  
TRAnsfers  
CANcel Policy  
CHEck in/Check out Times  
DEPosit  
GUarantee  
EXTra Person/Child Rates

#### Property Facilities

DINing  
ENTertainment  
LOUnge  
FOOd  
COFfee Shop  
REStaurant  
CASino  
GIFt Shop  
LAUndry  
MEEting Rooms  
HANdicap Facilities

#### Property Services

BABy Sitting  
COMputers  
CONcierge  
ROOm Service  
SECretarial Service  
VALet Service

#### Room Amenities:

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AIR Conditioning  
BALcony  
CABLe TV  
COMputer  
HAIR Dryer  
MINi Bar  
REFrigerator  
TELEvision

**SYSTEM ONE Amadeus:** The property description (HOD) area provides 11 elements for storing property information.

**MANDATORY:**

LOC	Location information
EXT	Extra person, bedding and meal plan charges
POL	Policies
FAC	Facilities and services
DEP	Deposit requirements
GNT	Guarantee information
STA	Minimum stay information
OTH	Other information

**OPTIONAL:**

COR	Corporate rate requirements
GOV	Government rate requirements
MIL	Military rate requirements

**WORLDSPAN:**     Mandatory Chain Keywords are:

GUARANTEE/DEPOSIT  
 CREDIT CARDS  
 CANCELLATION/REFUND  
 CORPORATE RATES  
 EXTRAS/OPTIONS  
 WRITTEN CONFIRMATIONS  
 COMMISSIONS  
 GUARANTEED RATE POLICY

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**WORLDSPAN:**     Mandatory Property Keywords are:

TRANSPORTATION  
 GENERAL POLICY  
 CREDIT CARDS  
 CANCELLATION/REFUND  
 EXTRAS/OPTIONS  
 FACILITIES  
 SERVICES  
 VICINITY  
 AIRPORT  
 HOTELS  
 CITIES/SUBURBS