

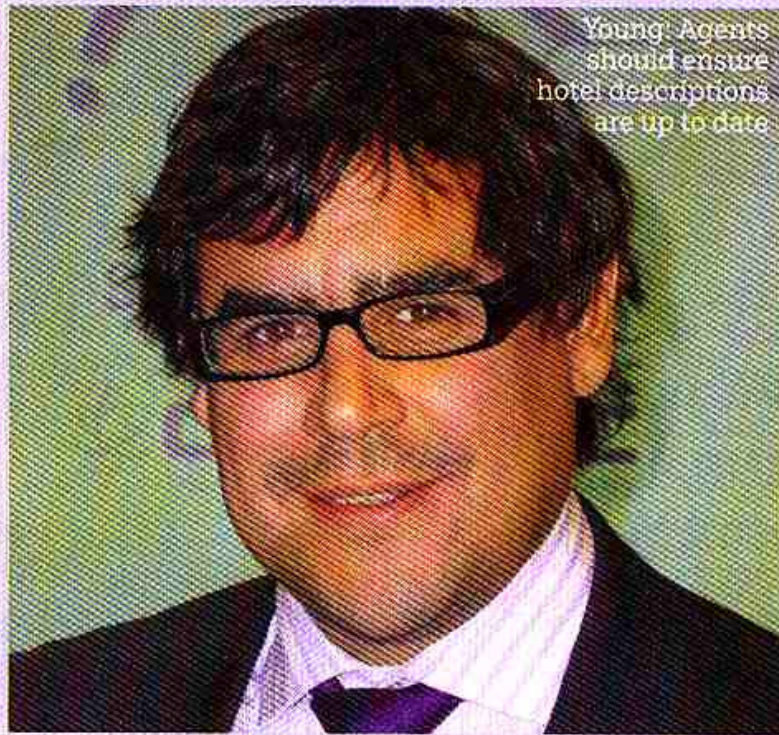
MISUSE OF HOTEL DATA COULD SHIFT LIABILITY

A senior figure at leading bed bank Holiday Brokers has warned agents that varying content descriptions to sell accommodation could affect liability when something goes wrong.

Holiday Brokers sales director Brian Young told the Travel Technology Initiative conference in London last week: "We have had cases where someone has complained and we have discovered that it is not our content they have sold."

Young claimed that many agents only use one description of a hotel on their websites, despite the fact the same hotel is sold by several bed banks, which may provide a different content description for a property.

Problems can arise if a room is sold through a bed bank using a description provided by a different supplier, or put together by an agent. If a hotel's



Young: Agents should ensure hotel descriptions are up to date

facilities are not updated in a description, or the property is sold against another company's hotel description, the bed bank could direct a customer complaint back to the agent.

Young said: "This moves liability to the agent, and I am not convinced agents have thought it through.

"The agent has to take responsibility because they have decided to use some-

one else's description," he said.

Agents should ensure their hotel descriptions are up to date to avoid liability, he said. "Some agents write their own content, and because it's their content, they are liable."

Young argued agents might not be highlighting the best deals by choosing to feature only the cheapest room prices. He said: "One supplier can have the best room-only price, but another has the best price for half-board."

He also questioned the value of bed banks investing in descriptions of products. "Historically, bed banks have managed the content, but since agents have started to aggregate content, what are the incentives to continue?"

"We can have the best videos of a hotel, but not get the sale because one of our competitors has cheaper rates," Young said.

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