

MEDIA RELEASE

12 November 2020

Operator of the Expedia Singapore website ceases false claims on validity period of “Daily Deals” promotions

1. Following an investigation by the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCCS**”), BEX Travel Asia Pte Ltd (“**BEX**”),¹ the operator of the Expedia Singapore website, has ceased its false claims and undertaken to not engage in any further unfair practices in relation to the validity periods of its “Daily Deals” promotions with effect from 12 November 2020.
2. In April 2019, CCCS commenced an investigation under the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (“**CPFTA**”) in relation to the “Daily Deals” promotions offered by BEX on the Expedia Singapore website at www.expedia.sg/dailydeals and through electronic direct mailers to consumers who were subscribed to BEX’s mailing lists. This self-initiated investigation arose out of CCCS’s market monitoring efforts.² These “Daily Deals” promotions involved the listing of certain “Daily Hotel Deals” and “Daily Package Deals”, which BEX represented as “*Hot deals for 24hrs only!*” that would expire at 11.59 pm in Singapore time on each calendar day.
3. CCCS’s investigation revealed that there were at least 55 “Daily Deals” offers where the promotional prices remained the same after 11.59 pm, contrary to its representation that “*These scorchin’ deals change daily at 12:00 AM (Singapore Time)*”. In CCCS’s view, such false claims in relation to promotional prices mislead consumers into believing that there is a price benefit which is only available for a limited period, thus creating unwarranted pressure or a sense of urgency for consumers to make an immediate purchase. CCCS also ascertained that BEX had represented as “*Hot deals for 24hrs only!*” offers which expired in less than 24 hours, which meant that such deals were available for a shorter time period than represented. The false claims on promotions by BEX took place since 2016 and had ceased as at October 2019.
4. At the end of the investigation, CCCS concluded that these false claims constituted unfair practices which breached section 4(b) of the CPFTA.³

¹ BEX was known as AAE Travel Pte Ltd prior to 17 January 2019.

² CCCS’s power to conduct investigations into breaches of the CPFTA is set out in section 12G of the CPFTA. Such investigations may be conducted at CCCS’s own initiative or may arise from cases referred to CCCS by the Consumers Association of Singapore (“**CASE**”) or the Singapore Tourism Board (“**STB**”).

³ Under section 4(b) of the CPFTA, it is an unfair practice for a supplier to make a false claim in relation to a consumer transaction.

5. After carefully considering the facts of the case, including the fact that the breaches have ceased, CCCS administered a warning to BEX for its breaches and accepted BEX's undertaking to:
 - a. Comply with the CPFTA and to take prompt steps to cease any unfair practices in breach of the CPFTA as it may discover in relation to communications (via any media) to consumers on promotions that can be booked through the Expedia Singapore website;
 - b. Prevent conduct described in section 4(b) of the CPFTA from arising in relation to communications (via any media) to consumers on promotions that can be booked through the Expedia Singapore website;
 - c. Ensure that promotions that can be booked through the Expedia Singapore website are not communicated to consumers (via any media) as being:
 - i. Available for a limited time period even though the promotion is expected to remain available after this time period;⁴ and
 - ii. Valid for a specific time period where the promotion may cease before the specific time period expires, unless the limited availability of the promotion is clearly indicated in the offer terms and conditions; and
 - d. Co-operate with CCCS to ensure that it complies with the CPFTA.
6. CCCS reserves the right to investigate any breach of the undertaking or any unfair practices by BEX.
7. CCCS is closely monitoring consumer markets for possible unfair practices that harm consumers. Where suppliers specify a time period during which a product or service will be sold at a discounted price, suppliers should state the time period for when the discount is actually valid clearly and prominently and not make false claims or otherwise mislead consumers. These obligations also extend to suppliers which only provide booking services to consumers and suppliers that only promote goods and services (e.g. advertising platforms).
8. Suppliers should review their business practices to ensure compliance with the CPFTA and may take reference from the [CCCS Guidelines on Price Transparency](#) ⁵ ("**Guidelines**"), which serve to provide greater clarity on which pricing practices could potentially infringe the CPFTA. The Guidelines also include recommended good practices for suppliers.
9. Consumers who encounter unfair practices can approach the Consumers Association of Singapore ("**CASE**") for assistance. For more information, please visit www.case.org.sg or call 6100 0315.

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Encl. Infographic: False Claims on Validity Period of Promotions

⁴ However, a promotion may still be offered at a future time if it complies with the CPFTA and was not represented as a unique offer that would not be repeated.

⁵ The CCCS Guidelines on Price Transparency are available [here](#). The infographic summary of the four key pricing practices set out in the CCCS Guidelines on Price Transparency are available [here](#).

About the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCCS**”) is a statutory board of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. CCCS is the administering agency of the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (Cap. 52A) which protects consumers against unfair trade practices in Singapore. CCCS also administers and enforces the Competition Act (Cap. 50B) which empowers CCCS to investigate and adjudicate anti-competitive activities, issue directions to stop and/or prevent anti-competitive activities and impose financial penalties. Our mission is to make markets work well to create opportunities and choices for business and consumers in Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.cccs.gov.sg.

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False Claims on Validity Period of Promotions



Price Benefit & Scarcity

Misleads consumers into believing that promotional prices will only be available for a specified period when they will be available beyond that



False Sense of Urgency

Creates a false or unwarranted sense of urgency for consumers to make hasty purchases



Unfair Advantage for Errant Suppliers

Gives the errant supplier an unfair advantage over other suppliers who do not make misleading representations on discounts or promotion periods

GOOD PRACTICES FOR SUPPLIERS WHEN OFFERING PROMOTIONS



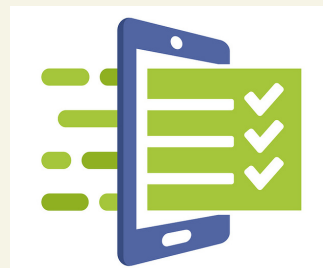
Ensure that discounts for goods & services are genuine



State time period of discounts clearly and prominently



Ensure terms and conditions which apply to advertisements are stated clearly and prominently



Ensure information published is accurate, regardless of whether you are the promoter or supplier of goods and services