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**CHOICE HOTELS EUROPEAN HOTELIER SURVEY REVEALS TRAVELLERS BOOKING DIRECT WILL BE A KEY TREND FOR 2017**

Choice Hotels Europe, the company behind the Ascend, Clarion, Quality and Comfort brands, today revealed the findings of its sixth annual “European Hotelier Pulse-Check”, which assesses over 100 of its hotelier’s 2017 business imperatives, opinions and potential industry trends. Key findings include:

* 64% of respondents believe the hotel sector may realize sustained upturn and that room rates may continue to perform well in 2017
* 69% are planning hotel refurbishments in 2017, matching the results of the 2016 survey
* Stepping up sales and marketing remains top business priority since 2011
* Room quality and features, staff service and price top list in ensuring repeat guest business
* A continued increase in digital advertising and more travellers booking via hotel websites were seen as main industry trends for 2017
* 65% of respondents believe the UK leaving the EU will likely have no impact on their business

The survey reveals that 64% of Choice pan-European hoteliers surveyed are entering 2017 confident that the hotel sector will likely realize a sustained upturn in 2017, with the same number also confident that room rates will likely continue to perform well. The quality and features of their hotel rooms, staff service and price continue to be considered the three important elements in securing repeat business to their properties.

As with the last two previous years, a refurbishment at their hotel is the main expansion plan for hoteliers (69%), and an additional 29% report that securing another hotel property for their portfolio is once again the second most likely expansion objective. The hoteliers also reported that stepping up sales and marketing activities to attract new customers remains their number one business priority for the fifth year running, along with enhancing staff training.

When asked to predict the main industry trend for 2017, 34% of the hoteliers point towards the continued increase in digital, as opposed to traditional advertising while 18% believed more travellers are likely to book direct via hotel websites.

The hoteliers participating in the survey were not overly concerned about the UK leaving the EU, with 65% claiming that it will likely have no impact on their business, and only 19% believing it might have a negative impact. When asked about the impact high security across Europe has had on the European hotel industry, over half (62%) thought travellers would come to Europe regardless and that the extra security gave travellers confidence.

Looking at ways to attract the all-important business traveller, 38% of respondents will encourage corporate clients to book through channels with lower distribution costs such as their hotel’s own website, others plan to sign up more members to Choice Privileges, Choice’s global loyalty programme, as their members have a greater likelihood to return, and 20% intend to sign more contracts with corporate clients so they can benefit from preferred rates.

Respondents also recognised how critical revenue management is to running a successful hotel operation, with over half (56%) of hoteliers surveyed believing they realised between 2.5% and 10% in increased revenue by implementing effective revenue management strategies.

Peter Till, UK Managing Director, Choice Hotels Europe, commented: “Our hoteliers are predicting that more travellers may book directly via hotel websites in 2017. We are already helping to drive record traffic to our hotels’ websites by providing the tools our franchisees need to help boost profitability and compete in the new industry landscape, as well as giving guests easy and quick ways to book. By booking directly with Choice via one of our own channels, we own the guest experience and can start forming relationships with guests before arrival, ensuring they have everything they need in advance of their stay.”

The “2016 European Hotelier Pulse-Check” survey was conducted amongst 104 Choice Hotels franchisees, operators and general managers from the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland and Italy in October 2016.

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**About Choice Hotels**

Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH) is one of the world's largest lodging companies. With more than 6,400 hotels franchised in more than 40 countries and territories, Choice Hotels International® represents more than 500,000 rooms around the globe. As of September 30, 2016, 745 hotels were in our development pipeline. Our company's Ascend Hotel Collection®, Cambria® hotels & suites, Comfort Inn®, Comfort Suites®, Sleep Inn®, Quality®, Clarion®, MainStay Suites®, Suburban Extended Stay Hotel®, Econo Lodge®, Rodeway Inn®, and Vacation Rentals by Choice Hotels™ brands provide a spectrum of lodging choices to meet guests' needs. With more than 28 million members and counting, our Choice Privileges® rewards program enhances every trip a guest takes, with benefits ranging from instant, every day rewards to exceptional experiences, starting right when they join. All hotels and vacation rentals are independently owned and operated. Visit us at [www.choicehotels.com](http://www.choicehotels.com/) for more information.