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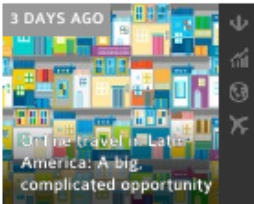
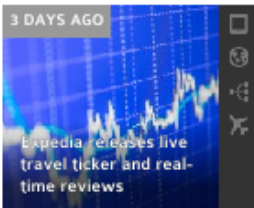
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Travelport buys into corporate travel platform Locomote

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Aug 4, 2014

Travelport's Beyond Air investment push continues – buying a 49% stake in Australia-based travel management platform Locomote.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Locomote is a three-and-a-half year old technology startup created by the Fastuca brothers (chief information officer Ross and chief operating officer David) which includes a corporate booking tool and expense management system.

Targeted at corporations, Locomote has already attracted a number of high profile customers including ANZ Bank, World Vision and MediBank.

The investment essentially creates a joint venture between Locomote and Travelport, with the former's platform integrating with Travelport's Universal API for flight, hotel and car rental content, as well as a policy engine and traveller profile platform.

The new system will continue to allow companies with managed travel programmes to plug in existing corporate travel agency or other third party tools.

Locomote was originally built for mobile devices and has since been extended to include a desktop interface for travel managers and employees.

Travelport CEO Gordon Wilson says the deal is part of the company's wider strategy to grow its Beyond Air division (areas outside of airline distribution), with Locomote in particular giving it a "much bigger footprint" into the corporate world.

"The [Locomote] management share the same vision that we have, which is that the future of corporate travel will be much more of a technology play.

The system was created with "mobile at its heart" and with one eye on the "next-generation of travellers", Wilson adds.

Responsibility for marketing of the platform will rest with the existing, Australia-based Locomote team.

Confirmation of the investment comes just days after Travelport increased its ownership of the eNett payment service, giving it a 73% holding of the company now valued at \$450 million.

This followed a deal earlier this year to buy hotel distribution platform Hotelzon – an acquisition with a price undisclosed at the time but, according to the S1 which Travelport filed for its IPO, was \$10 million paid in the first quarter of this year.

The Hotelzon system is expected to be added to the Locomote platform in due course, Wilson says.

Australian serial entrepreneur Philip Weinman was originally executive chairman of Locomote, but in the past six months has also taken on the role of CEO from Ross Fastuca.

Weinman says:

"This is all about giving our corporate travel customers a greater level of control over their own travel programmes.

"It will save businesses time and money and allow them to make the most of their travel budgets in real time. The platform we have developed is designed to be constantly added to, to keep pace with emerging trends as well as changing corporate customer needs."

Two Travelport executives will receive seats on the board of Locomote as a result of the investment.



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About the Writer :: Kevin May