



## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Historic Hotels of America® Calls On Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> to Handle Central Reservations** *Responsibility for more than 240 Historic Hotels added to contact center's queue*

**St. Louis, MO – October 10, 2012** – Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup>, (a division of Customer Direct) North America's leader in contact center services for the Lodging & Hospitality Industry, and Historic Hotels of America®, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, today announced that Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> has been selected to provide central phone reservation services for the Historic Hotels portfolio of more than 240 hotels.

Calls made to the Historic Hotels of America® toll-free reservation line (1-800-678-8946) will be routed directly into the Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> contact center. It is here where travelers from the United States and Canada who are considering a stay at one of these spectacular properties will speak directly with a Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> agent. The call center operation is open twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week.

Offering global call, email, and chat sales & support to some of the world's finest hotels and on-line booking agencies, Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> has earned its reputation for having the best people and booking processes in the industry. Stringent agent hiring guidelines, extensive training, a sales program that is tailored to each historic hotel, inn and resort, continuous agent training & improvement, and a best-in-class call monitoring & real-time reporting system all work in concert to deliver a better guest experience, and, subsequently, improved reservation conversion rates.

“We were looking for a partner that could seamlessly integrate into our existing operations, a partner who could expertly represent each individual hotel as if they were right there on-site. With the number of hotels we have in our collection, we realized that this would be no small task,” said Michelle Woodley, Preferred Hotel Group's SVP of Distribution and Revenue.

“As we spoke to Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> we soon realized that, with the importance they place on the experience that a potential guest has on each and every call, including being intimately versed in the intricacies of what each hotel offers, combined with their remarkable ability to digest a vast amount of information in a short period of time, the decision to select Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> to handle our central reservations was an easy one.” Ms. Woodley continued, “And, needless to say, we were pleased to learn Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> will significantly improve our conversion rates through their proven practices.” She concluded, “And we are confident that is exactly what will happen.”

A program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation<sup>®</sup>, Historic Hotels of America<sup>®</sup> identifies quality hotels that have faithfully maintained their historic integrity, architecture and ambiance. Historic Hotels of America<sup>®</sup> preserves the authenticity of America’s most prominent lodging addresses and offer visitors a remarkable travel experience to savor, celebrate and share. Member hotels are promoted nationally and internationally to those who prefer historic settings for their leisure and business travel.

Historic Hotels of America represents more than 30 of the world’s finest hospitality brands, chains, and collections. Several hotels have been in the same family for decades, passing down a rich and distinctive history from one generation to the next. Member hotels are located in 44 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Hotels range in size from a 15-room country inn, The Smith House in Dahlonaga, Georgia to the city center Palmer House Hilton in Chicago with 1639 rooms.

Thierry Roch, Executive Director of Historic Hotels of America, said, “We are pleased to work with a company who values the traveler and will seamlessly integrate into our current call center operations.” Roch went on to say, “Guest Direct’s highly personalized approach to working with their clients and callers is something that we feel is well suited to the mission of Historic Hotels of America.”

Tom Fox, VP of Strategic Partnerships for Customer Direct said, “With such distinguished and world-renowned properties throughout the United States with distinctive cultural and historical value, we are thrilled and honored to have been selected to provide such a vital service to such an amazing group of hotels.”

Rob Nolan, President and CEO of Customer Direct, added, “No matter the type of client we have, whether it’s providing customer sales & support for the hospitality, publishing, or retail industry, we take great effort to have the right people and tailored processes in place so that the

person on the other end of the phone truly feels that they are getting the service they deserve. From the start, our goal is to not be a vendor, but really to be an imbedded member of our client's team ... furthering our ability to meet the lofty, yet realistic bottom line expectations we set, while significantly reducing the headaches and costly overhead organizations commonly experience by having this function in-house." Mr. Nolan concluded by saying, "To that end, we are incredibly excited to be partnering with Historic Hotels of America® collection, and look forward to delivering their customers with the great first impression and subsequent gracious service that the brand has so richly earned."

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#### **About Customer Direct & Guest Direct**

Founded in 1997, St. Louis-based Customer Direct and its Guest Direct<sup>sm</sup> division provide outsourced call, email, and chat sales & support services for a wide variety of clientele. These services include customer care, multi-tier technical support, and back-office fulfillment. Customer Direct serves domestic and international clients within industries such as hospitality, Internet retail, publishing, catalog sales, and health care. For more information, contact Tom Fox, Customer Direct VP of Strategic Partnerships, at 1-800-332-3756. Or visit [www.guestdirect.com](http://www.guestdirect.com) or [www.customerdirect.com](http://www.customerdirect.com).

#### **About Historic Hotels of America®**

Historic Hotels of America was founded in 1989 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation® with 32 charter members. In 2007, Preferred Hotel Group partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to grow and enhance Historic Hotels of America. Historic Hotels of America has more than 240 historic hotels. These properties have all faithfully maintained their authenticity, sense of place, and architectural integrity in the United States of America, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Historic Hotels of America is comprised of mostly independently owned and operated properties. More than 30 of the world's finest hospitality brands, chains and collections are represented in Historic Hotels of America. To be nominated and selected for membership into this prestigious program, a hotel must be at least 50 years old, listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or recognized as having historic significance. For more information, please visit [www.HistoricHotels.org](http://www.HistoricHotels.org).

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