

EVENTS/CAUSES

Trump Collection leverages 2016 election frenzy for Washington debut

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Old Post Office Building, Washington, the location for Trump International Hotel

By JOE MCCARTHY

Trump Hotel Collection is capitalizing on the excitement surrounding the presidential election with a unique bidding initiative coinciding with the Trump International Hotel's Washington debut.

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The brand worked with Forward Market Media to let politically passionate consumers bid on rooms for the week of the presidential inauguration Jan. 20, 2017. To add another element of excitement to the campaign, winning bids are legitimate only if the right candidate is predicted.

"Basically the motivation starts with creating entertaining, interactive visibility," said Rick Harmon, CEO of [Forward Market Media](#), Chicago.

"We're selling the contingent right to something," he said. "Most people's passions are directly tied to some variable, and there's obviously a big group of people who would want to be in D.C. if their particular favorite candidate wins.

"What the forward markets do is provide a democratization of access. For the most part, this is a remarkably unique Trump Hotel and you probably would've had to know

someone inside the Trump organization to get access during this week."

Partisan tension

In 2013, The Trump Hotel Collection cemented its redevelopment plans for the Old Post Office Building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington and hopes that the hotel will usher vitality into the capital city.

The hotel brand had jostled with other bidders for the property back in 2012 before being selected by the United States General Services Administration for a planned \$200 million redevelopment. The building's venerated 19th century roots will help Trump Collection maintain a high level of exclusivity ([see story](#)).

The property is expected to open in 2016 as the election fervor reaches its peak.



Old Post Office Building

To capitalize on citizens' endless capacity for speculation about who will become the next president, and to draw attention to its proximity to the inauguration march, Trump Collection tapped Forward Market Media for a "forward market reservation system."

Since Oct. 31, consumers have been able to visit www.CanidateKey2016.com to purchase a CandidateKey, which is essentially a bidding token of limited quantity, starting at \$250 and \$500. Consumers must also name who they think will win the election at this time.

The Web site currently has 19 candidates available to choose from. The five most prominent candidates on the site are Hillary Clinton, Jeb Bush, Paul Ryan, Joe Biden and Chris Christie.

Pick Your Candidate For Your Key

World Class Rooms
Stay in the finest hotel in Washington, D.C., the newly renovated historic Pennsylvania Avenue Post Office.

Historic Events
Be there when your Candidate becomes the next President of the United States.

CandidateKeys
Remember how impossible it is to secure a hotel for the Inauguration? And to be there is priceless.

Pick Your Candidate
Follow your Candidate to Washington, D.C. - Your Candidate is your Key.

MORE CANDIDATES >

CandidateKey2016

The other candidates skew toward the right to reflect the Republican Party's attempt to regain the White House after a two-term absence. Bidders can also write in their favored candidate.

12.		Rand Paul	\$250	SELECT
13.		Ron Paul	\$250	SELECT
14.		Rick Perry	\$250	SELECT
15.		Mitt Romney	\$250	SELECT
16.		Marco Rubio	\$250	SELECT
17.		Paul Ryan	\$250	SELECT

CandidateKey candidates

After a candidate is selected, consumers can make their bid and set the process in motion.

The Candidates 

Elizabeth Warren | [Purchase a CandidateKey](#)

CANDIDATE	MARKET DETAILS
 <p>ELIZABETH WARREN </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 CandidateKey Per Candidate • January 2017 • Room Rate: TBD
<p>Select a CandidateKey <i>Your Candidate is your Key</i></p>	<p>HOTEL DETAILS Washington, D.C.</p> 
<p>Deluxe King Room from \$250</p> <p>SELECT</p>	<p>Deluxe One Bedroom from \$500</p> <p>SELECT</p>

CandidateKey bidding page

Throughout the election, consumers can buy and sell these keys on the Web site's marketplace. A key holder can opt to hold on to the key, or sell it to a bidder, a process that will likely drive the price of the key much higher than the starting point.

Theoretically, a bidder can buy a CandidateKey early on at a low price and sit on it for the duration of the election.

Other bidders will play an active role in monitoring prices in order to score a profit.

A CandidateKey does not guarantee a room during the inauguration. Only the key holders who predicted the right candidate will be given the chance to reserve a room, and the losers will forfeit their bid, further ratcheting up the tension for bidders.

The rooms in question will have a clear view of the inauguration march and guests will be able to reserve them for the entire week leading up to the big day.

Forward Market Media creates markets for events that have some contingent variable. For instance, a baseball fan may want to be near the World Series if their favorite team makes it, and may want to gamble on getting a package at a great rate in advance if they have faith. However, if the consumer's favorite team fails to make the championship, he will likely want to rescind his investment.

Mr. Harmon believes this tendency affects many areas of consumer interest and envisions luxury brands using forward markets 365 days a year for various reasons in the future.

Local incentives

Washington properties regularly draw on the nearby political theater for packages.

For instance, The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, triggered bookings from affluent families with a presidential-themed package that allowed children to stay like a "First Kid."

The “Live Like a First Kid” package let families see how the president and fellow U.S. government officials live and work on a daily basis. Through this package, families were able to take advantage of the VIP experiences and luxurious accommodations at the Ritz-Carlton ([see story](#)).

Since the 2016 election is expected to be the most expensive election in U.S. history, a bidding system such as CandidateKey will likely draw a lot of attention.

"People spend a lot more time anticipating stuff then doing stuff," Mr. Harmon said. "It's about connecting more and more with that user and where their passions are and letting them have fun."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/kV5qtREKgLE](http://www.youtube.com/embed/kV5qtREKgLE)

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