

STOP LOSING REVENUE

DISCOVER HOW TO INCREASE
DIRECT BOOKINGS ON YOUR ACCOMMODATION WEBSITE



12 essential elements your direct booking website needs to have

START GETTING MORE DIRECT BOOKINGS

It's so easy to become over-reliant on Online Travel Agents (OTA) for your bookings. And why not? It seems a good alternative to paid ads or other marketing expenses.

When you look at the trade-off on a singular point of view, it does seem like a good solution. Only pay for marketing when you get a booking. What can be wrong with that?

Well, the downside is that you never fully

own your business. You are at the mercy of the OTA. If a guest complains, they will refund them without your blessing. If the OTA wants to increase their commission? You cannot do anything about it.

You don't get the customer data, and you, in effect, are working for the OTA, not yourself. You have little or no control over your pipeline of guests and the amount of revenue you can make. Get a few bad reviews and watch your visibility and occupancy figures fall.

SHOULD YOU DITCH ONLINE TRAVEL AGENTS?

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When you look at it like that, OTAs and their dominance really do expose you. But should you ditch Online Travel Agents completely? My answer. No. They should be viewed as *part* of your rooms booking strategy, which must be combined with your direct booking and possibly your corporate booking strategy if you are that type of property.

Critical to getting direct bookings is your property website, and in this guide, we highlight 12 key elements your website should include to help potential guests convert to direct bookers.



KEEP YOUR SITE CLEAN & UNCLUTTERED

Simple websites are the most effective websites.

Slow, complicated websites that make your customers work hard to understand what you're selling and how to book with you will lose you bookings.

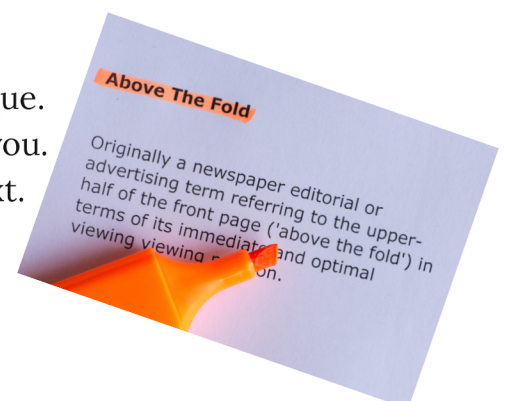
3 SECONDS TO SELL

On average, you only have three to five seconds of somebody's time when they land on your website to convince them that you are suitable for what they are searching for.

ABOVE THE FOLD

On your Home Landing page, the 'above the fold' section needs to contain the following:

1. Who you are for.
2. What you offer that's unique.
3. Why they should choose you.
4. What they need to do next.



YOUR HOME PAGE SHOULD INCLUDE:

01

A BOOK NOW BUTTON

Guest's need to know how to book with you - make it obvious.

02

LIVE SOCIAL PROOF

Helps build trust in you shows you are not a SCAM website!

03

INFOGRAPHICS

People don't read. Use infographics to showcase your best features, so they can see quickly you are a match

04

FEATURED ROOMS

Don't show all your rooms. Get your google click rate up by directing to rooms pages.

05

EMAIL CAPTURE HOOK

Have a Free Locals Guide to capture emails to you can re-market too.

06

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Make sure your contact details can be easily found and remain on screen at all times.

YOUR ABOUT US PAGE:

One of the best ways to differentiate your property is by showcasing your unique self.

People want to know whom they are staying with and if they will feel comfortable.

Show them what a great experience and what a hospitable host you are. Remember to put a nice picture of you and your team for higher engagement.



BOOKING TOOLS



A Booking Tool is a must if you want to increase your direct sales.

Your booking tool doesn't need to be complex. It can be a simple embed from your Property Management System (PMS), a hosted page which your website links to or your own booking engine with availability from your own website, where users can instantly book.

If your listed on other Online Travel Agency's websites (OTAs) like booking.com or AirB&B, then an Ical Sync solution will keep your availability in check. If you are managing more than 1 or 2 OTAs, then a channel manager system may be needed.

LANDING PAGES

FOR SEO:



FOR LOCAL EVENTS



FOR YOUR LOCAL GUIDE



Let's face it. You will never be able to rank your website in google for "high buyer intent keywords" like: "Hotels in X city".

The OTAs own the real estate on the search engines with their huge domain authority scores, massive list of backlinks and several different brand websites that rank for the top seven or eight spaces on page one. That combined with a huge marketing Ad spend means you will never complete and rank for those high Buyer intent keywords.

Depressing, isn't it?

So what to do?

Smart hosts aim to take their local knowledge and rank for longer tail keywords specific to local events and attractions. - "Places to stay near X tourist attraction - "Places near to x event"

Your website needs landing pages targeting all your local landmarks and events.



SOCIAL LINKS AND FEEDS



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



INSTAGRAM



TIK TOK

Live feeds from your social feeds, such as Instagram straight to your website, is such a great way to build trust with your potential guests.

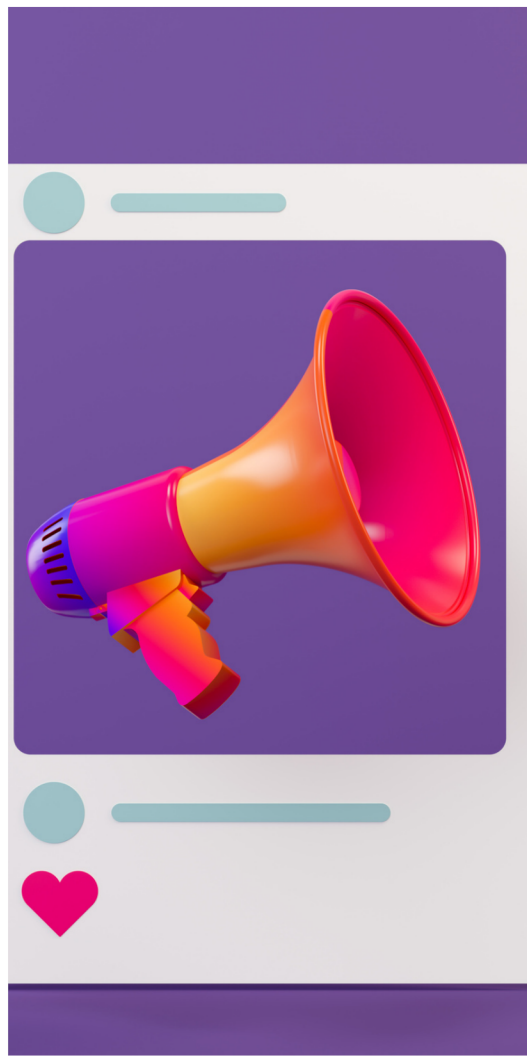
Done right, you can get your guests to post on your hashtags to create 'user-generated content.' Nothing beats that for convincing a guest to stay with you over a competitor

GET A GUEST REVIEW LINK PAGE

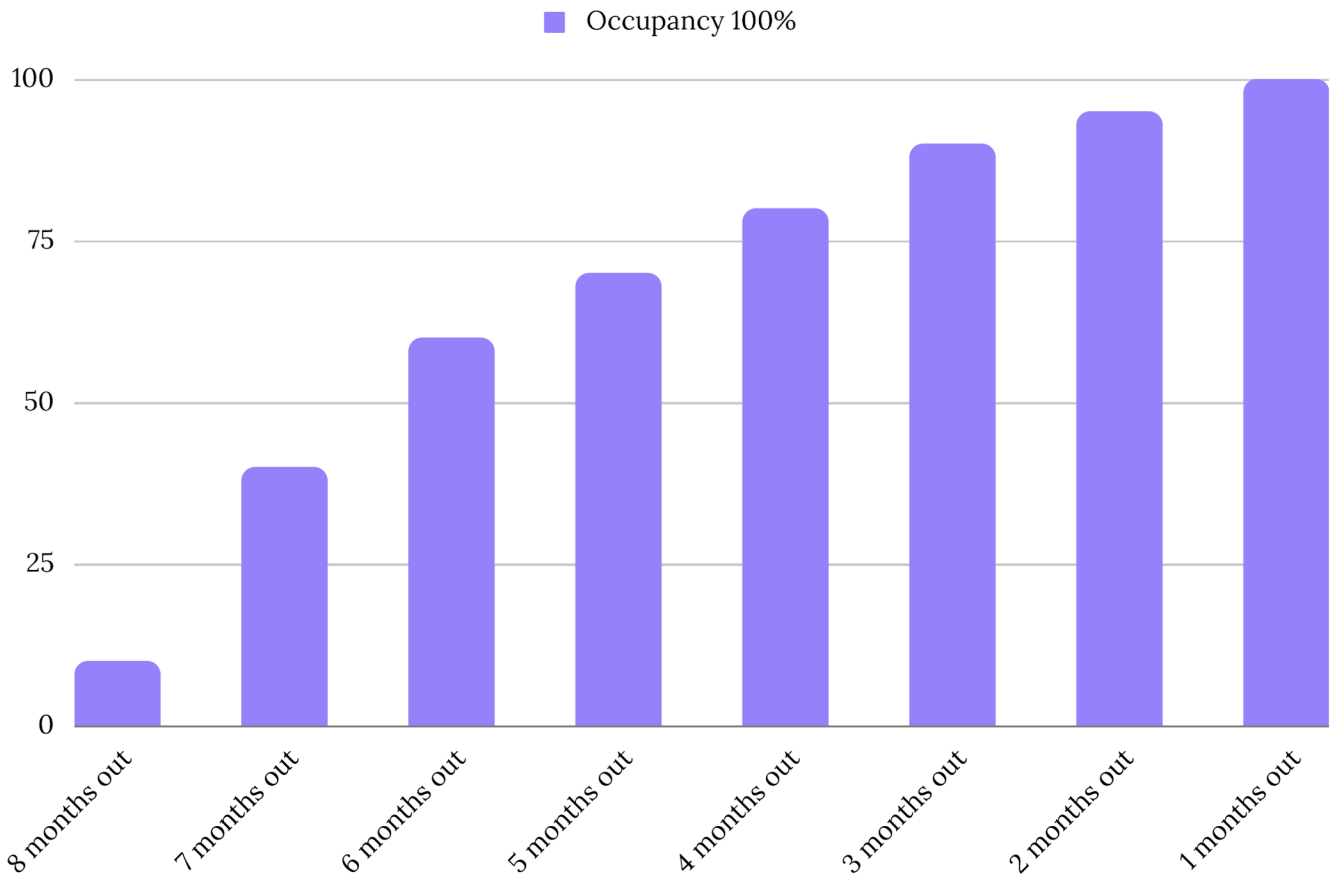
Following up with guests who have stayed with you, is so much easier with your own guest review page: www.YourDomain.com/review

Here you can add links to all the places you want to get reviews on; Trip Advisor, Google My Business, page or Yelp. It makes it so much easier for guests and for you to direct them.

Guest reviews play one of the most important parts in the decision-making process when choosing a place to stay. Rarely do guests return each year to the same place so make sure your current guests are encouraging your next guests to stay with you.



PRICE YOUR ROOMS CORRECTLY



Revenue management is the art and science of guessing how much you can sell your rooms for without having any empty on the night.

Your aim: Fill your rooms to 100% occupancy at the maximum price you can sell your rooms for.

How? Yield management and pricing strategies. There are several you can adopt here are some of my favourites.

- 1. Have different product types:** Advance Purchase (with a discount) and Pay on arrival (cancel up to 48 hours out)
- 2. Add Value to Booking Direct** - rather than giving discounts.
- 3. Packages** - Partner with local attractions and make staying with you a no-brainer.

GET A FREE WEBSITE REVIEW

If you would like us to take a look at your website so you can get insights on how to improve your performance. We offer a **Free Website Review**, where we take a look at three elements of your website:

Conversion Analysis

We will identify the key ways your site converts visitors into sales or leads and advise you on improving them. We'll let you know about the changes we would have made if we were managing your site.

Traffic Analysis

We'll look at the traffic and the traffic sources your website currently has and see how you could increase this further. We'll test a few search terms to see where you rank on google.

Competitor Analysis

We will see who your online competitors are and see if we can identify any weaknesses they have and how you can improve your website to outperform them over time.



When you **request your free accommodation website review**, we'll ask you a few questions about your business and how well your direct bookings perform. We'll ask you what you are most interested in finding out about in your review, whether that is help with marketing, improving SEO and google rankings or the UX (user experience) of the layout and design of your hospitality website. This will help us provide you with the most helpful review.

We will record a review to explain which parts of your website could benefit the most from improvements and tweaks. We'll take time to look at your site to see how well it is optimised for conversions, look at what traffic it receives, and compare this to your local competitors. We will then provide you with some action points you can take away and improve your website.

We don't work on other people's websites to improve their performance, so we are not selling SEO or Marketing services to you. However, we produce and manage websites for the clients we build sites for.

If, after the review, you would like to explore getting a new website, please feel free to reach out to us.

Get Your Free Review

www.accommodation-web-solutions.com/Review



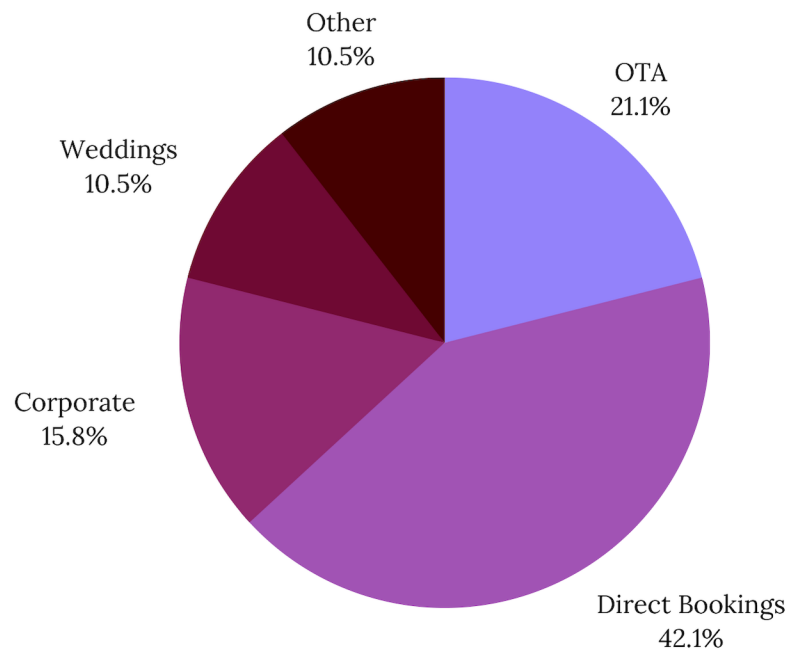
CONCLUSION

With the right outreach marketing plan and a solid website designed to convert, you can improve the number of direct bookings you can get for your property.

Keep going with the OTAs, they are a good traffic source for new potential clients, but you can dramatically cut down your commission fees if you build your marketing machine instead of relying solely on the OTAs.

NEXT STEPS?

Before you start on any out reach and drive traffic to your website, you need to make sure that when they get there you can capture their email address and have a product or value added that entices them away from the OTAs. Why not consider getting a **Free Website review** to fine-tune your own website?



ACCOMMODATION - WEB- SOLUTIONS



The article was written by Martin Spooner for Accommodation Web Solutions.

Martin has over 30 years of Hospitality Industry knowledge and has run several 6 figure properties.