MASTERING THE ART
OF DIRECT BOOKING

Captivate, Convert, and Delight Guests

aMaDEUS

Booking travel online has become the norm for most travelers in today's digital and highly connected world. With 60% of all reservations being made online but only 20% coming directly through a hotel's website, it is now as vital as it has ever been for hoteliers globally to start thinking of their direct booking strategy.

A recent study led by h2c and sponsored by Amadeus, among others, involving 96 hotel chains worldwide (representing 19,000 properties, 2 million rooms) showed that, for these chains, while the share of all bookings coming through hotel booking engines has doubled from 10% to 20% over the last five years, OTAs including bed banks still capture 35% of all bookings made online. A massive opportunity exists, therefore, for hotels looking to increase their revenue, by capturing a greater portion of that online business.

The study additionally revealed that 20% of hotel chains surveyed were not satisfied with and felt limited by their current booking systems, as they lacked personalization capabilities and proper upselling functionalities. They are therefore considering investing in new systems within the next three years to allow them to better acquire, convert, and retain guests through more direct bookings.

This is a powerful indication that staying competitive in the hospitality industry will require new strategies to maximize direct bookings and revenue potential and foster long-term guest loyalty.

Did you know that
6 out of 10
bookings are
now made online?

amadeus

MASTER
THE ART

THE KEY TO GETTING NOTICED IN A COMPETITIVE ONLINE MARKET

In today's crowded digital ecosystem, hotels must be strategic in finding ways to stand out online and make it easy for potential guests to find them. With so many options and competitors, getting noticed can be challenging for many hotels, but it isn't impossible.

Can potential guests easily find your hotel's direct channel?

Hotels must be strategic about their online presence to increase their online visibility and drive more direct bookings. Here are a few key ways hotels can boost their visibility:

- **Optimize for search engines:** Search engines like Google, Bing, Baidu, and Yandex are the go-to resources for guests searching for accommodations. Ensure your website and content are optimized for the different search engines to improve your rankings and visibility. This includes using relevant keywords, creating high quality content, and ensuring your website is SEO optimized.

- **List your hotel on local directories:** Including your hotel on local directories such as Google My Business and TripAdvisor can significantly improve your local search rankings. These directories help potential guests find your hotel and learn more about your amenities, services, and location.

- **Leverage your social media channels:** With today's new generation of travelers heavily relying on social media for travel inspiration, it's crucial for hotels to have an active presence on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. Utilize LinkedIn to connect with corporate guests and promote business amenities as well as event spaces and use Instagram and TikTok to showcase the hotel brand and guest experience through short videos highlighting your unique selling points. Share engaging content, exclusive offers, and special promotions. By doing so, you can tap into a new market and boost your online presence, which can lead to more direct bookings and revenue growth.

- **Boost direct bookings with targeted cross-channel advertising:** Utilize digital media advertising strategies across paid search, display, and social media to connect with potential hotel guests and increase direct bookings. With a competitive media strategy tailored to your property and the hospitality industry, you can maximize RevPAR and occupancy.

Identify areas of improvement for your hotel's website with an **SEO Checklist**

GET NOTICED

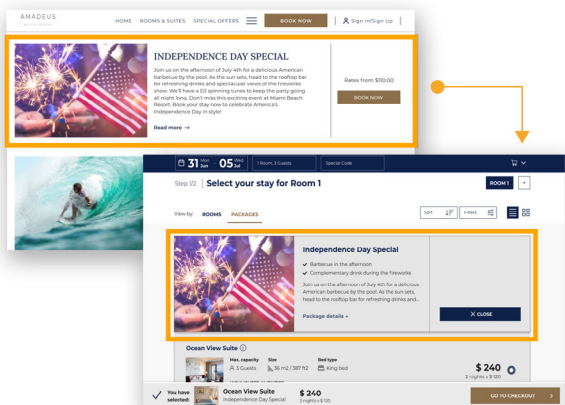# ELEVATING YOUR ONLINE BOOKING EXPERIENCE: IS YOUR DIRECT CHANNEL CONVERSION-FOCUSED?

Your hotel's website is often the first touchpoint for potential guests, setting the stage for a seamless and engaging booking experience. Optimizing your website can enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty, differentiate your property from the competition, and ultimately drive more direct bookings.

The new iHotelier Booking Engine helps hotels to **increase their conversion rate by 20%**
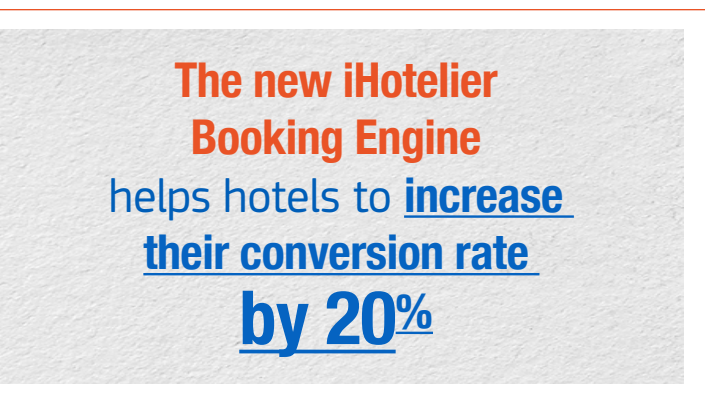
**Optimize the user journey with a seamless booking engine**

- **Straightforward navigation:** User-friendly navigation helps guests find information quickly, simplifying the booking process. Keep content concise in order to eliminate confusion. And with a large percentage of bookings being made on mobile devices, an optimized mobile booking engine is a must.

- **Compelling visuals and virtual tours:** Most travelers consider photos to be the most important factor when considering a stay. Use high-quality photos, videos and virtual tours to highlight your hotel's unique selling points.

- **Personalized messaging:** 80% of consumers are more likely to purchase when brands offer personalized experiences. Target specific audiences such as families, business travelers, honeymooners, or groups of friends with customized messaging throughout their online journey.

- **Membership and loyalty programs:** After the recent challenges faced by the hospitality industry, utilizing your direct channel allows you to stay in control of your brand and the customer journey. And, thanks to bespoke membership and loyalty programs, you can get a competitive edge over your competitors by offering personalized perks, such as exclusive discounts, complimentary amenities, and customized experiences. This will create a sense of exclusivity and incentivize customers to stay through your direct channel.

EXAMPLE #1: Offer unique packages based on the shopper's locations, such as Fouth of July rates for U.S. travelers

EXAMPLE #2: Celebrate your members with exclusive discounts only available when logged-in to their loyalty profile
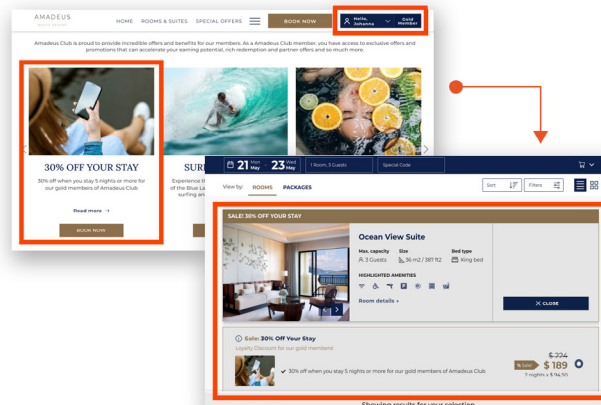
Enhance Revenue and Brand Consistency

- **Efficient payment process with flexible cancellation policies:** A hassle-free payment process reduces abandoned bookings and enhances guest satisfaction. And giving guests peace of mind by letting them know that they will be able to change or cancel their booking, if need be, will make on-the-spot direct booking more appealing than booking by other channels.

- **Personalized upsells and cross-sells:** This can be a powerful tool for driving overall profitability by providing guests with customized offers that enhance their stay and highlight your hotel's unique features and amenities. Incorporating personalized upsells and cross-sells into your booking channel can encourage guests to make additional purchases and boost direct booking revenue. To further optimize your revenue potential, consider implementing a robust cart abandonment strategy to recapture bookings that may have otherwise been lost.

Ultimately, this can help hotels differentiate themselves from the competition, and provide guests with a more satisfying and personalized experience.

- **Brand consistency:** Ensure that all messaging and visuals are consistent with the hotel's brand identity and values. Use content management systems and digital asset management tools to maintain consistency across all channels.

- **Rate parity:** Maintaining rate parity is essential to a hotel's direct bookings strategy and is critical for good metasearch performance. Competitive rates can help lower your advertising costs and boost conversions. By using a booking engine that helps with member-rate discounts on metasearch sites, you can increase traffic on brand.com vs. OTAs.

Did you know that more than 50% of hotel chains are facing challenges with limited upselling functionalities?

ELEVATE YOUR BRAND

FOSTERING LONG-TERM GUEST LOYALTY AND REPEAT BOOKINGS

The success of a hotel is often determined by its ability to foster long-term guest loyalty and drive direct bookings. By optimizing the website and booking experience, hotels can maximize their revenue potential, build strong relationships, and enhance guest satisfaction. Personalizing guest interactions and leveraging guest data are essential for achieving these goals and reinforcing brand identity.

Post-Stay Engagement

• **Guest feedback:** Collect and respond to guest feedback to improve the overall guest experience and demonstrate that you value their input. Use post-stay surveys or other feedback mechanisms to collect feedback from guests.

• **Loyalty programs:** Implement a loyalty program that rewards guests for direct bookings and encourages repeat stays. Use guest data to tailor rewards and incentives to individual guests and improve their overall experience.

• **Retargeting and remarketing:** Use retargeting and remarketing strategies to stay top of mind with guests after they leave your website. These strategies can include email marketing, social media advertising, and targeted content marketing.

DELIVER VALUE AT EVERY STEP OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Entice to book with personalized offers

Login to Loyalty Program

Checkout with personalized enchancement

Journey Begins　　**Experiental Web**　　**Frictionless Booking**　　**Custom Add-Ons**　　**Loyalty & Upsell**

There is a strong need for **sophisticated and competitive Integrated Booking Engine solutions,** followed by guest profile management and improvement in hotel chains' integrations with other systems.

CREATE
LOYALTY

MASTERING THE ART OF DIRECT BOOKING