

The direct booking marketing audit

Follow a guest from the first search to the confirmed booking. Check the hotel's proposition, website, campaigns and measurement for the questions and obstacles that can interrupt the journey.

Audit the handover to the booking engine

Direct booking performance depends on the entire journey. A compelling advertisement can still send people into a confusing rate calendar. Audit with a real guest scenario, including dates, occupancy, device and language. Use test details and avoid recording personal guest data.

Promise → Room and rate → Payment → Confirmation

Message to availability

Offer, stay dates and room match

Check whether dates and language survive the handover

Rate comparison

Comparable room, inclusions, tax and cancellation terms

Explain the direct benefit without unsupported price claims

Checkout

Required fields, payment errors and confirmation

Log failure stage and device, not sensitive payment information

Application checklist

- Prioritise errors that prevent booking before cosmetic changes.
- Repeat the test on mobile and in both principal languages.
- Give every issue an owner, severity, fix date and retest result.

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Working checklist

- 1** Set the commercial objective. Choose a period, guest segment and room or stay type. Record direct booking share, cancellation adjusted revenue and acquisition costs as a baseline. Agree the metric definitions with reservations and revenue management.

- 2** Clarify why guests should choose you. Check that the website explains the experience, location, room differences and suitability for the target guest. Replace broad luxury claims with specific, verifiable reasons to stay.

- 3** Review the direct booking proposition. Present genuine benefits and clear terms. Compare like for like dates, occupancy, room types, cancellation policies and total prices. Do not promise a best rate or benefit unless the business can honour it.

- 4** Test the mobile booking journey. Start on a campaign landing page and complete a test reservation. Check room selection, availability, languages, total charges, payment and confirmation. Record every interruption and assign an owner to resolve it.

- 5** Answer the questions that delay a decision. Use reservations enquiries to improve information about access, breakfast, room layout, accessibility and policies. Place answers at the relevant decision point and keep them consistent with the booking engine.

- 6** Check discovery and booking links. Review search visibility, hotel information and the route to your official website. With your booking provider, check Google free booking links, live rates, landing pages and source tracking where supported.

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Notes, owners and next actions.

- 7** Align campaigns with availability. Match audiences, messages and landing pages to bookable stays and priority periods. Separate branded demand from new customer prospecting in reporting, and review whether campaigns generate additional business.
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- 8** Validate measurement end to end. Check that the website and booking engine record the same journey without duplicate bookings. Reconcile campaign reports with confirmed reservations, refunds and cancellations, accounting for attribution limits and the organisation's consent requirements.
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- 9** Plan guest communication. Review pre arrival information and relevant return stay invitations for guests who may receive marketing. Agree responsibility, timing and preferences with the hotel team. Make every message useful to the guest.
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- 10** Prioritise three improvements. For each, record the problem, owner, effort, test period and success metric. Compare results with a relevant baseline while accounting for seasonality, price and availability. Judge net commercial value alongside booking volume.
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Further reading:

[Google / Hotel free booking links](#)

[Google / Tracking free booking links](#)