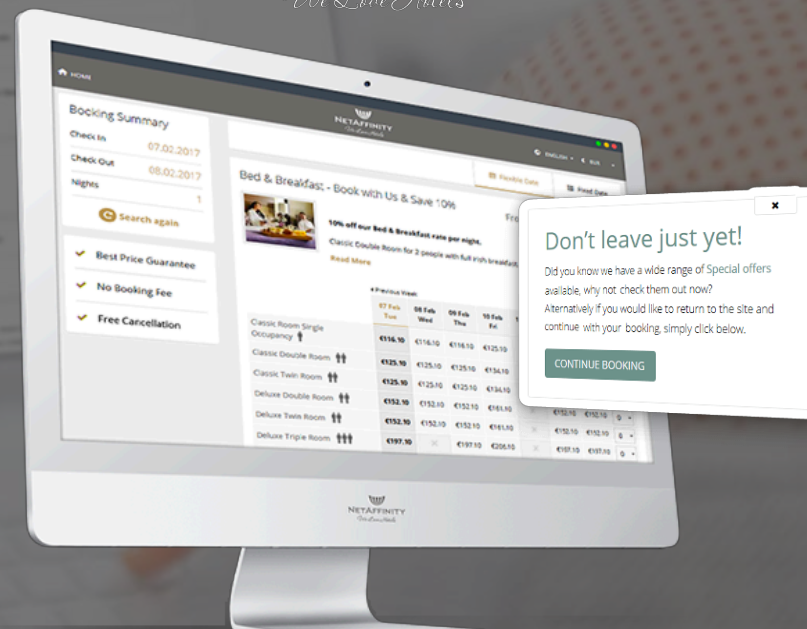


THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BOOKING ENGINES

2019 Edition

Underwritten, in part by:



Buyers guide created in collaboration with Net Affinity

**CONCEPTUALIZATION, DESIGN,
DATA AND COPY EDITING:**

Hotel Tech Report

HotelTechReport 

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WHAT IS A BOOKING ENGINE?



A hotel booking engine is essentially the shopping cart equivalent for a hotel website and its sole purpose is to drive and convert direct bookings. A good booking engine should be optimised for conversion, and should provide a simple booking process for your guests. An effective booking engine should also map data directly into your property management system and pull rates from your revenue management software.

**WHAT ARE THE
BENEFITS OF A TOP
RATED BOOKING ENGINE?**

1

INCREASE DIRECT REVENUE

Using a Booking Engine can result in an uplift in direct bookings through your own website. This brings many benefits, the most significant being a decrease in the cost per acquisition per booking.

2

SAVE TIME AND OPTIMIZE DISTRIBUTION

Using an integrated booking engine (which integrates with PMS & Channel Manager) can reduce the time management required to update multiple platforms, eliminates the need to manually input bookings into your PMS system and allows you to control your inventory distribution.

3

IMPROVED INSIGHTS

Access to Booking Data, allowing you to better understand your guests, what and how they like to book along with data to better improve your product offering in line with the customer's needs.

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Cut through the noise and find out what real hoteliers are saying by reading in-depth reviews.



VERIFIED USER REVIEWS

[Read reviews →](#)


Rooms Division Manager from Ireland

“Net Affinity understands the importance of Revenue Mgmt and provides an extremely user-friendly system to implement immediate changes to foresee and react to market demand. Their reporting side instantly combines information gathered and foresees the future, helping with...”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



Revenue Manager from Sweden

The product/booking engine helped us to be an active member of the business community, we can easily update extra sale opportunities as add ons or promotions, provide special discounts to our customers. The system is easy to understand and use, all changes are in real time.”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



Front Office Manager from Portugal

“Very easy to use software which main goal is to achieve maximum revenue. It's improving in a way that it is a crucial tool in Hotel management. The company team responsible for it is working hard all the time for improvements so that their associates feel that they are constantly being...”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



Marketing Manager from United Kingdom

“Moving our booking engine to Netaffinity has made a significant difference to our occupancy, sales & profitability. The team at Netaffinity provide revenue management experience that make short-term and long term solutions to our business. They also offer creative campaign ideas to assist other areas of the...”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



TREND WATCH

Read predictions from domain experts and learn about the state of the category.



WHAT'S NEW AND INTERESTING IN THE SPACE?

STRONGER PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

Intelligent and flexible payment solutions which speed up the payment process, resulting in increased conversion rates as a result of fewer steps to purchase.

Net Affinity Prediction: One touch payments will be pervasive such as Apple and Android Pay, PayPal and Amazon checkout for hotels.

SHIFT TO MOBILE

Today 39% of OTA bookings happen on mobile vs. just 10% for hotel suppliers.

Net Affinity Prediction: In the next 5 years mobile direct bookings will close the gap with OTAs.

CLOUD BASED SOFTWARE & ON-THE-GO MANAGEMENT

Cloud based software providing more flexibility and 'on the go' management of hotel inventory. Allowing for increased intelligence in revenue and yield management

Net Affinity Prediction: Hoteliers will manage operations, marketing and distribution all on-the-go from their mobile devices

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & PERSONALISATION

A.I. allows booking engines to pull data from internet browsers and historical data in order to deliver personalized rates and offers that convert guests.

Net Affinity Prediction: Offers will be curated from extensive data sets which will result in more engaged users and stronger conversion rates over time.

BUYING ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Critical
Features



Top rated providers
& comparisons



Key
integrations



Questions to
ask vendors

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES TO CONSIDER?

✓ **Mobile & Social Media Compatibility**

It is absolutely essential that your booking engine works seamlessly on mobile and is compatible with the social media websites that your hotel is listed on.

✓ **Speed+user experience=conversion**

Load times have a direct correlation with speed. Decreasing load time and better UX mean increased conversions and more revenue.

✓ **Channel Manager Integration**

To ensure that your room inventory across all of your online channels is automatically updated, it's vital that your booking engine integrates with your channel manager.

✓ **Data Collection & Reporting**

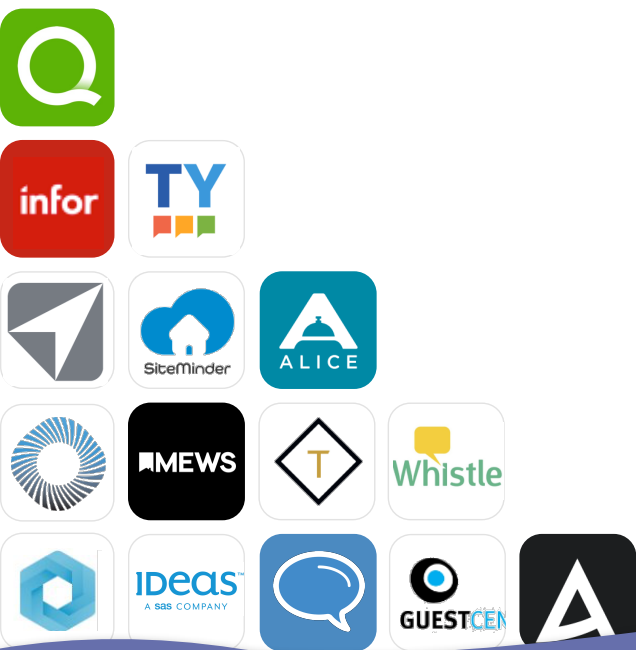
Your booking engine should provide you with transparent, in-depth insights that will allow you to find demand and booking patterns.

✓ **Transactional Emails**

Your booking engine should allow you to create and build personal relationships with your guests through e-mail communications.

✓ **Language and currency options**

Does the booking engine display the languages and currency that your guests are familiar with? Does it provide online voucher redemption or does it offer wedding and corporate booking modules? These are some questions to determine if the booking engine is flexible to your hotel's needs.



WHO'S WHO...

See which players are trending in the market and launch Hotel Tech Report compare to compare them side-by-side.

★ Featured provider



Our booking engine is built for the independent hotel. We keep the user front and centre, integrating cutting-edge conversion optimisation technology into the build of our booking engine to drive direct bookings through your website. When users reach your site, our goal is to



Travel Tripper has created the industry's most innovative booking engine—intuitive, elegant, and packed with features designed to convert lookers into bookers. Hotels that switch to RezTrip routinely see significant increases in their direct bookings,



Our booking system provides guests instant gratification. The original rates and availability calendar allows users to identify the most attractive offers at a glance and ground-breaking customer journey management with website funnels allows guests to book the best



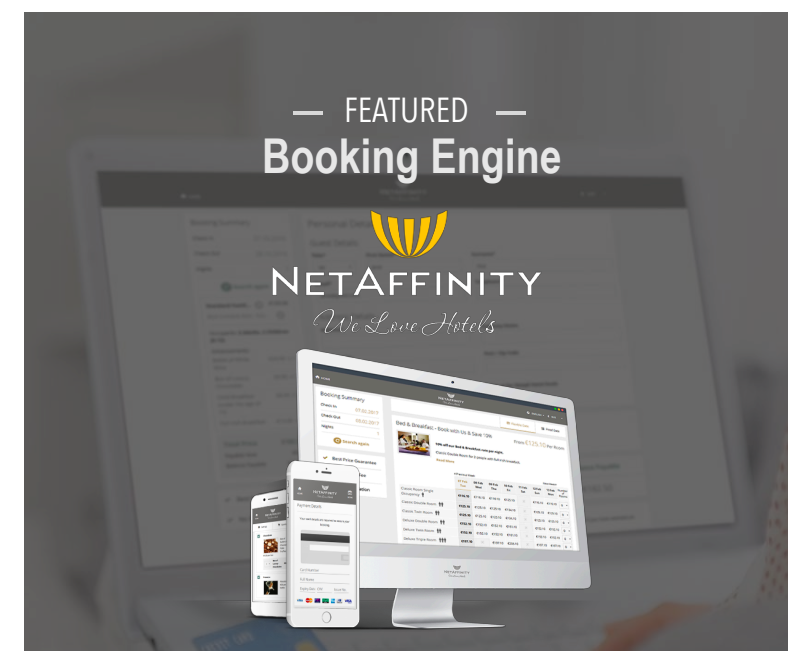
Gain a competitive edge with TravelClick's iHotelier Suite. This integration of all our solutions provides you with a holistic and data-centric approach to attract the right guests at the right price, convert shoppers into bookers and build and maintain guest



Mybookings is Cloudbeds' commission-free booking engine for your website and Facebook page. Our booking engine works for hotels, hostels, b&bs, vacation rentals, and more. We make your website the best place for guests to book a room while saving you money



The industry's first booking engine that leverages a smart profile management system to drive dynamic personalization. Take advantage of this self-customization tool to quickly build or edit your booking engine, on your schedule and at no additional cost



Want to compare products side-by-side with screenshots, reviews, features and more?

[Launch comparison tool](#)

“



Net Affinity review verified by Hotel Tech Report

“The booking engine is very user friendly and Net Affinity account manager support is available when needed. They give us helpful tips about increasing revenue and have a great blog with thought leadership for us.”

Reservation Manager

Clonmel, Ireland

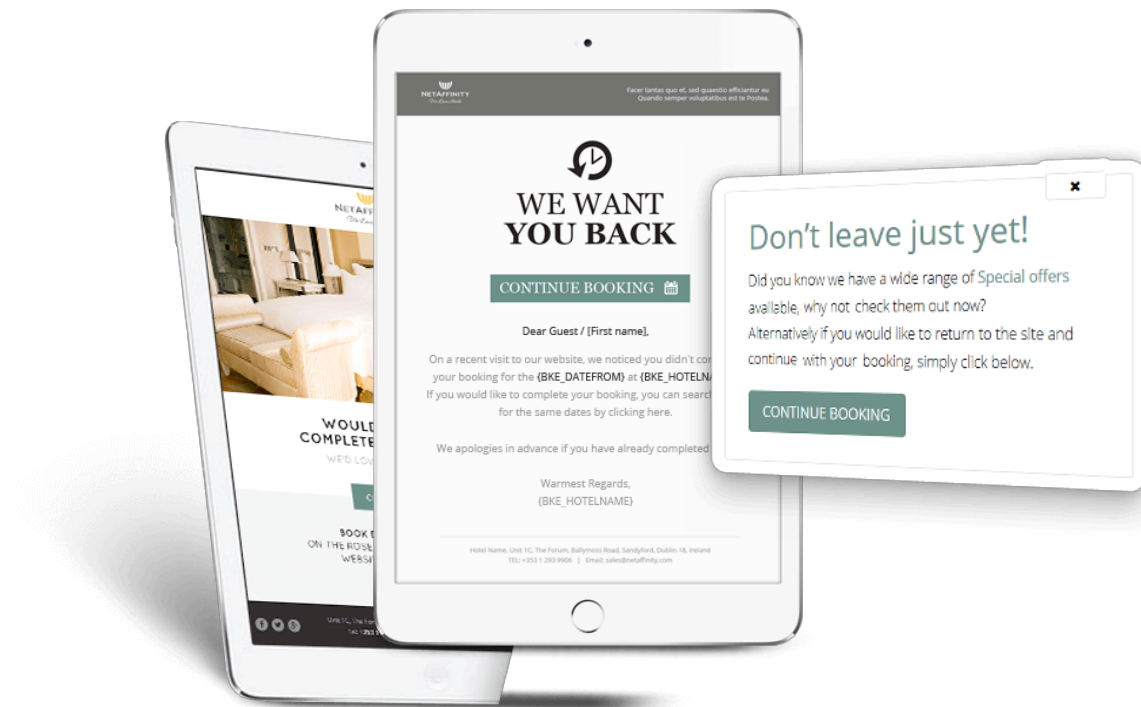
Boutique Hotel

READY TO CONNECT WITH A TOP RATED PROVIDER?

Learn more about Net Affinity >



Net Affinity's flexible, responsive booking engine works and offers integrations with all major channel managers and PMS systems. Our team of eCommerce managers offer advice based on the in depth, daily automated reporting that our booking engine provides. Net Affinity also offer Digital Marketing and Web Design services, providing hotels with the full range of services to drive quality traffic and strong volumes of direct bookings.



THE
SAVOY

LUXURY IN LIMERICK

Holiday Inn

SALTHILL HOTEL
★★★★

LA MON
HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB
★ ★ ★ ★

GALGORDRI
RESORT & SPA

STAY CONNECTED



MOST INTEGRATED
VENDOR



19 verified integrations

[Browse integrations](#)



- **Channel Manager** — Channel manager integrations provide a one stop revenue management platform. Having the ability to feed both rates and availability into and out of your website booking engine results in more intelligent revenue management, allows for real time stock and rate management providing the hotel with the ability to maximize ARR. Real time rules and alerts via your CM allow the hotel to drive high volume bookings through the booking engine (often the most cost effective channel)
- **Payment System** — Automatic payments takes the hassle out for your and your guests! By integrating with a payment provider like Stripe / Global Payments for example you can create rules for payments to be taken and at what time e.g. 24 hours before arrival take first night payment etc. This takes the manual function of storing and charging credit cards away from your hotel team and also helps you comply with PCI and Data Protection guidelines.
- **PMS** — Allows for bookings to feed directly from your website into your PMS. This allows for automatic room stock adjustment, significantly reduces workload and reduces errors.

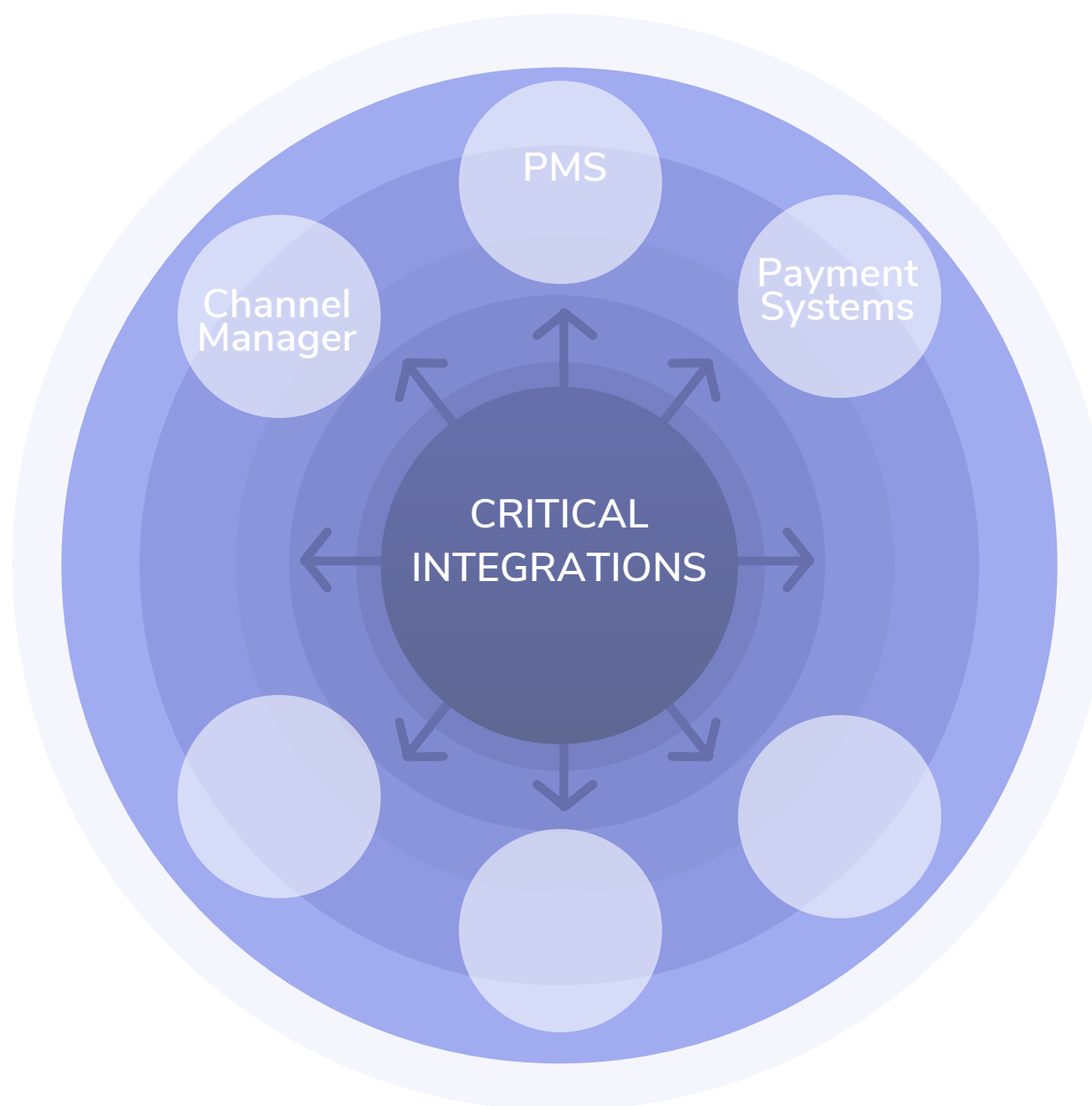
Without the right integrations even the best product can add complexity and cost. Make sure any vendor you consider has the integrations you need to set your team up for success.

[View integrations >](#)



Need an integration built for
your hotel?

[Connect with Hapi](#)



WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD A SMART BUYER ASK VENDORS



WHAT IS THE AVERAGE CONVERSION RATE FOR BOOKING ENGINES IN OUR MARKET SEGMENT?

Compare the average to your current provider and calculate the change in booking volume holding all else equal. This can help in projecting ROI.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE PAGE LOAD SPEED OF YOUR BOOKING ENGINE?

Load speed is one of the most critical factors when considering a booking engine as it has an extremely high correlation to conversion rates.

WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT YOUR BOOKING ENGINE IS MOBILE OPTIMIZED?

Mobile is increasingly important each year and it's where guest in many markets prefer to book. If your mobile experience is poor, expect them to book on an OTA. Also expect your PPC (e.g. Google AdWords) campaigns to be less effective.

WHAT KINDS OF OPTIMIZATION FEATURES DOES YOUR BOOKING ENGINE HAVE?

Optimization features allow for personalized offers and tactics similar to what you see on OTAs. Things like dynamic pricing, geotargeting, integrated rate match and rooms remaining widgets materially increase conversion.

HOW IS YOUR CUSTOMER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION BUILT?

It's important to know that if things go wrong that your provider will be there for you. Ask them about situations where the system broke for customers and how they were handled.

DOES YOUR BOOKING ENGINE INTEGRATE SEAMLESSLY WITH MY EXISTING TECH STACK?

If the booking engine you want to purchase doesn't have seamless connectivity with your PMS, CRS and Channel Manager it is likely to have material limitations. That's not a deal breaker but make sure you know exactly what you're getting into.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Pricing &
budgeting



Implementation
timeline



Success
metrics



Success stories and
additional resources

PRICING GUIDANCE

What are the typical pricing models and ranges that I should budget for?

TYPE	Price range
Installation	Varies by provider
Installation is usually included in the contract; however, there may be setup fees for certain payment providers.	
Monthly Fees	\$100-\$500/property/ month
Commission per booking / Flat rate per month	

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

What does the typical implementation timeline and process look like to go live?

Implementation timelines depend on the provider you decide to work with. A Cloud based Booking Engine can be set up very quickly, so the implementation time is often determined by how much resources the hotel can allocate to the project. Other tasks that often need to be completed during the set up phase:

1. **Domain setup** - Your IT company will need to assist with this
2. **Search Box needs to be added to your website** - Depending on who hosts your website, either your new provider or hosting company can do this for you.
3. **Training** - Often this is completed via online mediums and resources centres
4. **Connectivity** of existing channel manager / payment systems
5. **Population of hotel profile** and inventory

Approximate implementation timeline: 5-7 days

SUCCESS METRICS





HOW DO I MEASURE SUCCESS?

**1**

DIRECT BOOKING - OTA RATIO

Before signing on with a new IBE provider make sure you have data on your ratio of direct bookings - OTA bookings. Track success by trying to hold as many other variables constant and watching the change.

**2**

BOOKING ENGINE CONVERSION RATE

Ultimately the best measure of success is knowing how many people came to the booking engine and of those, how many ended up booking rooms. When switching providers, this is a true test of success.

**3**

TIME TO COMPLETION

Go into your local coffee shop and offer to buy people coffee for completing a quick task. Request that they go on your hotel website and tell them to book a specific room type on a specific date. Time them from start to stop then ask them how easy it was to book. Repeat this for 20-30 people for maximum results and take diligent notes.

SUCCESS STORIES AND FURTHER READING

CASE STUDY: HOW A NEW SITE LED TO A QUICK RETURN

Net Affinity engaged to develop a new website for this hotel to ensure that the hotel and all of its attributes are effectively portrayed online.

CASE STUDY: THE STRATEGY THAT INCREASED REVENUE BY 61%

Execute an optimised marketing strategy to promote the book direct message and to raise the profile of this stunning hotel which recently achieved a four star status.

CASE STUDY: HOW THE LAKE HOUSE HOTEL INCREASED REVENUE AND DIRECT BOOKINGS

In close consultation with the hotel team we developed a fully responsive website and a new booking engine. These two together allowed potential guests to experience a better booking process and enhance the overall user experience on the website.

CASE STUDY: NET AFFINITY BOOSTS SALES PERFORMANCE FOR MANOR HOUSE THROUGH SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS

In close consultation with the hotel team, we developed two, separate, strong campaigns that reflected the hotel's environment and would appeal to their target audience during cyber weekend and the january sales.

ARTICLE: THE REVENUE MANAGER'S GUIDE TO BUILDING DIRECT BOOKINGS

A set of articles written specifically for Revenue Managers, on the topics of combating high cancellation rates and rate disparity, using data to boost direct bookings, conquering mobile booking abandonment and key trends for the modern revenue manager.

ARTICLE: REVENUE MANAGEMENT AT THE HEART OF BUILDING DIRECT BOOKINGS

A guide to help you both save money and make money. It will assist you in setting the right KPIs, being committed to the strategy and bringing departments together around a common goal.

ARTICLE: HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST ONLINE BOOKING ENGINE

This ebook covers why you need an online booking engine, its key features, the costs involved and a buyers guide checklist.

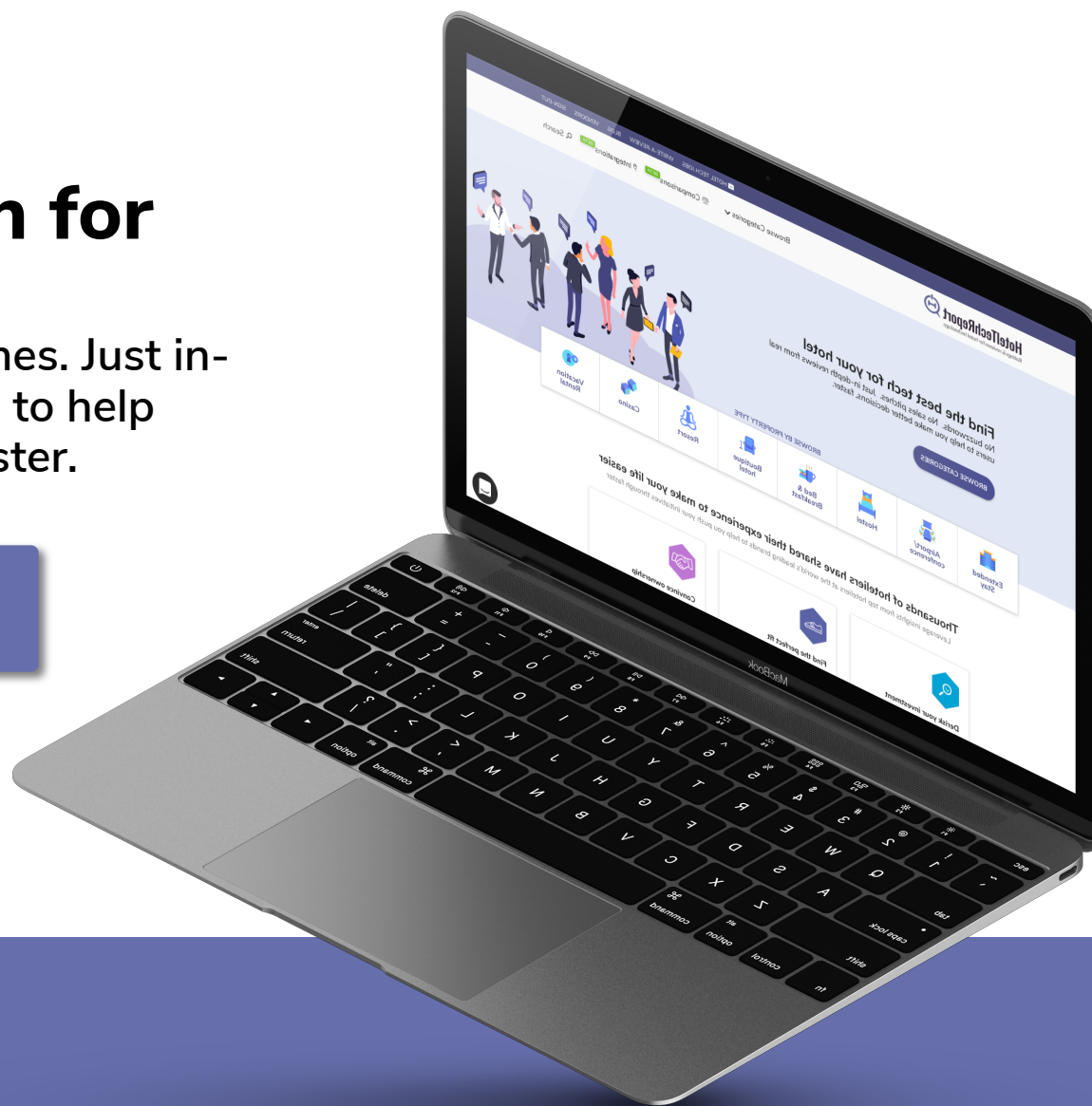
ARTICLE: SPOTLIGHT ON... ONLINE GUEST EXPERIENCE

This report gives a breakdown of the foundations of an effective website and tips on content, structure and testing. It also provides a 10-step guide to building a hotel website from scratch and a league table based on observations from websites of some of the world's leading hotel groups.

Find the best tech for your hotel

No buzzwords. No sales pitches. Just in-depth reviews from real users to help you make better decisions, faster.

Go to [HotelTechReport.com](https://www.hoteltechreport.com)



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