



A GUIDE TO DIGITAL MARKETING

DETERMINE YOUR NEEDS THROUGH THE **TOURISM DIGITAL ADOPTION PROGRAM**

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ONLINE BOOKING

Online booking systems carry out several functions including securely storing customer data, managing your staff, enabling potential customers to book and pay through your website, and keeping your business running long after you've left the office for the day.

There are many reasons why you should invest in an online booking system:

24/7 Online Booking

Since potential customers can be located anywhere and book at any time, a booking platform that accepts bookings 24 hours a day, seven days a week makes a lot of sense. All you must do is add your rooms, tours, or activities, set pricing, and decide whether you want to accept bookings on your own website or add other distribution channels like Online Travel Agencies (OTAs).

Easier booking management

With an online system in place, you will be able to manage your bookings more efficiently. Your guests will not have to wait for a response to emails and calls.

Reduce human error

People make errors. A misheard name on a poor line, a booking scribbled on a notebook but never entered into the system: mistakes are unavoidable. Computers, on the other hand, do not make mistakes. Sure, if a consumer makes an error, technology will unquestioningly pass it on, but the tool will not cause the problem. One of the most significant advantages of online reservations is significantly reduced errors.

Secure customer information

Given the fact that you are a tourism business and have customers from all over the world, you are responsible to keep their data safe and secure. Online systems are often “Consumer Privacy Protection Act” (CPPA - Canada) and “General Data Protection Regulation” (GDPR – Europe) compliant. There’s no need to store names and numbers in a spreadsheet or a notebook.

Maximise reservations and reduce no-shows

There are two main reasons why people who book online are more likely to show:

1. By deliberately choosing a date and time, they think longer and harder about the booking.
2. Automated emails and texts are sent to the customer to remind them of their upcoming booking.

Not only are no-shows decreased, but the ability for consumers to see exactly when you have a free opening means that you may maximize your reservations by eliminating the back and forth that frequently occurs when trying to find a free position over the phone.

Increase payment speed and security

The finest online booking platforms feature instant and secure payment capabilities, the ability to accept an advance deposit or full prepayment, and the ability to transfer funds into your account quickly. Payment service providers also have clear and robust rules in place for detecting fraud and resolving disputes.

Grow your marketing and online presence

Online bookings are an excellent way to expand your customer base. People are more than willing to provide their information when making a reservation, and you can use their demographic information, purchase history, and contact information to develop effective marketing strategies.

Increase profits

The great thing about online booking is that it can also be used to upsell products or services to customers by advertising add-ons and extras. Customers are also more likely to upgrade their bookings and purchase add-ons if they can do so online because they will have more time to consider their options.

Enjoy insights from data analysis

What demographic is booking a specific service? When do you get the most bookings: during the week, month, or year? Where are they booking from? All of these questions can be answered by analyzing your booking data and used to inform your decisions on marketing strategies, services, pricing, and more.

Online Storefront

E-commerce in the Tourism Industry is not limited to Online Booking, you can cement your brand through selling retail products with your logo, website etc. Not only does this get your business recognized, but also creates an additional revenue stream.

An E-commerce storefront is a cost-effective way to market your products as there is no physical location to maintain, you can manage your own inventory in line with orders and you can reach an international market 24/7!

There are 2 main avenues for launching your products online, Marketplaces and E-commerce platforms. The main difference is that a Marketplace is an online shopping platform that features products from multiple vendors. An E-commerce site is uniquely managed and supplied by you.

E-Commerce & Marketplaces

Examples of E-commerce platforms are Shopify, WooCommerce, Wix, Weebly and Squarespace. Depending on the platform your website is built on you can either integrate Shopify and WooCommerce with plugins or you can use the standalone Wix, Weebly or Squarespace ecommerce web builders.

Advantages:

- Ability to collect customer data.
- Design the site in line with your branding.
- Fewer restrictions and rules.
- No commission.

Disadvantages:

- You must generate the web traffic yourself.
- More time and money to build your own storefront.
- More financial risk if it doesn't work.

Examples of Marketplaces include Amazon, Etsy, eBay and even Facebook Marketplace.

Advantages:

- More traffic, leading to more potential customers
- Less financial risk, as setting up your profile is free
- Quick to set up.

Disadvantages:

- Competing against many other suppliers.
- Lack of brand control.
- Potential high commission costs