

Increasing your sales via the Internet

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Increasing your hotel sales via the internet is an easy task with a simple plan following some key activities which we shall detail for you in this Hotelscribe. There are two key ways to increase your bookings from internet users:

- Directly to your website.
- Via OTA's (Online Travel Agents).

Bookings directly to your website are more profitable for you, as there is no commission payable, however, the OTA's can easily and quickly produce some instant revenue for your property and they should be a considered key route for your hotels to increase sales from the Internet. Working with the OTA's consider the following:

- Rate Parity: give them the same rate as you do on your own website.
- Flex Commission : you can increase commission to some of the OTA's to get more prominent listing on their site, during your hotel need times, create a plan for this and action a month or so in advance.
- Meet your local 'market manager' from the OTA's. They can give you information about their production to your area so you can work out your current market share and together you can create a goal and plans as to how to increase this.
- The OTA's conduct their own sales and marketing promotions - make sure that you receive notification of what these are so you can decide whether you wish to be included. This is free promotion for your hotel to a worldwide audience.

Hotels often want to get more business directly from their own website to reduce their sales costs, and this can be done at the same time when working with the OTA's. Assuming that you have plans in place to increase your web customer look-to-book ratios, then consider the following to get more business directly from your hotel website.

- Make sure your booking engine is customer friendly. Many booking engines offers great 'back-end' abilities, but the consumer journey can be clumsy and clunky.
- Keep your availability open - this should be the last channel that you close-out.
- Remember Rate Parity - give your direct consumers the same competitive rates and packages that you are giving the OTA's.
- Give the guest a reason to book with you directly - on check-out, give them a sales proposition as to why they should book with you directly next time

- Offer last room guarantee on your website - this will increase customers loyalty to your site and not others.
- Personalise your online guests booking journey and in-house experience... right to the check-out and after departure follow-up. All of this will ensure they book with you directly in the future.

Good Luck :)