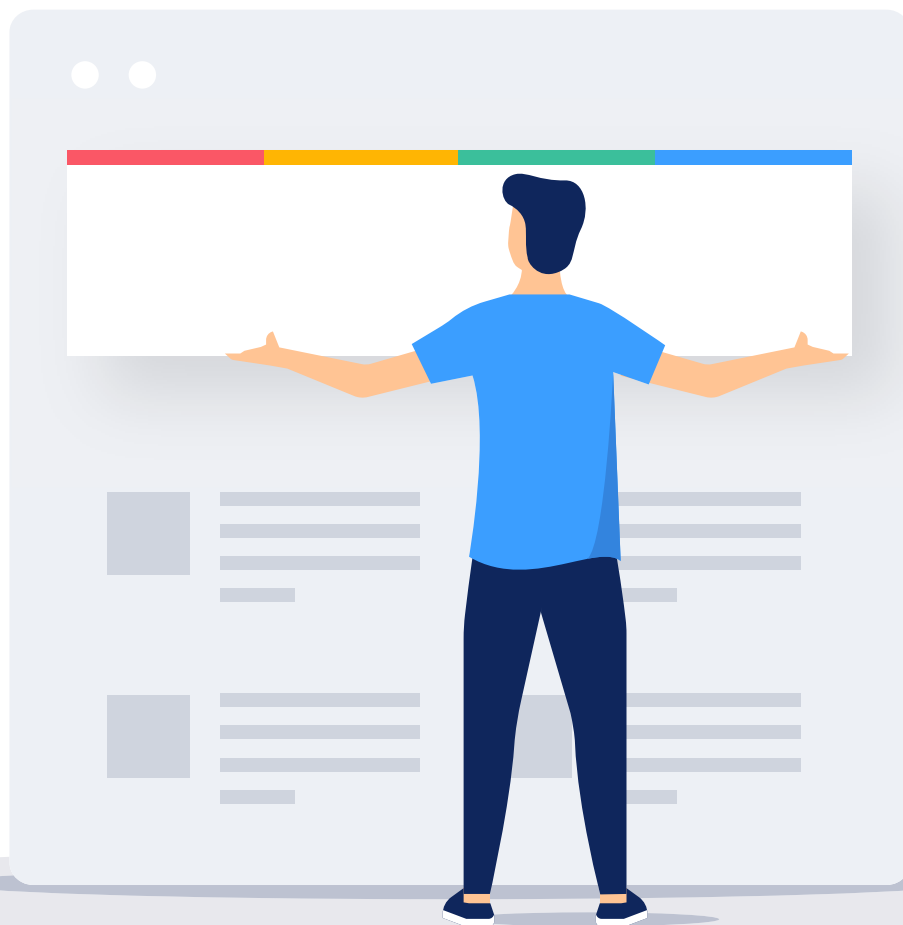




YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR CHANNEL

How to Create & Optimize a Direct Booking Website
for Your Vacation Rental Business



Curated with care by the pros at Guesty

www.guesty.com

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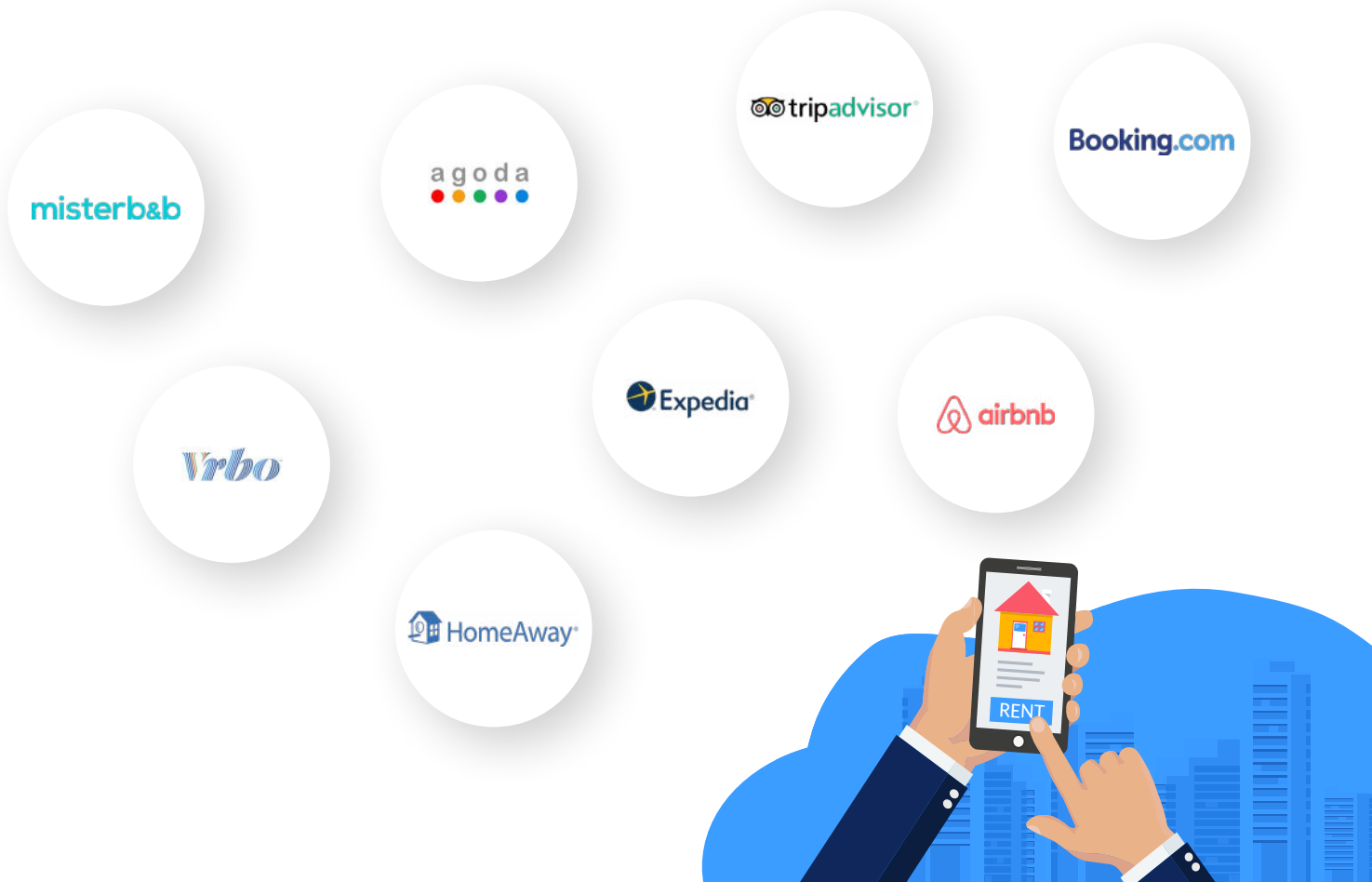
The simplest way to create a professional booking site of your very own.



OTA, All The Way

There's no denying it. Online travel agencies (OTAs) like **Airbnb**, **Booking.com**, **TripAdvisor Rentals** and more offer property managers a super convenient means of advertising and distributing their rentals, securing reservations and processing payments.

So what better place to promote your listings than a platform where millions of potential guests are searching for exactly what you're offering?



Not to mention, it's easy. The infrastructure is all there, and all you need to do is fill in the relevant data, [upload photos](#), ensure your [listing description is compelling](#) and hit publish. Plus, with the right property management software, you can update and manage all your channels [from one centralized location](#) and skip the hassle of logging into multiple platforms to carry out your regular listing maintenance.

Lastly, when guests reserve your rentals through a reputable platform, like many of the major OTAs, you know they've provided basic information that allows the channel to verify their identities and help prevent fraudulent activity. Airbnb takes host protection a step further and allows you to file a claim and [receive compensation](#) in the event that your rentals sustain damages at the hands of guests. You can also take a quick peek at reviews of guests written by other hosts before accepting a booking request.

In addition to utilizing OTAs to grow your business, we suggest creating your own branded booking website. Here are four compelling reasons why.

The Perks

01.

Profit

One of the least satisfying aspects of property management is slicing up your revenue for all those involved - from external vendors to, you guessed it, OTAs.

[VRM Insider reports](#) that these OTAs take the following commission per booking on average:



Aside from the commission they charge, most OTAs (Booking.com and Expedia excluded) also charge guests a service fee, which means you'll likely need to lower your overall price to stay competitive.

With a booking website of your very own, you can skip those extra fees and pocket more of the profit.



02.

Creativity

When listing on OTAs, you'll want to ensure your photos and descriptions are unique and appealing. That said, each platform has its own set of guidelines when it comes to posting about your listings.

But with your own website, the sky's the limit and you can keep coming up with new and innovative ways to brand and promote your rentals.

One such method might be offering coupon codes for a variety of circumstances, such as a local event, a repeat booking or a lengthy reservation.



You can also offer promotions for guests who've referred their friends to your rentals or posted about their positive experiences on social media.

In short, when you own the site, you make the rules.

03.

Opportunity

When you list your properties on any OTA, they're not just going to promote your listings, they're also going to promote alternative accommodations for travelers to choose from. And in the event that your property is booked or not entirely relevant to their traveling needs, travelers are most likely to take their business elsewhere.

However, when bookers are on your site, each and every one of the properties they'll be perusing are yours, giving a huge boost to the odds of them booking a property you manage.

And because you're in charge, you can also choose to promote specific listings by highlighting them on your home page.

Recently added a new rental to your portfolio? Promote it in a prominent way on your site so it gets noticed (perhaps by featuring it in a pop-up that appears when users enter the site, or by making it the temporary background image on your homepage above the fold).

The road to profit is smooth when you're your only competition.

05.

Growth

It's true that much of your effort should be focused on getting more guests, but growth-minded property managers will also want to attract more homeowners to beef up their portfolios and the number of listings they oversee.

While everything about your website, from the tone to the functionality, will be directed towards potential bookers, it is also a great medium to showcase your professionalism and competence as a reliable property manager to homeowners. An impressive site stamped with your brand can imply how great of a partner you will be and make homeowners more likely to entrust you with their properties. And as you know, more properties means more revenue.

04.

Loyalty

There's a LOT of competition in the OTA and short-term rental universe. So even when you secure bookings, travelers might not remember you for next time unless you make a remarkable impression during their stay.

A website of your own gives you a platform on which to promote your brand and make sure travelers remember your name, your logo, your vibe, your everything. Give your company character and stay true to it in both the design of your site and the experience you provide.

That way, instead of your previous guests saying, "Remember that great Airbnb we stayed at?" they'll be reminiscing about the vacation home they reserved through <insert your company name here> and will be sure to share their find with friends and look you up again when planning their next getaway.



The Strategy

Now that you know **why** you should have your own direct booking website, it's time to learn more about **how** to go about it. Creating a website isn't enough - you've got to make sure it's optimized to bring in bookings.

Here's how to build and maintain the perfect booking website for your rentals.

01.

Be Consistent

One of the most critical aspects of branding is presenting a unified voice on everything related to your company. That's why you'll want to be sure the names of your listings on your site are presented the same way across all booking channels. If you call it a Rustic Villa on Airbnb, then do so on your company site.

Consistency in listing names is also beneficial when travelers perusing OTAs decide to Google search your listings to find additional information or perhaps to see if the price offered on your direct site differs from those on booking channels.



02.

Reach Travelers

Speaking of search results, there are steps you can take to ensure your website appears in more of them. This is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO), a marketing tactic that you should know the basics of.

To ensure your site is SEO-ready, with the goal of attracting both travelers and homeowners, incorporate relevant keywords into your content, especially your meta-titles, which are what show up in Google search results. Use phrases you think your target audience will likely be typing into their search bars, like "book vacation home online" or "full service vacation rental management."

Need some more inspiration? Here's a list of popular search words travelers use to find accommodations:

General keywords to target travelers:



Specific terms to use in conjunction with those keywords:



Locations

Example:

Miami vacation home rentals



Attractions

Example:

Book **Grand Canyon** vacation homes



Seasons

Example:

Book now pay later **summer** vacation homes



Features

Example:

Private pool travel house rental

General keywords to target homeowners:

rental property management companies



short term rental property management company

airbnb rental management company

airbnb rental company

full service vacation rental management

Specific terms to use in conjunction with those keywords:



Locations

Example:

Paris Airbnb rental company



Property type

Example:

Luxury rental property management companies



Specifics

Example:

Short term rental property management company **fees**

03.

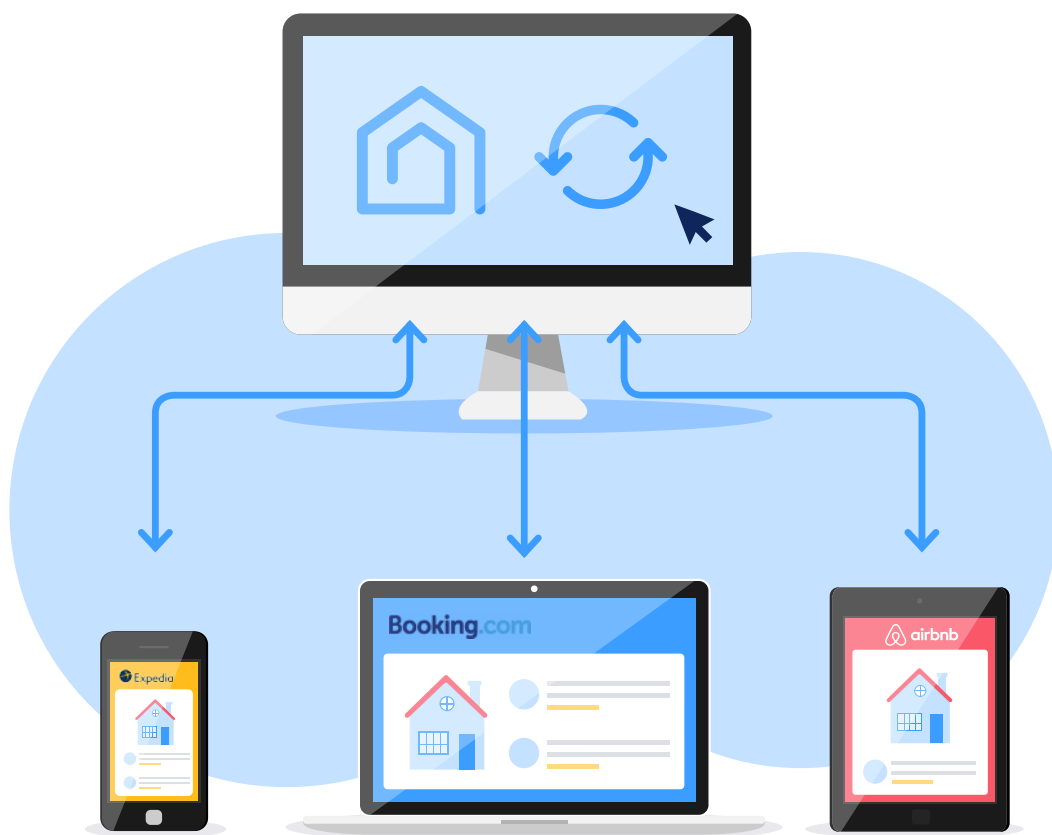
Sync Your Channels

Since you've got reservations coming in from multiple channels, making sure they're all accounted for in one place is critical to avoiding double bookings and other catastrophes.

Using a [channel management](#) software is the surest way of guaranteeing all of your calendars are updated and synced. It also has the benefit of saving you precious time when you want to adjust your prices across all your booking channels at once or make other edits to your listing profiles.

A [centralized calendar](#) that showcases all of your reservations will provide you with a clear view of your bookings, regardless of where they came from, and a [unified inbox](#) will store all your guest communication, whether the messages were sent via SMS, email or a booking channel.

With tools that bring all your activity to one dashboard, taking on new channels won't mean taking on more work, so you're free to list on as many OTAs as you'd like and, of course, to build a site of your own as well.



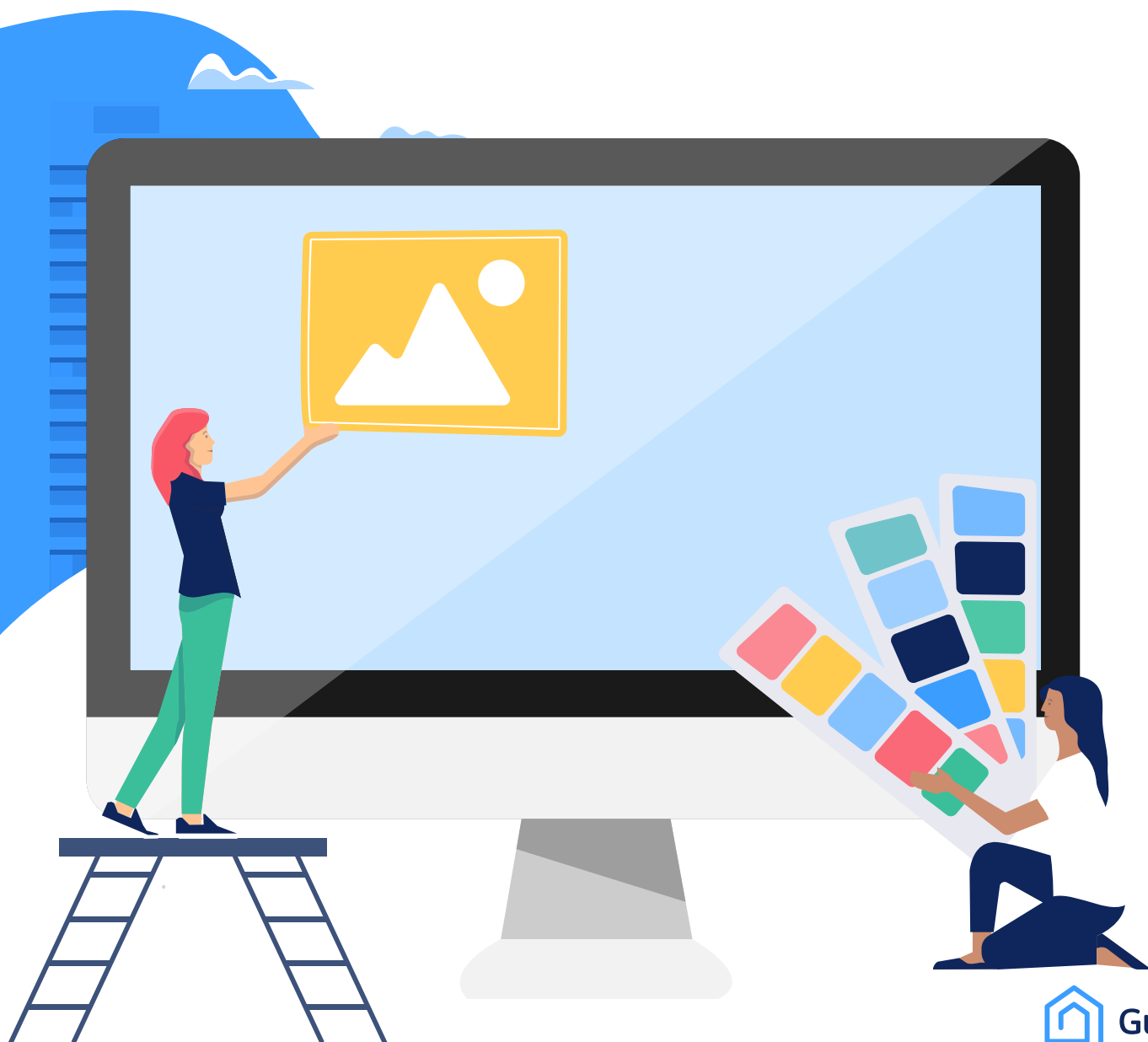
04.

Package it Nicely

You might have been told to never judge a book by its cover, but your guests are definitely going to and nothing will send them away quicker than an unattractive web design.

To put it simply, presentation has a lot of pull.

A sleek, carefully crafted website is more than just pleasing to the eye; it speaks volumes about your professionalism and the way you approach all aspects of your business. Think about it: when you give someone a gift, do you toss it in a plastic bag or spend time wrapping it and tying it up in a bow? Presentation matters, and therefore we suggest you keep it in mind and invest in the aesthetics of your site.



05.

Use the Space

Sure, you can keep it simple. A list of the rentals you have to offer and a means of booking them could theoretically be enough. **Or you could up your game.** Use your site to not only enable travelers to book, but also to provide all the information they need when finalizing their travel plans. What's the public transportation like in your area? Have any favorite cafes or attractions to recommend? Feel like offering some historical trivia about the city? Travelers will appreciate any tips you provide ahead of their trip and all your local knowledge may encourage them to make that booking!

Take this one step further by adding a dedicated blog to your site to earn followers and posting your content on social media to increase exposure.



06.

Promote it...Everywhere

Gone are the days of crossing your fingers and hoping people stumble onto your website. We've already covered SEO, but in the age of [social media](#), it would be a shame not to take advantage of the multitude of platforms available for business promotion.

You can post links to your blog and customer testimonials as well as images and even video tours of your rentals!

Sharing content on channels like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram can significantly increase traffic to your website and ultimately result in bookings. In fact, [90% of companies](#) have seen increased business exposure on account of social media marketing, while 75% say their social media marketing efforts have resulted in increased traffic to their websites.

Other promotional tactics include email marketing, which might take shape as sending deals to previous guests or updating them on your new properties.



07.

Track Performance

In order to do more of what's working and less of what's not, you need to track your website's performance, including where your traffic is coming from, how many views you're getting and what segments of your site are drawing the most attention.

Tools like [Google Analytics](#) can help you achieve maximum success with your site by determining which of your online marketing efforts are bringing in the most traffic, so you know where to put your focus, as well as which links people are clicking the most, where people are spending the most time, where they're spending the least and a whole lot [more](#).

This knowledge will be instrumental in helping you build a site that gets and holds viewers' interest long enough for them to make a booking. That is the goal after all.



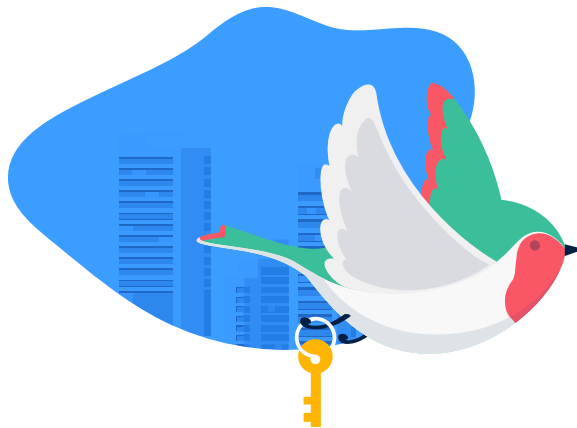
About Guesty

Guesty provides property managers and management companies with an end-to-end solution to simplify the complex operational needs of short term rentals.

With Guesty, users can manage listings from multiple online travel agencies like Airbnb, Booking.com, Agoda, TripAdvisor and more, as well as utilize the company's guest-centric tools such as: Unified Inbox, Automation Tools, 24/7 Guest Communication Services, Payment Processing and more.

Guesty's features also include a [booking site builder](#) which generates branded websites for users within minutes. With just a few clicks of the mouse, you'll have a booking channel of your very own, complete with a comprehensive catalogue of your listings that includes photos, descriptions, prices and available dates. Guesty's booking sites are customizable, so you can stamp them with your unique branding, promote specific listings and create coupons that work for you.

Feel like learning more about the ultimate end-to-end platform for short-term property management? [Request a free demo](#) and we'll show you the ropes.



Clients who use guesty report...



100%

Increase in
Listings Annually



150%

Increase in
Annual Revenue



50+

Hours Saved Weekly
On Average



Guesty

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