Guesty

Up, Up and HomeAway

How to Increase Your Visibility on HomeAway

Curated with care by the pros at Guesty

www.guesty.com

REQUEST A DEMO

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Why the Hype?

Guesty and our users are super excited about our direct integration with HomeAway, which makes it possible for those using Guesty to publish and edit HomeAway listings directly from their Guesty dashboards.

But why all the hype?

It's probably got something to do with the fact that HomeAway is one of the most popular channels for vacation rentals, offering hosts exposure to 75 million travelers per month, across 190 countries.

Beyond that, HomeAway provides critical data insights into supply, demand and occupancy to help hosts build promising business strategies for their short-term rental property management companies.

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Know Your Competition

Okay, you're convinced. Publishing your listings on HomeAway is a great way to reach more travelers and get more bookings. But you're not the only one who knows about this goldmine. With over **2 million properties** on HomeAway, the competition can get pretty fierce.

So what do you do? How do you ensure that travelers browsing this popular platform are seeing your listings?

There are steps you can take to increase your properties' exposure and the first one is understanding how HomeAway determines its results rankings.

The Ranking Rules

Here's what HomeAway considers when choosing where to place your properties in its search results.

01 Relevance

HomeAway's primary goal is to pair the right people with the right homes. To this end, they've developed an algorithm that responds to all searches with the "**Best Match**", which means the platform displays the most relevant results based on the unique needs of the traveler in question.

The platform accounts for several factors when determining which properties are most relevant to a traveler, including:
• Property location
• Available dates
• Amenities
• Guest capacity
• Other filters the traveler applies

02 Hosting Quality

In addition to prioritizing properties that best match travelers' specifications, HomeAway favors dependable hosts and rewards them with higher placement in their search results.

Here are the factors HomeAway considers when qualifying hosts:
• Competitiveness of rates, based on comparisons to similar listings
• Quality of listing photos
• Calendar accuracy
• Completeness of listing profile
• Guest reviews
• Response time

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Hop to the Top

Now that you understand how HomeAway's algorithm works, it's time to use that to your advantage and take measures to get your listings to the top of HomeAway's search results.

Read on for a list of easy ways to boost your ranking on HomeAway:

01 Enable Instant Book

Enabling guests to instantly book your rentals is a win-win. Not only does it increase the odds of you landing those bookings, since many guests prefer to book on the spot and won't look elsewhere while awaiting your response, it also does wonders for your response time. If you're automatically approving bookings right when they're made, your response time is essentially 0 seconds. And as we said before, HomeAway rewards hosts who get back to potential guests in a timely fashion.

02 Price Competitively

When pricing your properties, it's not only important to look at what neighboring rentals are charging, but also what they're offering. You can't charge the same nightly rate as the condo down the block if they've got a pool and you don't. Pay attention to the amenities of the listings in your area and make sure others' offerings are comparable to yours before applying similar pricing.

Another factor to bear in mind when choosing your price is the number of positive reviews you have. Since guests rely heavily on reviews when making their accommodation decisions, hosts lacking in this valuable stamp of approval will have to compensate with lower pricing, at least until they can earn enough 5-star reviews to give potential guests confidence when booking their rentals.

03 Accept More Bookings

HomeAway wants to make the booking process as efficient as possible for its users and avoid wasting their time. That's why the platform gives priority to listings whose hosts have high booking acceptance rates. You can check your booking acceptance rate on your HomeAway dashboard.

Enabling Instant Book can obviously ensure you have a perfect acceptance record (and has the added bonus of increasing your response rate), but even if you choose not to, bear in mind that every reservation you decline will have an effect on your search ranking.

04 Write a Solid Description

As mentioned, HomeAway's algorithm gives preference to complete listings. This means you need to provide a full description of your property. Descriptions should be anywhere from 400 to 1000 characters, long enough to specify anything notable or unique about your property, but not so long that they overwhelm potential guests. The text should be divided into short paragraphs to make it easier to read.

HomeAway suggests including the amenities you offer, details previous guests have mentioned in their reviews, nearby attractions and dining and shopping venues.

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05 Create an Eye-Catching Title

The title of your listing is your opportunity to pull travelers in, so craft it wisely. Instead of wasting these 50 characters on either a title that isn't very telling (Lisa's Place) or fails to convey what makes your rental special (2 bedroom loft in Miami), take this chance to catch travelers' attention with a headline that boasts your top selling points.

Example: Cozy Snow Chalet 2 minutes from the slopes!

06 Upload Quality Photos

Listings that look good make HomeAway look good. That's why you'll be rewarded for uploading high-quality photographs of your properties.

Take your photos in good lighting and preferably with a professional grade camera. HomeAway recommends publishing a minimum of 24 photos, at least 1920 x 1080 in size, in order to rank higher in searches that match your listing.

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07 Get Reviews

Since 92% of travelers rely on reviews when making their bookings, HomeAway wants to provide its users with results that have plenty of guest feedback for them to browse.

So, not only should you be prioritizing your guests' needs and expectations above all to ensure positive experiences, you should also be taking effective measures to encourage your guests to write reviews following their stay.

One way of doing this is reviewing your guests, which may prompt them to review you in return. Another, more straightforward method, is simply asking your guests directly. You can offer them a friendly reminder on their way out that every review helps your business and can even send them a follow-up email a few days after they've left. Setting up an automatic message to be sent to each guest a few days after checkout is a good way to ensure you stay on top of this important task. Just make sure to keep it light and not pushy.

08 Avoid Cancellations

Just as good hosting behavior is rewarded with increased exposure, poor hosting etiquette will prompt HomeAway to move you lower in its search rankings. One of the most frustrating things a property manager can do is cancel a traveler's reservation, so this is something you should avoid at all costs.

Of course, sometimes things happen that make it impossible to see a reservation through. Cancellations should be reserved for these situations and in all other scenarios, every effort should be made to avoid them.

One of the most common reasons for host cancellations is a double booking, which means two different parties have reserved the same property at the same time, usually on separate channels. You can avoid this by implementing a reliable channel management software into your operations to sync up all your calendars across all your channels.

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Business Done Right

For lots of vacation rental hosts, their properties are a source of passive income. This isn't the case for property managers who have created full-blown businesses in the short-term rental ecosystem, and who need to take active measures to maximize their listings' occupancy and, thereby, their company's revenue.

If you're serious about taking your short-term rental business to the next level, don't just list, list wisely. Follow the steps outlined in this guide, earn greater exposure to your target audience and start reaping the rewards of business done right.

Work Less, Earn More

Yes, getting your listings to the top of any channel's search results takes some effort, but running your property management business doesn't have to be a struggle.

Guesty provides property managers and management companies with an end-to-end solution to streamline and automate the complex operational needs of short term rentals. With Guesty, users can manage listings from multiple online travel agencies like Airbnb, Booking.com, HomeAway, 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.

Feel like learning more about the ultimate end-to-end platform for short-term property management?

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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

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