Guesty

Successful PMS migration

A guide to future-proofing your business

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WHAT IS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF A PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)?

Is it operations management, an overview of reservations, or listings distribution? The answer, of course, is "all of the above and more." For short-term rental managers, an effective PMS must be more than a collection of features, instead connecting the multiple different functions of short-term rental businesses and ultimately serving as an engine of growth.

Many businesses first opt for a "starter PMS" with basic functionality and a lower price point. Such systems can serve property managers with only a few listings reasonably well, but most businesses will eventually need something more powerful. Unfortunately, the point at which a more advanced PMS is necessary can be hard to identify. Sometimes there's a clear signal, such as emerging operational challenges or a desire for a specific feature that is lacking. But other times those signals are more subtle, and it isn't until after the switch to a new PMS is made that a property manager realizes the difference in power. The starter PMS isn't the only one that's at risk of being outgrown. Even advanced PMSs with complex collections of features don't always serve their users if the features don't work together in the right way.

Switching one's PMS can be a daunting task that requires a significant amount of time and resources, and which comes with a lot of unknowns. Furthermore, the longer one uses a PMS — adding new properties and integrations to their network — the harder it becomes. Through that lens, a PMS that works reasonably well remains an attractive, viable option. But a business using a PMS that it has outgrown is leaving money on the table, and the more time it operates with a suboptimal platform, the less likely it will be able to catch up.
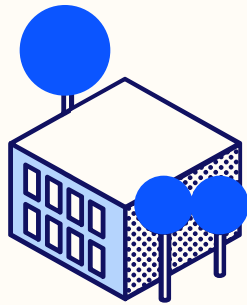
So how can you tell if your current PMS is best suited to your needs, or if it's time to move on to a more powerful platform? In this guide we'll explore the benefits leading PMSs provide and help you understand what to look for in technological solutions as your business grows. We'll also break down what the process of switching from one PMS to another really looks like so you can make an informed decision on how and when to do it.

Switch signals

With a long list of features and capabilities, it may seem from the outside that your PMS is working just fine. So what are some of the signals that it's time to switch?

01.

YOU MANAGE MORE THAN 10 LISTINGS (OR WOULD LIKE TO)

Running a successful short-term rental business is more than listings management and guest experience. While most PMSs have similar basic functionalities, they often don't provide adequate business support for larger operations. If you manage more than 10 listings, manage listings for multiple owners, or have plans to expand, you need a PMS with advanced reporting, analytics, and accounting capabilities.
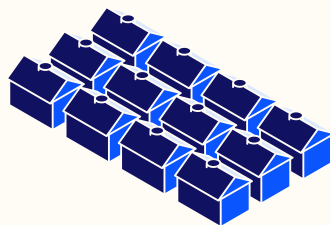
02.

YOUR LISTINGS COULD BENEFIT FROM A WIDER AUDIENCE

Most PMSs provide integrations to the top three online travel agencies (OTAs), namely Airbnb, Booking.com, and VRBO. But there are hundreds of other booking channels including OTAs for luxury rentals, glamping, LGBTQ travelers, families, and hyper-local rentals. Having the ability to seamlessly integrate with more booking channels can help you reach the right audience and boost occupancy rates.

03.

YOUR INVENTORY CONTAINS IDENTICAL UNITS

Perhaps one of the greatest distinctions between a starter PMS and a more advanced one is the ability to manage listings in bulk. If your listings inventory consists of any identical units — such as in a guesthouse or aparthotel — a PMS that enables you to move guests between units or to group them together for bulk updates will help you maximize occupancy while also greatly improving efficiency.

04.

YOU WANT TO USE MORE TECH SOLUTIONS — INCLUDING YOUR OWN

Sometimes your PMS offers everything you need to run your business, but sometimes you want to incorporate extras, such as remote locks or guest review solutions. Having a PMS that enables seamless integration with third-party solutions will enable you to run your business how you want to. Similarly, having the ability to build and integrate your own solutions will let you customize everything to suit your exact needs without compromising on a strong PMS and channel manager.

05.

YOUR LISTINGS AREN'T APPEARING NEAR THE TOP

OTAs are your gateway to bookings, and in locations with a lot of inventory, many travelers won't scroll far before choosing. The relationship between your PMS and the OTAs can determine the visibility of your listings as well as other crucial factors, such as the type of support you get from OTAs if something goes wrong.

06.

YOU WANT TO DRIVE MORE DIRECT RESERVATIONS

The bulk of your bookings may come from OTAs, but being properly set up to accept reservations directly means bypassing OTA fees and increasing your profit. A PMS that offers capabilities such as a website builder and payment processing can help bring in more high-profit bookings.
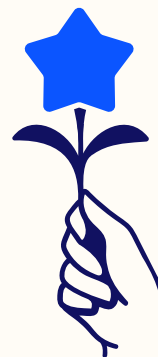
07.

YOU AREN'T GETTING REPEAT CUSTOMERS

Your PMS touches every aspect of the guest experience — from reservation management to communication to loyalty building. Whether by creating a seamless check-in experience or helping you advertise special promotions, a PMS with a strong customer relationship management system will keep your guests coming back.

08.

YOU AREN'T ATTRACTING NEW OWNERS

You're selective about which properties you want to manage, and owners are selective about who they trust with their investment. At a time when financials and compliance are becoming an industry standard, property owners expect short-term rental managers to have the right tools to manage this very delicate domain. Being able to show a high level of professionalism and provide strong support for owners, including detailed reports and dashboards, as well as full transparency into their investment, is an absolute must.
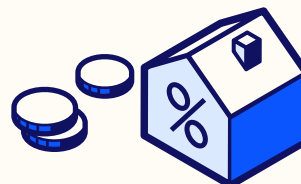
09.

YOU FIND YOURSELF OUTPRICED BY THE COMPETITION

Short-term rentals are an increasingly competitive industry, which means you have to price just right to attract guests. If you're not utilizing revenue management tools such as AI-enabled dynamic pricing solutions, you may not be maximizing your occupancy — and in turn, your revenue.

Switch score

Not sure if your PMS is working hard enough for you? Take the quiz below to discover your switch score.

RATE YOUR PMS FOR EACH QUESTION ON A SCALE OF 1–5

1	My listings appear near the top of search results for my location	*Never* ① ◯ ◯ ◯ ⑤ *Always*
2	I'm able to quickly and easily upload a new listing to several booking channels at once	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
3	I'm satisfied with the number and variety of booking channels that are available to me	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
4	My guests give me five-star reviews	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
5	Updating my listings is a breeze	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6	I'm confident that I'm pricing my listings correctly	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
7	Communication with my guests before and during their stay is smooth	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
8	I can seamlessly integrate the tech solutions I want, such as smart locks or dynamic pricing	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
9	I have enough time to focus on growth and other aspects of my business	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
10	The management part of my operations runs itself	◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

TALLY YOUR ANSWERS TO DISCOVER YOUR SWITCH SCORE

40 ~ 50	*30 ~ 40*	*10 ~ 30*
Great news! Your PMS is doing a pretty good job. Interested in industry benchmarks? Check out our recent survey report	You're hanging in there, but your PMS could be supporting you more, and you might outgrow your current provider soon.	The time for a new PMS was yesterday. Your current system not only isn't supporting you, it might be actively hurting your business.

Barriers to switching

(and why the time is now)

Moving from one PMS to another can be costly and time-consuming. Many PMSs charge onboarding fees. Additionally, a new PMS will require retraining staff members, resulting in a temporary learning curve. And then there are systems and integrations that may be lost if they've been built on your existing platform.

Despite these barriers, if your PMS isn't performing optimally it can be costlier not to switch. One reason is that if your business is growing, eventually you will need something more powerful, and the larger your business is, the harder it becomes to switch. Not only will you need to onboard more properties at a greater cost and retrain more staff members, you'll likely have to redo some of your systems and integrations, which will only increase with time.

Furthermore, while a PMS may seem like it's working well enough, every little thing adds up. The extra time it takes to update each listing individually when a PMS doesn't allow bulk updates can cost a team hours each week, while the revenue lost to mispriced listings can quickly add up to thousands of dollars.

In a fast-changing and highly competitive short-term rental market, not using the right technology can also mean falling behind the competition — and that gap is only harder to make up with time. Guest expectations are constantly shifting and dependency on technology is growing; if you've noticed that your peers are all moving to a different platform, chances are they have better technology than you do.

While the cost and labor of switching a PMS is high, property managers need to consider that the short-term setbacks that result from moving far outweigh the long-term effects of not switching. Ultimately, moving to a new PMS is an opportunity to strengthen your property management company with suitable business models and tools, such as Trust Accounting and review analytics, that will help you stay ahead of the curve.
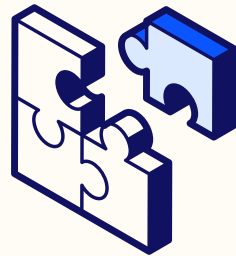
PMS essentials

Just as a short-term rental business operates differently when it has 10, 100, or 1,000 listings, what it needs from a PMS also changes as it grows. For that reason, perhaps the most important thing to examine when choosing a PMS is whether it supports businesses of all sizes. Other considerations include:
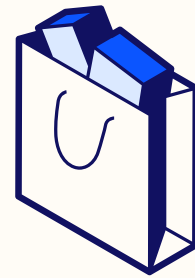
01.

OTA CONNECTIVITY

A PMS that has preferred partner status at the top OTAs will provide improved connectivity with those platforms, ensuring faster and more reliable data syncing. Additionally, these statuses give users early access to updates and features on the booking sites, enabling property managers to leverage the latest advancements in the vacation and short term rental ecosystem.

02.

MARKETPLACE INTEGRATIONS AND OPEN API

Realistically, a PMS may not be able to provide every single feature you need for your business. However, a PMS that provides seamless integration to those features through third-parties, and also allows you to connect your own systems, will allow you to build the tech stack you need to succeed.
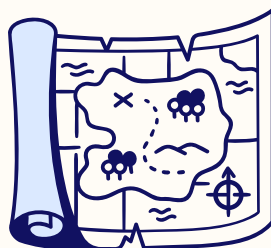
03.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

If something goes wrong, will anyone be there to listen? Whether you have ideas for features you know would benefit your business, or you simply can't get a report to download, you want to make sure your PMS has a team of experts behind it who are there to give you a hand.

04.

OWNERS' TOOLBOX

From Trust Accounting to financial forecasting and data visualization, a PMS doesn't only simplify your operations, it must also provide detailed information and transparency for homeowners, ensuring that their investment is safeguarded.

05.

COMPANY ROADMAP

The short-term rental industry is constantly evolving, and your new PMS should be too. Look for a PMS with a robust and dynamic roadmap that will keep up with travel trends and innovations. Of equal importance, make sure your PMS isn't just drafting a feature roadmap, but is also delivering on it every quarter.

06.

COMPANY HEALTH

In an ever-consolidating market, is your PMS a leading player in the industry, or is it at risk of being swallowed by another? If you do switch your PMS, you want that decision to come from you and not because your PMS no longer exists, so look for a company whose development seems like it will support your goals two years — and ten years — from now.
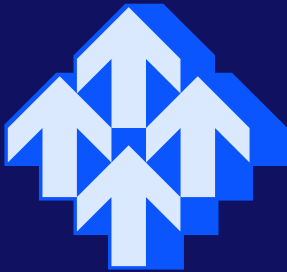
User advice:
How to choose a PMS

With more than 750 units across Florida and New Orleans,
here's what short-term rental operator Roami has to say about choosing a PMS:

ADVICE FOR NEW OPERATORS

"Find one software that meets most of your needs. Ask yourself what you're willing to spend money on, and do your best to find an all-in-one."

ADVICE FOR MID-SIZE OPERATORS

"Try to project whether a software will grow with you from five to 100 units. This will enable you to stay with the same partner even as you scale. Look for a PMS with a lot of connectivity partners; even if you don't need them now, you may want to add them down the line."

ADVICE FOR LARGE OPERATORS

"Take a close look at your tech stack and understand what's a must-have and what's a nice-to-have, so that you're not adding any unnecessary expenses. Additionally, make sure your providers really meet your needs, as migrating a large portfolio involves a lot of labor and associated costs."

8 steps to a new PMS

Every PMS has its own migration process. Here, we've outlined what you can expect from a migration to Guesty from another PMS.
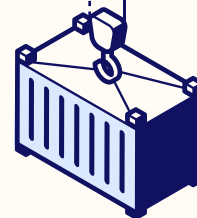
01.

ONBOARDING ROADMAP

Every short-term rental business has its own unique needs. Before the onboarding process begins, the Guesty team will learn about your business and build an onboarding project plan so you know exactly what to expect. While each of the individual steps below takes approximately one hour, the overall onboarding process takes about 30 days for most new users.

02.

BASIC SETUP

The Guesty onboarding team will train and assist you in the transfer of your data infrastructure, including setting up your account, importing reservations, and setting up automations.

03.

FINANCIALS

Everything money-related will be reviewed and configured, including connecting a payment processor to your Guesty account for direct reservations and setting up rate management features, such as specific taxes and fees for individual channels.

04.

GUEST EXPERIENCE

You will add your guest communications to Guesty, including messaging templates and saved replies, so you can communicate with guests uninterrupted. We'll also help you set up other workflow automations and guest experience features, such as pre-stay tools.

05.

OPERATIONS

Guesty will show you how to set up your task management as well as other business operations, ensuring your properties will continue to run smoothly.
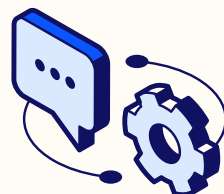
06.

REPORTING AND ANALYTICS

Data is an integral part of your business, and Guesty will show you how to set up your reporting based on your needs, so you always have the information you want at your fingertips.

07.

FLIPPING THE SWITCH

Once your listings have been transferred from one channel, we'll connect your other booking channels and import your reservation data. This ensures that all of your information is centralized in Guesty, allowing you to manage your operations from a single platform.

08.

ONGOING SUPPORT

To ensure a smooth transition, Guesty's onboarding team and customer success provides ongoing support post-launch.

Key to the process is the support of the onboarding team, which has ample experience migrating users from other PMSs and training them on the Guesty system. Yet the decision to switch to a new PMS is still filled with unknowns. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions when it comes to switching to a new PMS:

WILL MY DISTRIBUTION OR POSITIONING ON THE OTAS CHANGE?

If you switch from a PMS that doesn't have preferred partner status with the OTAs to one that does, your distribution and positioning should only improve, along with your occupancy rates.

WILL I BE WITHOUT A PMS AT ANY POINT? WHAT IS THE DOWNTIME?

Because all of your reservations are migrated to the new PMS ahead of time and your systems are configured with your preferred automations, the only downtime you will experience for most channels is when the switch is flipped and your listings are disconnected from one PMS and connected to the other. This process takes approximately 30 minutes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY PMS DATA INCLUDING FUTURE RESERVATIONS?

Your data, including future reservations, will be transferred to the new PMS ahead of time, ensuring you have the information you need.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY INTEGRATIONS? WILL MY WEBSITE BE MAINTAINED?

Whether your integrations carry over largely depends on what systems you're using and what PMS you move to. Proprietary integrations that are native to your current PMS won't be carried over. If you move to a PMS that enables third-party integrations and Open API, you'll be able to keep the integrations that aren't linked to a specific PMS. This is perhaps the biggest reason to make sure your PMS will support you in the long-term and to choose a PMS with a large marketplace of integrations.
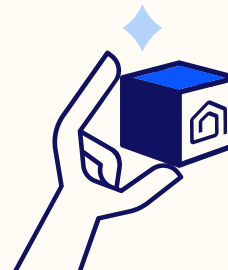
WHO WILL TRAIN MY STAFF?

Staff training largely depends on which PMS you move to. At Guesty we appoint a dedicated POC who will deliver and execute a structured program to ensure your team has everything it needs to get the most out of the platform from day one. We also provide ongoing support through a dedicated customer success manager.

The Guesty edge

If a lot of what was written in this guide resonates with you — or if you want to grow your business but suspect you're working with an unsuitable PMS — it's time to think critically about your current provider. Are they innovating for the future, or merely maintaining the status quo? While legacy platforms may seem comfortable, they often limit your ability to adapt and grow. Your PMS should not only meet your current needs but also anticipate and solve tomorrow's challenges. Take a moment to assess your provider's recent deliverables and future roadmap. Are they aligned with your growth trajectory?

Making the switch to a new PMS is undoubtedly a significant decision, but it is also an opportunity for positive transformation. It allows you to reassess workflows, retrain staff, and optimize operations for future success. Guesty offers a PMS that is continuously evolving based on the needs of the market. With an industry-leading R&D team of 250, as well as a team of experts on the ground, the company releases an average of 15 features a month, with about 70% of enhancements directly based on customer feedback, and boasts a system uptime of 99.999%. Furthermore, following several successful acquisitions, Guesty is now the largest PMS in the industry.

To experience Guesty first-hand and discover which features we have to offer your business, schedule a personalized demo with one of our product experts.

Guesty

ABOUT GUESTY

Guesty is the ultimate all-in-one property management solution, automating and optimizing operations for short-term rental professionals. Developed by a team of 250+ engineers and product experts, our technology streamlines processes, drives growth, and enhances guest experiences. With a comprehensive suite of features and partnerships with 150+ sector leaders, including major platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, Guesty serves diverse hospitality ventures. Dedicated to transforming the industry with effective solutions, our 800+ team members work across 15 global offices. To learn more about how we can support your business, visit guesty.com.