HotelTechReport

2023 BUYING GUIDE

The Ultimate Guide to Hotel Website Design Providers

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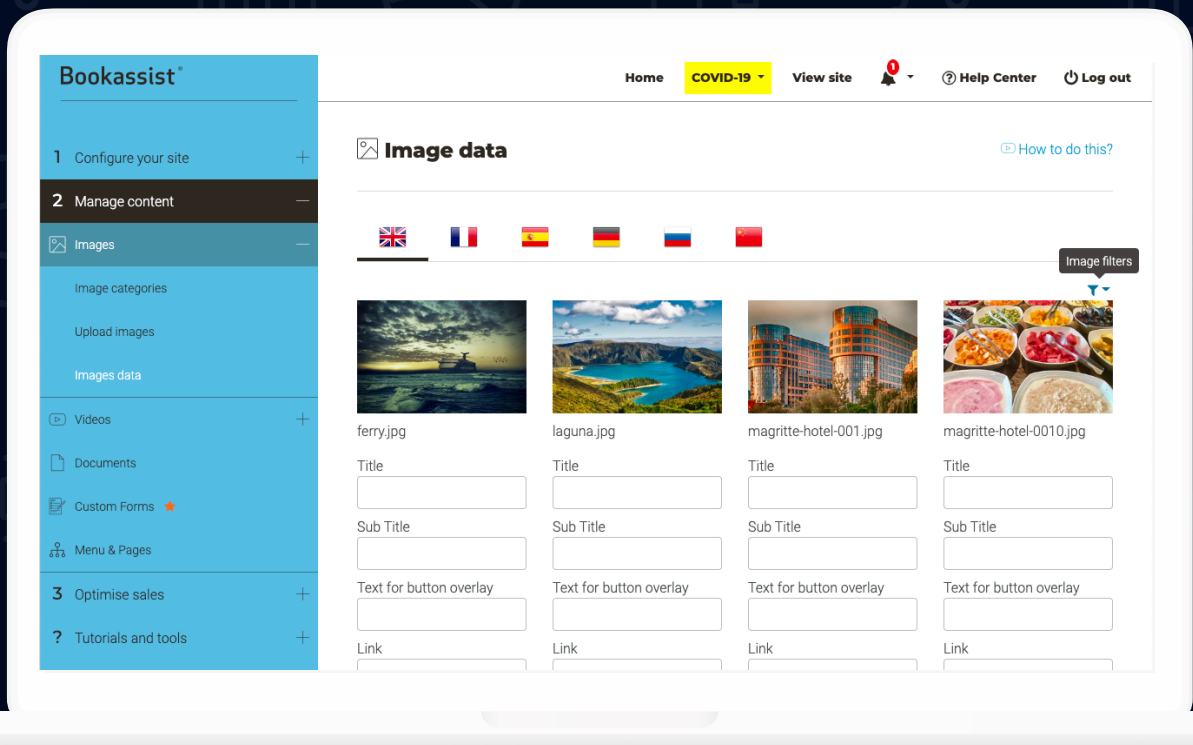
Hotel website design: the basics

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Designing and building a great hotel website is foundational to your overall E-commerce strategy. Your website is your commission-less store front where you optimize for modern technology, entice future guests with your amenities and share your brand promise. Hotel website design and delivery is about more than what's pretty – it is finding that partner that will guide you because they get the fundamentals like technical SEO (Search Engine Optimization), focus on CRO (conversion rate optimization), leverage modern trends and still tell your brand's visually stunning story. Because of this, many hotel companies choose partners with a proven track record of delivering high-performing websites that turn your 'lookers' into guests.

What's inside this buying guide?

▶ **Introduction**

▶ **Key Benefits**

▶ **Trends & Developments**

▶ **Key Features**

▶ **Critical Integrations**

▶ **Pricing & Implementation**

▶ **Questions to Ask Vendors**

▶ **ROI Calculator**

▶ **Curated Resources**

"The pandemic strongly impacted hotels, but as the market began to recover it became clear that hotels had a key advantage over online travel agents and third parties. That advantage lay in being the ultimate trusted source of information. As people exited lockdowns and began to travel, there was obvious nervousness about hotel stays. Travellers needed assurances that they could cancel without penalty, they needed confirmation that they and their families would be safe during their stay and that hygiene standards and guidelines were being adhered to. Hotel websites with good content management were the ideal vehicle to give all of this new and extra information to travellers, and to keep it bang up to date. As a result, more travellers visited hotel websites to get that information. For hotels with comprehensive and dynamic information provision, those assurances resulted in more direct bookings. Hotels have now learned that they can grow and retain direct business by leveraging dynamic content and by being more proactive in marketing to their potential guests. In the wake of COVID-19 hotels can continue to capitalise on this and reduce their future dependence on third party distribution - if they have the right software and strategy."

Dr Des O'Mahony
Founder & Chairman @ Bookassist

Hotel Website Design Benefits and Business Value

What it does

1
Drive increased direct bookings

Your hotel website should be a direct booking machine. It should be optimized not only to bring more visitors but also to convert those web visitors into real revenue for your business.

2
Steal share from competitors

Your hotel website is a guest's first impression of your brand. Fast performance and great design will signal to 'lookers' that those qualities will carry through the entire guest experience. Create a great first impression and steal share over lower quality competitors.

3
Customer education

A great hotel website should be the source of truth for popular guest questions such as: "What room types are available?", "What amenities are available to guests?", etc. A great hotel website that makes these questions easily accessible can decrease call volumes to your hotel by answering pressing questions that could be the difference between winning and losing a client.

> The William Vale hotel developed a local neighborhood guide on their hotel website that drove 94 bookings

How it adds value

➤ **Bring down digital acquisition costs.** Acquiring new guests online is highly competitive with rising costs across a variety of channels like metasearch, social, and paid search. Great hotel websites can bring the cost of acquisition down by making each dollar go further (i.e. increasing the conversion from paid click to booking).

➤ **Increased web traffic.** Not all website traffic is created equal, but growing web traffic typically leads to growing bookings. A great hotel website should be setup with a CMS that allows hotel marketers and their agencies to constantly refresh content and align with best practices with regards to organic search.

Trends & Future Predictions for
Hotel Website Design

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↗ **2022-2023 Trends**

Dynamic, rapidly-changing website content. Hotel websites have overwhelmingly been static to date. With customers now used to dynamic social media trends, hotels need to be able to quickly change content for events, seasons, trends, and they need to be able to do so without expert technical knowledge. Hotels need simple but powerful content management systems to get the job done without fuss or cost.

Personalisation creates website stickiness. After spending on digital advertising to bring customers to websites, those websites need to establish the persona of the visitor and adapt to it with personalised content if they are to reduce bounce rates and deal with short attention spans. This can be achieved with tailored landing pages or with genuine adaptable content. To do this, hotels need simple but powerful content management systems and booking systems that continue to evolve over time and leverage artificial intelligence approaches where relevant. This means choosing SaaS-based systems rather than once-off bespoke systems that stay stuck in the timeframe of the date they were purchased. Hoteliers need to increasingly focus on the website management side and not just the graphic design of the front-end.

Website guidelines for ADA compliance Ensure your website promotes accessibility and compliance, it's important to stay up to date on what these requirements are, which includes everything from an Accessibility statement and ongoing audits to actual website features like color contrasts and including closed captions on all videos. Hoteliers would be well served to ensure their web team and/or the vendor hosting their website is fully versed in current ADA website regulations for hotels and resorts to stay compliant and ensure that guests with disabilities can easily use your website.

Key competencies to look for when choosing a hotel website partner

1 **Website Design**

Keep your website simple! Google created their "knowledge" panel based off "what will give someone enough info to book a room" and it's a pretty light list. Great design delivers on stunning ascetics by focusing on conversion and keeping things simple.

2 **Content Marketing**

Guests interact with hundreds of digital touchpoints and dozens of content pieces in their path to purchase. Make sure you can deliver the right message to them at the right time and keep them interacting with your brand throughout their path to purchase.

3 **SEM (SEO/PPC/Metasearch/Display)**

It is important to find a website partner that has a breadth of offerings - not just development skills but expertise in multiple areas such as SEO, PPC, Metasearch and Display. SEO will help reach audiences at every stage of their path to purchase. PPC and Display will both help you prospect for new guests and help secure bookings once guests reach the lower end of the funnel and metasearch will help you steal market share back from the OTAs.

4 **Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)**

CRO is one of the highest ROI digital marketing investments so a great digital agency partner will leverage tools like Optimizely to constantly iterate and test site layout, content and copy to optimize conversion rates over time and they should share the results and learnings from these experiments with your team.

5 **Social Media Management**

Entice new guests with a partner that understands the importance of integrated social media as part of your overall digital strategy. Effective social media management can support in prospecting new guests and driving engagement through dedicated reputation and community management.

Top Rated Hotel Website Design Agencies

FEATURED

Ba **Bookassist**
Hotel Website Design

[Learn More]

Read Reviews

Avvio
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
217	94%	30

Profitroom
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
144	94%	7

Net Affinity
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
110	94%	9

SiteMinder
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
88	92%	2

ResNexus
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
54	90%	11

Hotelchamp
Hotel Website Design

Reviews	Recommend	Integrations
48	88%	8
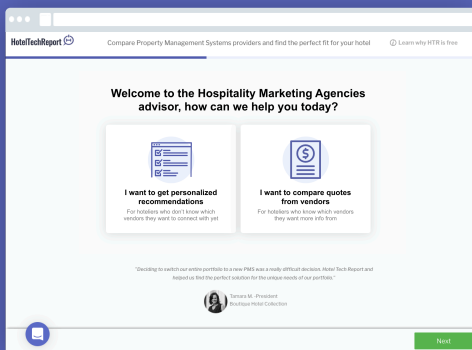
Want to find out which Hotel Website Design Agency is best for your hotel in under 2-minutes?

[Take the quiz →]

What hoteliers are saying about their hotel website design agencies

★★★★★ Review of **Ba** Bookassist

DOSM from Luxury Hotel in Ireland
"I have worked with BookAssist over the last 5 years on a number of different hotel properties and have always found the team to be brilliant to work with. Their account management is very responsive with fast results and they bring suggestions to the table. Their technology is second to none!"

★★★★★

We have many years of

Bookassist solutions are among the best on the market in our experience.

Operations Manager
Luxury Hotel in Czech Republic

★★★★★

Great service and great results

The good thing about Bookassist is that it can help you with everything you

Manager
City Center Hotel in Spain

★★★★★

Professional and res

quickly addressing issu
arise…coming up with

Marketing Executive
Airport Hotel in Ireland

aterialized

unt managers
way, and are

★★★★★

Always very quick in jumping in…

extremely customer friendly, always on hand to support when needed, nothing

Area Director of Sales & Marketing
City Center Hotel in UK

★★★★★

Excellent support and innovative

Bookassist has a professional team that strives to deliver positive results,

Marketing Executive
Luxury Hotel in Ireland

Read more reviews on www.hoteltechreport.com

What success metrics (KPIs) should you focus on?

▶ **Website traffic growth.** One of the main things a digital marketing agency focuses on is SEO both in terms of onpage optimization and content to drive organic traffic growth as well as paid ad spend to drive paid acquisition traffic. Expect to see steady gradual growth within 6-12 months with a top agency.

▶ **Conversion rate optimization (CRO).** A great digital agency is one that understands the balance between design and conversion and focuses on delivering that. They will leverage digital optimization tools to constantly iterate and test site layout, content and copy to optimize conversion rates over time and they should share the results and learnings from these experiments with your team. Monitor conversion rates on your website to track progress and success over time.

▶ **Domain authority (DA).** Domain Authority is a factor of traffic, backlinks and other key signals of how 'authoritative' or credible your website is. As part of your SEO strategy agencies will focus part of their efforts on building out your backlink profile (ie. credible sites that link back to your site in a relevant way) which helps improve domain authority and in-turn drives search visibility, increases traffic and improves direct bookings.

▶ **RoAS.** Your website typically has two types of traffic: organic and paid. The more efficient your hotel website is, the less you will spend acquiring traffic and therefore your RoAS (return on ad spend) will be lower the better your website performs.

Critical integrations

➤ **Booking Engines.** Ensuring successful tracking is a requirement for a successful website. Make sure your agency has previous experience with your Booking Engine/CRS. Ask them what issues have come up in the past, and how they've found a solution.

➤ **Website/CMS.** Ensure that your CMS will meet your needs and that you own your content/data. Hospitality's unique requirements often do not lend themselves to simple off-the-shelf solutions such as free ecommerce platforms like Wix and require specialized feature sets designed for the accomodation business. Many agencies either build their own CMS or build on top of popular open source CMS platforms.

➤ **Email Marketing & CRM.** The more your agency can help you segment lists/put people into mosaics; the more opportunity they'll have for personalization efforts in messaging (and this is huge).

What questions should smart buyers ask vendors?

#1 How does it integrate with my tech stack?

A CMS that's integrated into your CRM, CDP and the rest of your marketing suite will deliver the biggest rewards. When your CRM data underpins your digital marketing efforts, you can take full advantage of an omnichannel marketing strategy that puts your brand in front of guests in a variety of ways. This interplay between digital marketing, CRM and CMS is key for direct booking success.

#2 What is the average conversion rate of websites for clients like us?

Use the buying opportunity to build a set of benchmarks that you can hold your partner to you in future. Get them to put into writing specific goals for how your website should convert users. Additionally, if their conversion rate is lower than your current conversion rate, you may want to rethink the partner altogether.

#3 Does it allow personalization?

The best CMS turns data into unique and relevant textual, visual and promotional content. For example, Cendyn's CMS offers additional control over personalized content through loyalty portals that leverage CRM-specific metrics, such as RFM value, membership level, point balance and more. Inspire the most seasoned traveler with relevant content throughout the planning journey. Craft powerful website content that highlights your city, local points of interests and popular attractions, so when guests research what to do near your location, strong SEO will enable your hotel's website and/or blog to appear on the first page of organic search results for those key phrases.

#4 What happens to my data if I need to switch providers?

Many agencies build custom CMS platforms that make it easier for hoteliers to update content or are optimized for their own reporting processes. Custom CMS is fine (vs. Wordpress) but you should ask up front what happens to the content and data if you decided to switch providers to ensure you don't get held up.

#5 What are 5 SEO opportunities on my current website?

Great web design agencies understand that your direct channel is build for 3 things - SEO, the billboard effect, and PPC. With SEO being 1/3 of the value prop (more for some hotels), the web design agency should be able to give you a breakdown of your current SEO opportunities. The quality of their recommendations is a huge indicator of the quality they can deliver for you over the long term. Great websites often don't happen overnight, they require testing and optimization.

Pricing & implementation guidance

💵 PRICING

What are the typical pricing models and ranges that I should budget for?

▶ **Implementation Expense.** Your agency will need time to explore your market, analyze existing data, and set up their new campaigns. Don't be surprised if there are hard costs for tech that your agency plugs in here as well (it's pretty standard practice).

▶ **Website Development.** The pricing here is excluding to a more standard/templated website. If you want to enter the more customized zone then expect to pay anywhere from $12-$65k.

▶ **Monthly Retainer.** This is for a full-service digital marketing agency. There are options to pay less in management, but you get what you pay for. This is the range that more hands-on agencies tend to charge.

⏱ IMPLEMENTATION

What does the typical implementation timeline and process look like to go live?

▶ **4-16 Weeks.** This will really depend on what services/channels you're looking to utilize as ramp-up time may vary. A good standard onboarding time would be around 6 weeks.
Do note that property should be wary of an agency that's going to set everything up over night. A proper onboarding process should require time to ensure your agency really hits the ground running (reading through STR reports, digging into comp sets, analyzing past and current data, immersing the team into your brand book etc), so if an agency is rushing - you can be assured that the first few months will be full of learnings and the road could start out a bit rocky.

Furthering Reading & Success Stories

Read real stories from hoteliers like you about how they leveraged hotel website designers to grow their business.
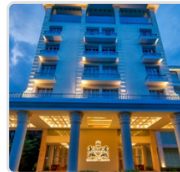
SUCCESS STORIES

Hotel Forum in Rome Grows Direct Bookings by 300%

Chateau Golf & Spa D'Augerville Sees 60% Increase in Mobile Revenue

Hotel Teatro Pace Achieves 43% Uplift in Average Order Value

Golden Crown Hotel Drives 100% Boost in Direct Revenue

FURTHER READING

- Top questions to ask when selecting a CMS
- The Ultimate Guide to Hotel Marketing (2022)
- 35 Hotel Website Designs We Love
- The 9-Step Hotel Marketing Plan for 2022 (+FREE Worksheet)
- Hotel Digital Marketing: Here's How an Agency Can Improve Results

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Bookassist®
THE DIRECT BOOKING EXPERT ™

Bookassist makes hotels far more successful online. Bookassist empowers hoteliers to prioritise a direct booking strategy that will seriously improve profitability, while reducing dependence on third-party distributors.

Your website is your lowest cost - highest margin sales channel. So don't settle for less than the best. Bookassist is the 1st choice for hotel groups and independent hotels.

Mobile-first website | fully scalable | highly customisable | never out of date - easy to use self service CMS technology |

Hotels | Hotel Groups | Destination companies | Restaurants | Spas| Bars | & so much more
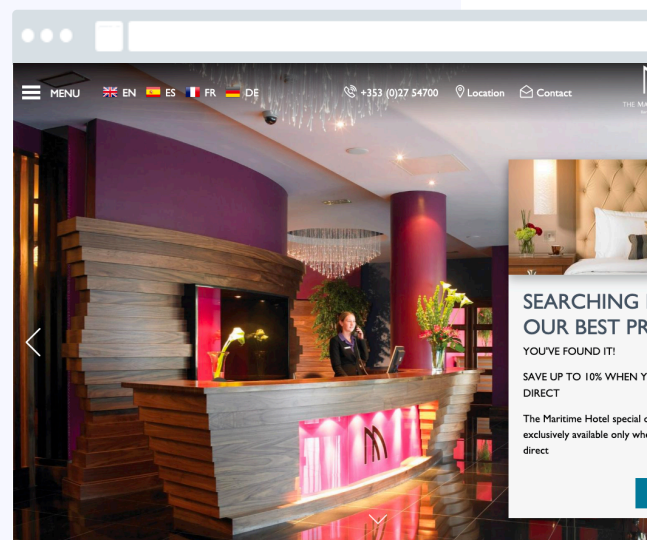
About Hotel Tech Report

HotelTechReport.com is a next gen B2B media platform that empowers hotel owners and operators from the world's leading hotel companies to find the best digital products to run and grow their businesses.

Each month 200,000+ hoteliers across 150+ countries research and discover new ways to leverage technology to drive revenue, increase operational efficiency and improve the guest experience.

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