

The Ultimate Hotel Benchmarking Checklist

How to step up your direct channel strategy by using data insights to take action where it matters most



The importance of hotel benchmarking

Understanding your hotel's [direct channel performance](#) is not always easy. Even the most experienced hotelier can be unsure about how best to analyze the results to be able to identify [where to make improvements](#).

That's why we created this checklist - so you can evaluate your hotel's direct channel performance [step by step](#) and know exactly which areas you need to focus on.

But that's not all! We also share best practices around how to turn your hotel's direct channel weaknesses into strengths, so you can [increase conversions and revenue](#).

Ready to step up your hotel's direct channel performance?
Let's get started...



It's a two-step continuous process

Learning

Benchmarking & Analytics

- Use real-time competitive data from the destination
- Discover opportunities and weak spots related to the direct channel performance

Getting Results

Conversion & Personalization

- Personalize the website user experience at critical points in the booking funnel
- Implement tried & tested tactics to boost hotel website conversion rates



First off, let's talk about BenchDirect™



Introducing the first benchmarking platform for your hotel's [direct booking channel](#), enabling you to:

- [Compare](#) your hotel's website performance to the market and competition
- Make better-informed decisions thanks to the [real-time actionable insights](#)

30+ Direct Booking Metrics

An extensive range of key metrics related to:

- [Website and booking engine traffic](#)
- [Rates and disparities](#)
- [User profile and behavior](#)
- [Future demand](#)
- [Bookings and pickup](#)

Competitive Sets

Compare your hotel's direct channel performance to:

Brand

Compare each property's performance to the other hotels in your brand

Proximity

Compare your hotel with other similar hotels in your destination

THN Network

We select the most similar look-alike hotels worldwide, from our network



Don't have a BenchDirect account yet? It's free, forever, so be sure to [request your account today](#).

How to use this guide?

1. Follow our checklist to use BenchDirect to identify where your hotel is under or over performing.
2. Click on the tabs within this document for each of the areas which are priorities for your hotel.
3. Discover recommendations to improve your hotel's results in these areas.



What do you need help with?

Let's turn your hotel's weaknesses into strengths

Total conversion
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Visitor to BE
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

BE to booking conversion
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Avg. Booking Value below
avg. on 3 top destinations

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Bookings below
average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Visitors who search
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Search distribution by stay
date below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Avg. LOS for bookings
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Disparities frequency
above average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Mobile conversion
below average

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

Conversion below avg. on
top visitor's countries

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS](#)



Discover more

Total conversion below average

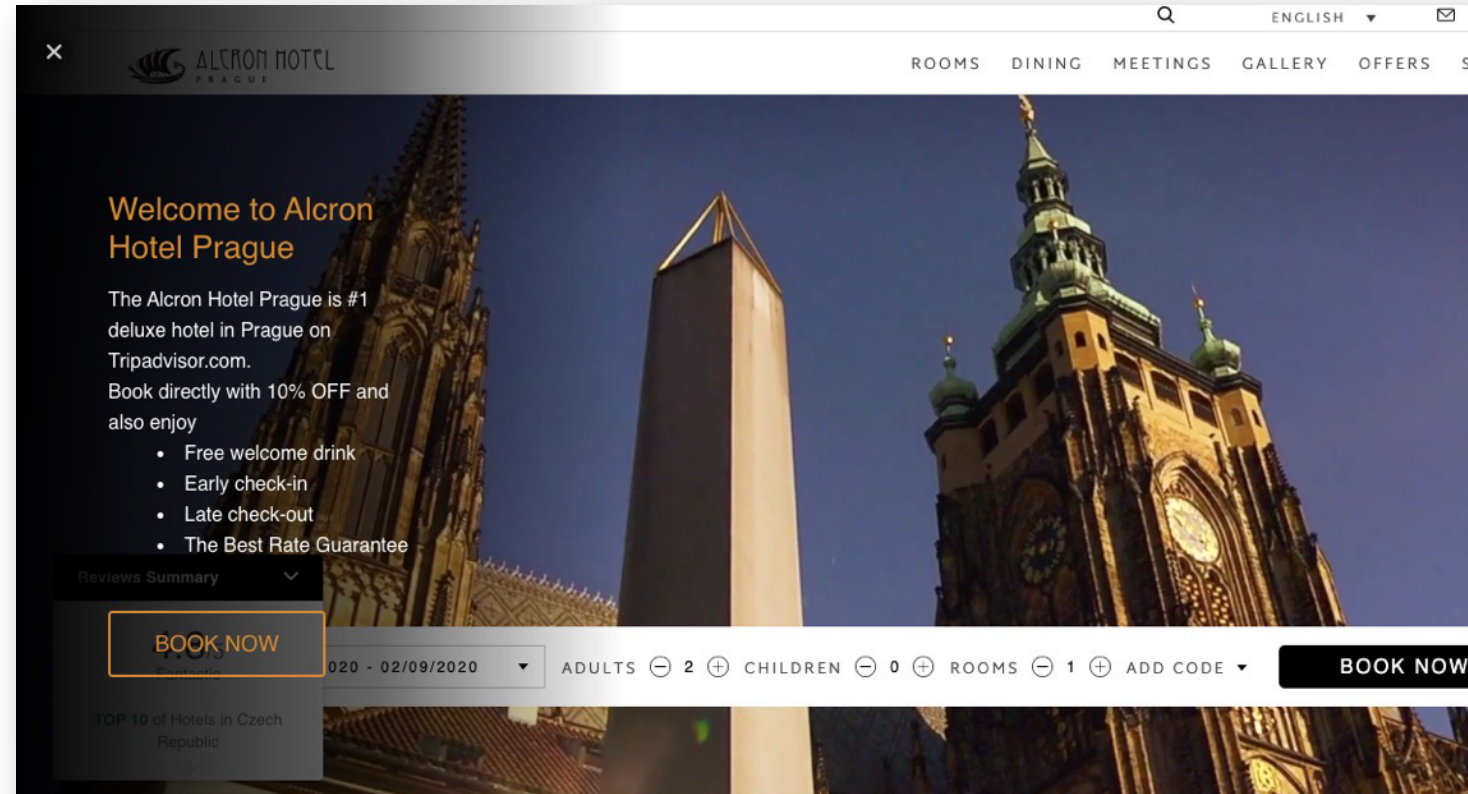
Highlighting the benefits of booking direct

Your hotel website conversion is lower than your compsets? This could be because your website visitors are not ready to book just yet.

So, why not give them that extra incentive to stay at your property? Perhaps an exclusive benefit to those who book directly with you?

Timing here is key. Make sure these offers are communicated as soon as visitors land on your website, so everyone is aware of your special treat.

Welcome Layers such as this one have worked particularly well among our hotel clients to entice users to stay on the website, explore further and hopefully make a reservation.



[NEXT RECOMMENDATION >>](#)

Total conversion below average

Highlighting your positive guest reviews

The screenshot shows a hotel website with a navigation bar at the top containing links: ROOMS & SUITES, RESTAURANT & BAR, BANQUETS & MEETINGS, OFFERS, SPA, WEDDINGS, and EN. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a hotel room with a bed and a chaise longue. Overlaid on the right side of the image is a 'Reviews Summary' widget. The widget displays a 4.5/5 rating, labeled 'Excellent', based on 1775 reviews. It also states 'TOP 2 of Hotels in Copenhagen'. Below this, there is a list of review sources with their respective ratings: Facebook (4.6/5), Google (4.6/5), TripAdvisor (4.5/5), Expedia (4.2/5), and Trivago (8.6/10). A link 'See reviews for you >' is at the bottom of the widget. The background image of the room has the text 'ELEGANCE, L AND IN 92 RO' overlaid.

ROOMS & SUITES RESTAURANT & BAR BANQUETS & MEETINGS OFFERS SPA WEDDINGS EN

05 JANUARY 06 JANUARY

BEST RATES GUARANTEED
NO BOOKING FEE
FREE MOVIES

CHECK AVAILABILITY

From May 16th cancellation is 12 noon 48 hours prior to arrival

Reviews Summary

4.5/5
Excellent
Based on 1775 reviews

TOP 2 of Hotels in Copenhagen

Facebook	4.6/5
Google	4.6/5
TripAdvisor	4.5/5
Expedia	4.2/5
Trivago	8.6/10

See reviews for you >

ELEGANCE, L AND IN 92 RO

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A low conversion rate may also be because your website visitors aren't sure whether your hotel is the right fit for their stay. Often, before deciding, they look at other sites to read ratings and guest reviews. So why not provide this information directly on your website?

Using our **Reviews Comparison**, you can display all the information users are looking for on your own website. Connected to all major review sites and categorized by travel intent, users won't need to leave your website to check elsewhere.

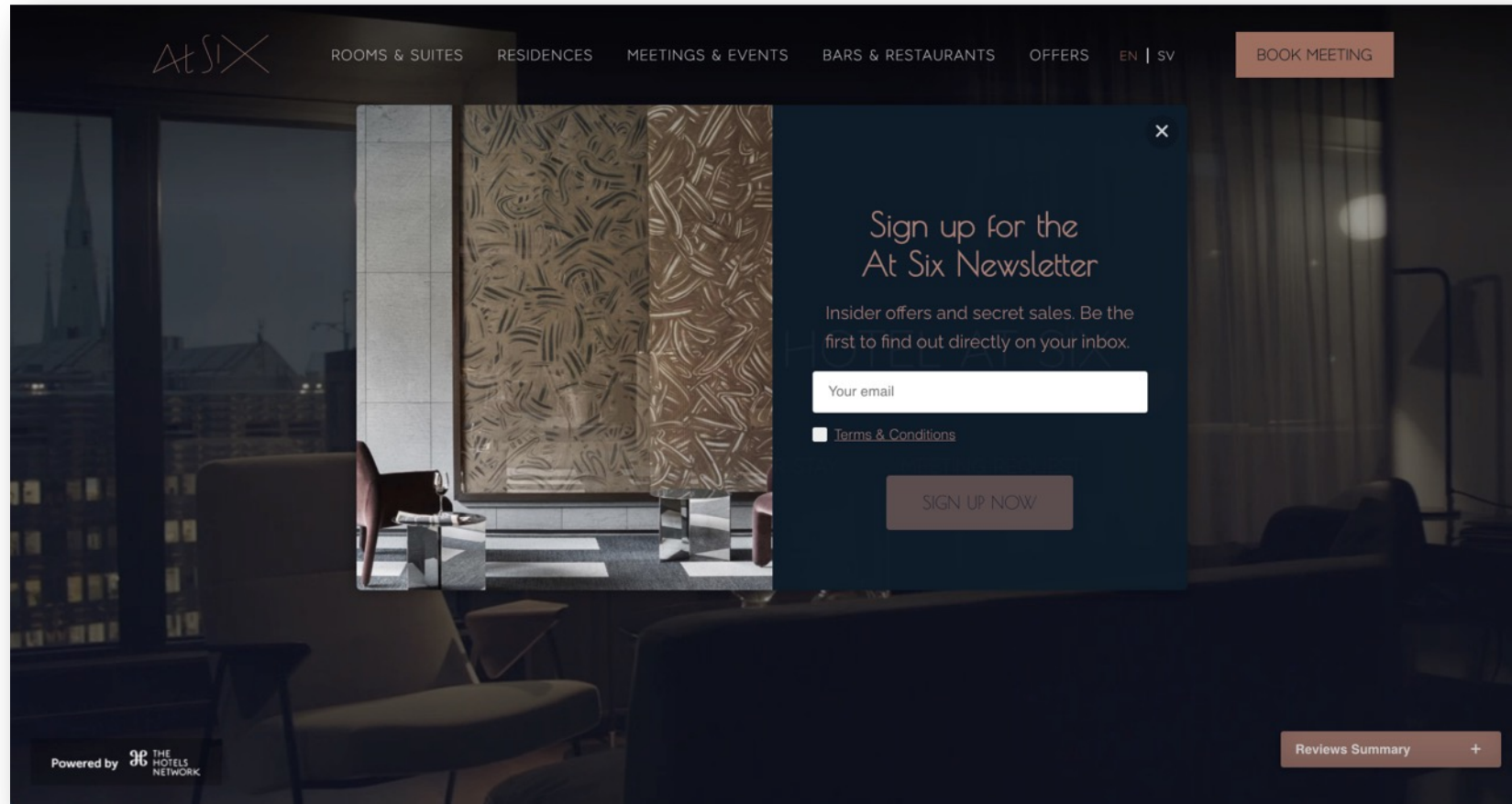
To ensure visitors know what guests love about your hotel, you can choose which sources and reviews to show. This will help to reassure visitors and attract more direct bookings.

[NEXT RECOMMENDATION >>](#)



Total conversion below average

Growing your marketing database



There is always going to be a high percentage of users who are not ready to make a booking right away. A good way to take advantage of this traffic is to collect email address for future marketing actions.

With our **Email Capture** tool, you can collect the contact details of visitors who may be browsing on your website but are unsure about booking. This enables you to grow your database of potential travelers for your future email marketing campaigns. Reach out to them with the perfect offer and they may well decide to book direct!



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Visitor to BE conversion below average

Drawing attention to your unique selling points



With so many other hotel options available, you have to make your property stand out from the crowd to draw visitors in. Highlighting your hotel's best features upon landing on your homepage is a great way to spark their interest.

Using our **Smart Notes**, you can display clever messages that draw attention to your hotel's USP's directly on your homepage.

By doing this, you can encourage visitors to be curious about what your brand has to offer and drive more traffic to your booking engine so users can check out your rooms and rates.



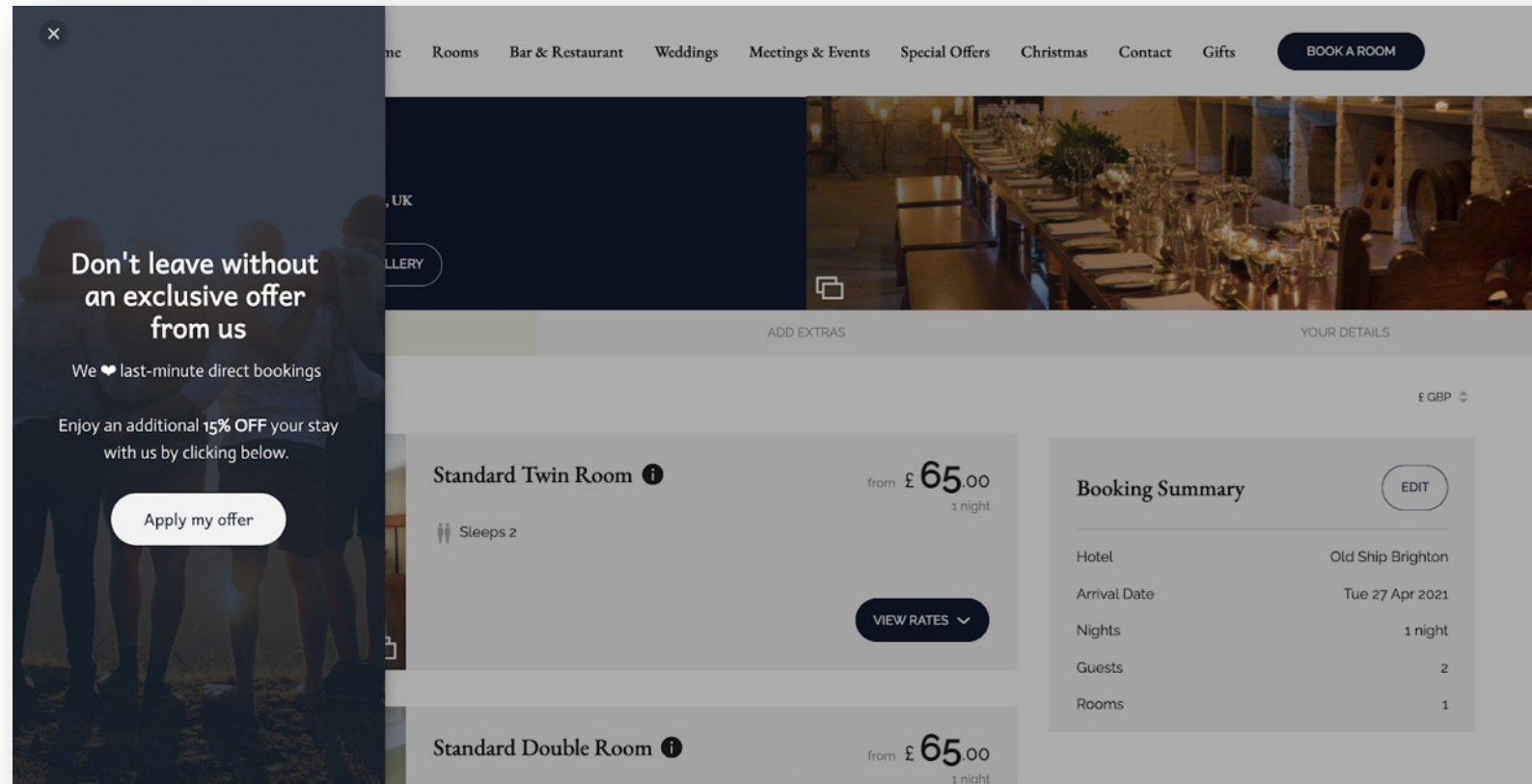
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BE to booking conversion below average

Nudging visitors towards a reservation

Convincing users to complete their booking once they arrive onto your booking engine is one of the most difficult steps in the booking funnel. If your BE to booking conversion is lower than average, it's important to find ways to enhance the user experience and entice them to book with you.

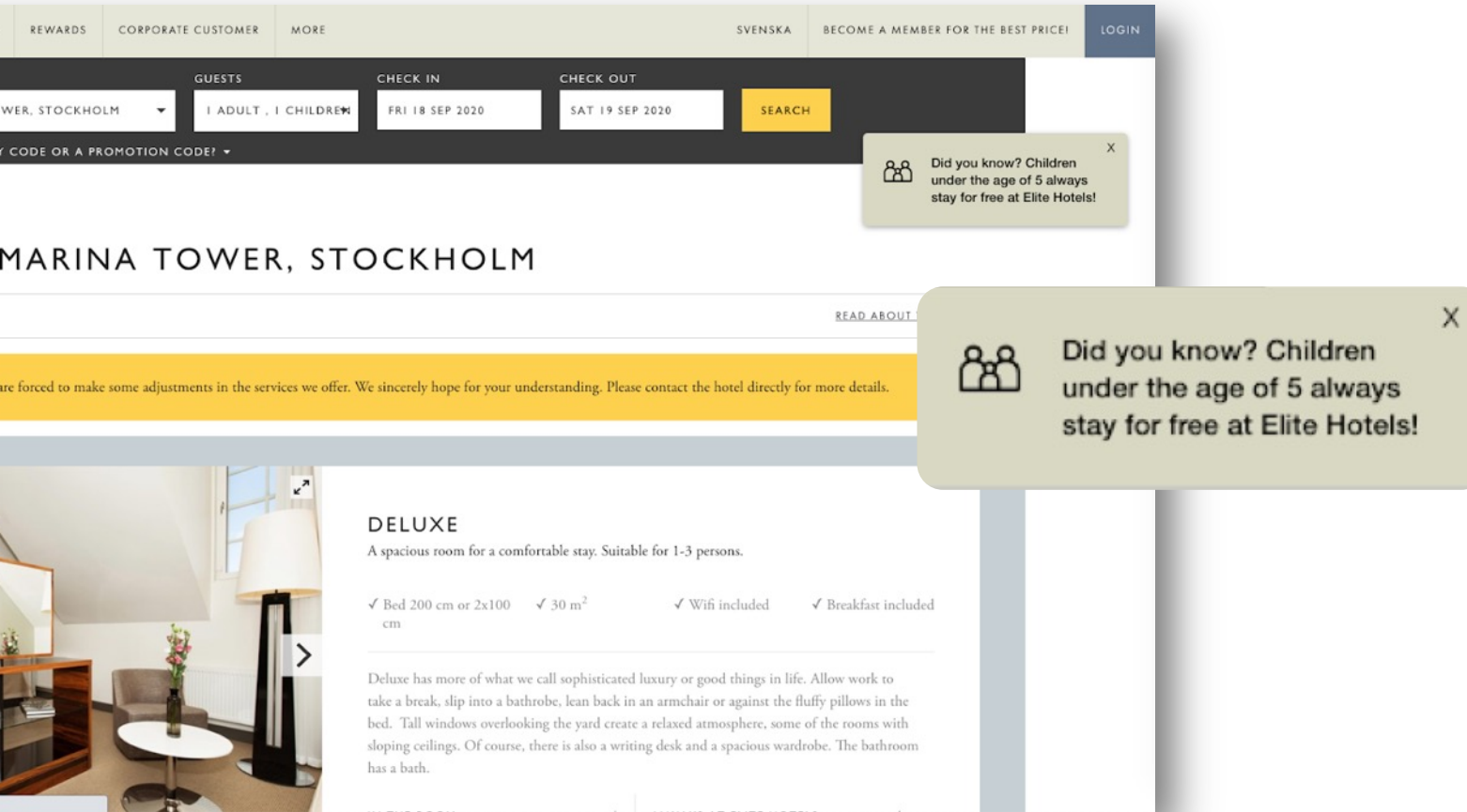
Using our personalizable **Layers**, you can highlight relevant content or exclusive discounts directly on your BE to nudge your visitors towards a reservation. Consider including a CTA (call-to-action) that automatically applies a discount code to create a sense of urgency and encourage immediate bookings.



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BE to booking conversion below average

Highlighting relevant messages and offers



Another way to encourage more visitors to finalize their booking is by highlighting relevant USP's for each user within the booking engine.

Using our **Smart Notes** and applying targeting rules, you can provide a personalized website experience that effectively grabs the visitor's attention and guides them towards a reservation.

Let's target the message based on search criteria. For example, if the user is searching for a stay for 2 adults and 2 young children, highlighting that kids under 5 can stay for free would be a great way to entice a booking from families of 4.

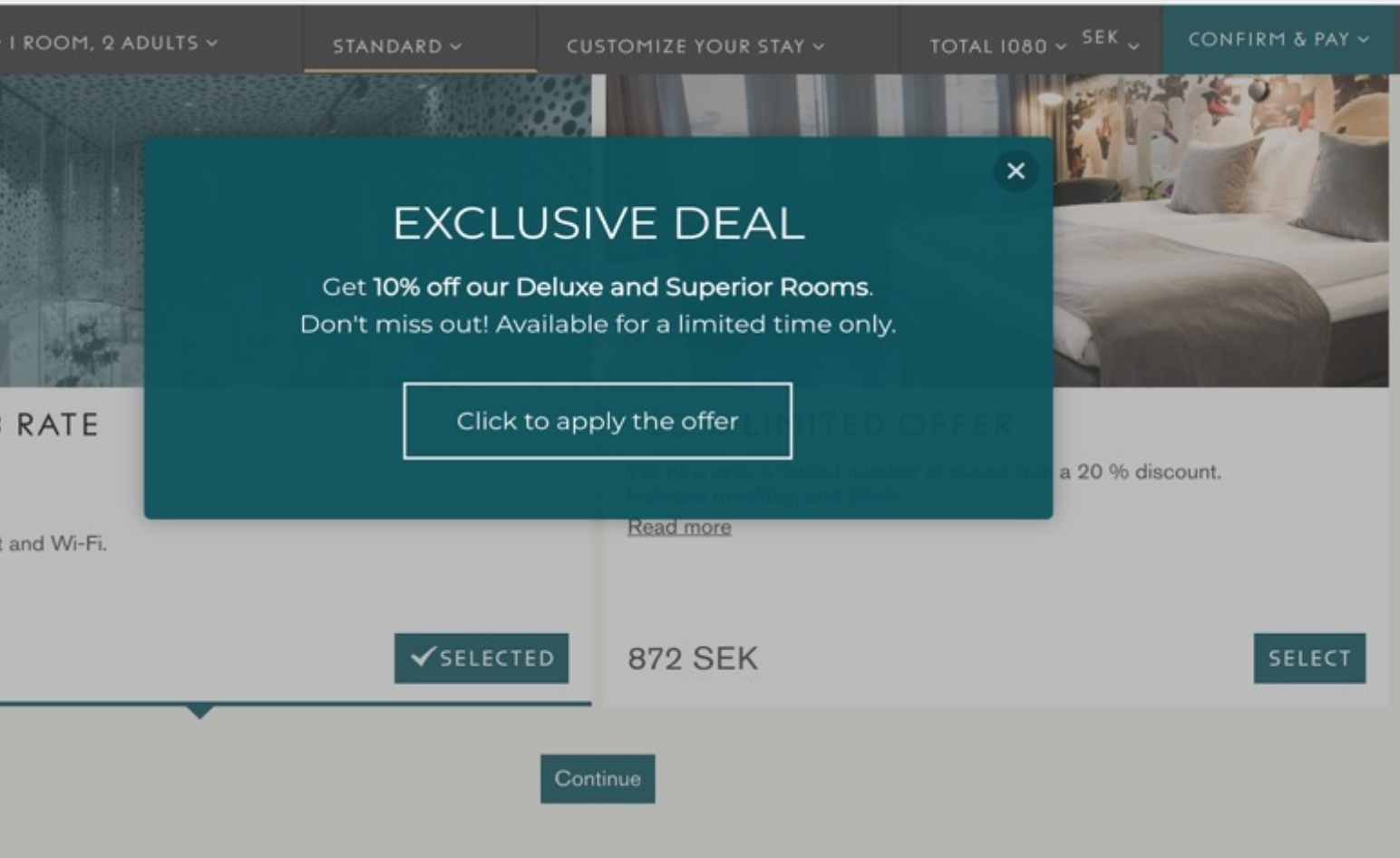
Engaging with your visitors in this unique manner will make guests feel that your property and services are tailored to them, helping to nudge more users towards a booking.



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Average booking value below average on 3 top destinations

Targeted offers to increase ADR



While increasing direct conversions is crucial, ensuring that the booking value is as high as possible is also key to your direct channel's success.

One way of increasing average booking value is by detecting users with a high probability of booking and showing relevant upselling or cross selling messages.

Oraculo, our predictive personalization tool, uses machine learning to identify high-intent users (those who are most likely to book) and automatically displays the best message and offer to get them to spend a little extra at your hotel. Quick wins include nudging these users to upgrade to a higher room category or buy extra services such as breakfast.

This technique is highly effectively for driving more direct bookings while increasing ADR.

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Bookings below average

Reassuring visitors you are offering the best rate

Users leaving your hotel website to search for a lower price on other sites is one of the most common reasons for losing direct bookings. It makes sense - visitors want to make sure that they are getting the best available rate.

Using our **Price Comparison**, visitors can compare prices without leaving your website. This powerful tool compares rates in real time, which reassures visitors that they will not find a cheaper rate elsewhere and helps to keep them on your website.

To give an extra nudge, you can also showcase any additional benefit of booking direct such as a welcome drink or late check-out.

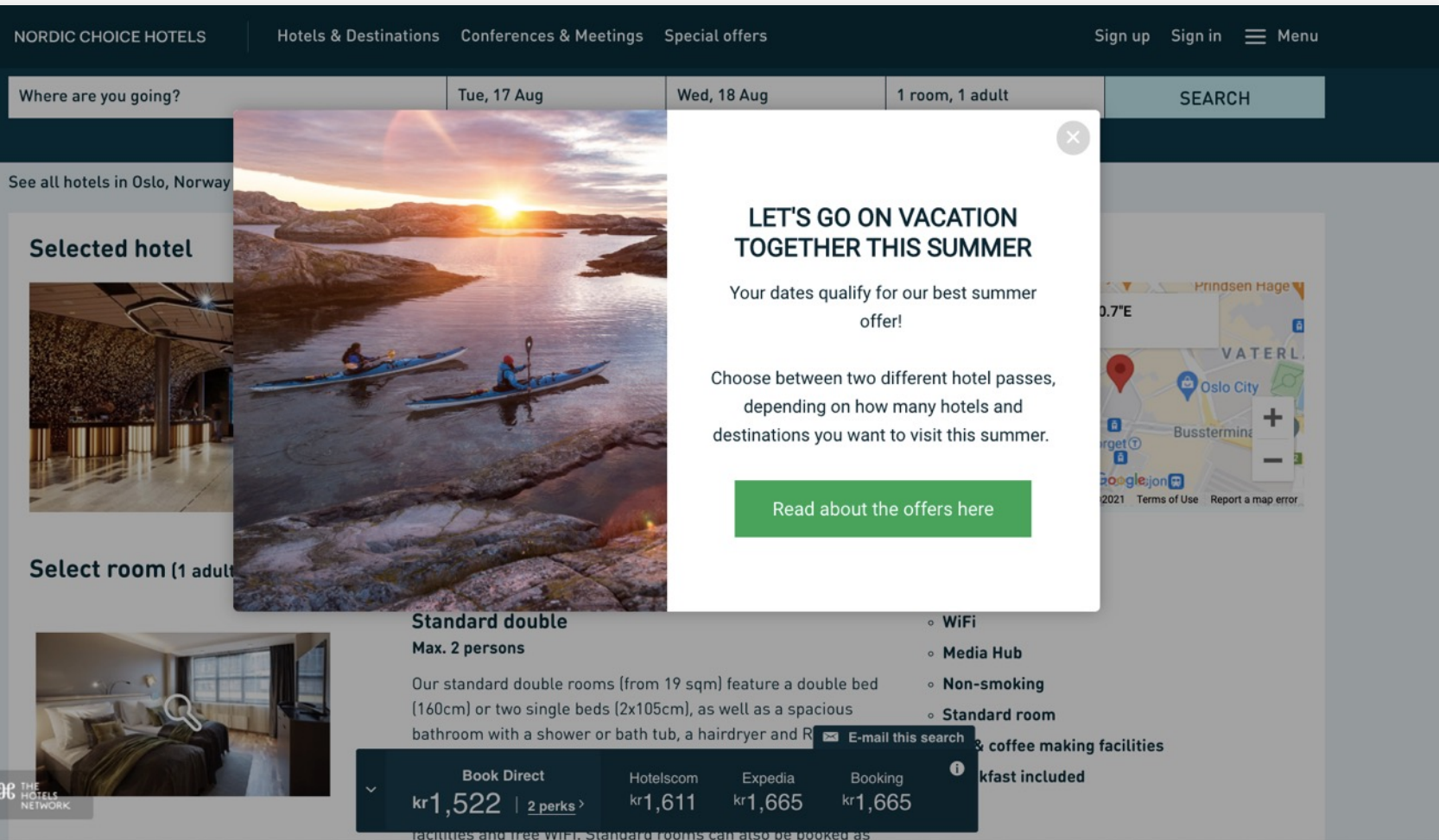
The screenshot shows a hotel booking interface for Leopold Hotel Sheffield. At the top, there's a 'HOME' link and the hotel logo. Below this is a 'BOOKING SUMMARY' section with a progress bar at 1. It displays check-in (10 MAR WED 2021), check-out (11 MAR THU 2021), and nights (1). A 'Search again' button is present. The 'Book Direct' section is highlighted with a teal arrow, showing a price of 67€ + a gift icon. It lists benefits: '+ Welcome drink', '+ Join our Guest Loyalty - Only on specific rates', and '+ Free Cancellation - Only on specific rates'. Below this, it compares prices with Booking.com and Expedia, both at 67€. An 'E-mail this search' button is also visible. A toggle for 'Are your dates flexible?' is set to 'NO'. A note states 'You will pay in Pound Sterling (£). Why?'. The 'WHY BOOK WITH US?' section lists 'Lowest Price Guaranteed' and 'Free Welcome Drink'. To the right, two room options are shown: 'Leopold Best Flexible Rate' with a heart icon and 'Accessible Double Rate' with a bed icon. Both have 'VIEW DETAILS' and 'View Available Rooms' links.



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Bookings below average

Retaining visitors who are about to leave



Increasing your hotel's volume of direct bookings is all about finding creative ways to keep the user captivated throughout the booking process.

With our **Exit Intent** tool, you can re-engage users who you would otherwise have lost. Appearing just as the user is about to leave your website, this eye-catching message is highly effective at grabbing their attention and boosting their interest once again.

Personalize the content to display messages or offers that truly resonate with guests. In this example, the message is shown to users who have searched for a stay during the summer months.



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Bookings below average

Giving visitors the option to save their search

The screenshot shows the AMBA Hotel Grosvenor booking interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes the hotel logo, guest count (1/0), dates (Sep 16-18), accommodation selection, total price (£0.00), and language/currency (English/GBP). A 'Save your search' modal is prominently displayed in the center, featuring a background image of the hotel entrance and a guard. The modal text reads: 'Save your search', 'Send this search result to your email and complete your booking later!', and includes an email input field and a 'Send' button. To the left of the modal, a 'Book Direct' button shows a price of £220.50. To the right, an 'E-mail this search' button is visible. Below the modal, a list of room rates is shown, including 'Special' at £325.00, '£ 227.50', '£ 261.00', 'on Breakfast' at £ 271.00, and 'Flexible' at £ 325.00. A 'View All Rates' link is also present. At the bottom right, a green 'SEE DETAILS' button is displayed next to the price '£ 227.50'. The footer mentions 'Powered by THE HOTELS NETWORK'.

Another common reason for missing out on direct conversions is that visitors are not ready to book during their first website visit.

With our **Saved Search** tool, you can give users the option to save their search and receive an automatic email with all the details of their booking, helping them remember your hotel. A link in the email takes them back to the booking engine so they can easily resume their previous search and complete the reservation.

It's a fantastic way to make sure your hotel is front of mind the minute a guest is ready to finalize their plans!

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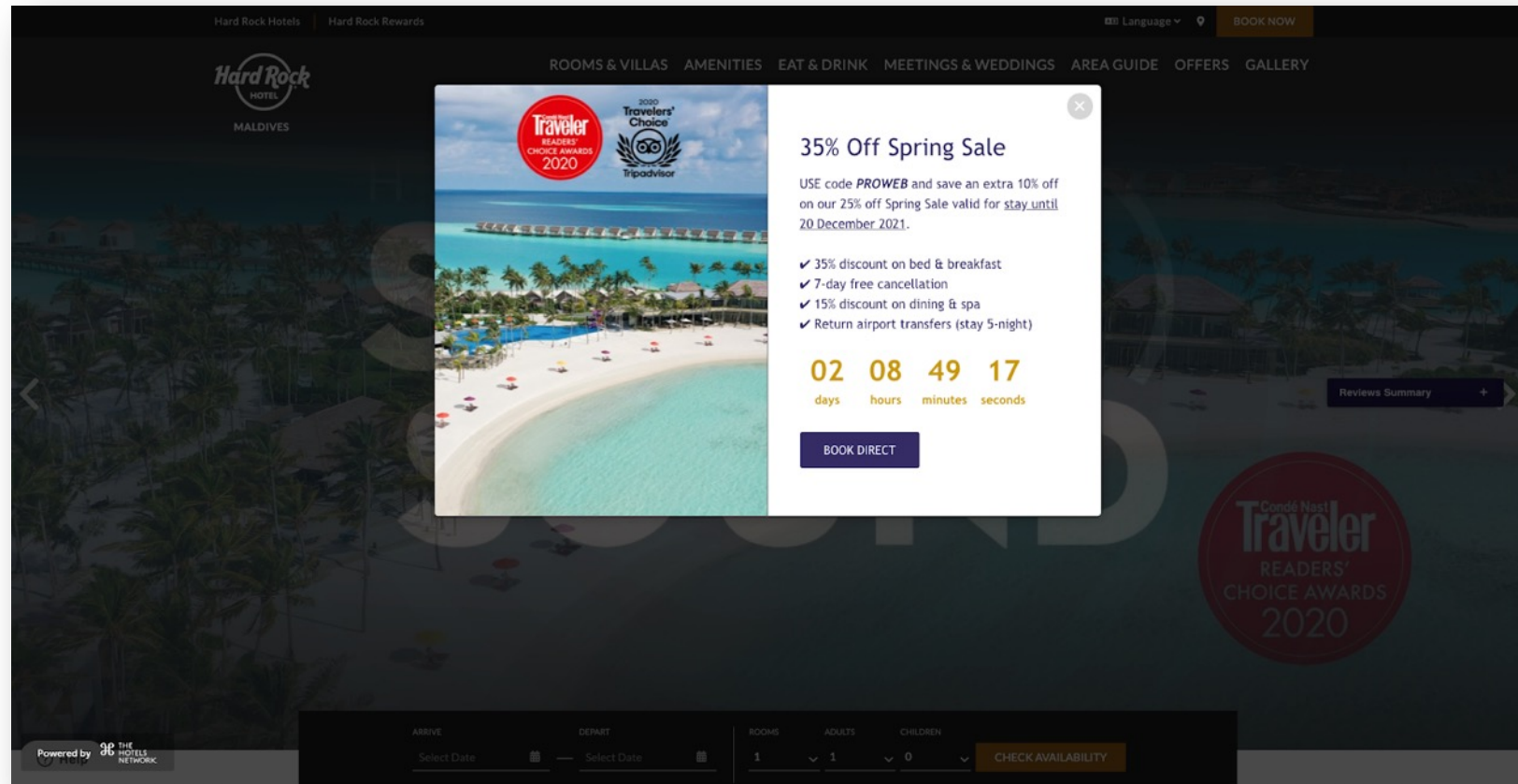
Visitors who search below average

Driving visitors to the booking engine

Getting visitors to your booking engine takes them one step closer to that illusive confirmed booking.

Using our **Layers** on the hotel homepage, you can display attractive messages and offers with powerful CTAs linking directly to the booking engine.

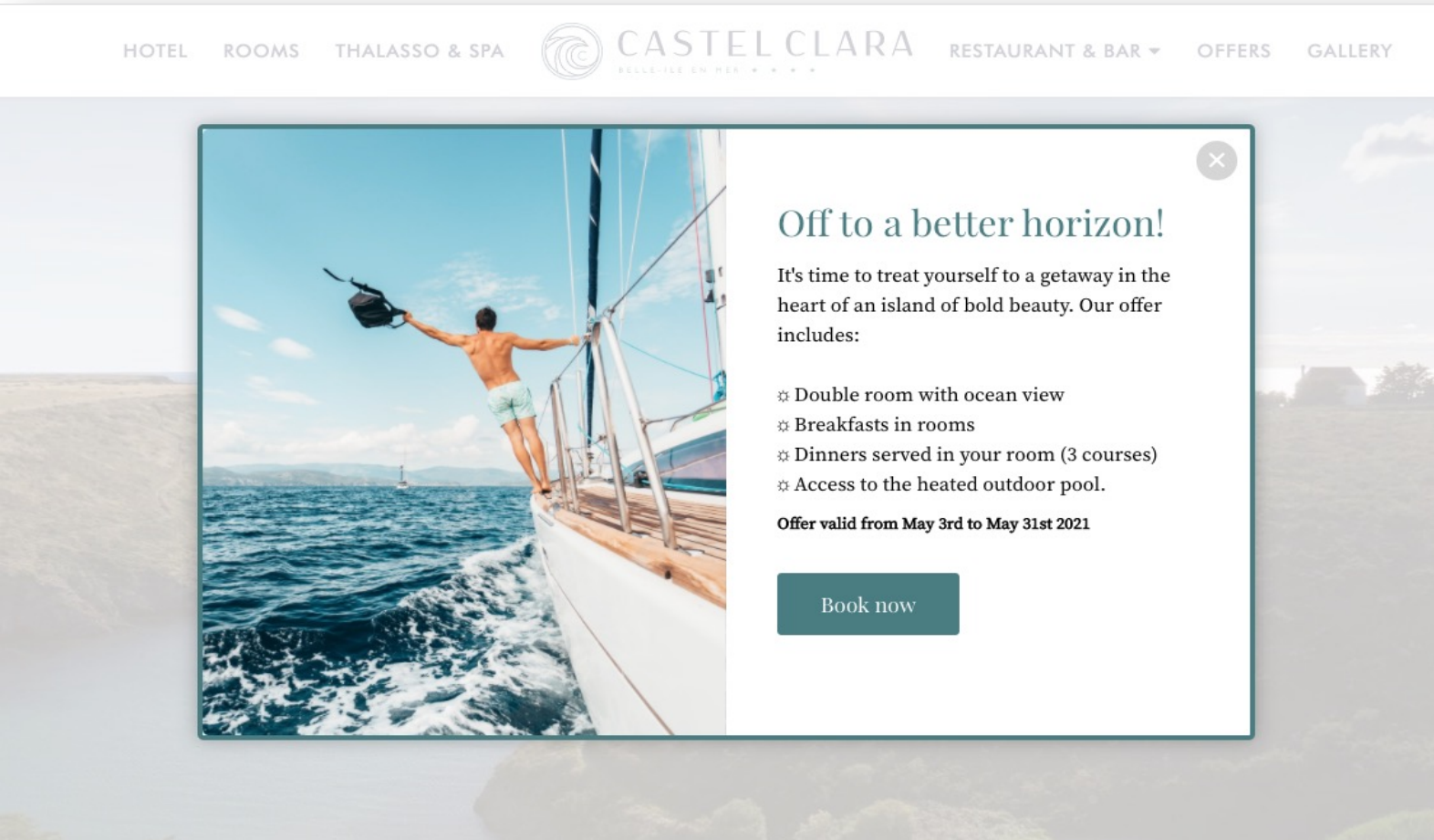
Adding a countdown clock, like the one in this example, helps to create a sense of urgency among visitors and guides them effectively down the booking funnel.



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Search distribution by stay date below average

Encouraging bookings on specific dates



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Castel Clara hotel website. The navigation bar at the top includes links for HOTEL, ROOMS, THALASSO & SPA, RESTAURANT & BAR, OFFERS, and GALLERY. The main content area features a large image of a person on a sailboat. Overlaid on this image is a white box with a dark border containing the following text:

Off to a better horizon!

It's time to treat yourself to a getaway in the heart of an island of bold beauty. Our offer includes:

- ✧ Double room with ocean view
- ✧ Breakfasts in rooms
- ✧ Dinners served in your room (3 courses)
- ✧ Access to the heated outdoor pool.

Offer valid from May 3rd to May 31st 2021

[Book now](#)

The nature of hospitality means that demand is never equally distributed across stay dates, with some dates being less popular at your hotel than others.

If you used BenchDirect to study your upcoming calendar and identified specific dates when your hotel has less demand, you can then build exclusive deals around these dates to give your results a needed boost.

Displaying a **Layer** on the homepage allows you to highlight offers that entice lookers to book on the specific days you are trying to sell. Make sure the package is irresistible and you'll see direct bookings come flying in for those dates!



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Average LOS for bookings below average

Encouraging longer stays to the right audience

The screenshot shows the 'Rooms & Rates' section of the Los Cocos Bungalows website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, Rooms, Restaurant, Los Cocos Bungalows (logo), Weddings, Membership, and Contact. Below the navigation bar, the 'Rooms & Rates' section is titled 'Plan your perfect stay at our hotel'. A progress bar shows three steps: 1. Choose your room (active), 2. Enhance your stay, and 3. Enter your information. The main content area displays a 'Mini Dreamy Room' with a photo of the room, a description ('Spacious and comfortable, this modern furnished room offers a queen-size bed and breathtaking views.'), size (25m2), and price (€120). Below the room details, there's a 'Sweet Bungalow' section. On the right side, a promotional offer is displayed: 'Your extra night is on us!' with a subtext 'Summer nights are the ones to be remembered – and we want you to spend as many as you can with us. Stay 3 nights with us and get the 4th one for free!' and a 'BOOK NOW' button. A teal arrow points to this offer. Below the offer is a 'Reservation Summary' section showing 'Mini Dreamy Room' with a dropdown menu set to '1'. At the bottom left, there's a 'Compare Prices' button with a plus sign.

Is the Average LOS of your hotel's direct bookings lower than your compsets? Why not display offers at key points in the booking funnel to push users to extend their stay?

Highlight promotions on your booking engine that encourage just that: 4th night for free, special rates for stays longer than X number of nights, etc.

You can display these as **Inliners** to ensure you don't overload the UX, since Inliners appear as native content. What's more, you can apply targeting rules based on the dates searched to ensure you are always displaying relevant offers to the right audience.

Following this approach, you can improve occupancy on shoulder dates and increase your Average LOS.



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Disparity frequency above average

Combating price disparities in real time

The screenshot displays a hotel booking interface. At the top, there's a header with "Hotel" and "tan 6, Stockholm, Sweden,". Below this is a search bar with "Check-in Sat, 23 Jan 2021", "Check-out Wed, 3 Feb 2021", and a "Search" button. A "Special Codes or Rates" link is also present. The "SELECT A ROOM" section shows a progress bar with steps 2 (Add-Ons), 3 (Guest Details), and 4 (Confirmation). Below the progress bar, there are filters for "View Results By Rooms" and "Sort By Recommended". The "Elegant Essential Room" is highlighted, with details: "Only 1 room left", "Sleeps 2", "1 Queen", "15 m²". A price comparison table is shown on the right, with a red box highlighting the "Book Direct" option at \$189, which includes a 10% discount. A red arrow points to this option. The table also shows prices for Hotels.com (\$199), Expedia (\$209), and Booking.com (\$211). A "Reviews Summary" button is at the bottom right.

Check-in	Check-out
After 3:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM

Sat, 23 Jan 2021 - Wed, 3 Feb 2021
1 Adult

Total: US\$0

Book Direct	\$210	\$189	+
Special offer available! Click here to get 10% off			
Hotels.com	Expedia	Booking.com	i
\$199	\$209	\$211	

E-mail this search

Reviews Summary +

We know that price disparities is one of the factors that negatively impacts direct conversions the most. If your hotel is underperforming here, it's definitely an area worth focusing on.

Thanks to our **Price Match**, hotels can fight against price disparities in real time by activating the tool directly within the booking engine. Whenever a price disparity is detected, the visitor is presented with a discounted rate to match it. With just one click on the special offer link, the discount is automatically applied to combat the lower rate.

By doing this, you will discourage the visitor from booking on a third-party site and boost your direct bookings instead.



[NEXT RECOMMENDATION >>](#)

Disparity frequency above average

Understanding the root cause of price disparities

Implementing Price Match is just one step towards combating the issue of disparities. Looking into where and when your rates are being undercut is equally important.

Using our **Rate Parity** solution, you can identify patterns and discover what the root cause of your disparities may be, such as an issue in a particular market or room category. You can even generate screenshots of the actual cases, to help when following up with third parties.

By drilling down on the analytics, you will have all the insights you need to be able to take the appropriate action and make sure that you are always offering guests the best rate when they book direct.

OTA	Price Difference	Check In	Check Out	Guests	Rooms	Country	Hotel Price	OTA Price ?	Search Date	Page	Device	Disparity Cause ?
Booking	-1.9%	Thu, 22/04/2021	Sat, 24/04/2021	2 adults	1	Denmark (dk)	1,164 SEK	1,142 SEK	Mon, 18/01/2021, 13:41 20 hours ago	Rooms and Rates	Mobile	3rd Party Rate

OTA	Price Difference	Check In	Check Out	Guests	Rooms	Country	Hotel Price	OTA Price ?	Search Date	Page	Device	Disparity Cause
Agoda	-20.9%	Sat, 14/08/2021	Sun, 15/08/2021	2 adults	1	Germany (de)	92€	73€ Captured: \$88	Mon, 18/01/2021, 12:46 41 minutes ago	Rooms and Rates	Mobile	OTA Undercut Hotel Rate

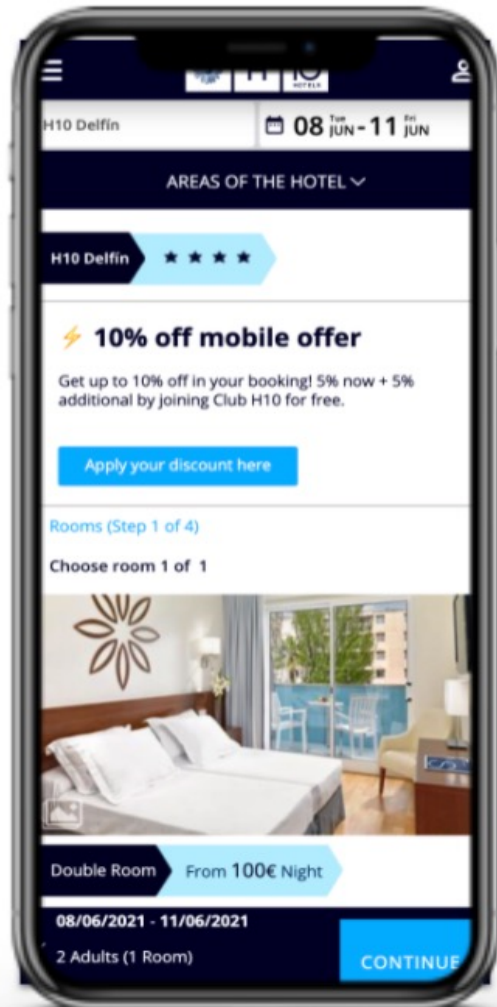
OTA	Price Difference	Check In	Check Out	Guests ?	Rooms	Country	Hotel Price	OTA Price ?	Search Date	Page	Device	Disparity Cause
Agoda	-9.3%	Fri, 21/05/2021	Mon, 24/05/2021	3 adults / 1 children	1	Germany (de)	268€	243€	Sat, 16/01/2021, 19:42 2 days ago	Rooms and Rates	Mobile	OTA Undercut Hotel Rate



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Mobile conversion below average

Increasing reservations from mobile visitors



Do you have a high volume of mobile visitors but find it difficult to convert them into actual bookers? It's crucial to tailor the user experience and messaging for mobile devices and look for creative ways to increase sales on mobile.

Using our **Inliners**, you can display carefully curated and unique offers to your mobile audience. These messages appear as native content and don't overload the UX, something vital for a good mobile experience.

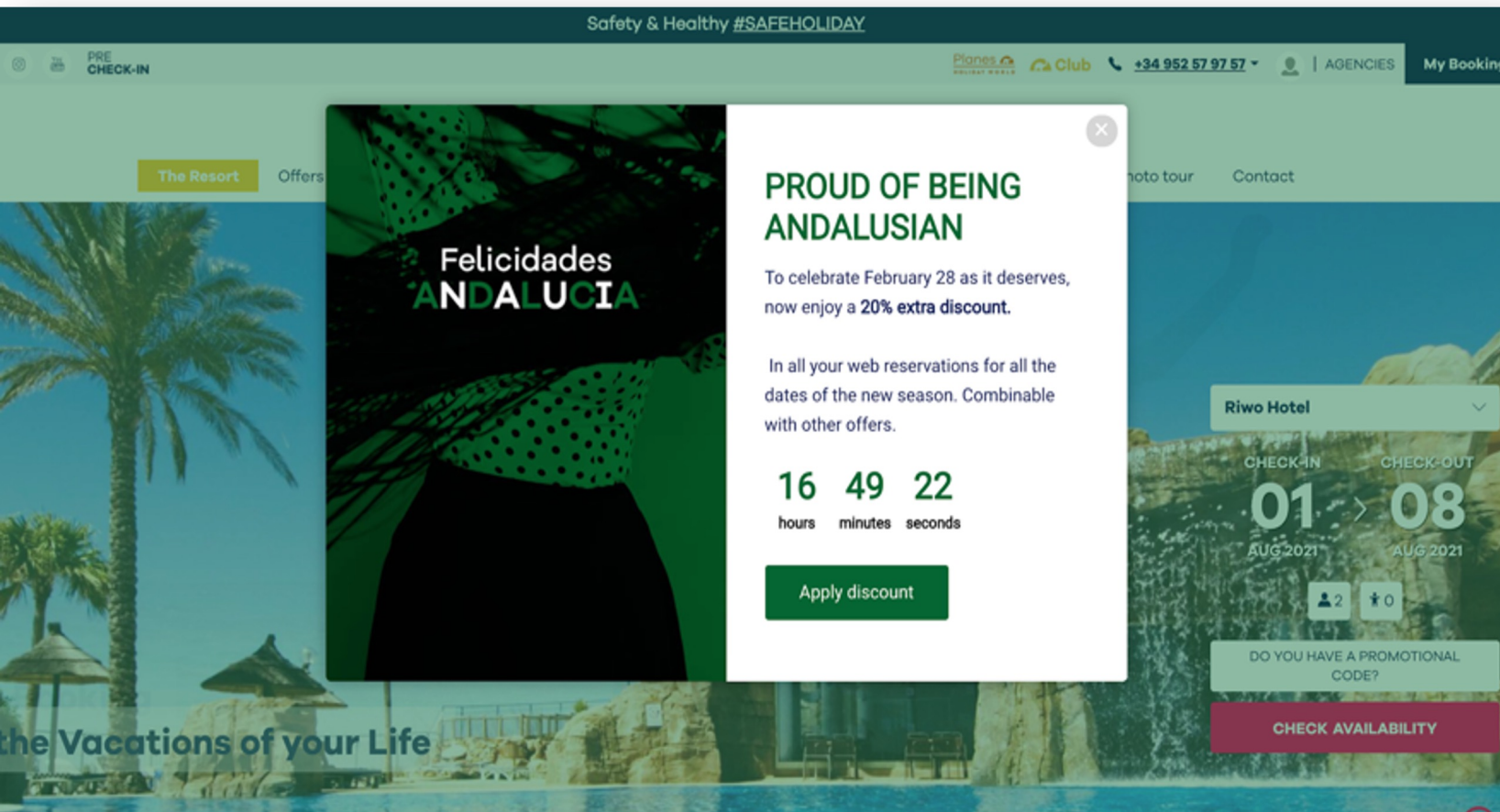
This will let you effectively reach your mobile users, engage with them while also nudging them to confirm their booking right away.



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Conversion below average on top visitor's countries

Boosting bookings from your top visitor countries



The top visitor country for your hotel has the potential to generate the most conversions. If this is not the case at your hotel, consider displaying targeted messages that will resonate with visitors from your top market and help to grab their attention.

Displaying a **Countdown Clock Layer** helps to create a sense of urgency for visitors and tempts them to complete their booking quickly. Using geo-targeting rules, you will ensure that only visitors from your top market will see the exclusive deal.



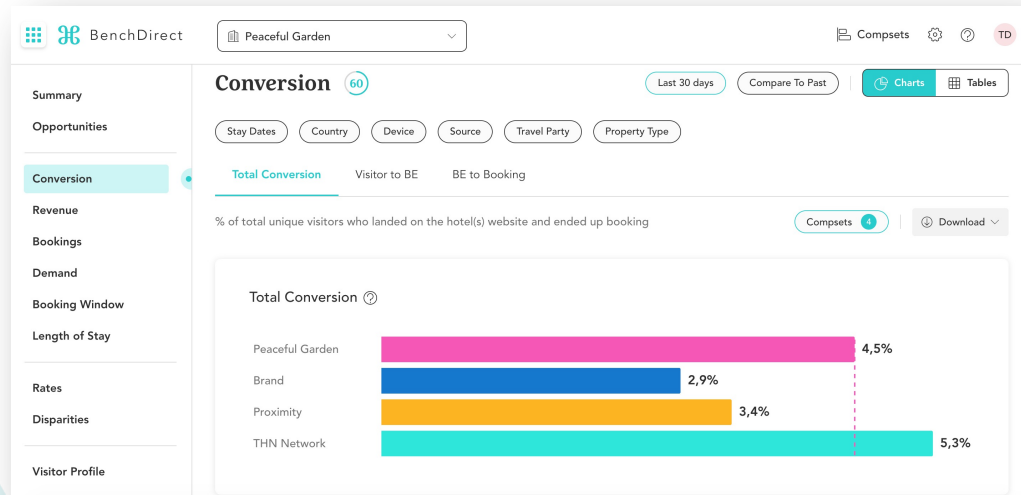
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Learning and getting results with THN



BenchDirect

Benchmark the key metrics of your direct channel

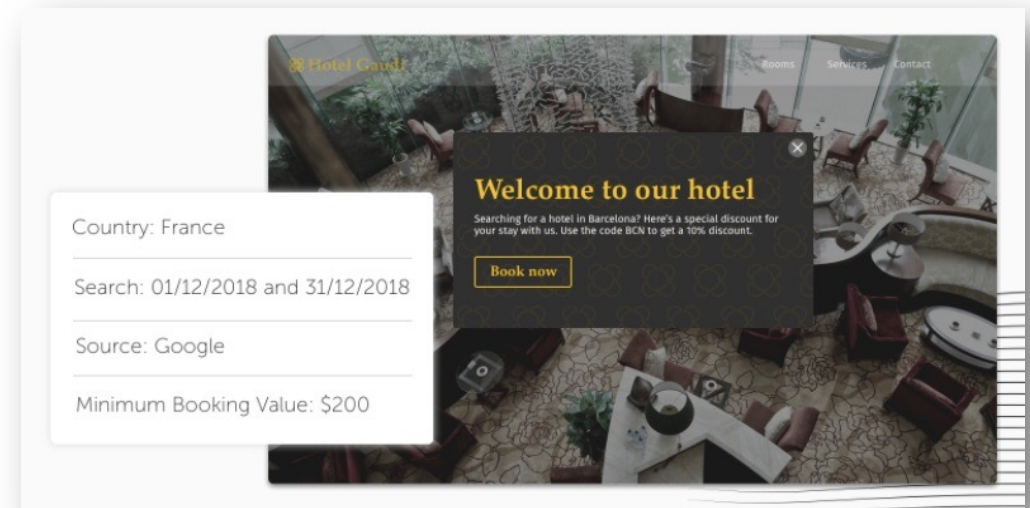


[Request your free account](#)



Personalization

Customize the web experience for every visitor



[Request your free 30-day trial](#)

About The Hotels Network

The Hotels Network is an innovative technology company working with over 14,000 hotels around the globe. Boasting an international team of experts, the company offers clients a full-stack growth platform to power their direct channel. By leveraging a series of integrated tools and analytics, hotel brands can attract, engage and convert guests throughout the user journey.

In addition to price comparison, reviews summary and a full suite of personalization options, THN's Oraculo product harnesses machine learning techniques to predict user behavior and then automatically personalizes both the message and the offer for each user. The company's latest innovation, BenchDirect, is the first benchmarking product for the direct channel, providing hotels with never-before-seen competitive data that empowers smarter decision-making.

Our mission is to improve the online booking experience, grow direct bookings and strengthen the relationship between hotel brands and their guests.

[Contact us today](#) to find out more.



www.thehotelsnetwork.com

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