



Internet Reservations

What you need to know about internet reservations.

May 2016

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This paper will explain internet reservations and your options for booking reservations through your own web site and through automated connections to the Internet Booking Engines - IDS/GDS systems (like Expedia.com, Hotel.com. Booking.com, etc.).

Some History

Each Internet booking engine has its own format for its inventory and for receiving a reservation. Historically, this meant that only the large Property Management System (PMS) providers had access and connectivity. Most systems relied on manual techniques to “give” inventory to the booking engines and to enter reservations from the faxes or emails received from booking engines, which required manual entry.

As the internet became more popular, people were empowered with the ability to do their own research and bypass an often inattentive travel agent. The culture underwent a major transformation and an internet presence became essential. Few properties had the ability to take a reservation from their own web site and booking engines like Expedia were born. Slowly the big chains – Hilton, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Days Inn, etc. – built large and expensive booking engines. These brands gained popularity because they had Central Reservation Systems (CRS) – the ability to capture a reservation for one of their franchisees, even though often the reservation had to be re-keyed from the CRS into the individual hotel’s PMS.

In the aftermath of the 2008 recession and the downturn in the lodging industry in North America, many properties had unsold inventory that they wanted to sell AT ANY PRICE. This spurred the tremendous growth of internet booking engines and created an attitude in guests to expect cheap prices from the internet – much cheaper prices than they were offered at the property. Discounts in the 40% range were common.

It was still cumbersome to allot inventory to the booking engines and to receive bookings if you were not part of a large chain or had software with this still expensive connectivity technology.

Discounts dropped as business improved. Rates discounted 15-25% were more common. This increase in business created a demand for properly integrated systems, where you could easily set up the inventory and the rates and publish to multiple booking engines and seamlessly capture the reservations.

The present

The way that guests are researching and booking reservations has changed again. The newness of online booking is past. People, especially Gen X, Gen Y and Millennials, expect to book online on their phones or tablets. The big booking engines like Expedia are very useful for finding broad availability and general price. However increasingly people research on these sites and search for the hotel's site and book directly with a hotel knowing they will get a better deal or a better room. Encountering an email form typically results in the user abandoning their search in favor of a property that can provide immediate gratification in the form of a confirmation number.

Modern search engines (Google) are a great equalizer. You appear on an equal footing with the biggest properties when your guests search for accommodation in your area, You are no longer held ransom by the big booking engines. You will not have to pay the fee associated with using someone else's booking engine.

Your Options

Take reservations directly from your own web site. By having the ability to take bookings in real time using live room / rate availability directly from your own web site, you are able to be up to date. After all, you want to sell the room from YOUR web site rather than from a third party site because you have to sell to them at a discounted rate or pay a per booking fee. Taking reservations from you own web site requires a high speed internet connection. If you are not sure of your internet speed, then go to www.speedtest.net and test. Your score must be 5M down and 3M up. For an example of online reservations see: www.meadowbrookresort.com/reservations or www.skichinapeak.com/lodging.aspx

Use a Channel Manager. A Channel Manager allows you to shop your inventory to the various big booking engines like Expedia and Booking.com. A channel manager provides you a single point of contact for room and rate availability. The Channel Manager then shops your inventory to the various booking engines and returns reservations to you. Ideally the interface is seamless. As you allot inventory

the Channel Manager is updated. Reservations from the Channel Manager are placed directly into your reservation database with no additional step. There are fees associated with using a channel manager but it greatly simplifies your inventory management. Smart Hotel Software has connected to TravelClick. Your internet speed does not have to be as high to effectively use TravelClick.

Smart Hotel Software can provide both of these options to you. If you have any questions or want to add this functionality, please call (604 926 3215) or email (info@SmartHotelSoftware.com).

We hope this explained our approach to internet bookings and how our solutions will work for you.

About Smart Hotel Software

Smart Hotel Software has been an application software developer for more than 25 years providing business intelligence software for the Small and Medium sized Business (SMB) market. Our products are sold and supported worldwide.

At Smart Hotel Software, we believe that a robust system coupled with reliable service is paramount. We rely on the most innovative use of proven technology to develop systems that you can trust to build your business. We are proud of this distinction as well as our commitment to our clients, our business partners and the industry in general.

Smart Hotel Software

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