



Let Your Hotel Website Double up as Your BDM

Hoteliers reveal how to create personalized booking value through their own digital platforms

By Gita Hari

Change is the only constant. Its palpability can't be felt more anywhere else than in the hospitality sector. Today, a hotel website exceeds the purpose of an E-pamphlet. It is one of the most important business and revenue tools for any hotel. Guests today want convenience, transparency, and personalized experiences, and that journey often begins online. According to Roopal Sachdev – General Manager Taj The Trees, Mumbai, "Increasing direct bookings starts with creating trust. A hotel website must be easy to navigate, visually strong, mobile-friendly, and offer a seamless booking experience. Guests are more likely to book directly when they see clear value, whether through

exclusive offers, curated experiences, or loyalty benefits." Today's traveller is looking for meaningful stays, wellness,

dining experiences, celebrations, and personalized hospitality. Content also plays a very important role.



Roopal Sachdev

Direct-only Perks

Is your website a result-oriented salesperson/Business Development Manager?

Several international hotel groups successfully drive direct bookings through member-only pricing, digital check-ins, app-based room selection, flexible cancellation policies, reward points, complimentary upgrades, and exclusive perks. "Hotels can maximize direct bookings by optimizing the user journey: offering exclusive 'direct-only' perks (like complimentary breakfast/spa therapy



Rakesh Rane

or room upgrades), leveraging a fast, mobile-friendly Hotel Booking Engine, and retargeting website visitors with paid ads to capture traffic that didn't convert initially. A vast majority of research and booking happens on mobile devices. A fast, responsive design is non-negotiable," says Kaushik Mondal, General Manager IRA by The Orchid Hotel, Sambhajinagar. Guests today increasingly choose direct

channels not only for discounts, but also for convenience, recognition, personalization, and value-added experiences such as early check-in and late check-out, pay-at-hotel options, VIP privileges, and loyalty rewards. Rakesh Rane, Revenue Manager, Sayaji Hotel Pune Ltd, notes, "Hotels are also combining SEO, meta-search, retargeting, CRM-driven email marketing, performance marketing, and loyalty campaigns into one integrated direct-booking strategy designed to maximize guest retention and lifetime value."

Varun Marwah, Commercial Director, DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad observes, "One successful initiative has been the introduction of exclusive website-only packages tailored to specific guest needs and travel patterns. For instance, we launched a Weekend Staycation Package for leisure travelers seeking a short city escape, along with a Long Stay Package designed for extended business stays and relocation guests. These packages were made exclusively available through



Vijay Chandran

our hotel website, encouraging guests to book directly instead of through third-party platforms. By combining attractive inclusions, flexible benefits, and direct booking advantages, we were able to create stronger engagement with guests while also increasing direct digital bookings."

"Hotels can significantly increase direct bookings by maintaining a smart balance



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Varun Marwah

between dynamic pricing and value-added direct booking benefits. While competitive rates attract attention, exclusive website-only add-ons like complimentary meals, room upgrades, flexible check-ins, spa credits, or activity inclusions create stronger guest preference for booking directly. A well-optimized website combined with SEO-driven blogs and local experience content helps hotels generate consistent organic traffic and reduce OTA dependence," affirms Antashia Fernandes, Asst. General Manager-Reservations & Revenue - Zuper Hotels & Resorts, as she adds, "Today, the most successful hotels are not just selling rooms, they are creating personalized booking value through their own digital platforms."

Successful Booking Strategies

In today's highly competitive hospitality landscape, direct bookings are increasingly influenced by experience-driven storytelling rather than pricing alone. "Hotel blogs and destination-led stories help drive organic traffic to the website while positioning the hotel as more than just a place to stay. Articles around local experiences, food, weddings, business travel, or sustainability help build visibility, connect emotionally with guests, and eventually support room and event bookings. At Taj The Trees, we have seen strong engagement through experience-led offerings," reveals Roopal Sachdev.

One of the most effective initiatives is to promote curated experiences such as wellness retreats, spa-led rejuvenation stays, and mindful family escapes instead of generic room-centric promotions. Hotels

that invest in strong digital narratives, destination-focused content, and loyalty ecosystems such as Marriott Bonvoy are witnessing stronger guest engagement and improved website conversions. Vijay Chandran, General Manager, The Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa, specifies, "At The Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa, the focus has been on positioning the property as more than just a luxury stay, successfully established itself as a wellness and experiential destination, helping attract travellers seeking meaningful and immersive getaways. These campaigns generated higher engagement and quality direct enquiries, especially from key drive markets like Delhi and Jaipur where travellers actively seek short luxury breaks."

Varun Marwah points out, "We have focused on immersive activations rather than strategic pricing. Seasonal staycation offers, long-stay benefits, curated dining experiences, and limited-period packages have helped attract high-intent travelers directly to our website." Exclusive inclusions such as flexible stay benefits, dining privileges, and added conveniences further strengthen direct booking preference over OTAs.

Content Marketing and Hotel Blogs as Tools

Hotel blogs are now evolving into powerful revenue-driving tools rather than just branding platforms. Instead of zeroing in on aggressive promotions like "Best backwater resorts in Kerala," hotels are steadily spawning goal-driven content such as "Ayurvedic detox experiences in Kerala,"



Antashia Fernandes



Kaushik Mondal

"48-hour Bengaluru business travel guide," "Best rooftop dining experiences", "Why Pushkar is Emerging as a Wellness Destination" or "Weekend Getaways Near Mumbai". These searches happen earlier in the traveler journey and help hotels attract high-intent audiences before accommodation decisions are made. Rakesh Rane highlights, "Successful hospitality brands strategically connect such content to stay packages, dining experiences, wellness programs, events, seasonal offers, and booking engines – creating a seamless path from discovery to conversion. Experience-led storytelling through local guides, culinary features, wellness itineraries, hidden gems, and staff recommendations also improves SEO performance, organic traffic, social sharing, engagement, and repeat website visitation, positioning hotels not just as hospitality brands, but also as digital content and commerce brands."

Over time, these digital initiatives not only strengthen brand visibility but also contribute to long-term guest loyalty and higher direct revenue generation. For luxury hospitality brands today, content is no longer just a marketing function – it has become a long-term revenue-generating asset that plays a critical role in influencing traveller decisions and driving direct business. While online travel platforms remain important partners, direct bookings allow hotels to build a stronger relationship with the guest from the very first interaction. The future of hospitality will belong to hotels that combine technology with authentic storytelling and personalized service. ■