



Building your business with direct bookings.

Did you know that two-thirds of your guests would prefer to book directly with you?

The popularity of direct bookings is great news for your business. By being ready and prepared to take more direct bookings online, you can:

- Spend less on commission payments to channels.
- Offer better deals by cutting out the 'middleman'.
- Build long-term, personal relationships with your guests.
- Be in charge of all aspects of your brand (how it displays and is marketed).

This guide unpacks five areas where you can take action to boost your direct online bookings. We'll look at the reasons why you should:

- 1 Optimise your website to encourage direct bookings
- 2 Use Discounts, Packages and Promo Codes
- 3 Make the most of the Billboard Effect
- 4 Spruce up your Google Business listing
- 5 Add direct booking links to your social media profiles



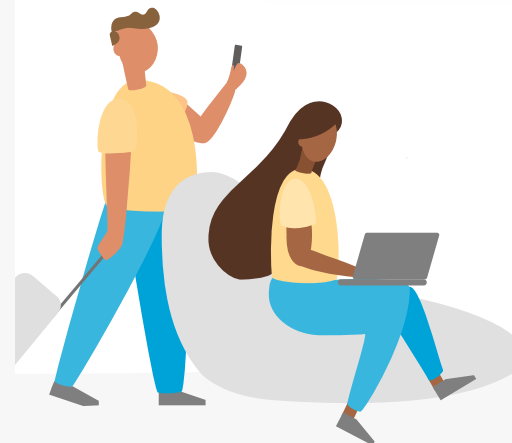
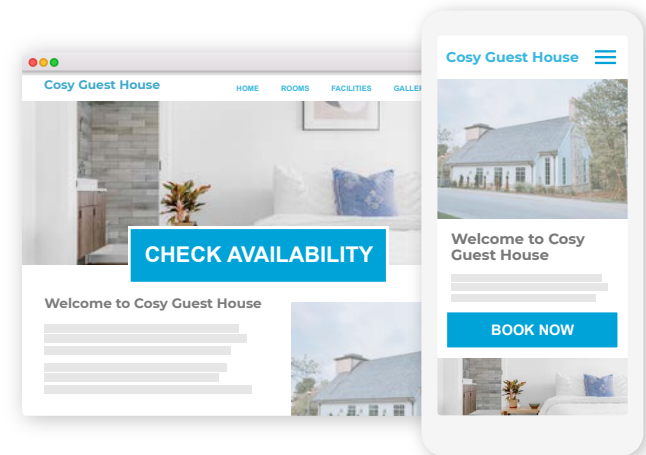


1

Optimise your website to encourage direct bookings.

Today's travellers no longer head to your website just to take a look at photos of your rooms. They'll want to check your rates and availability, and be able to easily book direct if the information suits them. So why not put in the effort into what could be your property's **most profitable sales channel?**

Your website is your property's shop window. Is what you have on display tempting enough? Let's share a few tips on how to optimise your site.





Catch the eye with your call-to-action.

Your website should provide relevant information and be designed to encourage bookings. Don't frustrate potential guests by hiding a booking button away in a hard-to-find menu. Make your call-to-action bold and attractive and make sure it is easily seen on every page of your site.

Did you know? Almost 90% of website visitors **only** read headlines and Call-to-Action text.

TOP TIP: The **NightsBridge booking engine** can be linked to buttons on both your website and Facebook page. You can also add a calendar widget to your site's home page, so guests can check availability.

Sprinkle in some fresh content.

If there's one thing that is a turn off it's poor quality or outdated information. Here are a few quick tips on how to maintain your website's content:

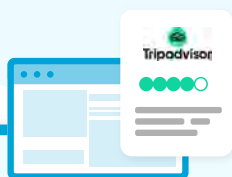
- Update your galleries with your most impactful photographs and videos;
- Read through your written content to ensure that it's accurate and up-to-date, editing out irrelevant information;
- Add any new descriptions and reviews, and some of your latest offers;
- Tell potential guests about more than just your property – they're also visiting the region.



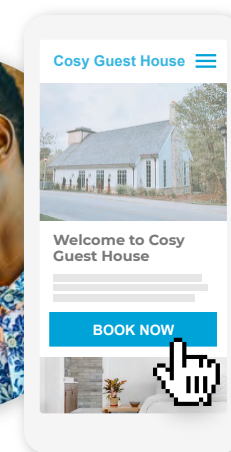
Keep site visitors from wandering off.

If guests have to leave your site to find information elsewhere there's always a chance you might lose out on that commission-free direct booking. Here's how you can prevent that from happening:

- Display feeds from your social media channels directly on your site.
- Pull your latest reviews from sites like Tripadvisor, Google and Facebook onto your own website.
- When you display accolades you received from booking sites, don't link these to your listings on the sites themselves.
- Make sure your map doesn't display an error so visitors have to find your location on another site.



TOP TIP: NightsBridge's integration with **Tripadvisor** sends a review request automatically after a guest's stay. You can also display your Tripadvisor reviews directly on your booking engine, making sure your potential guests don't have to go anywhere else for the information they need.



Make sure your site is mobile-friendly.

Do the test – go on! Use Google's [Mobile Friendly test](#) on your PC or open your website from your phone and check if:

- Your site resizes correctly on a smartphone.
- Text and images all work on a smaller display.
- Your site is fast and responsive. 32% of bookings are abandoned due to slow loading time.

Did you know?

- By 2024, one in every four travel bookings will be made on a mobile phone.
- Booking.com research shows that 50% of accommodation searches and bookings are made on mobile.

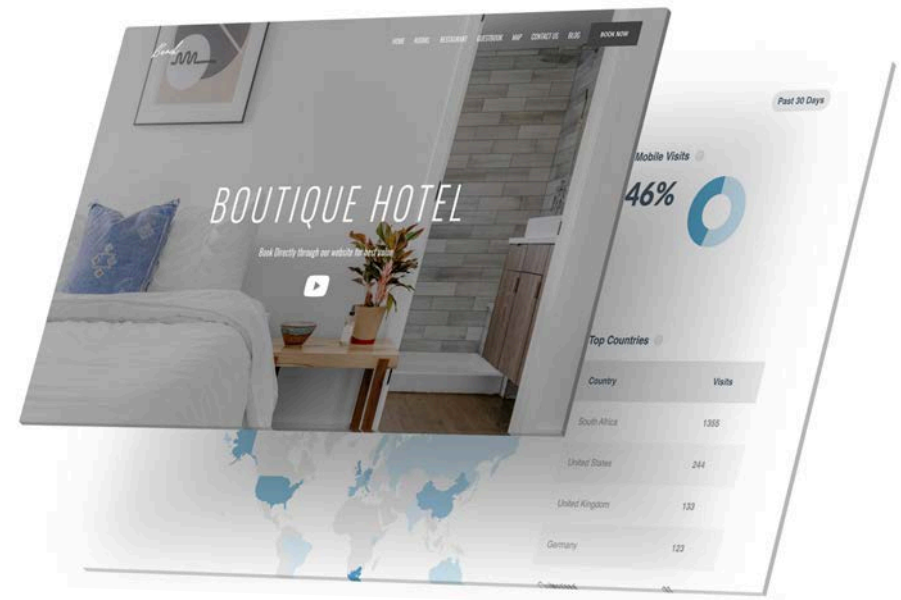
Don't have a website? We recommend Springnest.

NightsBridge recommends Springnest's all-in-one website solution as an option for a new website, or if you need to upgrade the one you have.

Springnest builds websites specifically for accommodation businesses that:

- Are mobile-friendly, taking your content to where your guests are.
- Come SEO ready – fast, responsive and optimised in all the right places.
- Use large pictures to inspire your guests to book.
- Link to your social media accounts.
- Can be easily managed by you.
- Integrate seamlessly with the NightsBridge booking engine.

TOP TIP: If you're interested in switching to **Springnest** now -- saving money while updating your image -- download an information pack [here](#).



Powerful websites, crafted for tourism.

Tell your story. Build your brand.
Reach guests. Increase bookings.



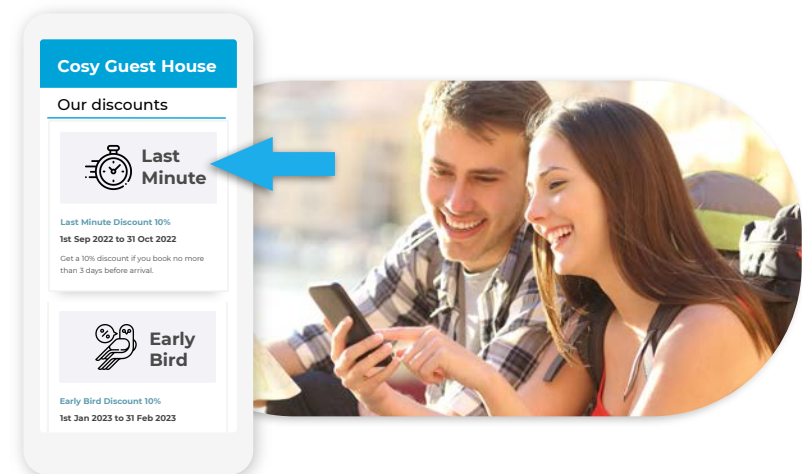
2

Use Discounts, Packages and Promo Codes.

Everyone loves a deal. A recent study reported two-thirds of consumers made a purchase they weren't originally planning to make, simply because they could potentially pay a bit less. Boost your direct bookings by offering your guests discounts, packages and promo codes.

Offer discounts on your website and booking engine.

Most of us are more tempted to buy when we see what we can save. Showing a discount percentage or 'before' and 'now' discounted price has the power to turn mere interest into serious consideration because everyone loves a bargain.



Set up discounts that will appeal to different types of travellers:

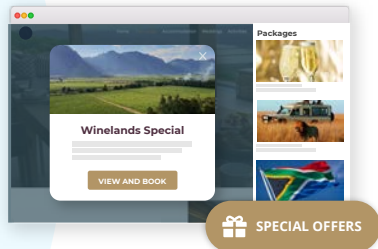
- **Early bird discounts** are aimed at those who prefer to plan far in advance.
- For the more spontaneous travellers, **Last-Minute discounts** are more attractive.
- Digital nomads would appreciate a **Long Stay discount**.

Promote your specials everywhere.

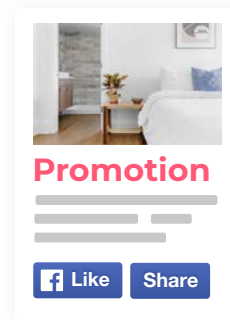
Make sure your potential guests see your special offers on the platform they most frequently use.



Email marketing: Keep your existing and potential guests up-to-date with current and upcoming specials through an email or newsletter. Your mails should be short, attractive and include a call-to-action to encourage bookings.



Highlighting specials on your website: Once a guest decides to make a booking they will most likely head to your website to check availability. Make sure your offers display prominently when they get there to remind them of any deal they can get. Popups or sidebars are a great way to do this.



Social media: If you are active on social media platforms this is a great way to connect with a larger audience. Post about your deals and packages regularly to keep your audience informed.

Cosy Guest House special holiday offer!
[click here](#)



WhatsApp/SMS/Facebook

Messenger: Your potential guests might prefer to hear from you or ask questions through other communication channels they use often. Send your latest special directly to your database of contacts to encourage bookings.

TOP TIP: After your packages are set up on **NightsBridge** they will display as bookable rates on your booking engine. And you can easily promote them on your own website or via social media platforms.

Create value-added packages for direct bookings.

Your target market should be your focus at all times when you sit down to put together packages. What could you offer that would delight them most? How can you add to their overall experience?

Put yourself in your guests' shoes:

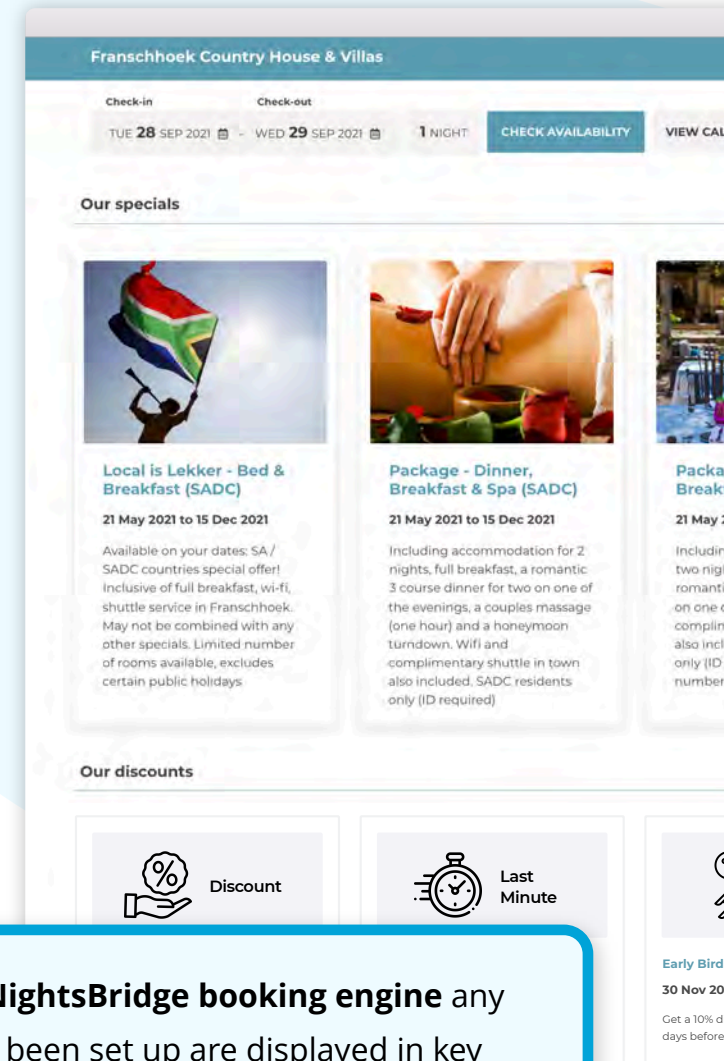
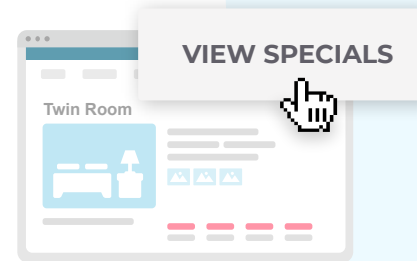
Hosting food lovers? Add a voucher to a local eatery to a package. Mid-week discounts may encourage corporate bookings, while weekend guests may appreciate a complimentary breakfast or late check-out on Sunday.

Team up with local suppliers:

Share the marketing costs of specials with a local company. Offer your little guests free entrance to a local play park, where the adults will most likely support the coffee shop. Or add a buy-one-get-one-free adventure with a local guide to your package.

Make returning guests feel special:

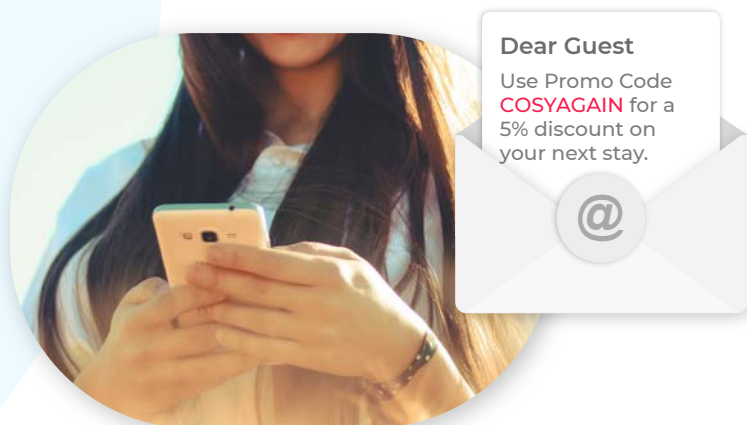
Around 40% of online sales come from existing customers, and most businesses sink or swim depending on how they encourage repeat business. Why not send all previous guests an email with offers exclusively for returning guests?



TOP TIP: On the **NightsBridge booking engine** any specials that have been set up are displayed in key places at all times. They appear as a rate for available room types, and a separate tab lists future specials (with photographs and descriptions) to encourage forward bookings.

Encourage return bookings with Promo Codes.

Promo codes are a way to offer exclusive discounted rates that regular guests don't have access to. They can be used in a number of ways to increase your direct booking revenue.

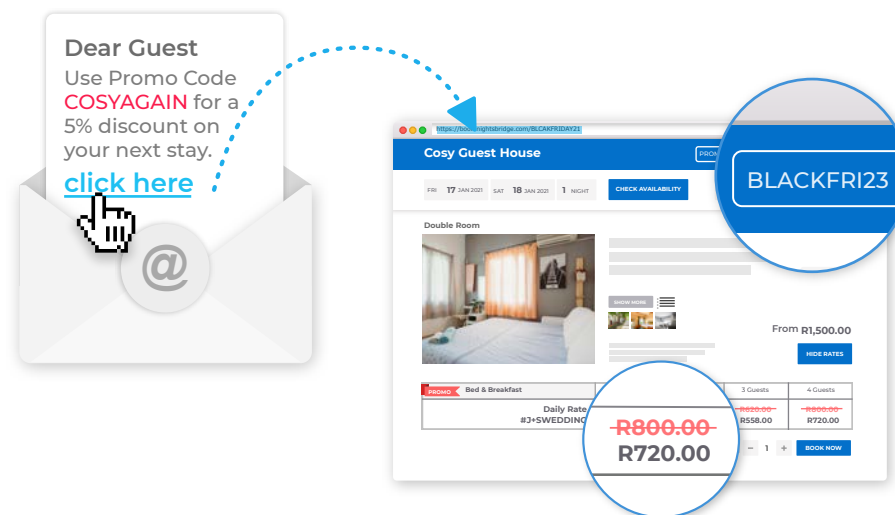


Offer guest discounts for return stays:

A great way to encourage guests to book direct is to create a personal discount for a return stay, and offer the promo code to them in an email after departure. If they originally booked through a channel this will help convince them to book direct the next time.

Incentivise repeat business from agents:

Encourage booking agents to send you more repeat business by giving them their own unique promo code that unlocks a further discount.



TOP TIP: A promo code should be attractive to shoppers. Make sure yours are:

- Easy to **remember**.
- Easy to **calculate**.
- Easy to **apply**.

NightsBridge makes this easy by providing 'straight-to-the-rate' booking links for promo codes. One click takes guests straight to their unique discounted rate on the booking engine. This link is also easy to share via email, social media or on your own website.



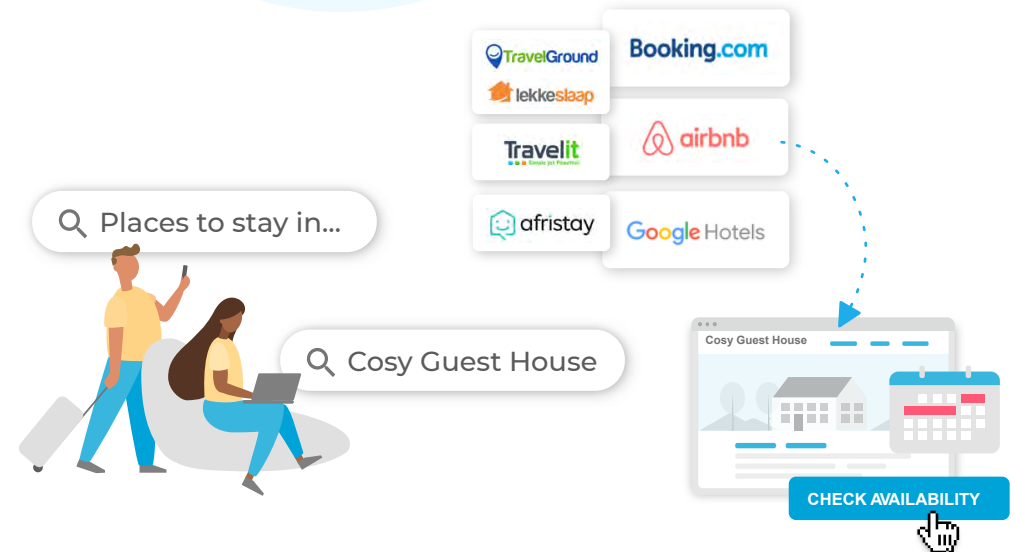
3

Make the most of the Billboard Effect.

Once you focus on getting more direct bookings, you may be tempted to delete your listings on other channels and sites. But wait! Studies revealed that 65% of guests who book directly with a property online visited a booking site before purchase. That's the magic of the **Billboard Effect**.

How does the Billboard Effect work?

The Billboard Effect is what happens when guests find your property name and listing on a booking site, search for your property website online and then make a direct booking with you there, on your own site. In this case, your channel listing acted purely as an additional marketing tool for your property.



Up to 26% more direct bookings. A Cornell University experiment showed that being listed on other channels increased the direct bookings at the properties by between 9% and 26%. For every booking through an online travel agency (OTA) website, a property received an average of three to nine additional direct reservations.

Let's look at some strategies you can use to make the most of the **Billboard Effect**:



Price to sell direct.

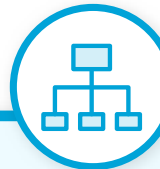
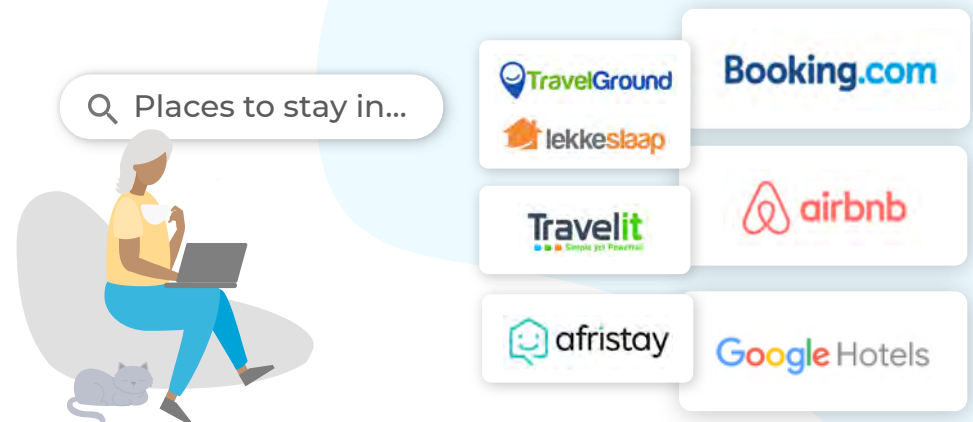
Your rates will be a key booking motivator for guests who find your name on a third-party site and then search for your website directly. Make sure you have a great deal ready when they land on your home page.

Offer engaging content on your site.

You don't want a traveller to leave your website without making a booking. Provide relevant and interesting information to make the traveller feel familiar with your property. Use beautiful images and compelling stories to increase the likelihood of a purchase.

Join more partner websites.

Given the way the Billboard Effect works, it might be worth connecting to a few more booking channels to get your property name to show up on the sites people use to search for accommodation.



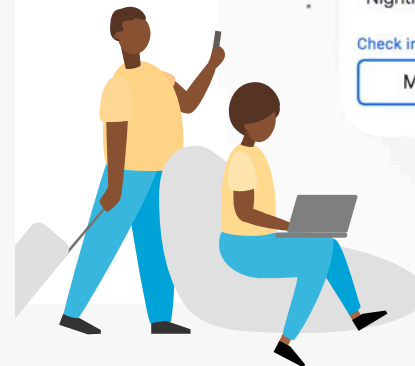
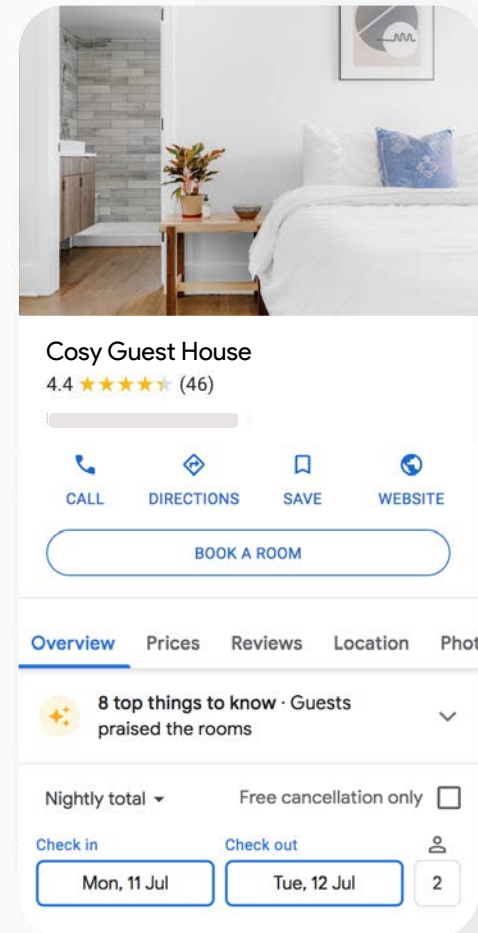
TOP TIP: NightsBridge makes it easy for you to connect your rates and availability to **more than 250 online booking channels**. We'll link you to the best local and international channels for your business.



4

Spruce up your Google Business listing.

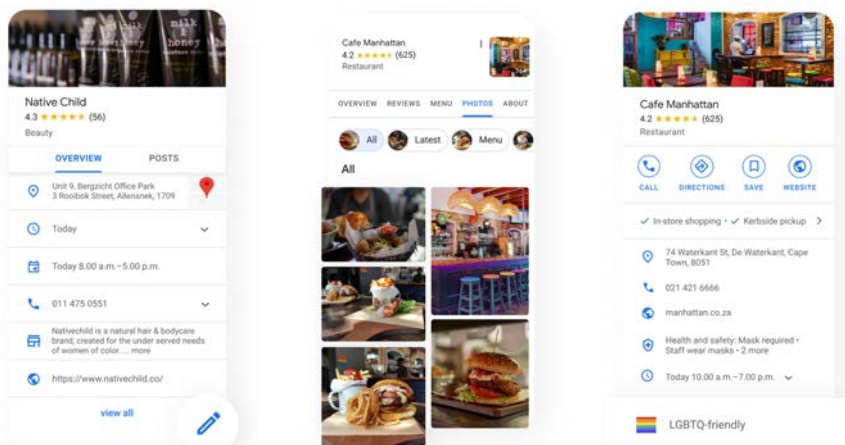
According to research by Ipsos, updating your property's **Google Business Listing** could lead to 7x more clicks and a 50% higher chance of your property getting a booking. You can make the most of what Google has to offer your business by making sure your listing is in top shape.



Claim and verify your Google Business listing.

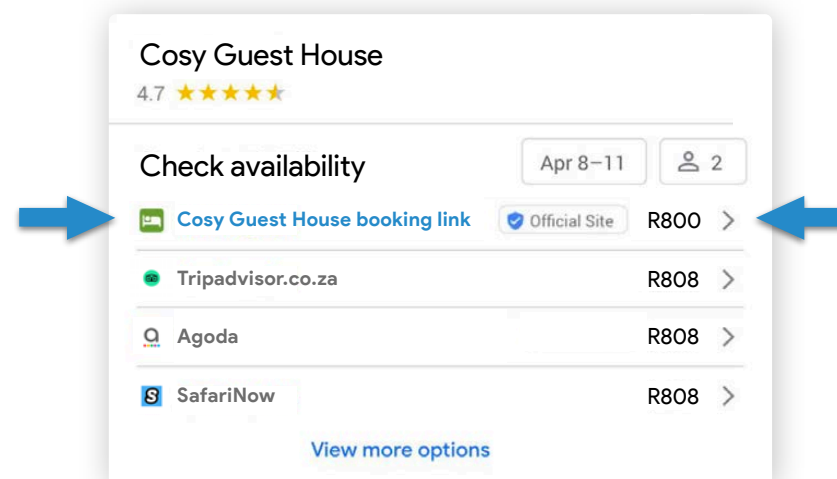
Your Google Business profile helps you to promote your business information across Google – like on Google Search and Google Maps. With your Google Business account, you can connect with your customers, post updates to your Business Profile and see how customers are interacting with your business on Google. If you haven't verified and claimed your Google Business listing yet, you can do so by following [these steps](#).

Google Hotels



Connect your Google Business listing to your booking engine.

If the company managing your bookings is an official **Google Partner** (like NightsBridge), you can also have a booking link displayed through which commission-free bookings can be made. Your property listing will have an 'official site' badge, and bookings can take place on your own booking engine.



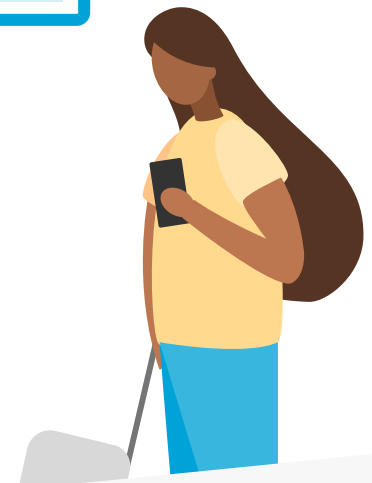
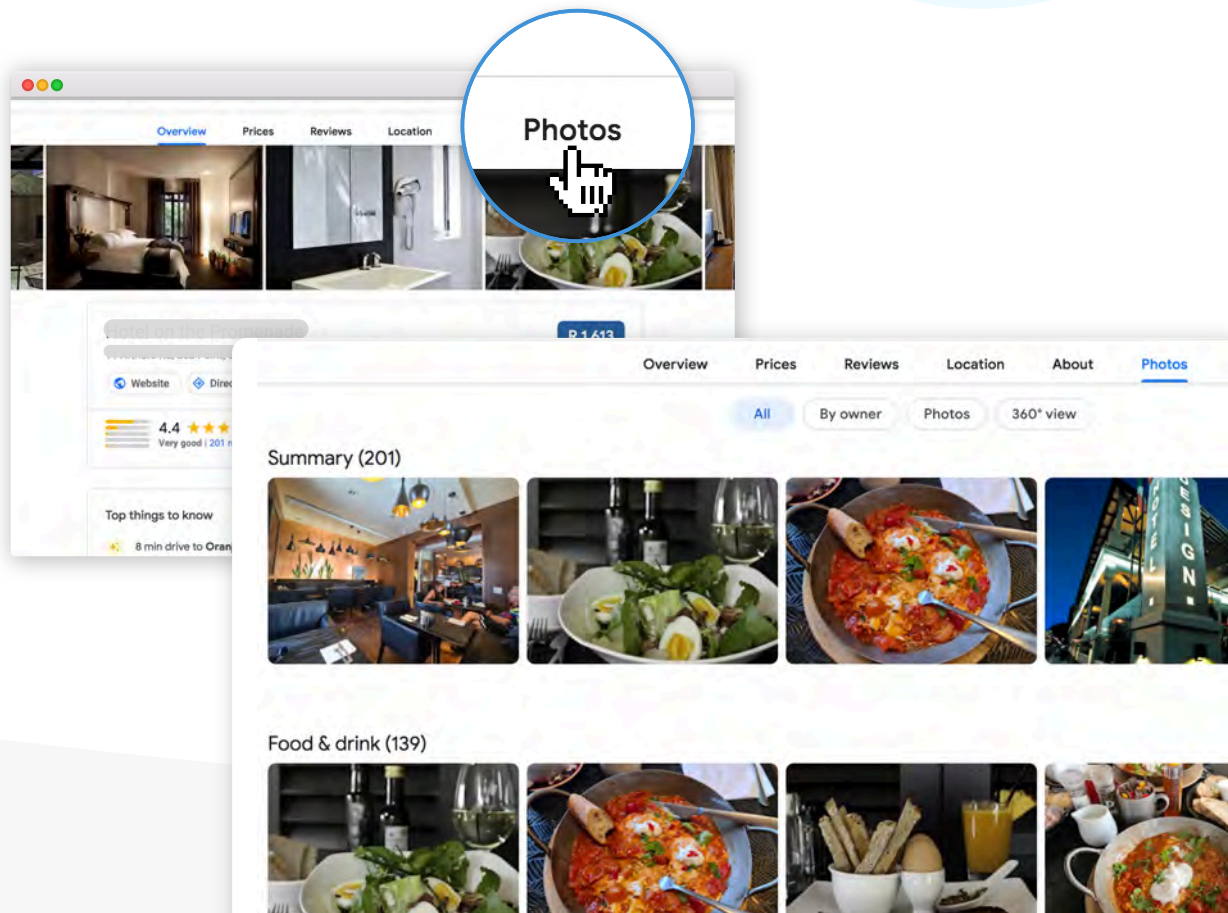
TOP TIP: NightsBridge's free integration with Google Hotels is a powerful direct sales channel for our clients. And the best part? It's commission-free! This connection pulls your rates and availability into Google and includes a direct link to your **NightsBridge booking engine**.

Update your content to get more clicks.

The more complete your Google Business profile is, the more likely your potential guests are to consider your business as reputable. Images and videos can be used to show off your property and services. Make sure to add a logo, cover photo, videos and interior and exterior photos. And remember to update your hotel attributes and amenities as these are used in Google's search algorithms.

Answer FAQs and invite reviews on Google.

On your Google listing you can set up answers to frequently asked questions to help guests find the information they are looking for. And to give your business credibility, and a better Google ranking, spend some time on your reviews. Ask your guests for more Google reviews, and respond to those you receive.





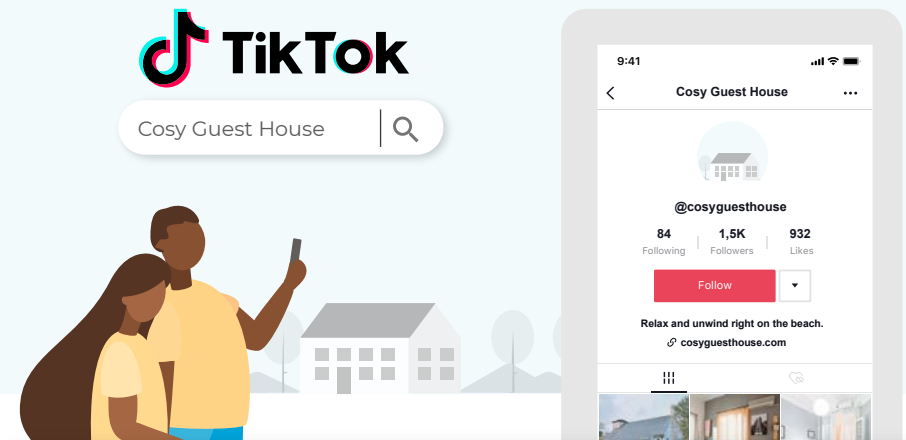
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Add direct booking links to your social media profiles.

Convert the effort you put into your social media channels into direct bookings. Offer visitors to your platforms a way to easily access your rates and availability, once your content inspires them to visit.

Use your social media profiles to drive direct bookings.

Well-written social media profiles and bios can often answer quite a few questions your potential guest might have. Make sure to mention your location and unique selling points and always include a call-to-action. A link to your website or booking engine can convert a casual social media scroller into a guest.



TOP TIP: NightsBridge supplies properties with unique '**one tap**' booking engine links that can be added to Facebook, Instagram and TikTok profiles. You'll be able to see which platform was the source of your direct booking. This makes it easy to gauge whether your social media marketing converts into booking revenue.



Get in touch with us today.

To find out how NightsBridge can help you do more and better business online visit:

nightsbridge.com

Call our team on:

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Or email us on:

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