

DIRECTBOOKING  
SUMMIT

31st May - 1st June 2022

# DIRECT BOOKING SUMMIT: BERLIN

**KEY  
LEARNINGS**

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# Fireside: The Future of Google Travel

**Sanjay Vakil, Senior Product Manager, Google**

**Olga Chatzidoukaki, Partnerships Manager, Google**

**Charlie Osmond, Co-Founder and Chief Tease, Triptease**

- Google's 'free booking links' are all about giving more people access to prices. The goal is to provide a comprehensive list available to everyone, so searchers will always see as many prices as Google can find. For hoteliers, there are 'no strings attached to it' - they're just links going straight to your booking engine.
- When asked if Google expect free links to remain free, the response was that the product has been hitting all the internal metrics they've been tracking so far. That means they are happy with performance and as long as that is the case the plan is for it for it to remain free - but of course, never say never!
- Touching on how free links are weighted, the team explained that Google doesn't 'weight'. They look at what consumers want - meaning they push the most useful content to the top. Everything is ranked by usefulness to the user, and they also have a very serious price accuracy policy.
- In terms of needing a price connectivity provider, Google still requires this for now. They revealed that they have a product coming out that will allow very small hotels to enter their own prices. But if you are a very tech-savvy hotel who already has a provider, that will still be the best use of your time.
- The advice for selecting the best connectivity partner is to ask potential partners for the names of hotels they are working with today then go and run the searches as a guest would. See if the results show up. You want that coverage - if they can't do it for a big hotel, they won't do it for you.
- When selecting distribution partners, think strategically about reaching new audiences that you couldn't reach otherwise. It will become increasingly important to be selective and determine which audiences they will provide access to. Which audiences are the most valuable to your hotel right now?



# A brand in demand: The Point A direct booking journey

Camille Lorigo, Head of Marketing, Point A Hotels

- Point A paid attention to both the human and commercial aspects of building their brand to transform their direct booking strategy.
- Building a unique brand for your hotel involves several ingredients: a sense of fun, dreamy imagery, an engaging lifestyle, honest human connections, attention to detail, and being in touch with the present moment.
- Clarify your hotel's values and unique selling points. Ask yourself whether these are human or commercially driven.
- Start demonstrating your values wherever possible. Tip: try to conjure your values in an image.
- Be ambitious and long-term with your various KPIs such as: brand searches, website users, social media engagement, parity, conversion rate, subscribers, return bookings, cost per acquisition (CPA) and Net Promoter Score (NPS).
- Be curious and collaborative by getting varied perspectives from your team to encourage friendly debate and share goals.
- Be inclusive. Make sure you're training your team on brand values, guest experience and products with the aim of furthering business goals. Tip: train up a team of Learning Champions to help with instilling your values in your team through regular training and engagement.
- Be systematic and focus on big, essential wins such as: getting your hotel up on metasearch, seeking third party help with your search strategy, improving website personalization, offering direct booking incentives, improving your parity, and optimizing your CRM usage.
- By implementing the above, Point A saw huge gains in their conversions, parity, brand search, Instagram following and social referrals.



# The 5 website and booking engine A/B test learnings you need to know

**Eduardo Barea, Conversion Optimisation Manager, NH Hotels**

- When it comes to running successful A/B tests, the most difficult part is extracting valuable insights from the findings.
- Be patient: When collecting your data remember that greater volumes will be most likely to deliver statistical significance, which makes your findings much easier to defend. Collect as much as you can and narrow down later. Use online statistical significance calculators to find the optimum sample size for you.
- Early results can be skewed. Running too many variants at one time will prolong reaching statistical significance. Think carefully about how many variants you want to test.
- Be hypothesis-driven: Always start with a plan of what you'd like to test and what you think the result might be, but don't let that influence how you interpret the results. When your hypothesis is supported by data, it becomes evidence.
- Be prepared to fail: 'There are two possible outcomes; if the result confirms the hypothesis, then you've made a measurement, if the result is contrary to the hypothesis, you've made a discovery'.
- Never give up: Your test may have influenced the metric you were measuring, but how has it affected other areas of your overall business objective? It's important to look beyond the goal of the test to truly understand the results, including as how it impacts other segments.
- Adapt to changes: If there's one skill hoteliers have learnt in the last few years, it's this. Use A/B testing to quickly learn the best way to respond to changes. NH Hotels used A/B tests to make sure they were providing the best messaging around flexible rates and locking in the best price.
- Remember, A/B testing is only one piece of the puzzle. It will help you identify some winners, but this will only be within a specific context (time, layout, seasonality, impact etc) so you may be missing some opportunities in another context.
- Testing is only one aspect of UX research and will never replace your product strategy - testing is valuable but can never replace creativity and taking risks.



# Using brand and technology to keep customers on your website: How Macdonald Hotels and Resorts increased their direct booking volumes by 30%

**David McLean, Head of Digital, Macdonald Hotels**

**Shaun Sequeira, UK/I Lead, HiJiffy**

**Emily Myrtle, Direct Booking Coach, Triptease**

- When David first joined Macdonald Hotels, direct bookings made up only 22% of all leisure sales. Thanks to a focused effort on their goal to increase direct booking volumes, the business is now pacing between 50% - 52%.
- He achieved this by showing the right message to the right customer when they arrive on site. Additionally, if they have questions they are answered on site instead of pushing them offsite to an OTA looking for the answer to their question.
- David looked at the overall Macdonald brand but also looked at what each individual hotel looks and feels like. The brand is different for each hotel and he needed to reflect that.
- As David said 'We're pulling out the stories for each property. Then we use Triptease Targeted Messages to personalize the messages for each property.' For example, with Aviemore he tried to design a destination site. Whereas at the Windsor property the message is 'our hotel is right in Windsor so you can see the castle from your room'.
- David is doing the same with HiJiffy chat - the questions that are immediately prompted will be customized for each property. The way they're formulating responses is different for each hotel - more casual, relaxed language is used for Aviemore, while the language for Windsor reflects its upmarket positioning.
- His next step is creating a data lake outside of the CRM where he can keep customer info regardless of how they've booked. More specifically, he is interested in those who haven't booked with them at all.



# Why you should care about tracking

**Dan Bodart, Senior Engineer, Triptease**

**Bettina Eggenschwiler, Direct Booking Coach, Triptease**

- Tracking website users is important to a direct booking strategy. It allows you to understand who your direct bookers are, where they are coming from, and what they do on your website.
- Having access to this data empowers you to improve your website by making sure your users' needs are met, and therefore improve conversion rates.
- However, accurately tracking users is not as simple as just adding a Google Analytics tracking code to your website. Hotels have a unique challenge - most have a separate marketing site and booking engine, which live on different domains. This means that when a user clicks from one to the other, their tracking details are lost in the middle of the two.
- Fortunately, there are solutions to this problem that are within a hotelier's control - most of them require asking for technical support from your booking engine and web agency.
- The gold standard is switching to a 'Single Domain setup' - this requires speaking to your web administrator about creating a single domain using a 'Content Delivery Network (CDN)' or a 'Reverse Proxy', which will join two websites into one.
- The next best option is switching to a 'Subdomain setup'. For this, you'll need to speak to your booking engine about creating a 'CNAME Record', pointing at the booking engine which will improve tracking by allowing a shared first party cookie.
- If changing your domain setup isn't an option, consider enabling 'Cross-Domain Measurement'. This will require talking to your web agency or developers about adding some code that will allow user tracking across domains.
- The accuracy of your tracking can be improved by setting up detailed 'eCommerce Events' within your Google Analytics, creating a custom 'funnel' that just shows your booking engine, using URLs that are readable, adding a 'referrer policy' to improve Path Exploration, and regularly checking that your dataLayer is consistent by running test searches.
- Finally, make sure to upgrade to GA4 now! This will give plenty of time to gather data ahead of the switchover on July 1st 2023 and iron out any issues. If you want to be able to compare year-on-year data next year, you need to get set up asap.





# How to bank on guest data to achieve engaged guests and high value bookings

**Travis Cabrera, Regional Director for Europe, Revinate**

- Leisure rather than business is going to dominate the mix for some time.
- Staff shortages are another key trend. 94.5% of hotels are having staff hiring challenges and one of the things Revinate wanted to encourage everyone to think about was that hoteliers can lean on technology and automation rather than putting additional stress on their staff. This will also drive top line revenue.
- Be relentless about your guest data. Focus on first party data collection at every interaction across the customer journey. If you can bring it into a single source database then you can leverage it more efficiently.
- You can then use that first party data to power the direct relationship throughout the customer journey. Travis explained that 75% of critical touch points - including everything from drip campaigns and cart abandonment to modification and pre-arrival upgrades - can be automated.
- Deploy a website and cart abandonment solution. Lots of hoteliers haven't implemented this yet. Somebody is at your booking engine and has left their name, email, date of stay that they're interested in - when you combine that data with all your other data (loyalty, previous spend, etc.) you have the opportunity to convert and win that booking direct.
- Giving this data to your call agents can massively increase the value of a booking. That's because they can use the insights to personalize the service they provide.
- Focus on the demand you already have (i.e. turn those lookers into bookers).



# How hotels can win on paid search in 2022

Moriah Olschansky, Product Manager for Paid Search, Triptease

- Google's Paid Search Ads remain one of the most important channels for driving direct bookings in 2022. As Google's cornerstone product, it remains one of the most rapidly developed with constant changes being made.
- Just some of the recent changes include more relaxed criteria for 'exact match' keywords resulting in less control over keywords, the sunset of Expanded Text Ads in favour of Responsive Search Ads, and the introduction of 'Infinite Scroll' on mobile results pages.
- All of these changes require hotels to constantly update their Paid Search strategies to effectively compete with OTAs. But most don't have the time or technical resources to keep up, which is why Triptease launched its Paid Search product last year.
- Having been in the space for nine months now, Triptease identified some simple things that hotels can do that make a big difference to their performance:
- Trademark your brand name: This won't stop OTAs from bidding on your brand name, but it will prevent them from including it in their ad copy. Google will then consider their ads less relevant and rank them lower than yours.
- Incentivize clicks and bookings with Paid Search-friendly offers: Think carefully about how to use the limited text space and how you can grab attention in as few words as possible. Aim to be clear, concise and compelling. Offers don't have to be discounts but it helps if they are promotion extension-friendly. Check out how OTAs advertise your hotel and the attributes they choose to promote for some inspiration. They are marketing experts after all!
- Make it easy for guests to book your offers: They liked the offer, don't make them search for it again once they land on your website. Set up property-specific offer pages with their own URLs and well-structured, easy-to-read content. This not only creates a better customer experience but also allows for better testing and reporting, and will help you rank higher due to having the most relevant landing pages to the ad copy.
- Shrink the gap between desktop and mobile page speed: 53% of mobile users will abandon websites that take longer than three seconds to load, leading to a high bounce rate that will impact your ranking. Regularly test your page speed and aim for a score of 50-70.



# Stay like a local: How Center Hotels created a truly unique brand experience

**Sara Kristófersdóttir, Chief Commercial Officer, Center Hotels Group**  
**Katie Waters, Brand Director, I-AM**

- In 2017 the competitive landscape in Iceland changed - Center Hotels could no longer simply rely on their central location to attract guests and realized they needed to embark on a rebranding journey.
- They partnered with the design agency “I-AM London” who proceeded to investigate what made their hotels tick and who their customers were. Tip: Start by defining your target market and understanding their needs.
- The best brands are based on truth to create authentic experiences. Center Hotels used their family ties along with their regional connection to Iceland as the basis for their rebranding.
- They discovered that their guests were not typical holidaymakers - they were more adventurous, explorers at heart, and wanted to get under the skin of their destination.
- This gave rise to their key message: ‘Stay like a local’.
- Key drivers for their brand included local immersion, creativity (Iceland has the most artists per capita in the world), and creating a social hub for the city.
- They reviewed their brand architecture to solve the problem of over-saturation in the city, settling on two tiers of brand - Standard Hotels and Endorsed Hotels (which are more boutique and personalized).
- Center Hotels stayed away from a corporate feel and opted for family values reflective of Icelandic creativity - this fed into everything from their logo and messaging to their restaurant design and room cards.
- They leveraged technology, working with Triptease alongside other partners to personalize their online booking experience, increasing their website conversions by 77% and direct bookings by 61.3% between January - April 2022 compared to the same period in 2019.



# Live website audits with a user experience expert

**Chimmy Kalu, Senior Product Designer, Triptease**

- Chimmy reviewed four Triptease client hotels - Nobu Hotel London Portman Square, Keahotels, Beachcomber and Danubius - looking at their business goals, and how the user experience (UX) design of their websites could be improved to help achieve them.
- The hotel booking journey is typically made up of four stages: Dream, Research, Book and Experience. Experience takes place in the hotel, so Chimmy focused on the first three only.
- In the dream phase customers are looking for inspiration: Where do they want to go and what kind of holiday are they interested in?
- In the dream phase hotels need to provide inspirational imagery on arrival, videos, articles, a newsletter sign up option and eye catching offers. Remember that the path to booking is not always linear and guests may visit multiple times so your landing page should be set up to cater to more than just booking scenarios. Hotel group pages should also be set up to appeal to the specific audiences you're looking to attract.
- Next up is the research phase. At this point customers are looking for information. They're trying to get a sense of whether your hotel is the right fit for them. They're looking at amenities, room options, price, hotel location and whether there are special offers that appeal specifically to them and the kind of trip they are planning.
- In the research phase a great hotel website would make information about rooms, amenities, location, offers, etc. easily accessible - perhaps via a dedicated offers page, by displaying a best price guarantee and by writing room descriptions in a way that makes the benefit immediately clear to the customer.
- Finally - the booking phase. At this point customers are looking for affirmation that the hotel is not just the right place to stay, but also the right place to book. That means focusing on function, speed and clarity.
- In the booking phase a great hotel website would make account creation simple, the 'Book now' button really easy to find, and the steps to booking as minimal as possible.



# What's new in '22? Hotel rate parity trends in Europe

**Andrew Williamson, Product Manager for Parity, Triptease**  
**Charlie Osmond, Co-Founder and Chief Tease, Triptease**

- Undercut rates in EMEA have improved slightly compared to 2021, but the situation remains unpredictable - monitoring parity should remain a key priority for hoteliers.
- Undercutting is rife on metasearch. This massively impacts click-through rates, which drop by around 2.5x when a hotel is undercut compared to when the price is cheaper direct.
- Booking.com have the best price on metasearch 64.9% of the time - other OTAs to keep an eye on include smaller OTAs like Snaptravel, Destina, FindHotel and Trip.com.
- Undercut amounts vary in size, from large undercuts to smaller ones - smaller undercuts are usually down to factors like currency and exchange rates, whereas larger undercuts suggest more deliberate behavior.
- Remember that OTAs bid differently for different guests all the time, so the prices customers see are constantly fluctuating.
- Smaller OTAs like Trip.com are often more aggressive with undercutting as they need to compensate for weaker brand awareness and consumer trust.
- Ideas from the audience on tackling the wholesaler problem included monitoring parity frequently, conducting test bookings, and severing ties with wholesalers altogether.
- Undercutting is worst for shorter lead times (1-3 days) so try to reserve longer lead time bookings for OTAs and wholesalers, and keep the shorter lead times for your direct channel.
- Undercut rates from major OTAs like Booking.com drop for longer stays, but undercut rates from smaller OTAs like Trip.com go up - adjust your distribution based on available data.



# Branding from the inside out: How an independent hotel group can stand out from the crowd

**Tobias Koehler, Chief Commercial Officer, BIG MAMA Hotels**

- After almost decade since their initial brand launch, BIG MAMA recognised that they needed two key elements to maximise future growth: stability and a strong brand presence.
- Their goal for rebranding was to ensure consistency, recognisability, scalability and adaptability across channels, and to clearly convey the values of BIG MAMA to the world.
- They came to learn that a brand is more than just a style guide - it's an identity and an attitude. So they began by asking themselves 'What differentiates us? What's our story? What do we stand for? And what are we like?'
- 'The most important opinion is the guest.' The team focused much of their research on understanding their customers with qualitative interviews and empathy mapping, as well as identifying the demographic and psychographic characteristics of their target audience.
- Another big focus of the rebrand was ensuring that the on-site employees felt empowered, and identified with the new brand. They involved the team in the whole process to gain trust, from running initial surveys and informal chats to understand what the brand meant to the team, down to presenting and explaining the solutions and asking for feedback.
- The team used Agile Principles which allowed them to learn and experiment quickly. These shorter sprints of continuous delivery paved the way for better collaboration with the design studio and ultimately allowed them to hit their rebranding goals.
- For BIG MAMA, the ingredients for an Agile brand include: trust, flexibility, curiosity, no fear, involving your employees from the beginning, being open, focusing on your customer and having fun!



# Is e-mobility another missed opportunity in the future of hotel distribution?

**Daniel Zelling, Managing Director & Founder, opensmjle**

- Technological developments can change consumer behaviours - that includes the way that we travel.
- We saw this with the rise of OTAs. Hotels didn't anticipate the extent to which these platforms would change consumer behaviour and have ultimately lost out as a result.
- Apps like Uber have changed the way that we travel. It's not always the cheapest option but it is the most convenient, and that's why people keep choosing it.
- Now the increasing availability of Tesla and electric cars has the potential to change travel behaviours again. People will need to plan routes based on where they can stop and charge those kinds of cars - or where they can drop it off if they're renting it.
- That means we'll start to book hotels differently as a result. Customers will be thinking about whether there's a charging point at or near the place they want to stay - they may start to book particular hotels based on whether they can charge their car.
- And how will they book that hotel? Potentially via the same app that they originally booked the car from.
- Maybe in future we'll want Tesla suggest which hotel we should stay in. They'll know your preferences, they'll know your card details - so you'll just book it through their platform.
- Then guess who is going to start incorporating this information into the booking journey? Expedia and Booking.com. So if you are a big hotel in your market - start working on this.
- There won't be one clear winner in terms of super apps. It's more likely that there will be 'power apps' for different niches. There will be one for travel, one for e-commerce, etc. and because individually they will all be strong they'll defend themselves from hostile takeovers.
- That said, one big player that may come back in the next few years is Amazon. We'll have Prime Travel and we'll never have to leave that site. Will we consider the differences in price when you're never leaving the platform? No, we'll just book it because it's comfortable.



# A hotel in the heart of London: Bringing a direct booking strategy to life

Alex Lewis, Head of Performance, Axiom Hospitality

- The pandemic shifted the market for Axiom Hospitality's Central London property, forcing them to adjust their direct booking strategy to cater to new customer segments.
- Previously most of their business came from America, whereas they needed to start attracting local guests who come with a different set of expectations.
- The hotel underwent a six-month rebranding journey that saw it go from 0-100% following the easing of pandemic restrictions.
- They adjusted their entire marketing strategy, moving away from a five-star luxury feel to focus instead on guest experiences.
- Their performance has been strong - Triptease's Price Check message drove huge results for them with regards to revenue and conversion rates.
- When it comes to measuring results, Axiom Hospitality focused on: branded and unbranded search, ADR delivery, channel contribution, and geographical mix (foreign guests are making a comeback!)
- Parity is a continuous source of frustration. They truly underestimated the problem of wholesalers.
- Remember the bottom line - focus on driving exceptional returns and review your NRevPAR regularly to identify pesky hidden costs.
- Exceeding guest expectations is key to driving your direct booking strategy.





## Vacation Packages: a widely untapped growth opportunity for hotels' direct booking channels

Jan-Frederik Valentin, General Manager, Ennea Capital Partners and Industry Advisor, LAYA

- When talking about 'travel' we're not just talking about hotels. Consumers are also thinking air travel, excursions and packages too.
- For a long time nobody really 'got' the value of packages. Jan launched the Kayak website with Booking Holdings and nobody understood his job. But it turned out to be 5% of Booking Holdings' revenue - and for Expedia and Easyjet packages account for 8%. That's because customers value the entire experience. A holiday is not just the hotel; packages provide a better experience.
- How do packages differ in terms of economics? People book much more in advance (although this has changed slightly due to the pandemic). The entire industry has huge cashflow - bookings are taken in January for July. And you have much longer stays - especially in Europe (but less so in America).
- There's huge untapped potential in the online world. Everything else has shifted online very quickly except for this piece. The package market is under-digitized in many ways. It's a bit of a mess, the customer experience is poor and hoteliers could do better at selling packages themselves.
- Why is the hotel - where people spend most of their time - not involved in the package-booking process? You are the platform where people experience their holiday. The flight is something that they need to take but your hotel is the destination. But unfortunately your share of the wallet is very small if you're only selling your hotel room. So you should become the package provider - but you can't do that entirely by yourselves.
- Big chains have succeeded at it but it's fairly difficult in terms of fulfillment and the legal part - European law is particularly severe. And the technical part is complex too.
- Technology has taken a long while but now you can pretty much plug and play and sell your own packages.



# Improve guest engagement through segmentation and personalisation

**Yannis Anastasakis, VP of Partners and Solutions, SHR**

**Sandro Christofori, Director of Business Development - Central Europe and Middle East, SHR**

- Personalizing your marketing efforts through the use of your unique guest data, stay data, historical data and preferences is key to driving higher engagement and upsells.
- 56% of customers are more likely to return to websites that are personalised, and 90% of customers are willing to share their data in exchange for discounts and offers - this is a golden opportunity for hoteliers!
- Personalized marketing is beyond just using the guest's name - it should be data-driven and appeal to the customer's individual needs.
- Prediction is a powerful tool enabled by automation. Customer behavior and our understanding of it are constantly changing - this is where technology can be a great help.
- Upselling is offering your customers relevant extras to make their stay better.
- There are many moments during the guest journey where you can up- or cross-sell and with the right technology you can even automate the process. Some key parts of the typical guest journey include: booking and pre-stay, pre-arrival, check-in, during the stay, check-out and post-stay.



# Building better onsite messages: A workshop with the Triptease Targeted Messages team

**Chimmy Kalu, Senior Product Designer, Triptease**

**Sam Firminger, Engineer, Triptease**

**Emilia Zbar, VP Customer Success, Triptease**

- The Triptease Targeted Messages team are constantly looking to learn more about how hoteliers want to personalize their websites. This session was designed to help hoteliers in the room understand more about impactful website messaging strategy.
- A key product update that was recently made in 2022 is the shift from thinking about message *type* (e.g. an exit message, email capture or countdown timer message) to message *intention* (e.g. influence, data collection or urgency).
- These intentions are designed to more closely align with the way marketing teams at hotels are potentially thinking about their broader campaigns and business goals. You might not be thinking in terms of the exact message type you want to set up, but you should know what you want that message to achieve for your business.
- A hotel website messaging strategy is not always just aiming for conversions - marketers might also be looking to provide reassurance, create urgency, share information, collect customer data (like names and email addresses), provide a more personalized mobile experience, offer discounts to specific groups of guests, influence customers to move further along the booking journey or to capture incremental revenue.
- That means every messaging strategy needs to start with a broader marketing goal or intention, before you start building your message.
- In breakout groups, the hoteliers in the room discussed the messaging that they would like to set up on their website, discussing the different intentions that a full screen message might be used for as well as which audiences to target with F&B messages, and which to show room information messages to.



# The four key pillars of a successful commercial strategy

**Yang Li, Business Development Manager, OTA Insight**

**Simon Schwitallik, Head of Analytics, Design Hotels**

**Sasha Kastelan, Director of Sales, IHG**

**Jean Buche, VP Revenue Management Central Europe, Leonardo Hotels**

**Alba Troya, Revenue Team Lead, numa**

- Empowering smarter revenue and distribution decisions is key to driving a successful commercial strategy and capitalizing on the new travel trends.
- Focus your commercial strategy on four key pillars: prediction, price, distribution and analysis.
- Make sure all your commercial teams are aligned on key revenue objectives through data-sharing and communication. Lack of coordination is a major barrier to your commercial success.
- Historical trends are no longer reliable - use your pre-booking data and leverage technology to help with forecasting demand in your market.
- Use promotional and discount strategies to pull new audiences to your hotel.
- Focus on the actions OTAs are taking to ensure they're not restricting efforts to drive direct bookings.
- Hotels' best channels, segments and promotional deals have changed following the pandemic - make sure you're measuring the effectiveness of your strategies so you can refine them and drive growth. Tip: knowing your customers and market is important so you can build your strategy.
- Key takeaway from the panel: Rethink your guest segmentation. Leisure has a different meaning to guests after the pandemic. Focus on generating demand by paying attention to where your customers spend their time, whether this is on your website or social media.



# How to leverage the untapped potential of your hotel WiFi

**Yogesh Ram, Head of Marketing, Safestay**

- The team at Safestay recognised that even though OTAs remain vital to them (in 2020, OTAs captured 64% of all European bookings), for as long as they continue to mask guest data, they wouldn't be able to target customers, automate campaigns or grow direct bookings.
- Due to changing trends, guests care more about experience and visiting hotels that fit their values, making it even more important that you're able to communicate what you stand for directly to them.
- In addition, hotel data is still fragmented and disconnected, with poor quality data and tools that don't talk to each other, limiting insights, guest profiles and detailed customer journey mapping for segmentation.
- It's impossible to capture emails if you don't own the touchpoints, and without real guest emails you can't talk to them, build loyalty or cross/upsell.
- Safestay sought to leverage their WiFi to solve this, since on-premise guests are actively engaged with the brand during the time between check in and check out. WiFi offers more opportunities to capture data since it's something guests want and there are multiple possible interactions.
- There are five possible touch points to obtain opt-in from WiFi: sign-on, timed ads, WiFi connection email, reconnect prompt and opt-out messages. All of these can enable hotels to collect email addresses, which links customer data across different platforms.
- Key learnings for the team were that it's key to invest in clean data before being able to marginally optimize campaigns, which means building full customer profiles, and hotel WiFi is just one option to achieve this. Once collected, it's still important to invest in workflows to combine datasets and platforms in a Customer Data Platform (CDP) built on quality data with profile segmentation to allow campaigns to be hyper-personalized.
- When asked by the audience, Yogesh revealed they are moving to Airangel as their provider for data capture as, they are able to provide a lot of flexibility and also use hotspot zones - meaning that are able to hyper-personalize offers as guests move around the hotel.



# How H-Hotels experienced record-breaking results on metasearch

**Christoph Peppers, Director of E-Commerce, H-Hotels**

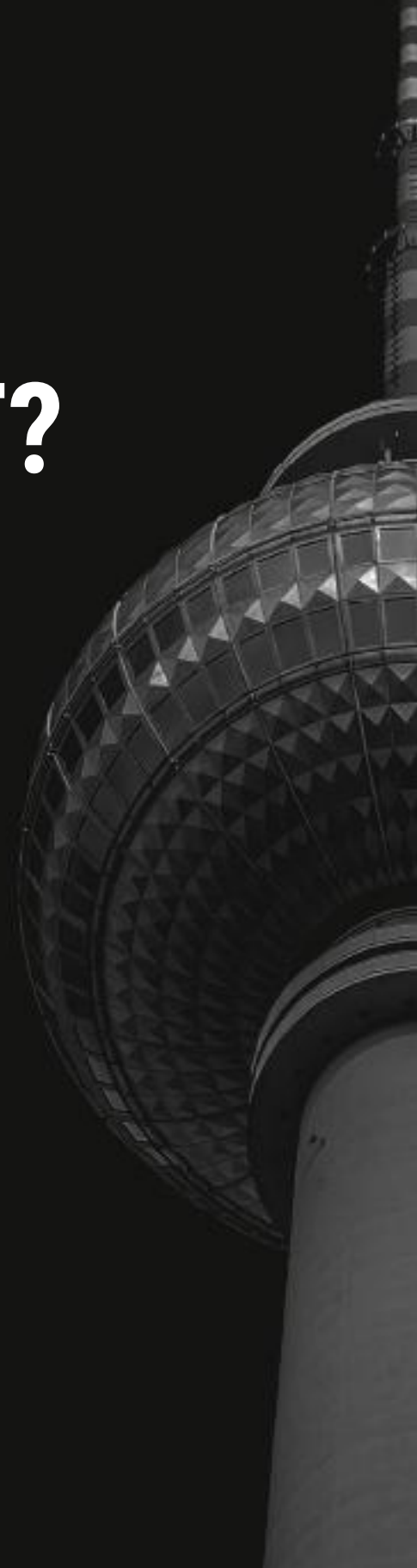
- Metasearch was a game-changer for H-Hotels when travel began opening up again.
- Their post-Covid journey began with Tripadvisor - they knew it was a major site with lots of potential for visibility and traffic.
- They embarked on a three-month trial with Triptease for three of their properties, focusing solely on Tripadvisor. This was soon expanded to include Bing, Kayak, Skyscanner, Wego, Google Hotel Ads and Trivago.
- They surpassed the regional benchmarks for all of the metasearch sites with record results.
- Member rates were a key success factor, helping them to ensure they were always 10-15% cheaper than OTAs to drive more direct bookings.
- Google Hotel Ads came out as the winner for H-Hotels, seeing an increase of more than 45% revenue compared to pre-Covid. Tripadvisor and Trivago saw downward trends although there is still lots of potential here.
- Other factors that contributed to their success on metasearch include: regular parity checks, monthly performance calls with Triptease, and updating business profiles on the meta sites.
- Key insight: with the introduction of Google's free booking links, don't be fooled into thinking you no longer need to invest in paid metasearch. Triptease data shows that the paid booking links convert at double the rate of the free links, so make sure you're making the most of this.
- Chris was asked by an audience member how to go about carrying out a trial on metasearch and the factors you should be focusing on - he emphasized the importance of starting with a small number of properties that are already performing well and driving healthy website traffic volumes. Using regional metasearch performance benchmarks as a reference point will help you determine what's working well.

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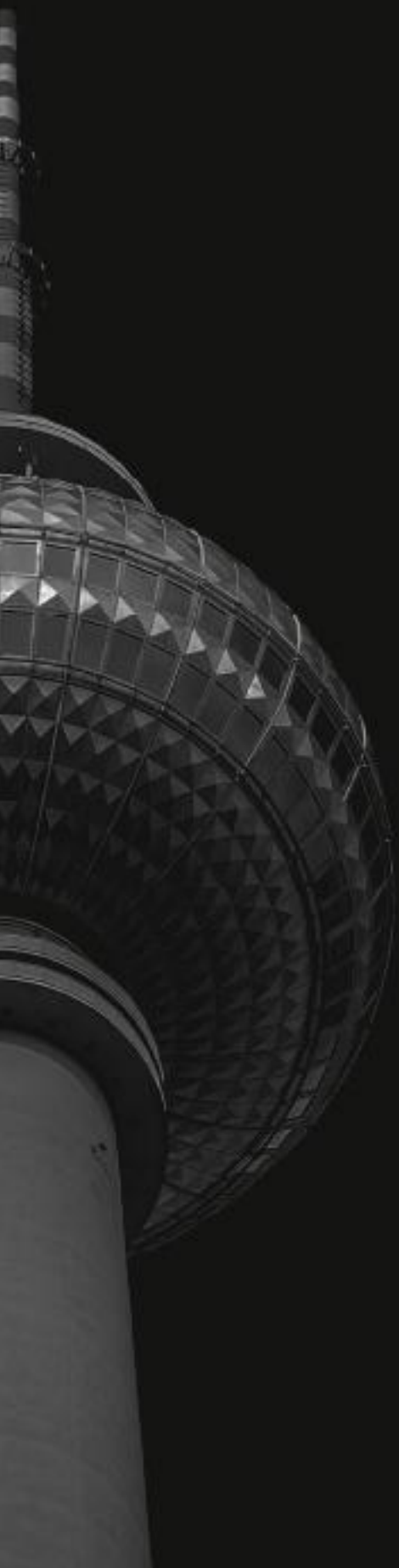
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