



Around the world



**7 INNOVATIVE WAYS
TO CONVERT VACATION
RENTAL VISITORS AND
INCREASE BOOKINGS**

Contents

Introduction

PRACTICE #1 Make it more than just a destination.

PRACTICE #2 Be the consummate host.

PRACTICE #3 Color your world.

PRACTICE #4 Take visitors where they want to go.

PRACTICE #5 Don't trip over pricing.

PRACTICE #6 Choose the right traveling partners.

PRACTICE #7 Explore the realm of reviews.

Closing

Sources

3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12



Around the World

For every prospective traveler, the process from browsing to booking is a journey. It's your job as property manager to not only guide them through that journey, but also point them toward your property as the ideal destination. The best way to achieve that is to be direct, efficient and customer-focused.

The 7 Best Practices included here will not only bring more travelers to your website, they'll also help you set your property apart from others, leading prospects to make your property their port of call.



Practice #1

Make it more than just a destination.

Your website is more than just a nice place for travelers to visit. It's your introduction, your handshake and your last chance to make a first impression. And as everyone knows, first impressions count.

But your website should be more than a pretty face. It has to be an achiever. A good website works hard to boost bookings and improve the guest experience. It also helps eliminate some of the business' heavy lifting, acting as sales, marketing, booking agent—even accounts receivable. Even though you depend on partner websites such as Airbnb to drive bookings, your own website can and should play a critical role in building your business.

Be a Competitor

To be as effective as it needs to be, your website needs the following features and capabilities to help push the business forward:

- An elegant professional look
- Easy navigation
- Mobile device optimization
- An effortless booking process
- Social media and SEO
- Specials and featured properties



Practice #2

Be the consummate host.

Potential guests are looking for more than just a place to lay their heads. They want an experience packaged solely for their needs. And while that may seem difficult to do on an individual basis, it is doable with a customer-centric attitude, some flexibility and a little innovative thinking.

SELL AN EXPERIENCE

- Choosing your property should be more than simply booking an accommodation. Sell your destination with information on local attractions, restaurants and events.

BE FLEXIBLE

- Give travelers the widest possible array of choices. For example, a 2017 Airbnb survey suggests offering shorter minimum stays, ideally 2-3 nights.

RE-TARGET

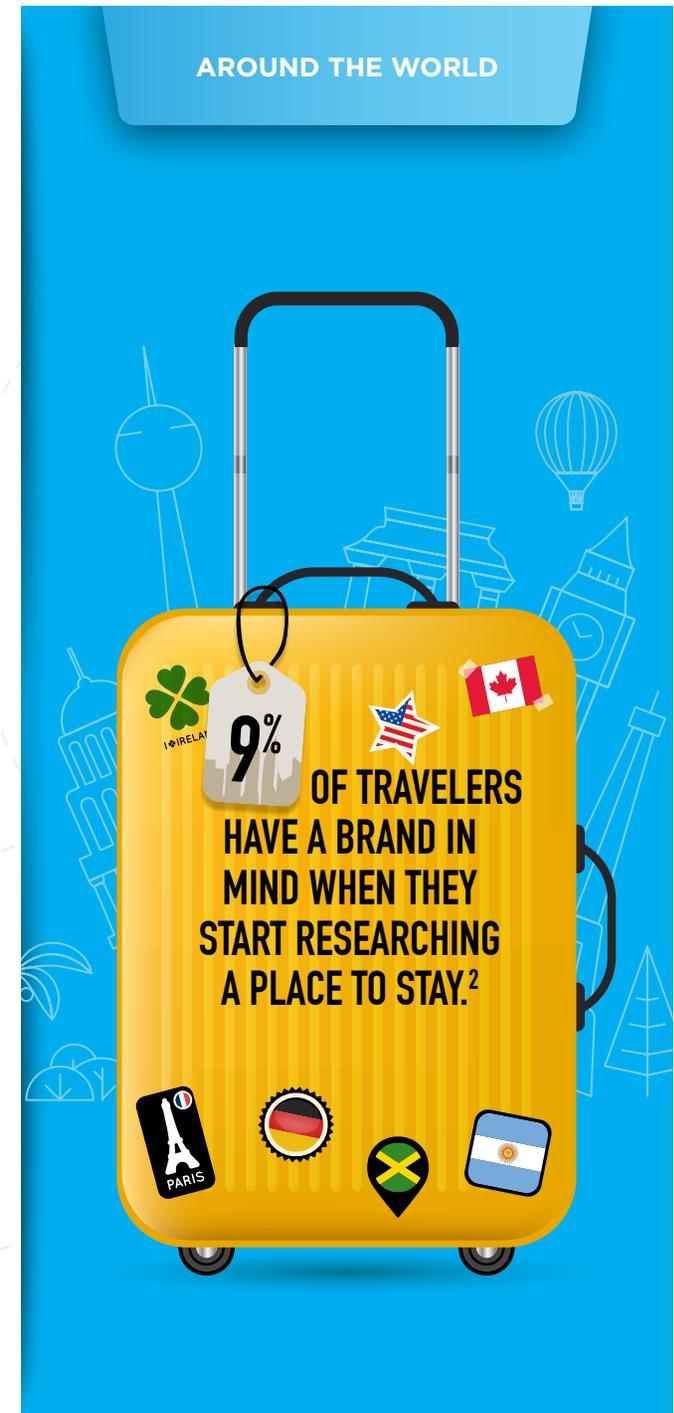
- Create custom emails for past visitors encouraging them to rebook. Paid ads for past website visitors should encourage them to return and close the deal.

UPSELL

- Demonstrate customer service by selling extra amenities, like travel insurance and concierge services, right from your website.

OPTIMIZE THE USER EXPERIENCE

- Show your value by offering properties with similar criteria if the selected option isn't available.



Practice #3

Color your world.

Vacations are life experiences driven by emotion. The more you can convey the warmth, quaintness, sophistication, spaciousness or coziness of your properties, the more likely you are to attract and convert. Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning which photos of your properties you want to highlight:

QUALITY

- High-resolution photos give a crisp, more realistic impression. Typically, 4200 x 2700 pixels @300 dpi is ideal. While web browsers only display 72 pixel images, the clarity and beauty will still shine through.

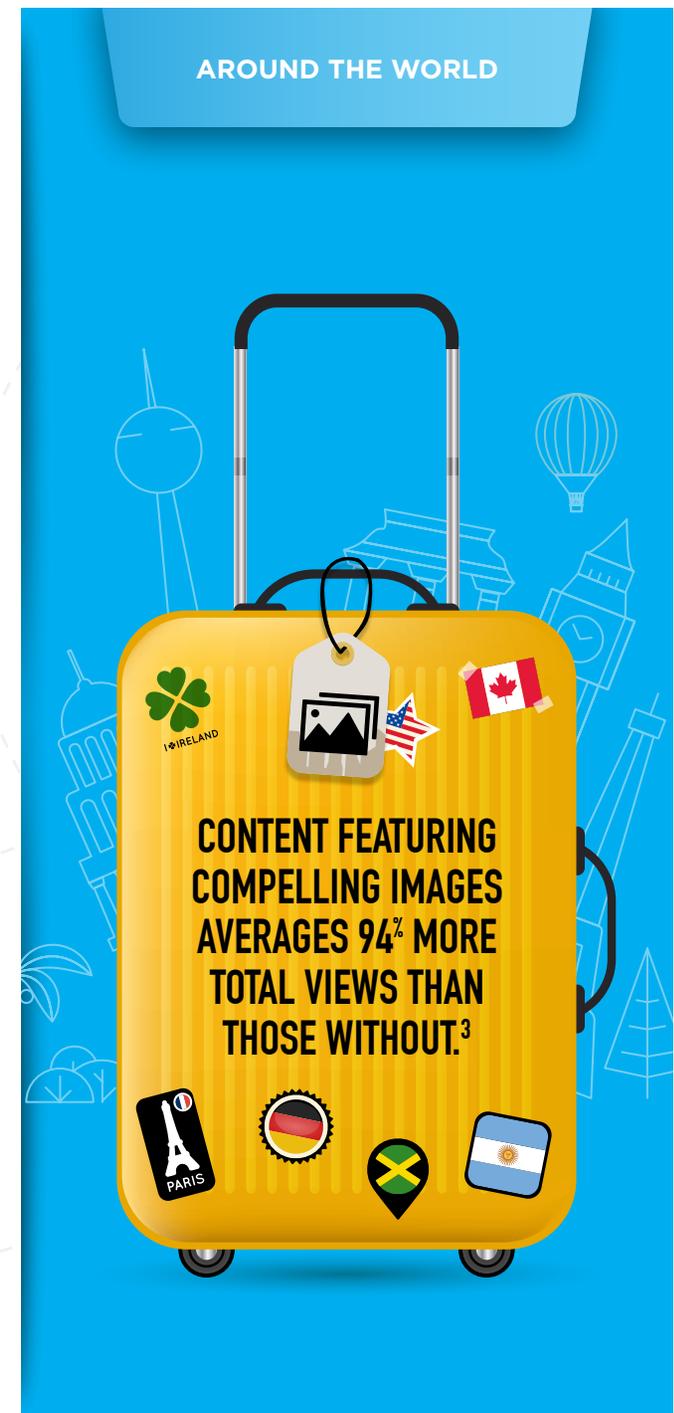
QUANTITY

- Studies show that vacation rental property listings with more than 4 photos get twice as many inquiries as listings with 4 photos or fewer.

SUBJECT MATTER

- A bedroom, outdoor space or living room is typically the best choice for your lead image. Include both exterior and interior photos that best represent your property and showcase it in its best light. Include a descriptive caption for each photo to explain its significance.

Today, crisp and clear photography is more important than ever. Consider the “Pinterest Effect,” the phenomenon fueled by social media platform Pinterest to use more high-quality imagery in sharable content. Facebook Timeline also puts a greater emphasis on imagery.



Practice #4

Take visitors where they want to go.

If the booking process is a journey, then your content strategy is the transportation to conversion. For your website landing pages to be truly effective at lead generation, they should focus on building custom content that communicates your value.

COMPELLING COPY

- Your guests will have a lot of questions for you before they'll agree to choose your property. Tell them everything they want to hear, but do it in a way that is compelling. Start with room descriptions and basic amenities. But don't forget that location is everything, so sell nearby attractions and hotspots—they are definitely a big reason for booking!

CLEAR CONCISE CALLS TO ACTION

- Don't just tell your visitors about the property—tell them what to do. After you give them the information, your potential guest should immediately see what action you want them to take, and a clear path for taking that action.

SHORT FORMS

- When your call-to-action includes filling out a form, don't get greedy and ask for too much. SearchEngineJournal.com cautions to collect only the information you need: "If your form looks dangerously long, this can be a major turn-off."

SOCIAL PROOF

- Social proof and other user-generated content like guest reviews, social media mentions and travel selfies all attract new leads and encourage bookings.



Practice #5

Don't trip over pricing.

Pricing a property with the right rate at the right time is more than just a simple appraisal. It can be the biggest challenge you face when putting a new property online. And solving that equation involves a complex equation made up of your property's size, its amenities, market demand and, in some cases, the time of year.

Here are some ways to make sure your pricing is right:

TRACK YOUR HISTORY

- Once you complete a full calendar year of bookings, you'll have a means for comparison. Compare your rates for last year at the same time. But don't stop there. Take a look at vacancy rates, length of stay and total units sold. If you're behind in any of those categories, it may be time to tweak your pricing strategy.

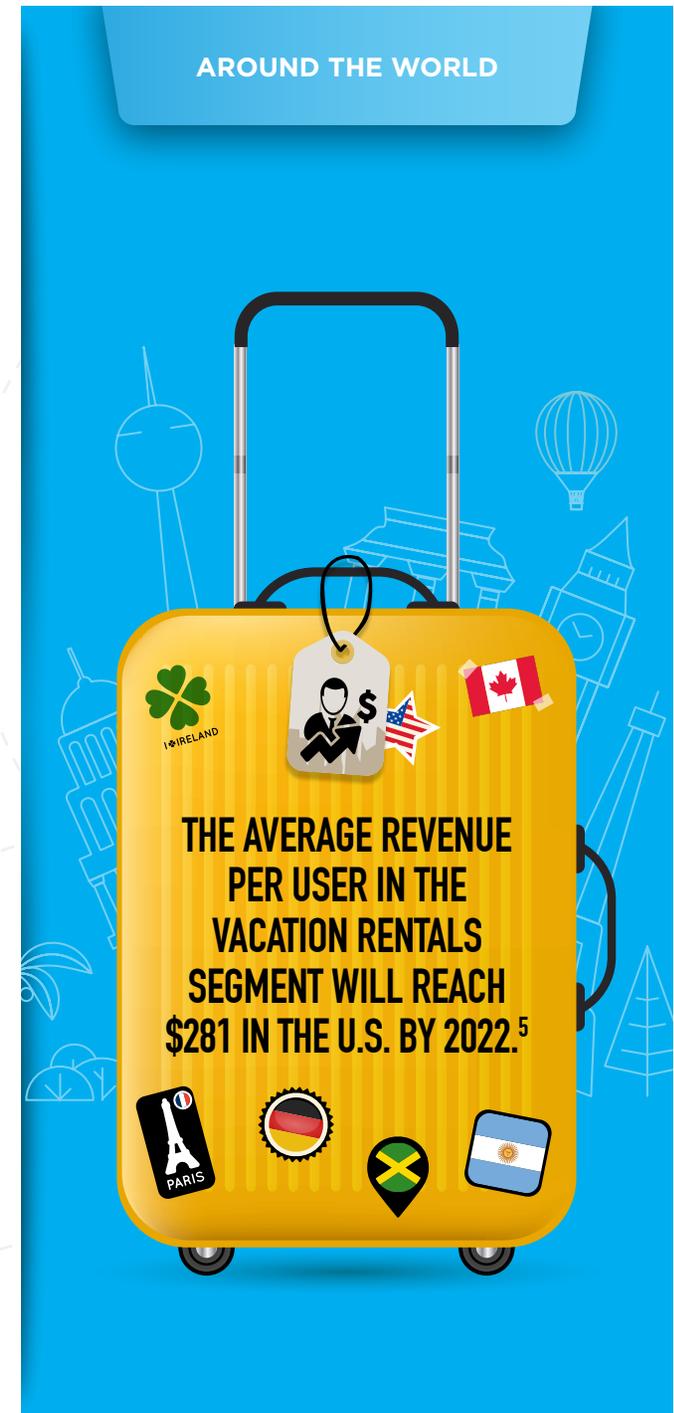
CHEAPER IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER

- There are a lot of reasons to lower your rates, but there are also reasons to raise them. Find the right time for each. Lower prices can be a turn-off to a guest looking for a nicer property. They can also leave money on the table when you're trying to maximize profits.

KNOW THE FINAL PRICE

- You may know your rate, but the final rate the guest pays may be entirely different. Make sure you know the final bill. Cleaning fees, channel fees and taxes add up quickly and can price you out of the market.

Revenue management is never easy. We recommend a software package that handles it for you.



Practice #6

Choose the right traveling partners.

To some property managers, the best way to promote your property would appear to be adding it to every channel imaginable. However, that isn't always the best use of time. Choose the channels that have your best interests at heart, as well as theirs. Compare exposure and rates, and make sure their goals align with yours. Here are some channels that will give you great visibility and more bookings.

AIRBNB

- With over 60 million bookings in 34,000 cities in 190 countries, Airbnb has given new life and a new path to vacationers who want to have a different travel experience.

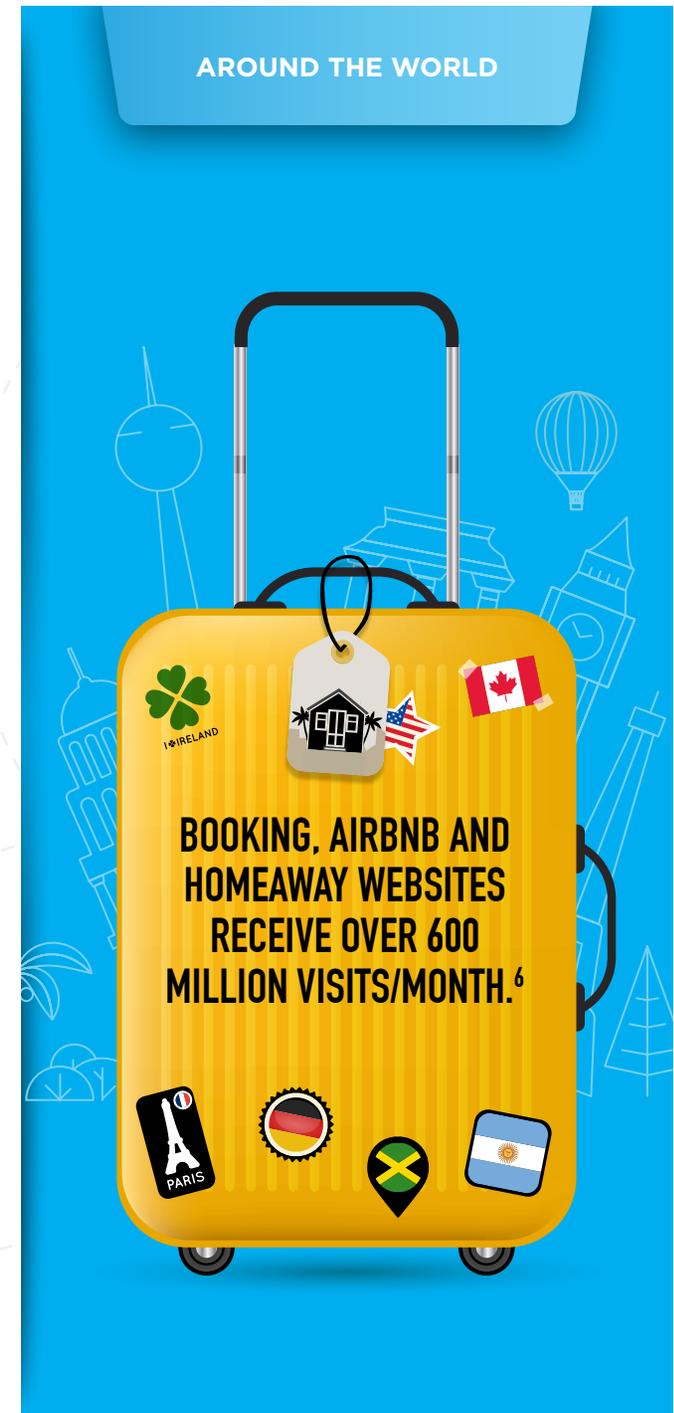
BOOKING.COM

- An innovative partner that is always evolving, booking.com has over 25 million bookable rooms.

HOMEAWAY

- HomeAway is a worldwide provider of vacation rentals that makes it easy to advertise and manage your bookings. They also offer a flexible subscription model.

Just as you would choose your business partners wisely, you should do the same with your channel partners. A channel manager can help manage these relationships more efficiently, helping you save time and avoid duplicate bookings.



Practice #7

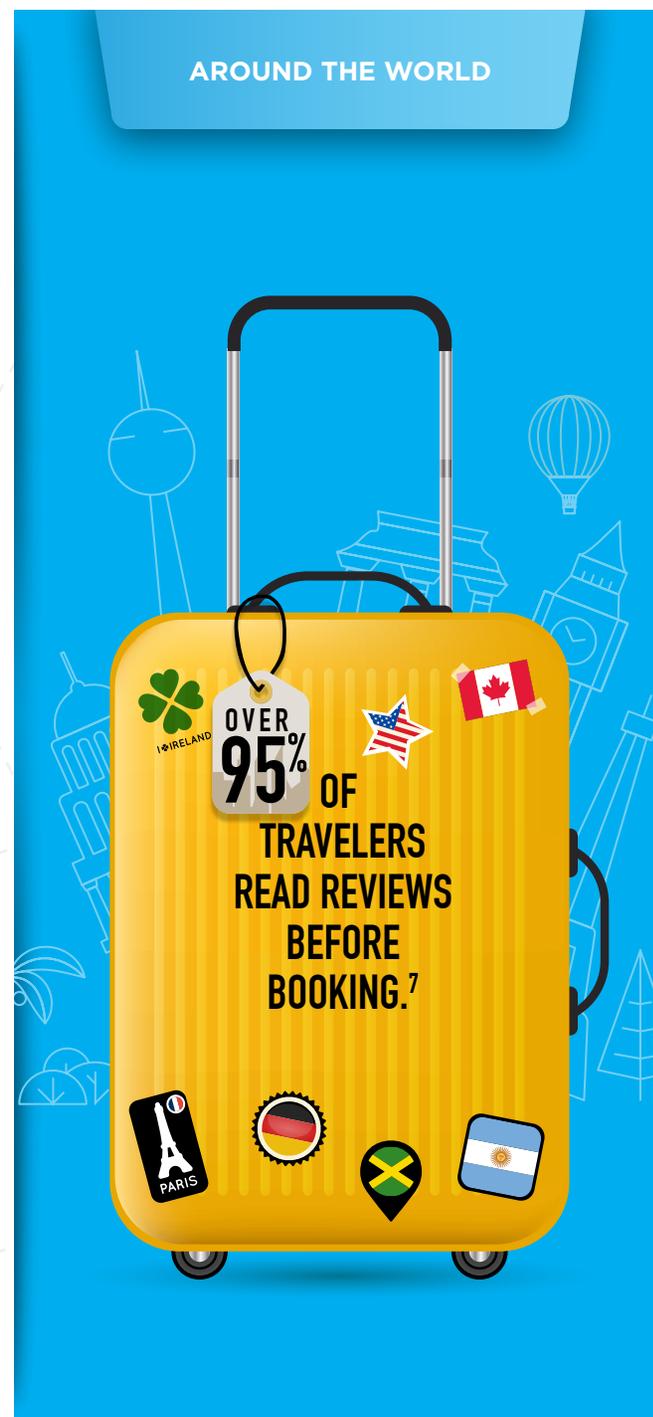
Explore the realm of reviews.

One final best practice: Make sure to reach out to your guests and encourage them to review their experience at your property. Authentic user-generated content is always a valuable tool for bringing in leads, and reviews are at the top of the list. In fact, Nielsen Research says 92 percent of people trust recommendations from a peer and 70 percent trust a consumer opinion posted online.

Another important thing to note about reviews is that your average rating and number of reviews can actually impact search results. The higher both are, the more search results you might appear in.

It's also acceptable to request a review. Send a post-stay thank-you note. Not only will you get a better response rate, you might be able to find out whether their review will be positive.

And don't forget to respond when they do review. Continuing the dialogue opens the door to repeat business and continued word-of-mouth. When the review is less than flattering, you can showcase your customer service skills and provide a polite response.



Kigo vacation rental websites give you the sophistication and effectiveness of the top websites in the industry, without the arduous and expensive process of building them yourself or paying someone to do it for you. And our experts are here to help you every step of the way.

Schedule a demo to learn how Kigo can help you create a website that grows your business like never before!

KIGO CHANNEL MANAGER

- <https://www.kigo.net/channel-manager/>

KIGO REVENUE MANAGEMENT

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KIGO MARKETPLACE

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