

ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEMS FACT SHEET



WHY BE BOOKABLE ONLINE?

More and more people planning a trip are demanding the ability to search, book and pay instantly—at any time of day. An online booking system makes your business open for bookings 24/7, all around the world. It can generate more bookings and boost your revenue.

An online booking system allows you to:

- display your product availability in real time and manage your inventory from one central point
- sell your product through multiple websites/distributors from one central system
- save time by automating tasks like processing payments and confirming bookings
- eliminate the risk of overbooking with block out dates (see more at Top Tips below).

UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

No two businesses are the same, so it's important to choose the online booking system that fits your business best.

Some things to consider:

- Is the system suited to your category of tourism business? Does it specialise in accommodation, tours, activities, attractions or events?
- Can the system integrate bookings and centralise management of third-party websites like Wotif and Expedia in the one place?
- Can it integrate with your social media and Google maps? Does it offer analytic tool?
- Will you be able to access it on any browser and from any device? A 'cloud' based system is easier to manage than something that requires specific hardware.
- How does the system connect with your website? Think about the 'book now' button or widget.
- How much will it cost? Is it commission based, a flat fee or free?
- How will you receive payment? Is it instant, paid directly to your bank account or on account?
- How user-friendly is the system overall?

WHAT'S THE CATCH

It's likely to cost something to introduce an online booking system. Cost can range from booking charges only (commissions), which is suitable for small or start-up operators, to monthly/annual fees based on your sales or number of products listed. There can also be set-up costs or fees for ongoing support and training.

CONNECTING TO TOURISM EXCHANGE AUSTRALIA (TXA)

Once you have your online booking system in place and your listing on ATDW you can distribute through the TXA. The TXA gives you access to present your product through many different online website and distribution channels. For more information refer to the resources on TXA in the Industry Toolkit.



Tourism Exchange Website

TOP TIPS

- ✓ **Understand your business**
A clear understanding of your business needs is crucial. Use tools like the Tourism Tribe checklist and comparison charts to drill down and find the best booking system for you.
- ✓ **Update your website**
Make sure your website is up to date and has a search engine optimisation strategy so your customers can find you easily. A booking system that connects to the TXA will enhance your online visibility.
- ✓ **Manage your channels**
If you use third-party websites like Wotif and Expedia, make sure your system can manage your inventory to avoid overbookings. This is called a channel management tool.