



Best Practices



Hotel Quick Response Tactics in Tough Times

Bouncing back to recover direct bookings



Reacting to Unforeseen Situations

Be sure to communicate with visitors when it matters most!

It's common today for uncontrollable situations to occur causing uncertainty for guests, which results in **unexpected low demand** and a higher risk of cancellations.

In times of low demand, **growing your direct booking channel is even more critical than usual**. Hoteliers need to act quickly and define a clear strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to recover bookings.

Your hotel website is the ideal place to **reassure and engage visitors with personalized messages**, helping to capture bookings from existing traffic without investing more in campaigns.

Here we will look at best practices to proactively take the lead in difficult situations, taking examples from different hotel brands.



Choose the Best Combination of Message Formats

To ensure important messages are seen on your website, the choice of format used is key. Within The Hotels Network platform, you can choose from a wide variety of display types, which are all completely customizable.

- **Smart Notes**

Nudge users towards a booking with in-web notifications

- **Layers**

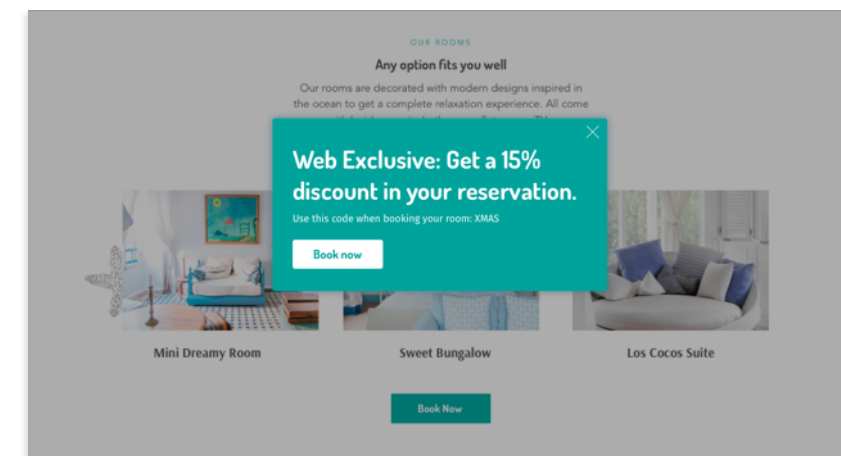
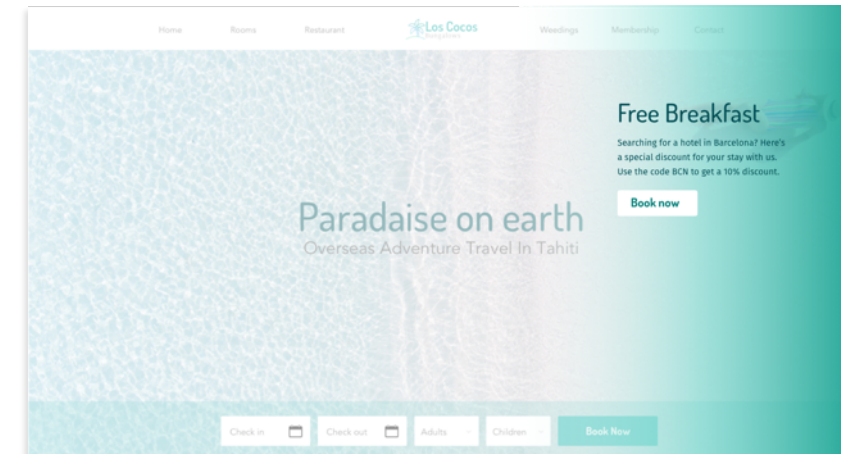
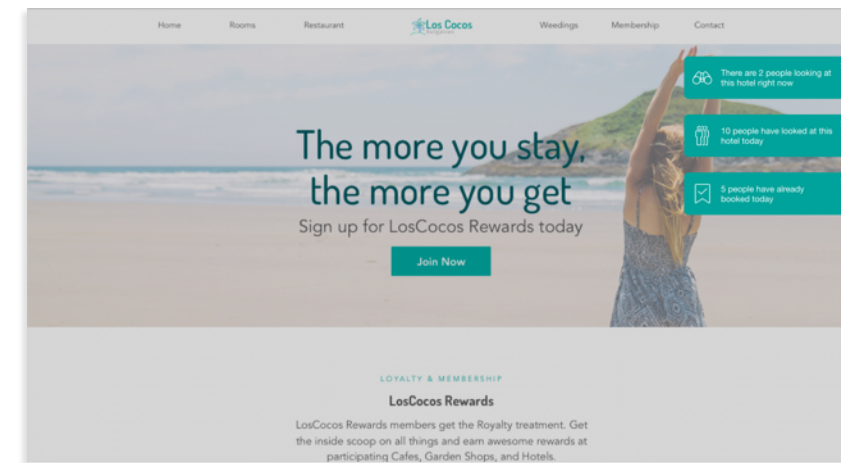
Create a personal and engaging user experience

- **Inliners**

Seduce users with subtle messages without interrupting the UX

- **Exit Intent**

Persuade abandoning visitors to stay on your website



Use Targeting Rules to Make Messages Relevant for Users



Timing: Date range / Day of the Week / Time of Day



Release: Early bird / Last-minute / Custom release



User location: Country / State / City where the user is located



Length of stay: Based on a minimum or maximum number of nights



Traffic source: TripAdvisor, Google, Instagram, custom domain...



Booking value: Within a specific price range (minimum / maximum amount)



Loyalty: Differentiate between logged members and non-members



Availability: When sold-out, send users to a sister hotel located nearby



Retargeting: For users who visited your website in the past 30 days.



Device: Display only for mobile or desktop or all devices



Booking search dates: For stays within a specific date range



+ Custom targeting: Build your own based on variables in the URL





Strategies & Tactics

We will be exploring how to optimize performance by focusing on the following areas:

- Reassuring visitors
- Flexible rates & cancellation policy
- Early bird / last-minute bookings
- Increasing ADR & average stay
- Packages & promotions
- Domestic market opportunities
- Returning visitors & VIPs

Reassuring Visitors

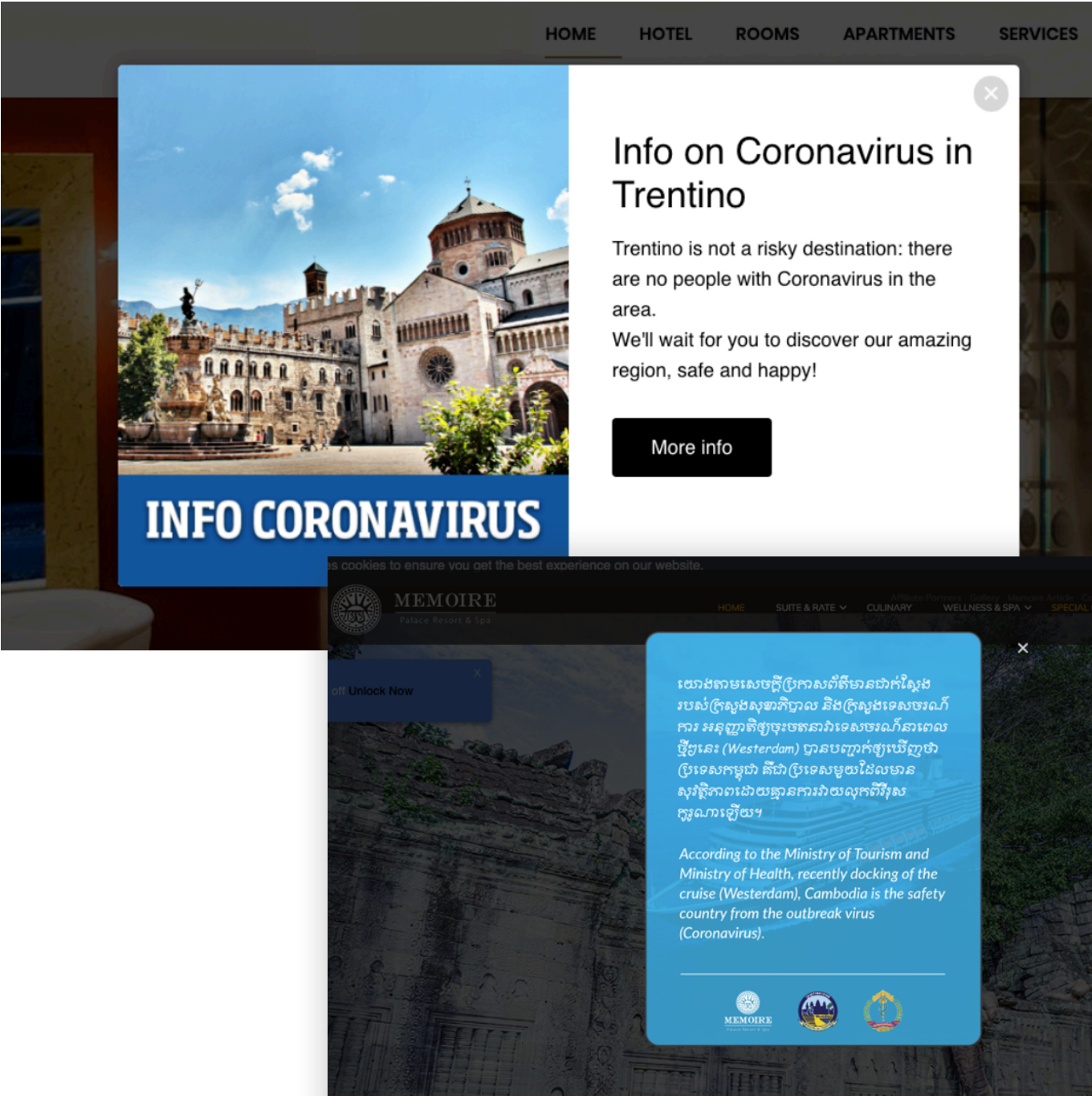


Communicate Regularly

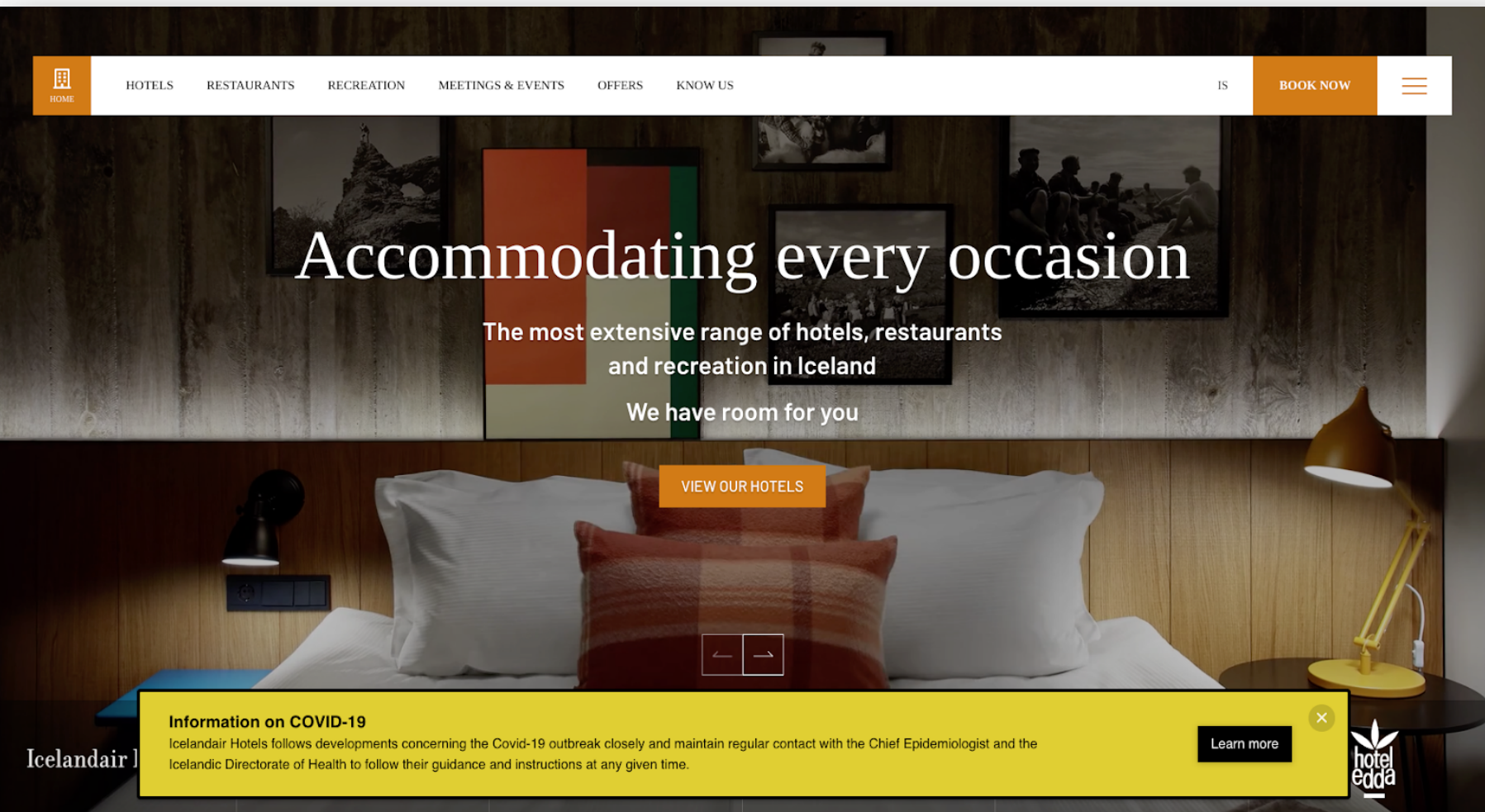
Clear information

If something has happened near your property such as a hurricane, reassure visitors by highlighting the safety of your hotel and destination.

These examples show messages posted by hotels during the Coronavirus outbreak to reassure visitors.



Publish Messages That Help to Reassure Visitors



Health & Safety

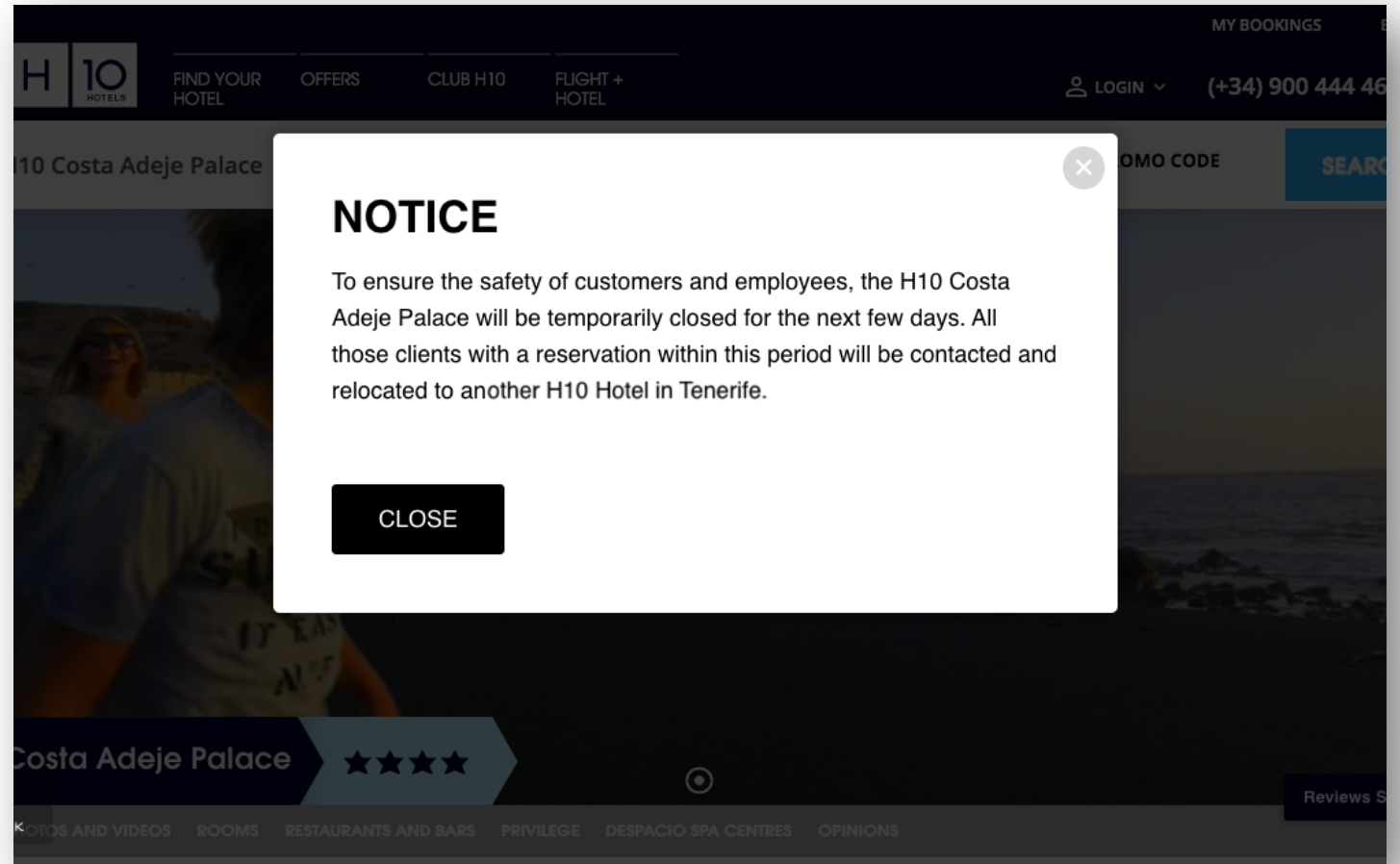
Make it clear that you are following guidelines from local government to minimise risk at your hotels. This could include best practices such as providing hand sanitizing points in your restaurant or a heightened cleaning regime at your property.



Keep Guests Updated of Any Sudden Changes

Urgent messages

If your property has been affected by an emergency or forced to close for any reason, publish regular updates informing visitors of the situation and how to proceed. Ensure guests know any action was taken in their best interest and a solution for current guests has been prepared. Guests must feel that their safety is your priority at all times.



Flexible Rates & Cancellation Policy

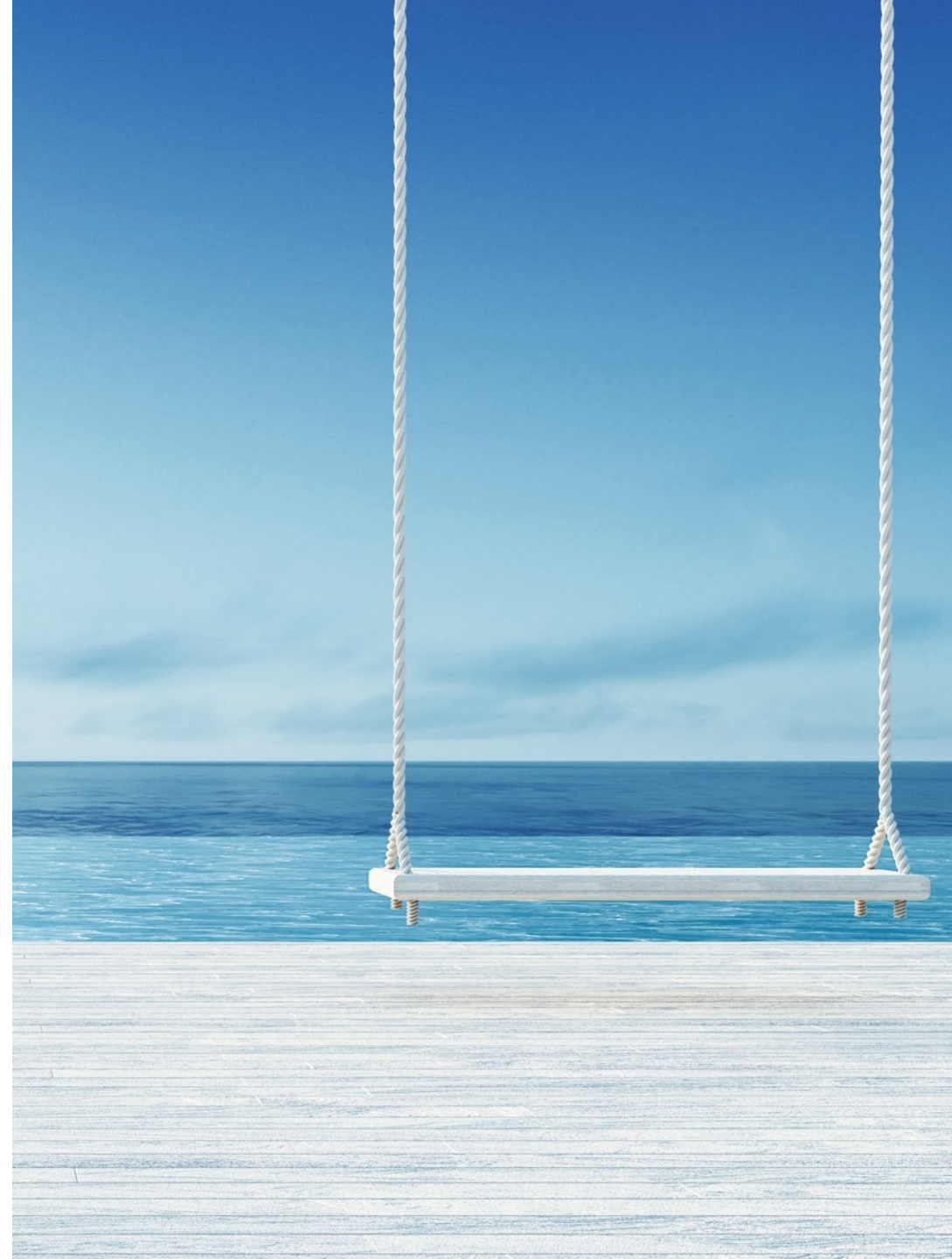


Review Your Cancellation Policy for Existing Bookings

Refunds and fees

Try to focus on a customer-centric service. In the long run, it may make sense to waive cancellation fees or offer more flexible rebooking policies to attract guests back in the future. This is probably particularly true for large repeat business customers.

During the Coronavirus outbreak, some larger brands have been relaxing cancellation policies specifically for their club members or subscribers.

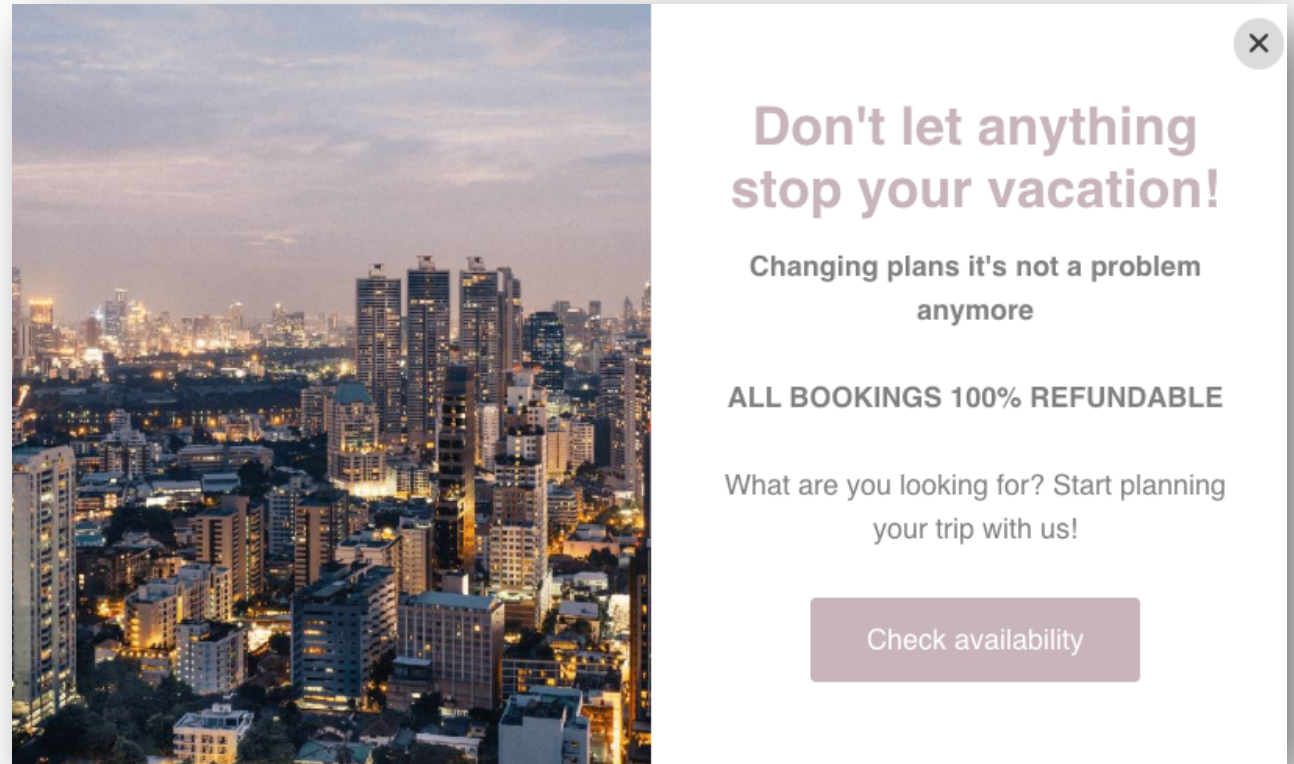


Promote Your Flexible Rates to Encourage New Bookings

Free cancellation

The majority of your bookings are probably made in advance and so don't let a market downturn affect your booking volume today for stays later in the year.

Consider relaxing your cancellation policy in the short term so that you remove the feeling of risk for guests. Use a Layer to let them know that direct bookings are 100% refundable.



✕

Don't let anything stop your vacation!

Changing plans it's not a problem anymore

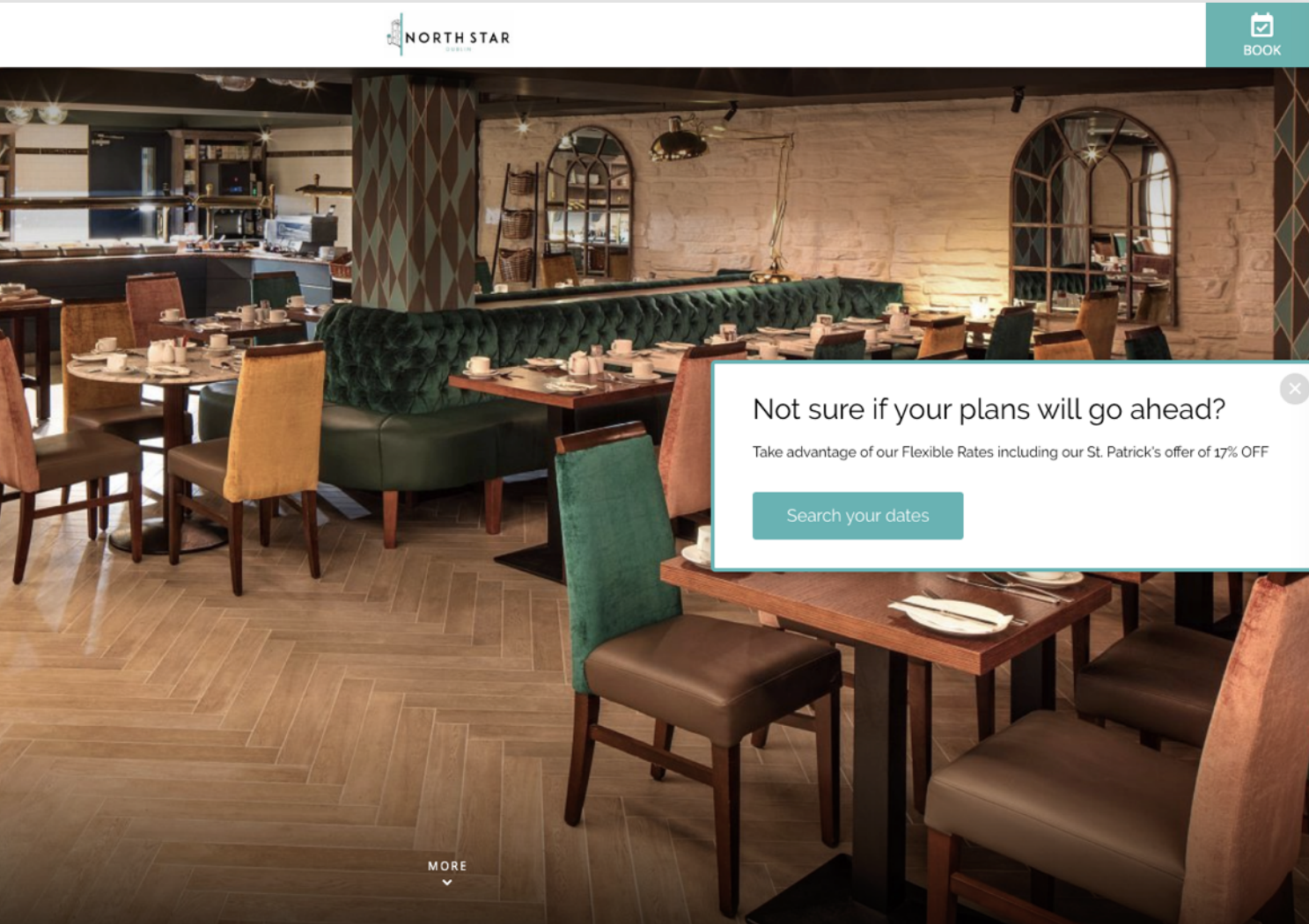
ALL BOOKINGS 100% REFUNDABLE

What are you looking for? Start planning your trip with us!

Check availability



Highlight Exclusive Rates for Direct Bookings



Book Direct

If you are also offering flexible rates on your listings on OTAs, you may need to give users an extra incentive to book direct to make sure you avoid paying commissions.

This Layer grabs visitors' attention as soon as they land on the website. The hotel not only highlights their refundable rates but also a 17% discount for direct bookings.



Guarantee Rate Parity

Price Match

If OTAs are undercutting your rates, activate a “Price Match” option to fight real-time disparities and encourage direct bookings.

If the tool detects a price disparity, users are shown an offer to match it. With just one click on the special offer link, a discount is automatically applied to combat the lower OTA rate. Apply targeting rules to decide what offer to display: when, to whom and how much.

Disparity detected

Rooms & Rates
Plan your perfect stay at our hotel

1 Choose your room 2 Enhance your stay 3 Enter your information

Book Direct 130€ 117€ + Special offer available! Click here to get a 10% off Booking.com 122€ Hotels.com 130€ Expedia 131€ E-mail this search

Internal Garden Room
Comfortably and tastefully furnished, it is the ideal room to come to after a fabulous adventure exploring the surroundings.
Size: 25m2
Beds: 1 People: 2

Reservation Summary
Internal Garden Room 1
Check in From 15.00h
Check out Before 12.00h
Reservation date From 12/04/2019 to 13/04/2019

€130

Discount automatically applied

Book Direct 117€ + Agoda 122€ Booking.com 122€ Expedia 131€ E-mail this search

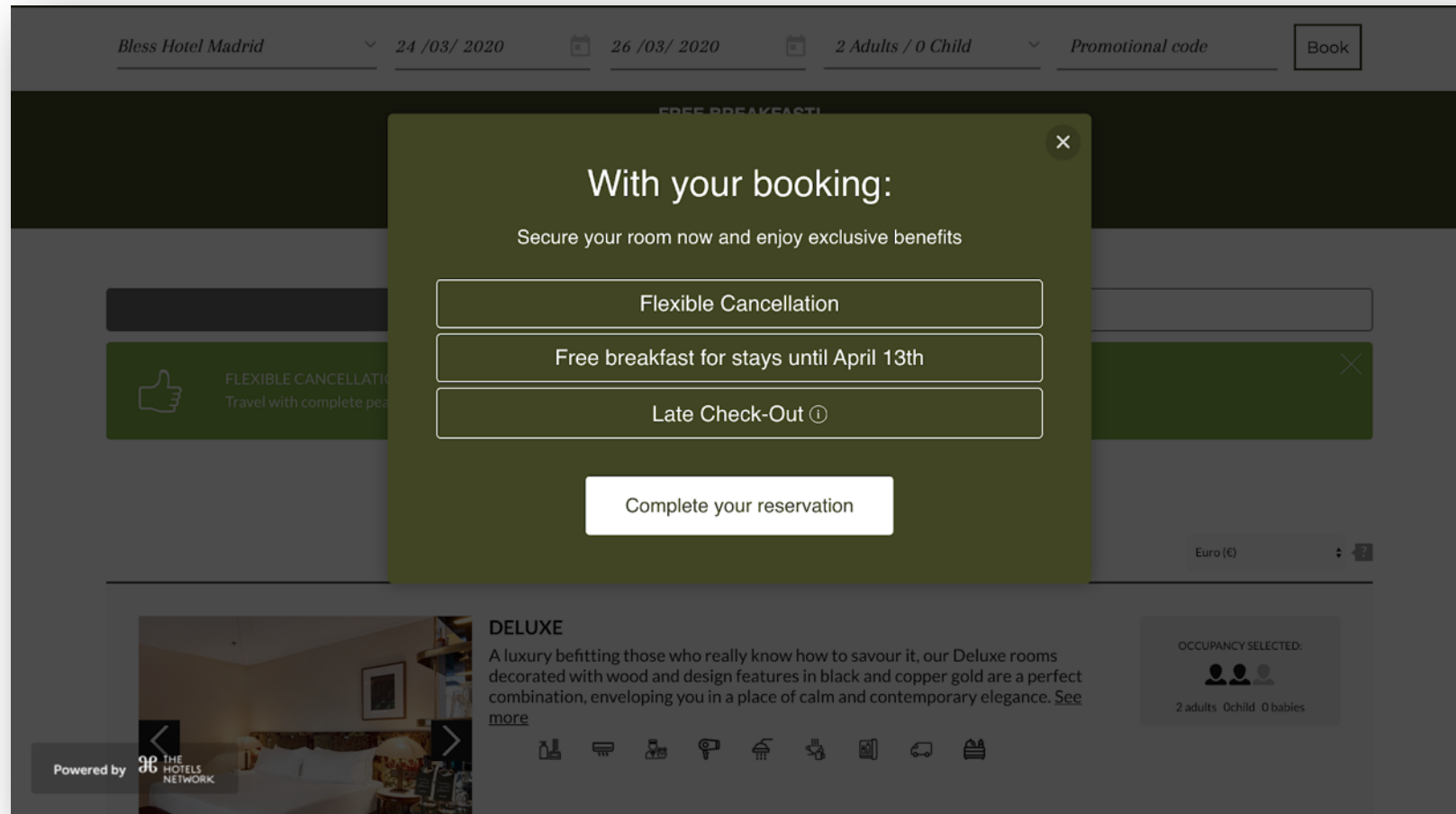
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€130
€117.0



Persuade Abandoning Visitors to Stay on Your Website



Exit Intent

Show users a tailored message that grabs their attention when they are about to leave your website. Reinforcing flexible cancellation and other direct booking benefits can help to keep them on your website so there is more chance they end up booking a stay.



Early Bird / Last-minute Bookings



Highlight Early Bird Offers

Pre-sales

Define a clear strategy around early bird bookings. Consider important holidays dates for your markets and create campaigns around these dates.

This example is an Inliner showing a pre-sale for stays in summer which is exclusive for direct bookings.

The screenshot displays a hotel website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a 'MENU' icon on the left, a search bar in the center, and a 'BOOK NOW' button on the right. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a text block describing 'Benedict, our in-house bakery and breakfast restaurant open 24 hours a day. Inside you'll find all of the Max Brown essentials—great coffee and bread, free WiFi and the most comfortable bed around.' To the left of this text is a 'Reviews Summary' widget showing a 4.5/5 rating and 'TOP 20% of Hotels in Berlin'. Below the text is a large image of a hotel room with a yellow bedspread. To the right of the room image is a large image of a woman sitting on a yellow bedspread. Below these images, a 'SUMMER SPECIAL UP TO 30% OFF' banner is displayed, with a 'BOOK NOW' button underneath. A teal arrow points from the text 'This example is an Inliner showing a pre-sale for stays in summer which is exclusive for direct bookings.' to the 'SUMMER SPECIAL' banner.

MENU

BOOK NOW EN

Benedict, our in-house bakery and breakfast restaurant open 24 hours a day. Inside you'll find all of the Max Brown essentials—great coffee and bread, free WiFi and the most comfortable bed around.

Reviews Summary

4.5/5
Excellent
TOP 20% of Hotels in Berlin

SUMMER SPECIAL
UP TO 30% OFF

Use MAXSUMMER code and receive up to 30% off. Only available on our own website.

BOOK NOW

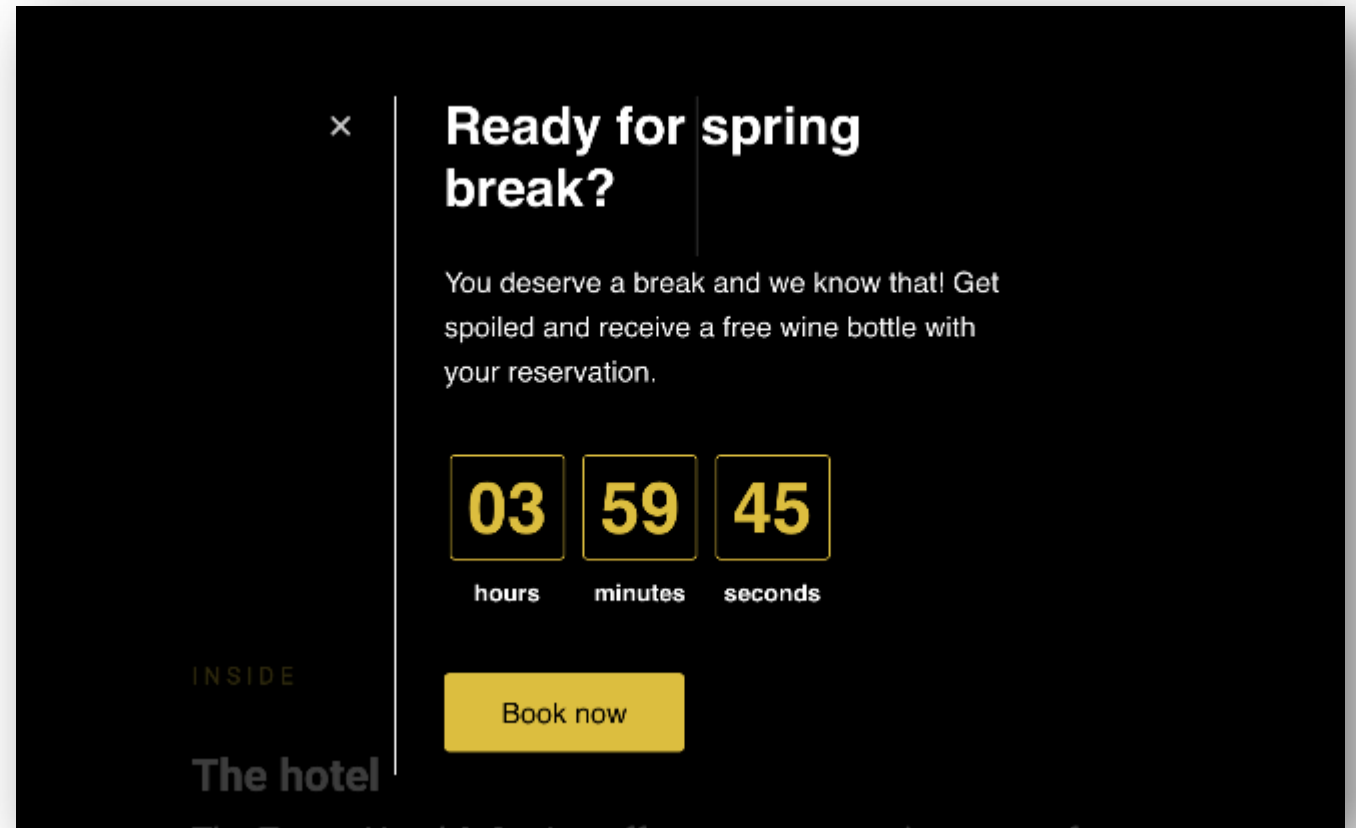


Create Campaigns for Multiple Dates

Holiday periods

There are all different types of holidays, from Spring Break and Easter to Mid Summer or even Halloween.

Create campaigns for key dates for your markets and use targeting to show personalized campaigns to visitors searching for a room on those dates. These can literally be launched months in advance.



Encourage Last-minute Bookings

Attractive deals

Travelers may be waiting to see how an uncertain situation evolves before booking which means there may be an opportunity to generate last-minute reservations if the situation stabilizes.

Use a Smart Note or Layer to promote last-minute offers. Also consider packages to encourage longer stays.



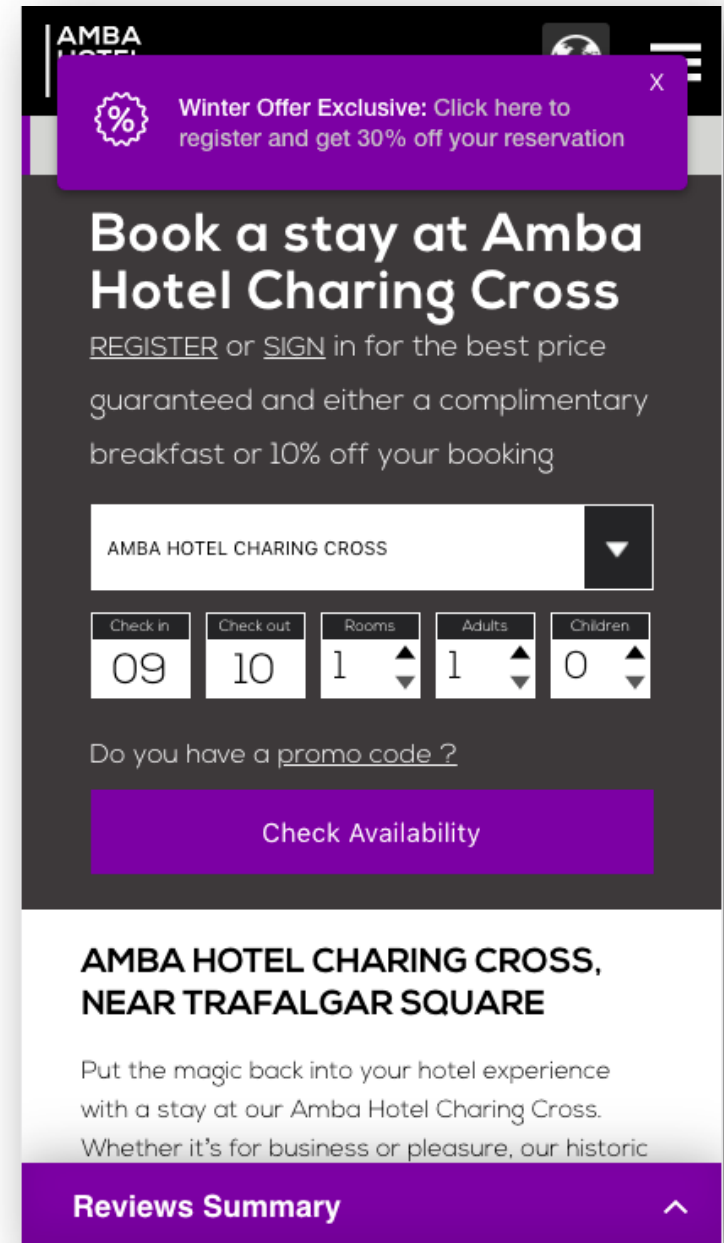
Your search qualifies for our
"Extend your Weekend"
offer. Click in packages to
learn more!



Optimize Your Strategy on Mobile

Last-minute traffic on mobile

For last-minute bookings, there is often a higher percentage of traffic on mobile devices than usual. It's essential that any last-minute offers or messages are optimized for mobile users.



The image shows a mobile app interface for AMBA Hotel Charing Cross. At the top, there is a purple banner with a percentage icon and the text "Winter Offer Exclusive: Click here to register and get 30% off your reservation". Below this, the main heading reads "Book a stay at Amba Hotel Charing Cross". Underneath, it says "REGISTER or SIGN in for the best price guaranteed and either a complimentary breakfast or 10% off your booking". A search bar contains the text "AMBA HOTEL CHARING CROSS". Below the search bar, there are five input fields: "Check in" with the value "09", "Check out" with the value "10", "Rooms" with the value "1" and up/down arrows, "Adults" with the value "1" and up/down arrows, and "Children" with the value "0" and up/down arrows. Below these fields, there is a link that says "Do you have a [promo code ?](#)". A large purple button labeled "Check Availability" is positioned below the link. At the bottom, there is a white section with the heading "AMBA HOTEL CHARING CROSS, NEAR TRAFALGAR SQUARE". Below this heading, it says "Put the magic back into your hotel experience with a stay at our Amba Hotel Charing Cross. Whether it's for business or pleasure, our historic". At the very bottom, there is a purple bar with the text "Reviews Summary" and an upward arrow icon.

AMBA HOTEL CHARING CROSS, NEAR TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Put the magic back into your hotel experience with a stay at our Amba Hotel Charing Cross. Whether it's for business or pleasure, our historic

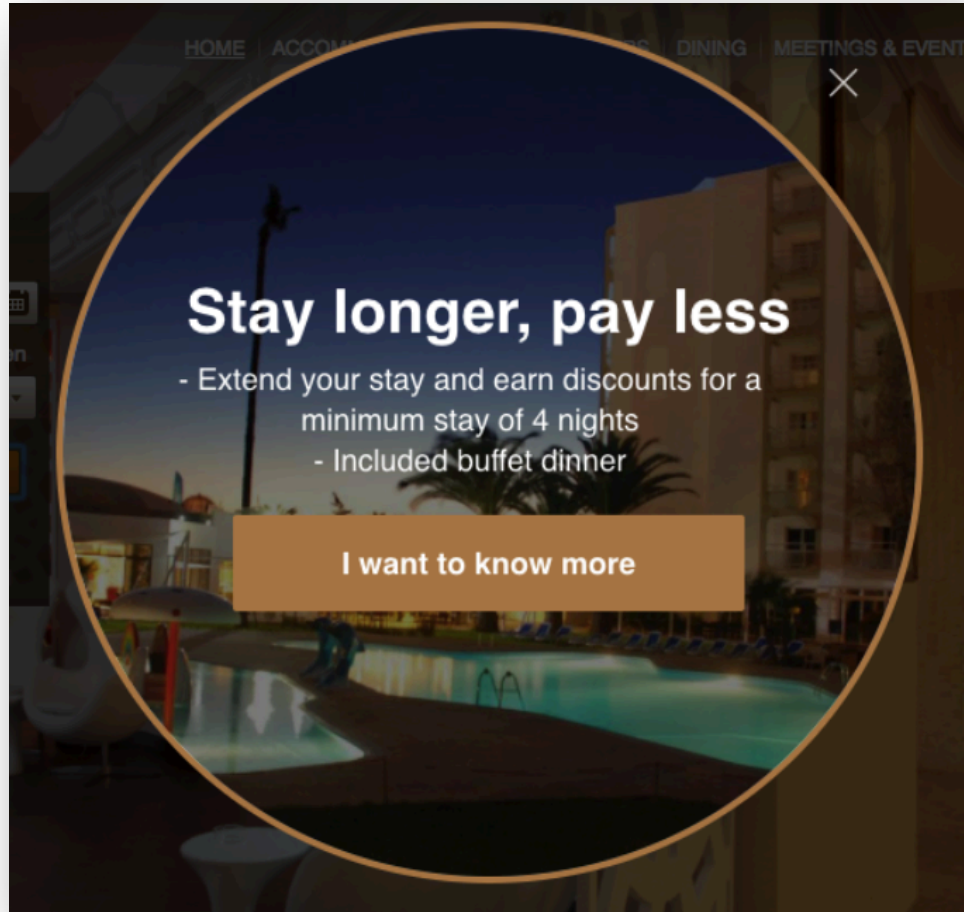
Reviews Summary



Increasing Average Spend



Increase Average Length of Stay



Higher booking value

Encourage users to book a longer stay by offering incentives such as complimentary perks or extras. "4 nights for the price of 3" promotions are also highly effective.

The example here shows an Exit Intent message to persuade abandoning users to stay on the hotel website. Using targeting rules, it is only shown to users who had searched for a stay of minimum 2 nights.

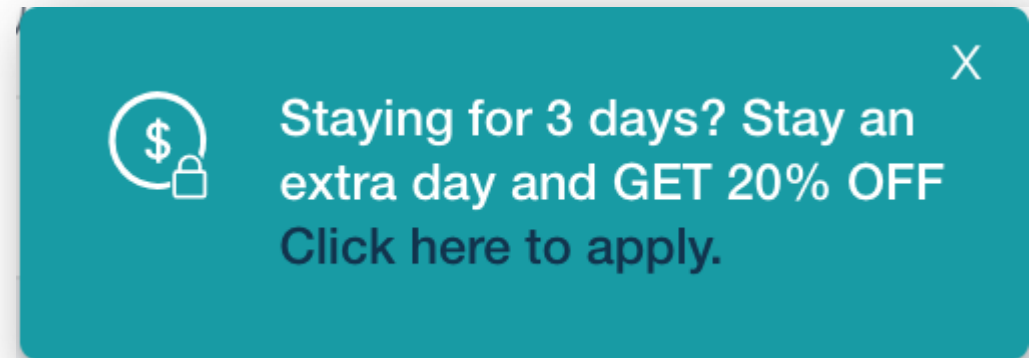


Nudge Users to Book an Extra Night

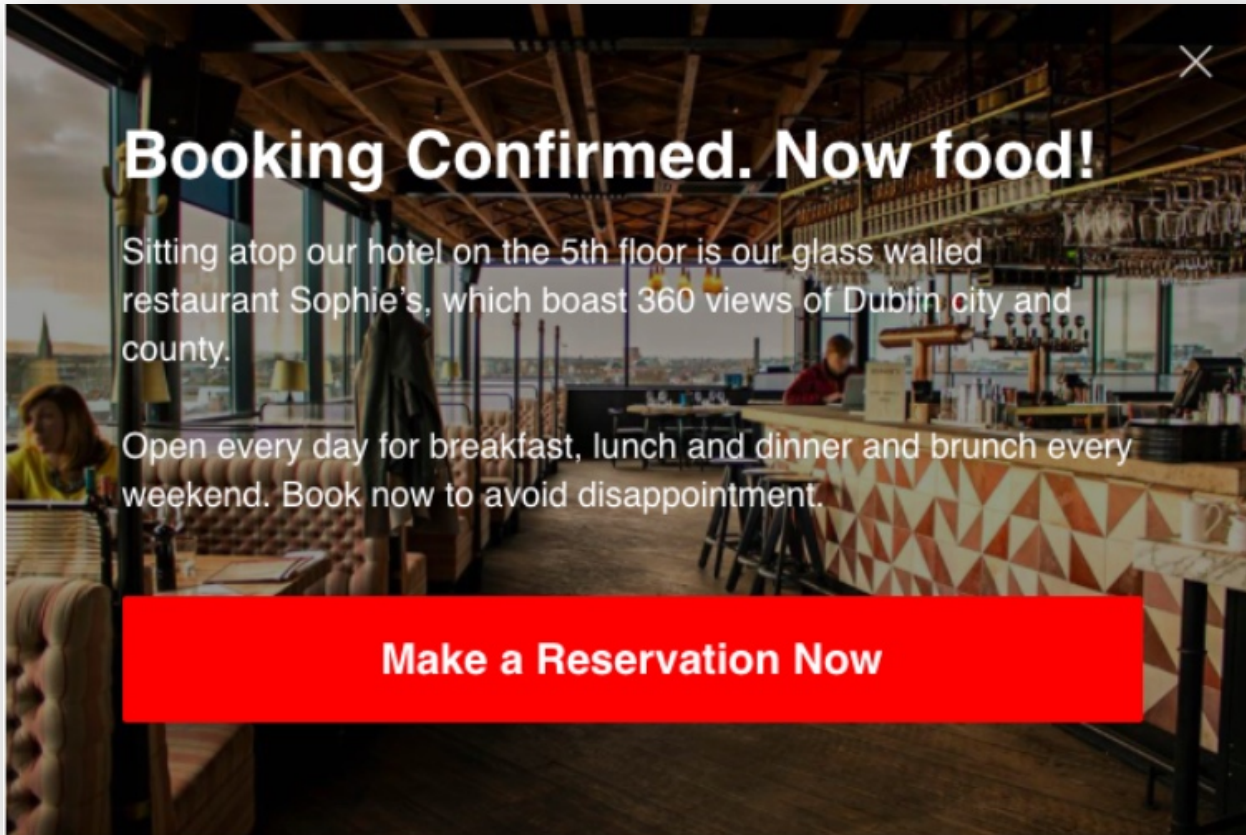
Clever discounts

For shorts stays, offering a discount on an extra night helps to increase occupancy, especially on low-demand dates.

In the booking engine, the Smart Note is only visible to visitors searching for a 3-night stay. With the 1-click option, you can apply the discount automatically without having to show a promo code.



Showcase Hotel Services



Ancillary Revenue

In times of low occupancy, it is even more important than usual to generate additional revenue from services at your hotel such as F&B, spa treatments or tours.

This Layer uses an eye-catching image to highlight the restaurant with 360° views of Dublin. The message is shown to guests as soon as they have confirmed their online booking,



Thank Guests for Booking with You

Spa offer

Make guests feel valued while potentially generating additional revenue by offering a reduced rate for hotel services.

Guests who book at this hotel see a message promoting a 15% discount at their spa.

We can't wait for your stay!

We're delighted you chose to stay with us. As a token of our appreciation, **use code MYTAHITI** when booking any service in our **Spa to save 15%**

Explore Our Spa



Packages & Promotions

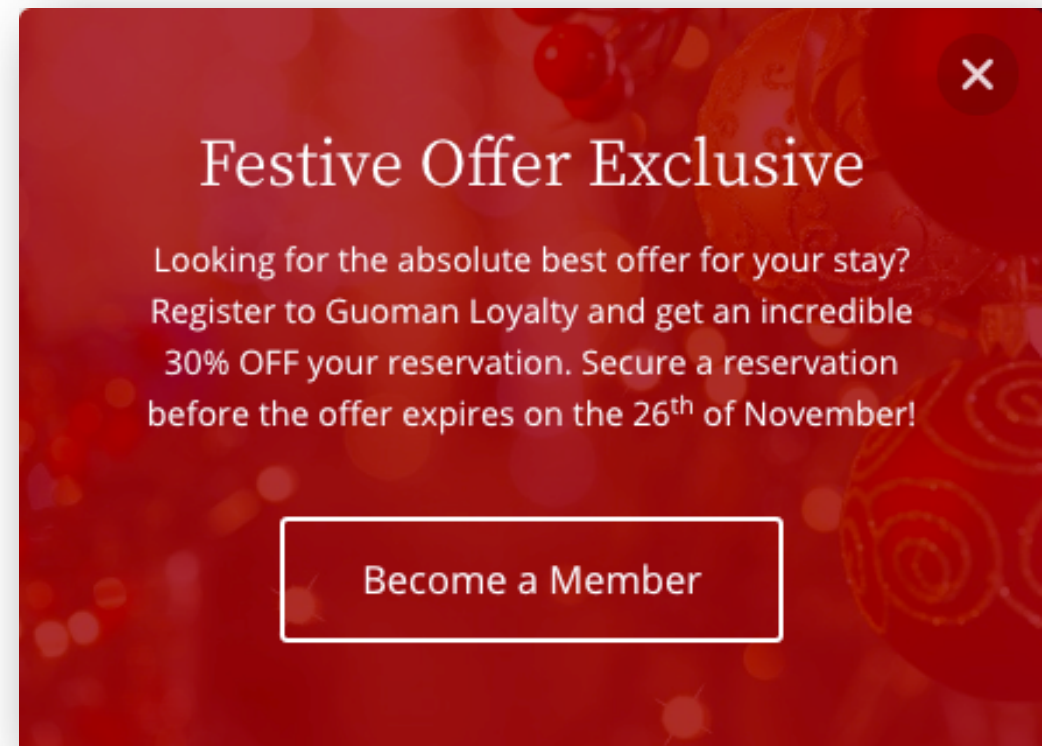


Boost Newsletter Subscribers & Loyalty Club Membership

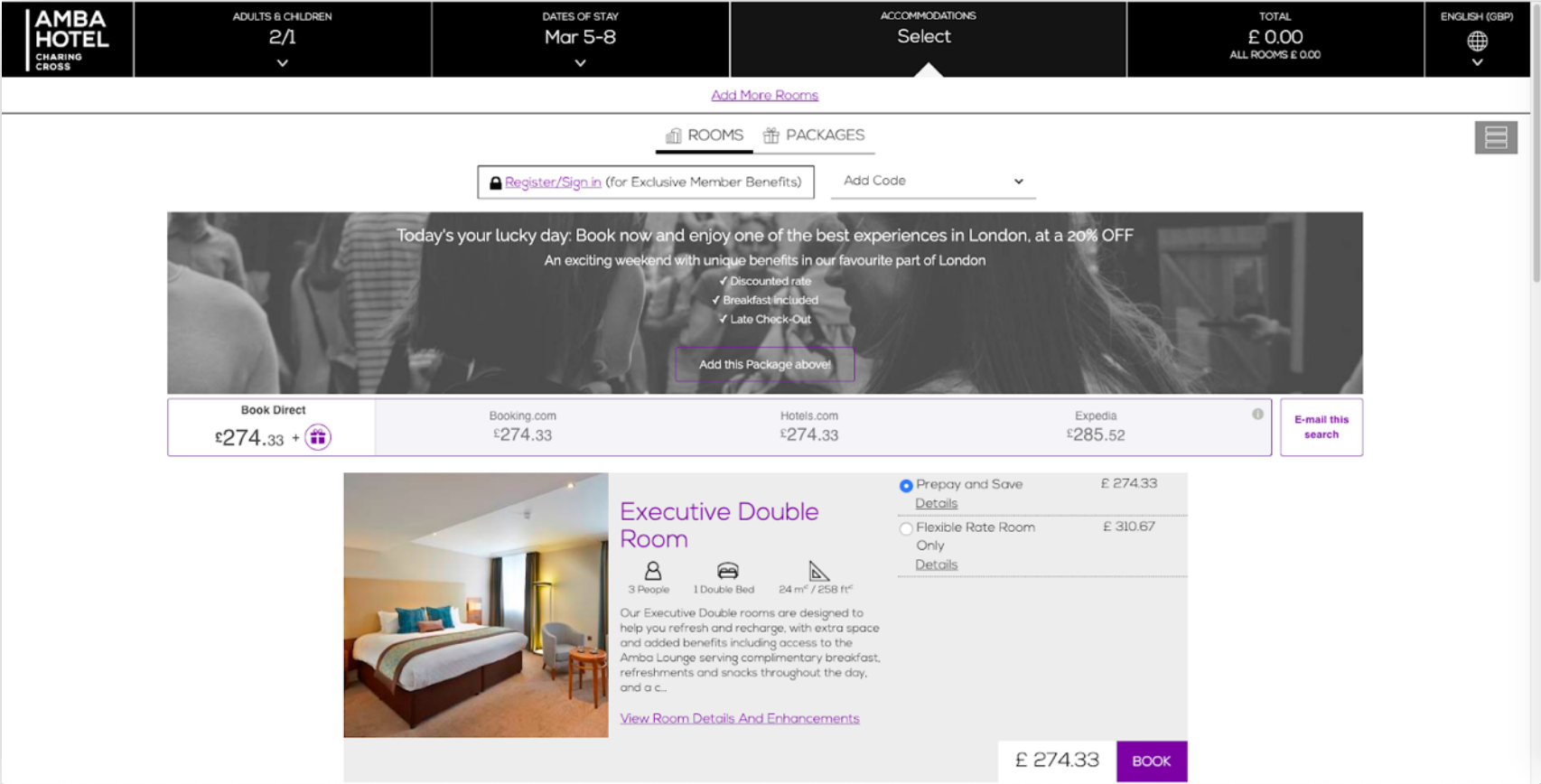
Special rates for members

If demand is low, you may find it necessary to offer discounts or reduce rates to tempt visitors to make a booking.

Help turn this into something positive by making the discount for members only so that more visitors sign up to your newsletter or loyalty club. It's always good to grow your marketing database.



Highlight Existing Packages



Eye-catching Deals

You most likely already have some great deals and packages. Make sure they jump out so visitors know about them!



Create Packages for Special Dates

International and local celebrations

Special dates and occasions are a fantastic excuse to launch tailored packages and campaigns. Check to see what festivities are coming up soon, such as Mother's Day or Father's Day, and publish creative campaigns on your hotel website.

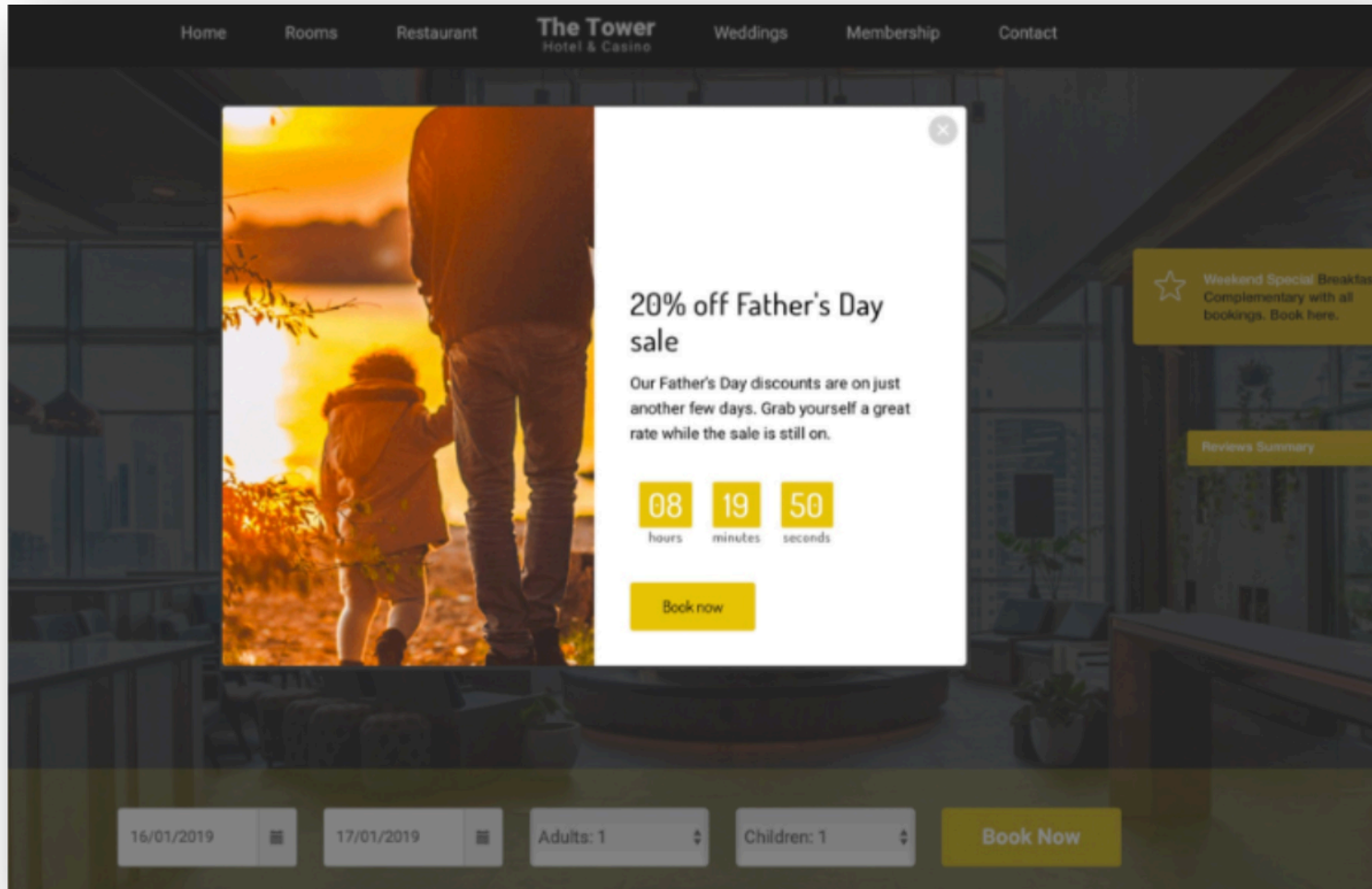
If a celebration is relevant for just one market, use targeting to only show the campaign to users from that market. For example, only show 4th of July offers to users from the USA.

2020 Daykiting Calendar

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
6 th - Three Kings' Day	14 th - Valentine's Day	8 th - International Women's Day
11 th - International Thank you Day	20 th - Carnival	17 th - St. Patrick's Day
25 th - Opposite Day	29 th - Leap Day	20 th - International Earth Day
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1 st - April Fool's	4 th - Star Wars Day	8 th - World Ocean Day
4 th - International Pillow Fight Day	5 th - Cinco de Mayo	20 th - First Day of Summer
12 th - Easter	15 th - International Day of Families	21 th - Father's Day
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
4 th - Fourth of July	2 nd - Sisters day	8 th - Labor Day
7 th - World Chocolate Day	13 th - International Lefthander's Day	11 th - Make Your Bed Day
17 th - World Emoji Day	15 th - Relaxation Day	19 th - Oktoberfest
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
2 nd - World Smile Day	1 st - Día de Los Muertos	25 th - Christmas
16 th - World Food Day	20 th - Universal Children's Day	28 th - Boxing Day
31 st - Halloween	27 th - Black Friday	31 st - New Year's Eve



Generate a Peak of Interest with a Flash Sale



Countdown Clock

Grab the attention of users with a Layer on your homepage communicating a flash sale that is only valid for a short time.

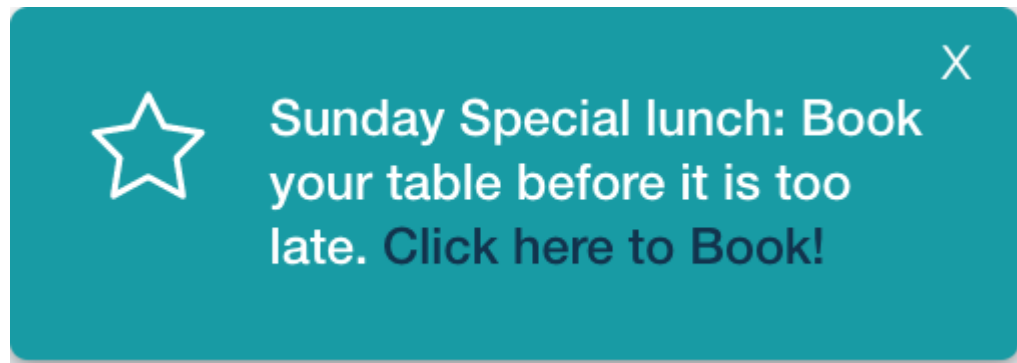
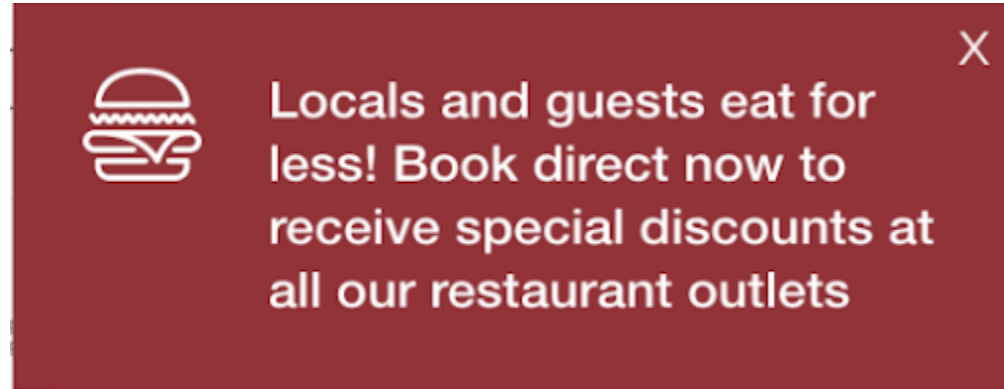
In this example of a Father's Day sale, there is a countdown clock to make sure visitors know they need to book soon if they don't want to miss out.



Domestic Market Opportunities



Personalize Messages for Your Domestic Market



Local Customers

In uncertain times, people may be hesitant about traveling long distances. It therefore makes sense to look into what you can do to appeal to customers from your local market.

Use targeting to display personalized messages to users from your own country or city. Create tailored promotions around hotel stays but also the services you offer. For example, these Smart Notes are pushing restaurant reservations.



Appeal to Guests Living Within Driving Distance

Guests Arriving by Car

If there are reduced flight timetables or international travel controls, focusing on the drive market can help to encourage bookings for stays during the dates until the restrictions are lifted.

To avoid reducing rates, look for ideas for added-value offers that are relevant for this segment. For example, use a Smart Note to promote that you are offering complimentary parking during these dates.



**Enjoy complimentary Parking
when you stay with us.**

x



Returning Visitors & VIPs

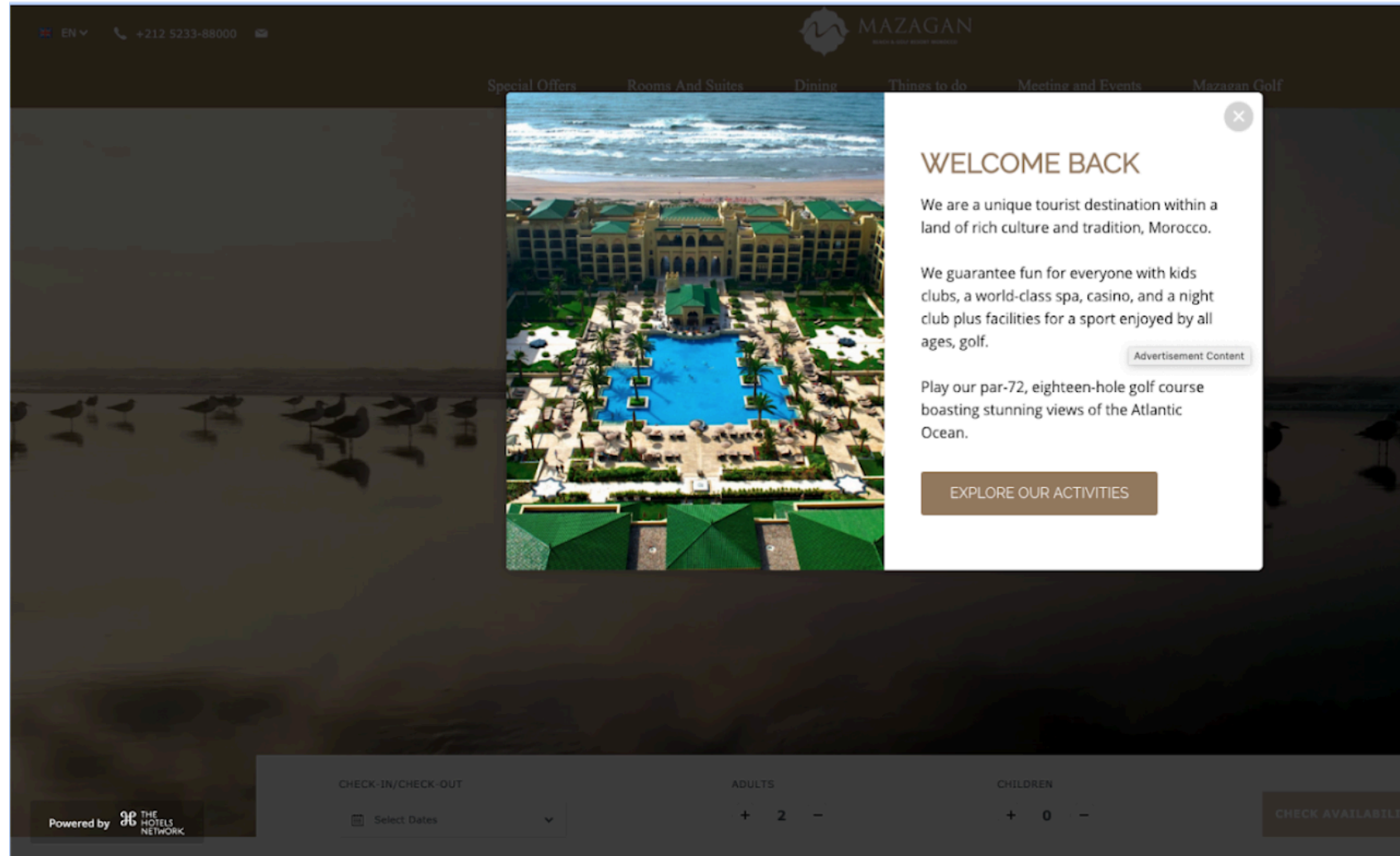


Welcome Back Returning Website Visitors

Repeat visitors

Hospitality is all about making guests feel welcome, and it's just as important on your website as at your hotel.

Display a warm message or offer something special to users who come back to your website, encouraging them to book direct.





Key Takeaways

- ✓ Communication is key. Be sure to **reassure and engage website visitors** when it matters most.
- ✓ Make crystal clear the **benefits of booking direct**. Personalize the message for specific user groups, offering them additional incentives if necessary.
- ✓ Highlight **flexible rates and cancellation policies** on your homepage as well as in the booking engine.
- ✓ Focus on segments that are less affected by the situation (such as domestic travelers) and use targeting rules to **personalize the website experience** for each audience.
- ✓ Be creative in terms of **exclusive offers and packages** and how you promote them visually. Customize the design to reflect the look and feel of your website.
- ✓ As soon as you become aware of an issue affecting guests, **publish an update on your website asap**. Try to avoid negativity and offer a solution wherever possible.



About The Hotels Network

The Hotels Network is an innovative technology company working with over 5,000 hotels around the globe. Boasting an international team of specialists, we offer clients a hotel tech ecosystem to boost website conversions and ADR. By adding a layer of tools to the hotel website, brands can improve the user experience for guests and increase direct bookings.

In addition to price comparison, reviews summary and a full suite of personalization options, our latest product innovation, Oraculo, is the world's first predictive algorithm for hotels. Oraculo harnesses machine learning techniques to predict the behavior of visitors to the hotel website and then automatically personalizes both the message and the offer for each user.

Our mission is to improve the booking experience and strengthen the relationship between hotel brands and their guests.

[Contact us](#) today to find out more.





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