

# Are you ready for booking season?

## What is booking season?

We know that there is a typical increase in bookings on HomeAway sites from the last quarter of the year to the first quarter of the following year.

Two key pieces for getting ready for booking season are to:

- Make sure your listings are the best they can be to appeal to travelers
- Make sure your listings are optimized to perform on the HomeAway sites.

## Update your listing

Take some time to review your listings and make sure they are appealing to travelers. With the influx in bookings during this season, it's important to regularly revisit your listings for quality and attractiveness. Here are a few of the top tips that we have:



### Invest some time in GREAT photos.

Choose the right thumbnail photo! You have just a few seconds to grab travelers' attention as they browse the site. You want to put your best foot forward with a great thumbnail photo to draw them to your listing.

- ✓ Stage the space before you take pictures. It's important that the space you are photographing is clean, uncluttered and inviting. Consider adding some flowers or other aesthetics to make the space more inviting.
- ✓ Ensure there is lots of natural lighting in the photos. A common mistake we see is that people take dark photos or photos that use only interior lighting. Interior lighting has a tendency to discolor photos. Open up doors and windows and let as much lighting into the room as possible.
- ✓ Get as much of the room in as possible. Stand in a corner or doorway and take a landscape style photo. It helps to use a wide-angle lens. Travelers want to see the whole space.
- ✓ Understand the minimum requirements and take advantage of your 24 allotted photo spaces. [Check out our photo guidelines.](#)



### Revisit the text on your listings.

Your pictures are important but you have to tell the story of your property with your text. Take some time to make sure you are putting your best foot forward with your headlines/descriptions. Here are some tips to do that:

- ✓ Customize your headlines for seasonality. Winter text might be different than summer for you properties
- ✓ Tell a story about your properties with your text. It should be relatable, it should showcase the uniqueness of the properties, it should help build trust.

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## Understand how to optimize your property for Best Match

Your listing may be a high quality listing, but it's also key to ensure that it is surfacing to travelers. We want to walk you through the basic rules of our site but also some of the metrics you need to be thinking about to ensure you are performing in Best Match



### Let's start with the basic site rules.

There are some essentials for operating on the HomeAway platform. Think of these from a traveler's perspective. The more listings on HomeAway sites, the better the experience for travelers. The better the experience for travelers, the more they come back to book with these sites in the future. It's a cycle that we want you to reap the benefit of. So here are the basics:

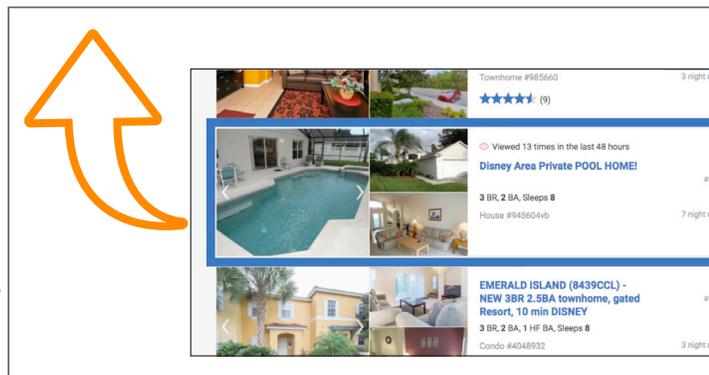
**All customer bookings generated through HomeAway must be reported through software (Booking Update Service)** You may have online booking enabled, but if you are getting an inquiry generated through HomeAway and that inquiry turns into a booking, it's important to close the loop. It's beneficial to you in that it supports your place in Best Match. We'll get into how that works in the next section.

**You must accept a material number of booking requests for each listing.** Make sure that you are accurately reporting bookings generated through HomeAway, otherwise, it looks to us as if you aren't accepting bookings

**You cannot cancel a material number of confirmed reservations per listing.** Things happen, but try where possible to avoid canceling. It creates a bad traveler experience.

**Maintain an accurate calendar.** This is a marketplace basic, but it's a great advantage for our integrated property manager customers (customers who use software). Your calendars are automatically synced and this really helps your placement in Best Match.

**If you have questions about how your listings are performing, ask your account manager.**



### Know your competition in order to enhance your Best Match performance.

Above and beyond the essentials, your properties are being benchmarked on a per listing basis against the others in your market. So here is what can you do to be successful:

#### First and foremost: Report offline bookings through the booking update service.

- You aren't getting credit for your performance in the below metrics. That means, you're not getting credit in Best Match and you will fall lower in sort.
- Check with your software provider or account manager if you're not sure how to ensure you're reporting this.

#### Secondly, you will want to beat your competition with the following metrics:

- **Number of Booked Nights** Again, if you don't report through booking update service, we don't know about it! Make sure that you are accurately reporting bookings generated through HomeAway, otherwise, it looks to us as if you aren't accepting bookings
- **'Views to Contacts' Rate** This is a signal of the appeal of your property. If you're getting lots of views but no inquiries or bookings, then price/image quality are the number one reason why you might be losing bookings.
- **Accepting bookings** Accurately report HomeAway bookings generated! If you don't report it, it will look like you got an enquiry through HomeAway, but didn't accept. That will count negatively against you.
- **Reviews** - Average rating & review count are important. The more reviews and the higher the ratings, the better.