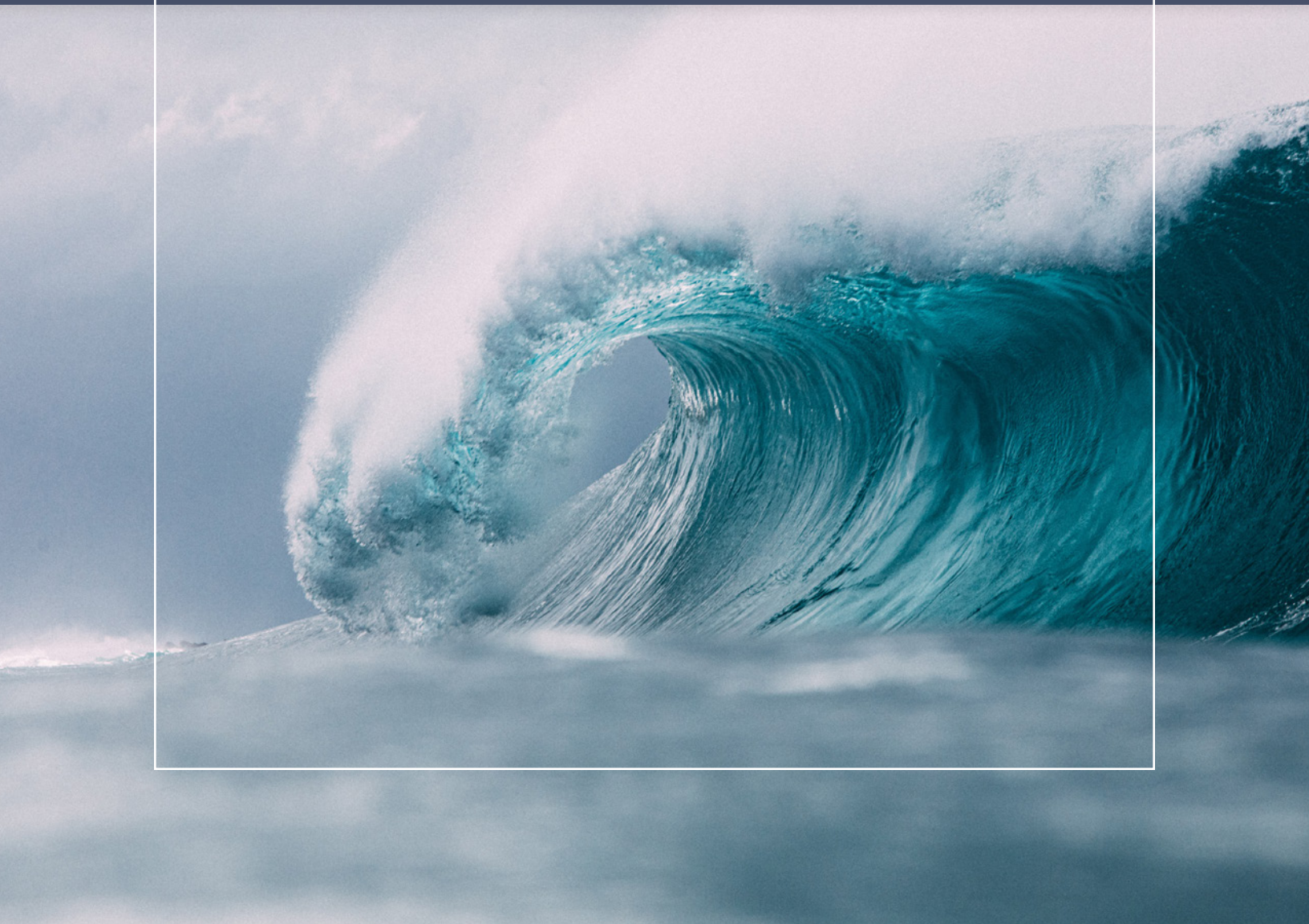


# 10 Warning Signs

Your Direct Booking  
Strategy Is In Trouble



They may not realize it, but every time they travel your guests are making bets.

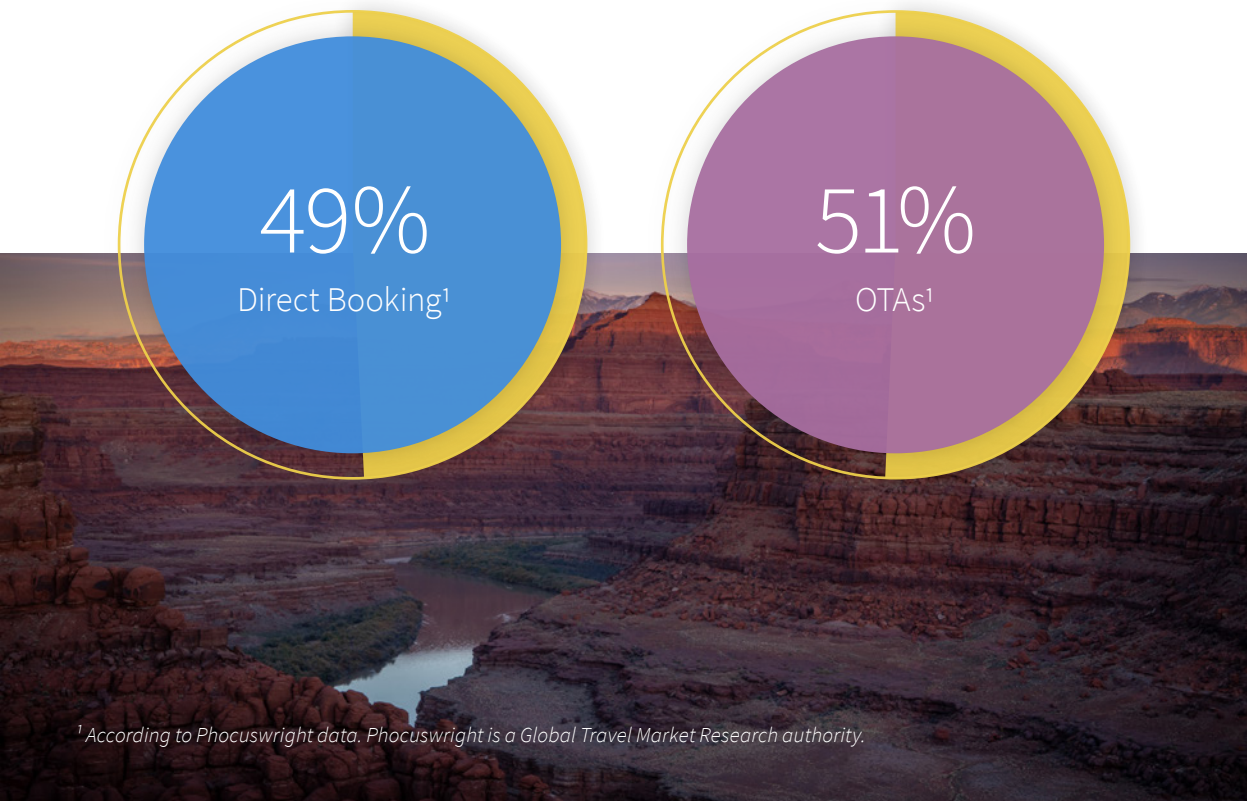
When deciding to book a stay they are investing time, money and resources now in exchange for an amazing vacation.

Unfortunately the OTA’s are experts at capitalizing on your guests’ desire to mitigate risk. OTA’s have built an industry based on leveraging price and convenience to make travelers’ choices feel safe – keeping their agencies on top of the sales funnel and capturing demand. Pretty clever!

You’ve likely been fighting OTA’s and their 30% cut for years, and the good news is you’re making progress. Data from Global Travel Market Research authority Phocuswright shows direct bookings recently accounted for 49% of U.S. hotel and lodging online gross bookings, versus OTAs at 51%.

But to continue to effectively take back your commissions, you need to make an honest assessment of the health of your direct booking strategy and whether it effectively encourages travelers to feel like your property is the bet that will result in the best stay. If you’re not seeing the results you deserve, something might be amiss, which is why we created the **10 Warning Signs Your Direct Booking Strategy Is In Trouble**. That’s right, it’s time for a little self-reflection so you can maximize those direct bookings and make your guests comfortable choosing YOU.

U.S. Hotel and Lodging Online Gross Bookings



WARNING SIGN #1

You’re Sending the Same Message to the Same Audience

Market segmentation is the somewhat nuanced activity of identifying subgroups within your target market and understanding their common traits, then tailoring your marketing messaging accordingly.

Wait, what?

Think of it like this: Your family may consist of your grandparents, parents and your own children. But you communicate to each subgroup differently by curating personalized content in a way that captures each individual’s attention and meets their needs, which makes your message valuable. Now THAT’s segmentation!

Dive deep into your target market, segment, and unpack what makes each group tick so you can communicate effectively and meet their direct booking needs.

WARNING SIGN #2

You’re Targeting the Wrong Audience

Marketing communications would be so much easier if only you could afford a few Super Bowl ads and broadcast your idea across the globe. One can dream, but until that glorious day you can let data you already have be your magnifying glass to see the right audience clearly.

Google Analytics, your PMS, and a fully integrated hospitality CRM are great ways to identify pockets of demand (geotargeting), determine how they are traveling (airline travel is coming back, but for now the drive market is worth your attention), and develop actionable demographic information to generate a proper marketing ROI from your right audience.





WARNING SIGN #3

You’re Taking Loyalty for Granted

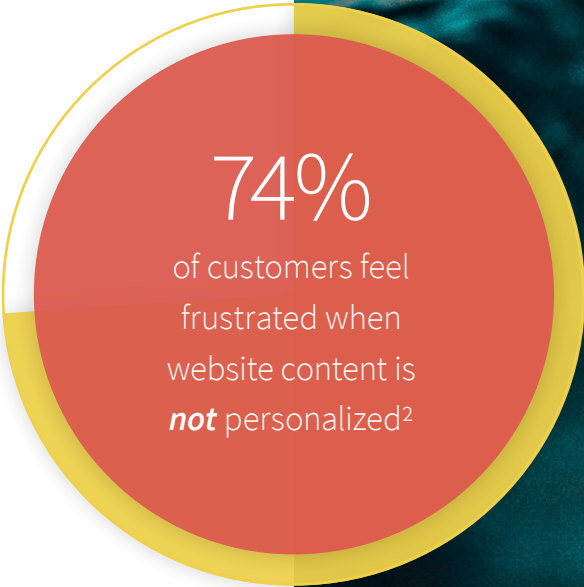
It’s much more cost effective to keep a current customer than find a new one. The direct booking process creates ample opportunity to gather the guest details you need to follow-up, create personal connections and enhance the guest experience with thoughtfully crafted pre and post-stay communications. Every guest wants to feel seen – taking the time to notice and demonstrate your appreciation is future direct booking magic.

WARNING SIGN #4

You’re Not Getting Personal

According to global consulting and technology leader Infosys, 74% of customers feel frustrated when website content is *not* personalized, while Salesforce identifies 59% of shoppers state personalization influences their purchasing decision.

Personalization adds resonance to your guests’ decision-making process. Meanwhile, direct booking provides your hotel all of the guest details and profiles from the beginning, so you can nurture a great relationship (and offer an excellent overall experience) by interacting personally and directly across the entire booking journey.



WARNING SIGN #5

You Haven’t Invested in the Right Tech Stacks

Staying in touch with guests and offering a consistent experience can be overwhelming in an analog-only world. Fortunately the right hospitality CRM solves this problem by creating a beautiful marriage between personalization and automation. Consider what it’s worth to you to bring those guests back with a keystroke! **The Hospitality Guide to Tech Stack Shopping** is a great place to start.

<sup>2</sup>According to Infosys data. Infosys is a global digital services and consulting company.  
<sup>3</sup>According to Instapage. Instapage is a landing page platform designed for digital advertising conversion.



#### WARNING SIGN #6

### You're Seen as a Commodity

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In the course of marketing your property it's easy to simply focus on your functionality (what you are, and what you have to offer). Unfortunately by doing so, you align yourself with everyone else and amplify your commonality. The next thing you know you're competing solely on characteristics you share with properties of the same type, and pressure mounts to differentiate yourself on important aspects like price. Sound familiar? You've become a commodity!

To drive direct bookings, focus on your brand's attitude, the status you convey, the experience you deliver, and how you are different (especially the little things you do - unique to you - that create an emotional connection). This tells your guests why they should care about you and gives your property the chance it deserves to remain "sticky" in their minds.

#### WARNING SIGN #7

### Most of Your Prospects Are Abandoning Your Website

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Potential guests are lining up in your booking engine, then vanishing. It's shopping cart abandonment, a.k.a. the bane of the entire e-commerce industry. And the travel & hospitality segment in particular suffers a disproportionately high abandonment rate of 81.1% according to Econsultancy.

You're spending money to drive these prospects to your site, so it's worth exploring how to capture what you've been missing. Check out our guide to [\*\*Capturing Uncaptured Demand\*\*](#) to learn more!



## WARNING SIGN #8

### You're Not On the Right Platform (at the right time)

It's no secret that speed wins in today's digital landscape. Which begs the question, when was the last time you completed a booking on your property's mobile site? Uh oh.

According to data-driven informational resource Think With Google, 94% of leisure travelers switch between devices as they plan or book a trip. This is largely due to decision-making anxiety and the limitations of mobile booking sites and apps pushing shoppers to finalize the transaction on a laptop.

Since your guests' decision-making journey spans multiple devices with upwards of 700 digital touchpoints (searches, website visits, video views and clicks), it's important to know where your property lives at these key conversion moments so you can tighten up your mobile booking experience and align your other channels (don't forget about Voice!)

Upwards of  
**700**  
digital touchpoints  
in guests' decision-  
making journey across  
multiple devices

**94%**  
of leisure travelers  
switch between  
devices as they  
plan or book a trip<sup>4</sup>

## WARNING SIGN #9

### You're Only Focused on the Booking Phase

It turns out travelers aren't exactly brand committed when they first starting thinking about a trip. Google data reveals 82% haven't picked an accommodation when dreaming up a destination.

The good news is since many travelers still have an open mind about who they'll book with at this stage, there's a great opportunity to make an impression – and 67% of travelers are more likely to book with a brand that provides relevant and useful content for the destinations they're interested in.

As you consider the entire booking journey, be present in all stages (if you only focus on the last one, you're too late!). Be their inspiration – show up for searches based on geography or type of trip. Provide visual content (including video) that communicates what they can expect. Entertain with an engaging story that answers your potential guests' questions. It's carpe diem, direct-booking style.

**82%**  
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**67%**  
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<sup>4</sup> According to Think with Google. Marketing research and digital trend data repository.

<sup>5</sup> According to Google/Ipsos MediaCT. Ipsos specializes in media, content and technology research and Google is their client.

<sup>6</sup> Google/Ipsos Connect. Ipsos Connect measures media and brand connection.



## WARNING SIGN #10

# You're Going with Your Gut

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It's important to embrace your instincts, think big and openly explore all of the creative options available to reach your guests. At the same time, your gut can lead you astray.

To create an effective balance, think like a scientist and let data inform all of your decisions. Allowing analytics and A/B testing to determine which marketing strategies are actual revenue drivers prevents overconfidence cycles, groupthink and confirmation bias – while helping you achieve your always-important marketing ROI.

Data is the true litmus test to determine whether a marketing strategy truly resulted in the desired outcome of captured demand.

Your guests are gambling every time they book a stay.

Fortunately you can adapt your direct booking strategy to provide the information they're looking for to make a safe bet and book direct with you today. If you'd like to learn more about direct booking, capturing and converting demand, and how [NAVIS technology](#) can help, please don't hesitate to [reach out!](#)



# One Platform. One Team. More Profit.

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## The Hospitality Industry's No. 1 Direct Booking Platform

For hospitality professionals, getting and keeping profitable guests is tougher than ever. NAVIS has created the only complete Direct Booking Platform with a proven plan to help Reservations, Revenue Management, and Marketing truly operate as one team, and make more profit.

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