

GUIDE

How to personalise a guest journey for the 2023 guests

Bookboost

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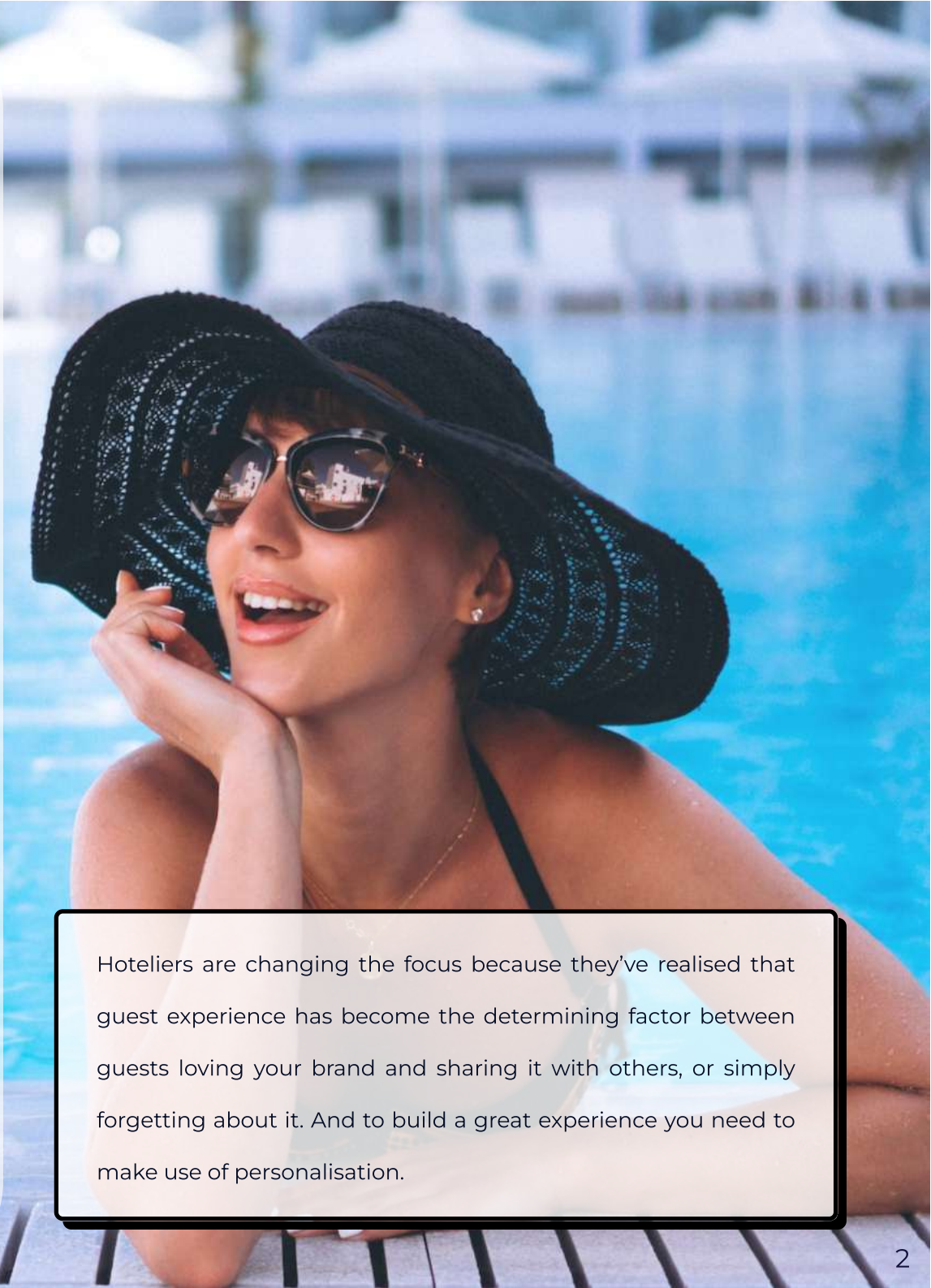
What makes a guest journey a great guest journey? 20

Everything revolves around the guest experience

In today's busy market, it is more and more difficult for brands to differentiate themselves from competitors. In particular, the hospitality industry provides a similar product – accommodation, therefore, for brands to excel over other brands, hoteliers have to offer something additional: a unique experience.

Hospitality is all about making people feel at home outside their own homes. And at the same time, give them that unique experience they would never have at home - or at any other hotel, besides yours.

It is not necessary to look into the future to notice that the business models in hospitality are starting to change. They are becoming relationship-centric instead of booking-centric. This means the hotel is no longer just a place to sleep, but a partner for travellers.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a large black sun hat and dark sunglasses, is smiling and looking towards the right. She is sitting by a swimming pool, with her hand resting on her chin. The background shows a blue pool and some blurred structures.

Hoteliers are changing the focus because they've realised that guest experience has become the determining factor between guests loving your brand and sharing it with others, or simply forgetting about it. And to build a great experience you need to make use of personalisation.



**The 2023 guests
want personalisation**

Nowadays customers demand more and more personalisation. According to Mckinsey, 71% of customers expect personalisation from companies, and **76% of them get frustrated if this does not occur.**

However, as EHL Insights mentions, personalisation in hospitality goes far beyond adding your guest's name to the email heading or remembering their birthday. It has to do with really getting to know them and taking into consideration their whole profile to offer them something they truly value.

Let's say your guest is staying in your hotel to celebrate their anniversary. How would they feel if you reach out to them and ask them if they want to add a bottle of wine and some roses to surprise their loved ones? Or if they find a card saying 'happy anniversary' in their room when they arrive?

Or if you have a returning business guest with a long stay, who arrives by car, will do a late check-in and wants to work out during the week. How would he feel if you reserve him a parking spot? Or if you remind him of the gym's opening hours and ask if he wants to book a slot (in case this is necessary for the hotel)?

It might seem like small actions, but they can go a long way when it comes to making sure your guests remember you.

But how to design a great experience and what elements should be included? In this landscape, the guest journey will be the tool that will help you to craft an unforgettable and personalised guest experience, and stand out from the crowd.



2023 guests want immediacy

Technology has enabled a wide range of things, especially regarding communication. Guests are now not willing to wait in order to get an answer. They expect communication with hotels to be instant and easy to follow.

This also means they expect to have options and be able to customise their experience without constantly talking to the staff. Having access at all times and being able to modify your reservation when it is convenient to them is perceived as time-saving, cost-effective and highly satisfactory.

This does not mean that they don't expect good service. But the concept of what good service is has grown beyond someone greeting you with a smile or towels being delivered within 5 minutes after the request. Now good service involves how fast is the communication, how easy is for them to modify their reservation, add or delete services, and so on.

A photograph of two young women sitting at a wooden table in a cafe, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is wearing a black hat and a grey sweater, while the woman on the right is wearing a blue denim shirt. There are two coffee cups on the table. The background is a white brick wall and a wooden cabinet.

The benefits of a guest journey

The truth is, without a guest journey, hotels will be providing just an ordinary guest experience and losing the opportunity to increase guest loyalty. This also means that they are losing opportunities to generate revenue.

A guest journey will be the map that helps you to see where your guests are placed in the whole process of interacting with your brand. It will give you more clarity about what their needs are at every stage and how you can help them solve their problem.

The benefits of having a guest journey are multiple and affect different aspects of your hotel business. It helps you to create an extraordinary experience for your guests, improve your conversion rate, and increase guest satisfaction.

Other benefits of having a guest journey are the following:

- Greater engagement with your guests
- Higher open rates than when sending random messages at random moments
- Establishing a true connection with your guests
- Better and more reviews

What should you consider before building your guest journey?

1. Identify guest audiences

Before start building your journey, you need to understand who are you building it for. Who are your guests? What inspires them and motivates them to make a booking in your hotel? What are the most common types of guests you receive in your hotel?

For that, you need to take into consideration demographics, behaviours and business segments. The more insights you gather about them, the more successful your guest journey will be.

2. Identify the needs of each audience

The second point you need to start building a guest journey is to identify what are your guests lacking. Use your guests audiences and identify needs for each one of them. This will also help you to determine the outcome you are looking to achieve for every audience.

For example, business travellers are lacking recommendations regarding the purpose of their trip. Or leisure travellers are looking for an experience that feels like home.

What should you consider before building your guest journey?

3. Understand moments of truth

To identify and understand moments of truth you need to think about the situations during the whole guest journey when your guests can form an opinion about your hotel. Try to place yourself in the guests' shoes. What would they think about that specific situation? As it is currently, would it let to a positive or a negative impression?

For example, think about the booking process.

That is one of the first opportunities your customers have to form an impression about your brand. What would they think of the process? At any point would they be bored?

Another example would be the moment of modifying a reservation. What would they think about your brand based on your current processes?

4. Identify opportunities for satisfaction and risks

At this point, it is important to think about what you can do to make your guests happier. Is there something they always ask to know about? Are there points they don't understand and need further clarification? Thinking about this will also lead you to consider where there are risks for dissatisfaction.



When does the guest journey start?

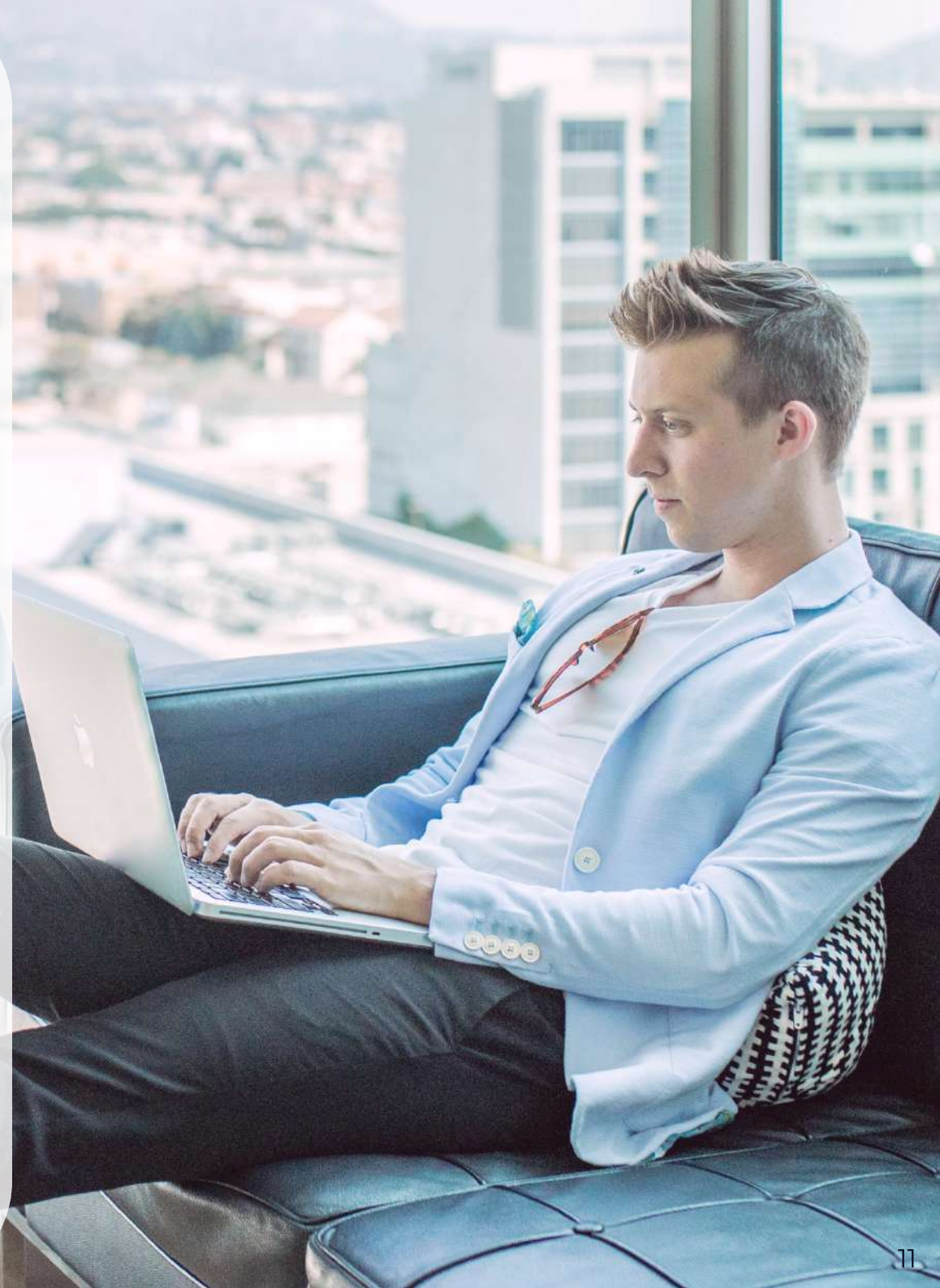
One of the biggest mistakes for hoteliers is to think that the guest experience starts when the guest arrives at the hotel. On the contrary, it starts from the very first moment they get in contact with the brand through any of the communication channels and it goes beyond the check-out.

Do they receive a confirmation message once the booking has been made? Does this confirmation email include the necessary details? Where can they find answers to their most common questions?

You must think about the different stages and then determine the several touchpoints for each stage.

How to personalise every stage of the guest journey?

A guest journey that circles the whole experience must start from the booking process, then will be followed by the following stages: pre-stay, stay, and post-stay. Here are some of the things you must consider in every stage:



BOOKING

Here is where the journey starts. Prospects are taking the first step towards an experience with you, and therefore, is very important this first stage is full of positive and valuable information for them.

- Identify what are your most repetitive questions and make sure to put the information out there. The less effort you require from your prospects, the higher the satisfaction.
- Make the booking process short. Avoid unnecessary questions that could drive away your prospect. If they have questions, offer a web messenger so they can ask them without problems.
- The longer the period you are available for the prospects, the better. Make sure that even if they contact you in the middle of the night, they can still get some information in return or at least a “We’ll contact you as soon as we are back online” message.

PRE-STAY

This is the stage where you create great anticipation about their trip. The more valuable information you give to them, the more eager they will be to stay at your hotel and begin their adventure.

- Use your communications to gather more information about your guests, such as the purpose of stay, transportation method, or even their expected ETA (estimated time of arrival).
- Send recommendations about local attractions or services that match the purpose of their trip.
- Take the opportunity to offer extra services from your hotel, but always consider their needs. Now you have a better understanding because you collected their data during pre-check in and you have a holistic profile that includes information about their previous stays.
- If the trip is due to a special occasion (anniversary, birthday), offer something to personalise it (a cake, roses, a bottle of champagne).
- Ask about contactless options they can make use of during their stay. Since covid-19, many people started to ask about these options. Show your guests you care about them by having it as an alternative.
- “Bleisure” is a very popular trend among guests and it refers to the mix between business travel and leisure travel. In your communications, you can highlight information about spaces, facilities, connections, and more, that will help them to get the work done without problems.

STAY

This is the stage where you can show your guests that everything you told them during the pre-stay is true and that the magic service you promised was not a lie. You reach out to them through their preferred channel with information that will boost their trip or that will be useful while they are in town.

- Send a message to check in on your guests during their stay. Asking if everything is okay or if they need some kind of support will make them feel taken care of. You have the power to turn the stay of your guests into a caring experience, and catch any negative experience during the stay, before guests share it on a review platform.
- Offer the possibility to acquire extra services during their stay (or simply get a question answered) quickly and in a personal but simple way. Reducing customer effort is key to creating a good experience.
- Give leisure guests information about the local services they can keep in hand.
- Give business guests information about their conference or business event.
- Give car travellers information about parking.
- Give plane travellers information about taxi pickups. The more personalised the information you share with them, the better the experience.
- Provide them with a specific channel in case they have a complaint, and make sure it is easy to use.
- If your hotel is on social media, you can remind your guests about your channels or your own hashtag so they can tag you. User-generated content has great power, and you can make the most of it.
- Offer them the option to check out digitally.



TIP NO. 1

Make sure you are available for your customers in the right channels, the ones that resonate the most with them. This means they can reach you in the platform of their preference. However, keep in mind that you need to keep control of all channels. Otherwise, they will feel unheard. You can use Bookboost Unified Inbox to have a general overview of all your channels and integrate all your communications into one guest profile.



TIP NO. 2

In this stage, you will increase your conversion rate if you communicate with your guests through their favourite channels. You can use Bookboost's multichannel CRM to segment your audience and message them first, starting the conversation and leading them through the guest journey.



TIP NO. 3

The best way to provide all the valuable information your guests need in one place is to have a content hub they can access whenever they want. However, it needs to be personalised and only include information relevant to them. You can do this with Bookboost's Guest Web App, which allows you to personalise and create different pages with the content you select.



TIP NO. 4

Keeping track of every communication or touchpoint in your guest journey might feel impossible. However, you can use technology to do it for you. With Bookboost's multi-channel CRM you can schedule communications, create workflows and set up different automation. In this way, the repetitive tasks will be taken care of, and you will have time for the ones that create the most value.

POST-STAY

A successful guest journey does not end when the guests leave the hotel. In fact, it does not have an end. It continues by delivering value to guests based on their profile and previous interactions with you.

- Ask for a review with a message through their favourite channel.
- Ask them to stay in touch with your brand by following your hotel on social media.
- Include them in a newsletter to update them about services and special offers. If they used any of your services, you can contact them again with related information.
- If they spent a birthday or anniversary in your hotel, offer them to spend another celebration at your hotel and mention services they might be interested in according to their profile.

A scenic view of a resort with a pool and mountains in the background. The foreground shows a pool with striped towels. The background features a range of mountains under a blue sky with light clouds. A semi-transparent dark box with a black border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

**What makes a guest
journey a GREAT
guest journey?**

We gathered the opinions of several hospitality experts and these are their points of view:

“

A great guest journey reads the mind of its guests, answering the questions they are about to ask.

“

It includes concise but personalised information, and it reaches the guest through the right channel at the right time.

“

It gives you something unexpected, and at the same time, it helps you to easily find the answer to your questions or ask for help.

“

It's those that make any guest feel unique because the message they receive looks genuine and personalized. It's certainly a challenge for any hotel, but the starting point is to have a guest journey in the first place. Improving it will come with time, experience, and data.

How can Bookboost help you build the ultimate guest journey?

REACH YOUR GOALS
WITH OUR TOOLS



OTA Profiling: get a rich profile from each guest.



Unified inbox: connect all of the messages in one place.



Messaging (Automation): schedule messages for a specific segment.



Web Messenger: self-serve support chatbot.



Guest App: content builder and inspiration for your guest journey.