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Build It And They Will Come? Hotel Websites And

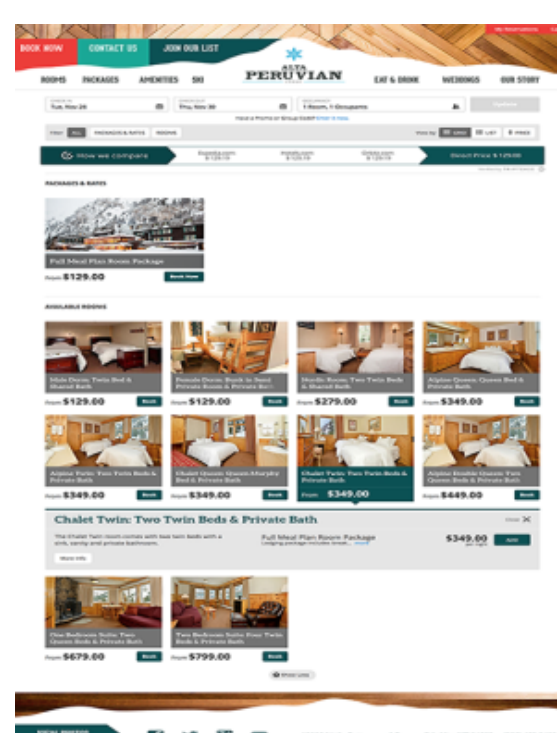
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Strong technology partnerships are a necessity for hotels. When the partnership is a good one, you will wonder how you ever lived without it. But if it's not, it can be difficult to make a smooth exit if need be. This dynamic can also apply to a hotel's choice of how to build and host its website—arguably the most vital piece of technology in your business model. In an already complex and often expensive hotel business landscape, the idea of having your **CRS** provider build your hotel website for you as part of your contract can be very attractive. But what happens if you need or want to change providers? Depending on your vendor, the honeymoon may end abruptly at that point, leaving you to create a new website in record time on your own, or perhaps to re-up when you weren't planning to do so.

Another option is building and hosting your site on your own, relying on high-quality interfaces with your CRS. You might even opt for a third choice, one that may offer you the best of both worlds without losing your autonomy. Whatever you decide, your goal should be to align—not tie—your hotel website to your CRS in a **real partnership**. By thinking through issues prior to engaging with a new distribution company, you can help ensure that your hotel business stays within your comfort zone and desired control level.

The Freedom of the Open Road

If you are the kind of hotel that feels you've already got a good handle on your website experience, then building and hosting your site with an independent third-party may be the way to go. With this kind of arrangement, you also have the most leverage with your CRS provider should you need to exercise it. And with today's better CRS platforms that lend themselves to the building of **seamless two-way interfaces**, that may be all you need to create the kind of booking experience recommended to get you where you need to go, keeping you nicely aligned with the best of today's **distribution technology**.



The All-Inclusive Package Deal

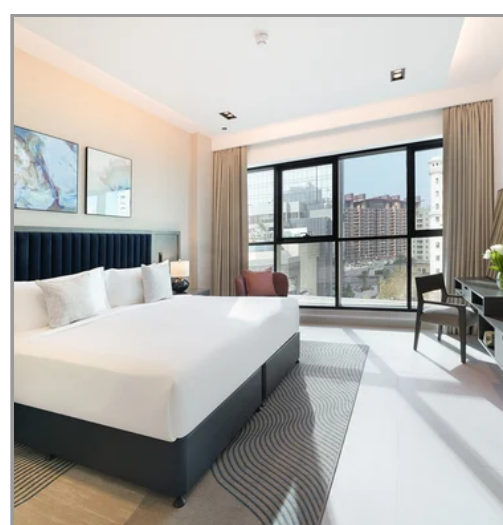
On the other hand, the allure of simply handing over your website needs to your **CRS** vendor as a perk of your contract can be hard to resist. After all, they are generally pros, the sites they build look fabulous, and seem to hold the promise of more and better bookings because of their organic integration with your CRS. Plus, they are presented as free with your contract. But is that contract a long-term one? There are different schools of thought on this, but normally, long-term contracts (over two years) are not considered in a hotel's best interest as they are not consistent with the concept of a true partnership. Also, make sure you understand how much freedom you will have to change the site in the future, and if you need to upgrade, what fees may be involved. With **industry technology evolving so rapidly**, you don't want to find yourself in a situation where you can't change things up when necessary. And of course, if you must switch vendors, you absolutely should find out up front if that means surrendering the site that has been built for you. You do not want to find yourself scrambling for a new site, or feeling pressured to stay in a contract you no longer need or want.

A Transparent Partnership

The third choice you might consider is to have your CRS build and host, but with the written understanding that if you need to go, you can do so without penalty. You retain your website and hosting for a fee, but you may use that site with any vendor you choose. Companies that build and host hotel websites and embrace this philosophy generally do so as an act of good faith, one that can serve as a cornerstone of a real and lasting partnership.

There are many choices when it comes to tackling the task of creating and hosting your hotel website. Whether you go independent, inclusive, or a combination of the two, knowing your hotel's unique needs and all the details up front can serve you well in making your best decision.

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