

Planning for 2022 - A Hotelier's Guide



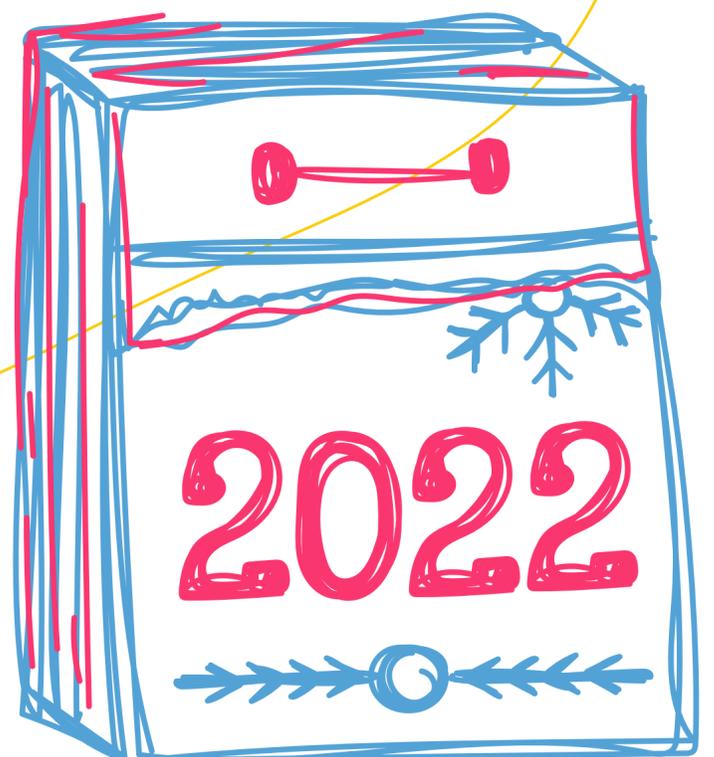
What else does a new year mean if not fresh starts, new perspectives, a heightened sense of the possibilities within reach, and a determination to improve?

Before Christmas, we took a look back at the key trends that stood out from 2021 in relation to hotel marketing, bookings and tech.

Now we're on the other side, we're taking a look at what's coming down the line and how you can plan for 2022 as a hotelier.

There are some things we cannot predict, but by focusing on what you can control, you'll be setting yourself up for success the best way you can at this point.

Let's get into it.



1. The importance of planning

The best way to begin a new year is by structuring clear and simple plans for yourself and your teams. Create an event calendar for the entire year with all the key dates highlighted so you can plan and strategise rate plans and offers for various suitable target audiences.

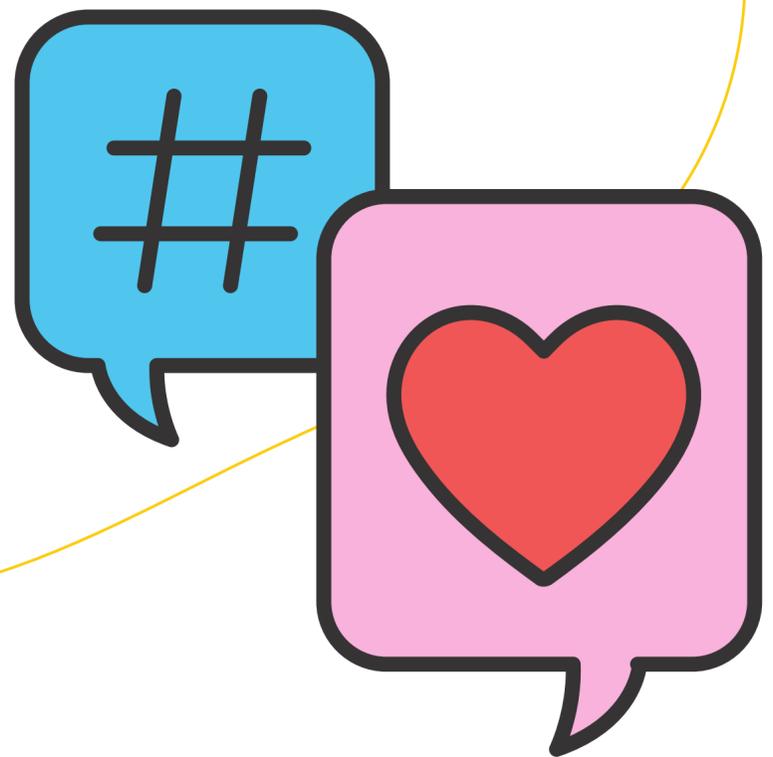
[Download your key dates calendar here!](#)

The importance of planning runs across many facets of your business. When you plan accurately, you give yourself the time and space needed to devise rateplans and content, and it means your guests are suitably informed too. When there is no proper planning, things tend to happen in a more last minute fashion, meaning you may miss important components, meaning you will miss certain guests too.



Some specifics to consider in relation to planning and its importance throughout the year:

- Keep reviewing your things to do/activities section on your website. Create example itineraries based on your main target markets (families, corporates, working from home).
- Review your USPs & update them on your searchbox & website.
- Continually make the most of your social media platforms - don't be afraid to post offer links.
- Get ready for cookieless tracking! Start building your direct data base. For more on cookieless tracking, [read our blog](#).



2. Investing time and thought into your marketing efforts

Your marketing efforts in 2022 will be crucial to continue attracting a new cohort of (and repeat) guests who have all been heavily influenced by the last two years.

Here are the specifics to focus on in 2022 in relation to your marketing efforts:

- Be mindful of your marketing budgets and the importance of investing in marketing. Plan out your campaigns for the year with us and understand that budgets may need to be fluid due to potential changes in the market - given we're still in a state of flux somewhat. Don't approach your marketing campaigns with a 'stop/start' attitude - you will see the most success if you invest on an ongoing basis.



- It's important to remind yourself of the marketing funnel, and there's no better time of year to do so! The idea behind the marketing funnel, is that like a funnel, marketers cast a broad net to capture as many leads as possible, and then slowly nurture prospective customers through the purchasing decision, narrowing down these people in each stage.
- In 2020, changes were made to cookieless tracking. With privacy measures ever increasing, we will start to see some large gaps in campaigns we've become heavily reliant on. The biggest blow will be to remarketing campaigns. Newsletter sign ups via your website and booking engine will be effective ways of collecting database contacts and also Facebook lead generation ads will allow you to build databases quickly with highly qualified users. [Read more here.](#)
- Use Google Hotel Ads! Last year, Google eliminated fees for hotel booking links in order to make the booking process easier and more comprehensive for consumers. Before this, hotel booking links in Google.com/travel were paid ads ranked by the traditional advertiser bidding model. The free booking links extend the reach of Hotel Ads campaigns. Throughout the year, we noted brilliant performance in relation to Google Hotel Ads campaigns. Using Google Hotel Ads can result in an increase in your direct traffic and revenue, and will allow you to own your guest data while sustaining a future relationship with guests. It's a win all round!

3. Giving your guests what they want - and need

The pandemic has shifted how we need to approach people as guests. We need to rethink so much and be mindful at every turn - that's why we encourage you for starters to revisit your guests personas and build on them. Your guests aren't the same and so you can't assume they don't need more from you.

What are some things you need to consider this year to keep guests interested?

- Personalisation. According to Hubspot, “consumers don’t just like personalized marketing experiences. They expect them.” To personalise your guests’ experience well, your tech stack needs to work seamlessly together – more on your tech stack later. Personalisation can deliver 5x-8x the ROI so it's crucial you consider it. You can start personalising your email campaigns for example, once you have segmented your data. It will allow you to offer discount codes, specific upsells, early/late check-ins/outs, additional in-room features. [Read more here.](#)



- New types of travel. As we know, 2020 and 2021 were the years of the staycation. And the staycation is here to stay! While international travel will of course return in varying levels, people have rediscovered the joy of exploring their own country, while staying relatively safer by minimising plane travel, being kinder to the environment and experiencing less travel hassle. We also saw the introduction of the workation, which does what it says on the tin - you holiday while you work!

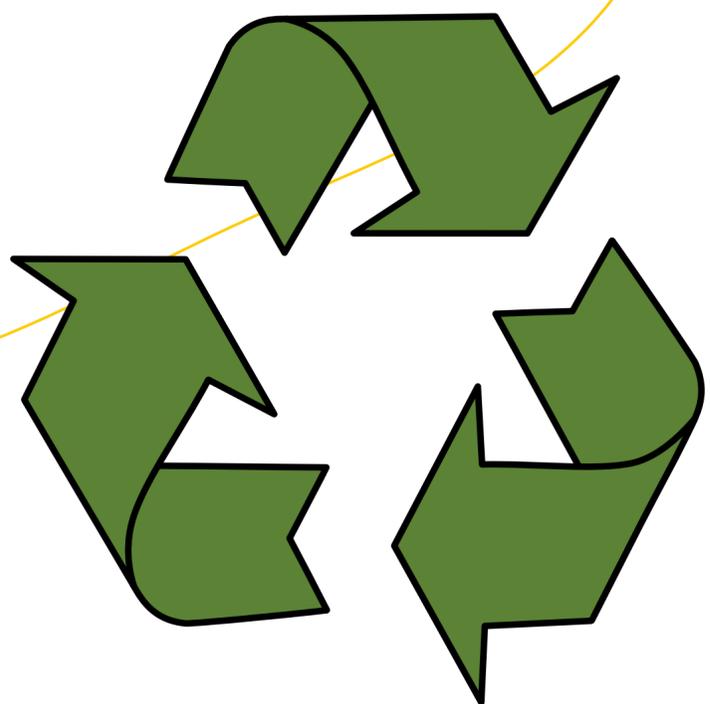
As well as these new kinds of holidays, there will be a lot of solo travelling done in 2022 and people looking for experiences - this goes for single people and families. To cater for this variety of guests, you will need to have the right website content up that details the type of hotel, services, grounds and local experiences you can offer. You'll need to consider your rateplans and landing pages carefully and create ones for each type of traveller - marketing them properly. Finally, don't forget the power of enhancements!

Enhancements will add that extra pazaz and could be what sets you apart from the competition! Small touches count and are appreciated.



- Sustainability will be top of mind for guests in 2022. The climate emergency is impossible to ignore and it is a concern for most travellers in the western world at the moment. According to a recent study by travel company Virtuoso, 82% of people surveyed said the pandemic has made them want to travel more responsibly in the future. Eco-friendly hotel searches will only continue to increase. If you are making an effort to run your hotel sustainably, make sure you are communicating this to guests.

- Health and wellness will also continue to stay top of mind for travellers this year! Consider what it is about your property that would entice a health conscious traveller - perhaps it is your grounds full of hiking trails/local cafes with seasonal produce/your spa and thermal suite. Whatever it is (and remember to consider the big and small) talk about this on your website and always consider what you can include as an enhancement or point of interest in your offers/rateplans.



4. Investing in your technology

Technology investment will be key in 2022 - this includes investment in your hotel tech stack and paying attention to mobile - of course!

It's important for you to have the right booking engine and marketing mix if you want to increase your direct bookings. Your booking engine should be a tool that people can easily use to convert and book directly.

Your booking engine

- Your booking engine needs to have an easy navigation that will encourage users to convert. It needs to integrate well with your current workflows and marketing processes and it should be flexible in relation to the growth of your products/services and what you have to offer.
- It needs to be mobile-optimised (77% of hotel bookers now view hotels on mobile).
- It should have the capability to display more than just the basic rates and dates - you need to use imagery to incite emotion and easily display the likes of enhancements as part of your packages.
- It should have different kinds of modules available like corporate and wedding for example.
- It should enable gift voucher purchases.

What other kind of technology platforms do you need?

Your booking engine should integrate seamlessly with all of the other technology platforms you need to create a harmonious booking experience - that is, your PMS, RMS and Channel Manager. The first port of call should be to find the best providers in booking engines, channel managers and PMS solutions.

Your PMS provider should be able to help with the initial setup of rate plans and connection to your channel manager. Your providers should also be able to advise you and help with your rate strategies and business logics as they change and develop.

Your booking engine should connect directly to your PMS or your channel manager should be flexible enough to adjust rate mapping easily.

Make sure your booking engine gives you the option to integrate sales conversion tools too, as they will help maximize the number of website visitors turning into buyers. Your booking engine should also allow for the inclusion of non-lodging products (vouchers, activities).

Mobile

In 2023, it is projected that there will be over 295 million mobile internet users!

Currently, approximately 83% of the US population are mobile internet users. Those people need a pretty flawless booking experience on mobile if you want to convert them.

We saw exponential growth in mobile performance across revenue and traffic last year. During the summer, mobile revenue contributed 60% of all revenue and mobile traffic came in at 77%. These numbers will only continue to grow in 2022! As well as making sure your website, booking engine and content are fully optimised for the platform, remember the likes of offering free wifi throughout your property, contactless check-in (via mobile), making your rooms 'smart' rooms with voice-activated controls and casting devices.



Conclusion

If we managed to get through the last two years, we can get through anything.

The world is changing rapidly and things like technology and environmental concerns will play a role in shaping what many industries look like in years to come - hospitality will be no different.

Pay attention to your guests and their needs, work closely with your booking engine/marketing/e-Commerce teams and invest properly in marketing and technology. Investment is a sign of hope and belief in your hotel, and it will give you the boost you need to do well this year.

We're always here to help! Reach out on hello@netaffinity.com if you would like to chat to us further about anything in this report.