eviivo

# HOW TO GROW YOUR DIRECT BOOKINGS: THE EVIIVO 3-STEP STRATEGY

(+ CHECKLIST)

So, you've crunched the numbers and decided it's time to boost your volume of direct bookings.

As a key partner of independent accommodation worldwide, eviivo has been helping customers to grow their direct business for over a decade. We understand the challenges to making your direct booking website more appealing than the major online travel agencies (OTAs) — as well as the solutions.

So, read on to discover the eviivo 3-step strategy for driving more direct sales from your own website. We've also included expert advice from our partner direct booking experts at Boostly and Inapub, plus a useful checklist to mark your progress.

Now, in the spirit of being more direct, let's take the first step, shall we?
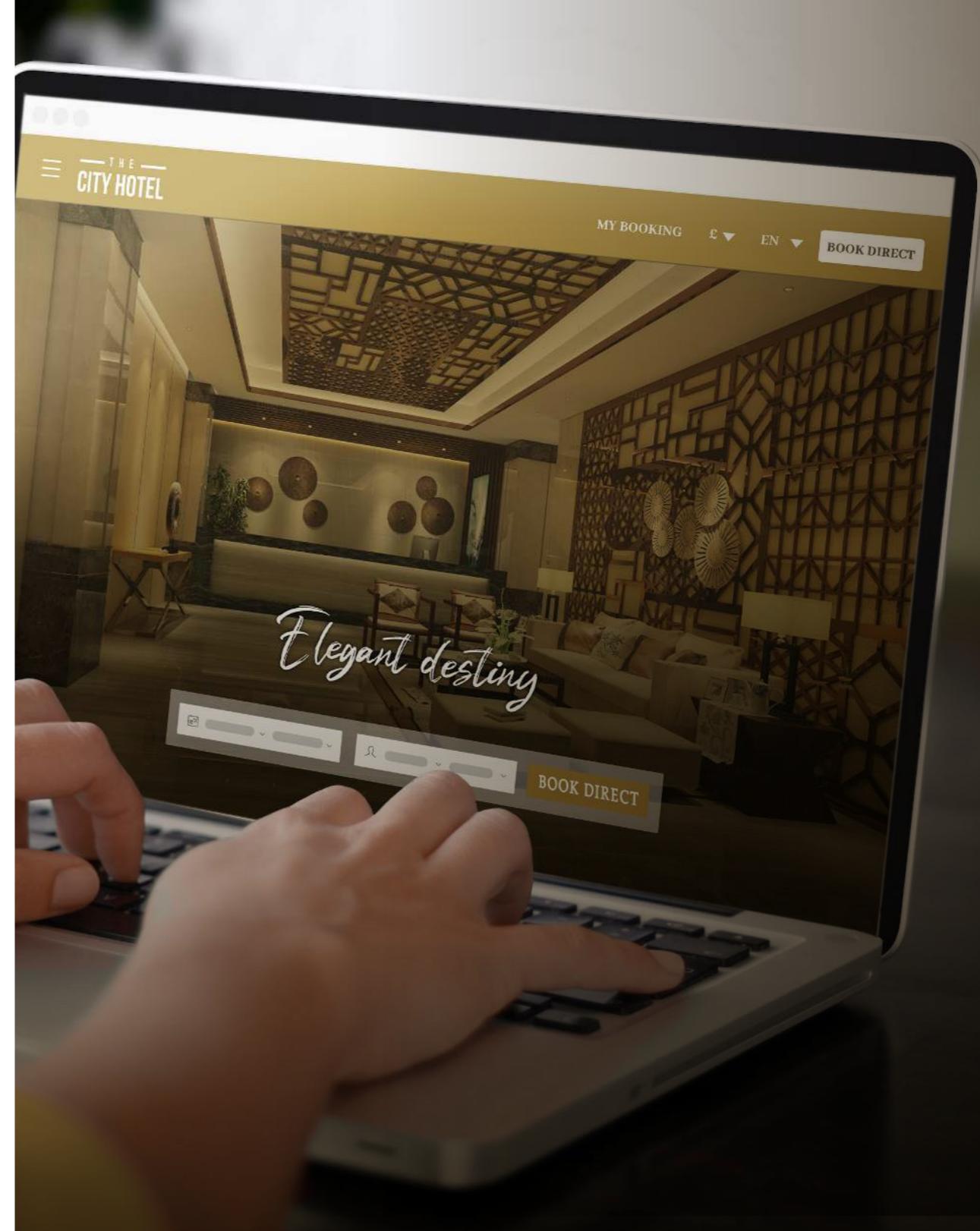
STEP 1:

GET YOUR WEBSITE SET UP WITH THESE ESSENTIALS.
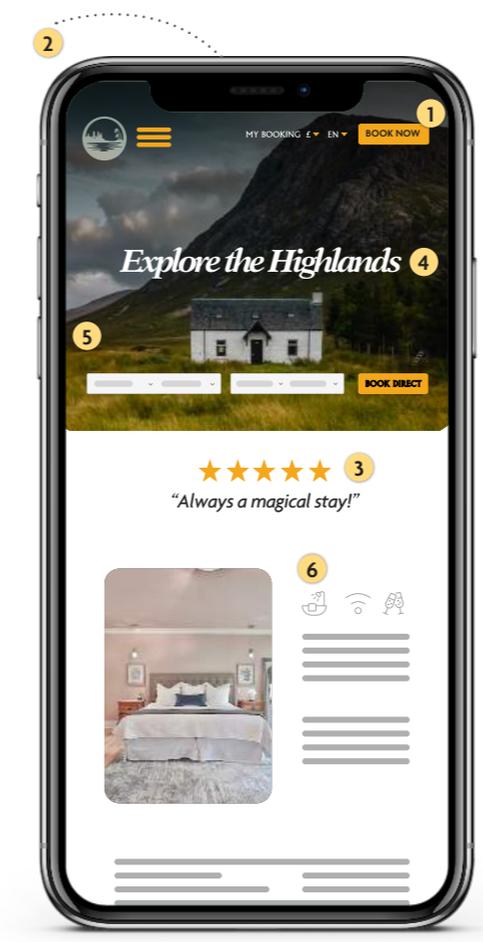
1. Prominent 'Book Now' button

2. 100% mobile-friendly design

3. Social proof (e.g., guest reviews) included

4. Your unique selling points highlighted above the fold

5. Great, hi-res photography

6. Appealing room & property descriptions

Top Tip

Before they book direct with you, travellers need assurance that you'll handle their data securely. So make it clear that you offer secure payment processing, in compliance with PCI and 3DS2 standards.

PCI DSS CERTIFIED
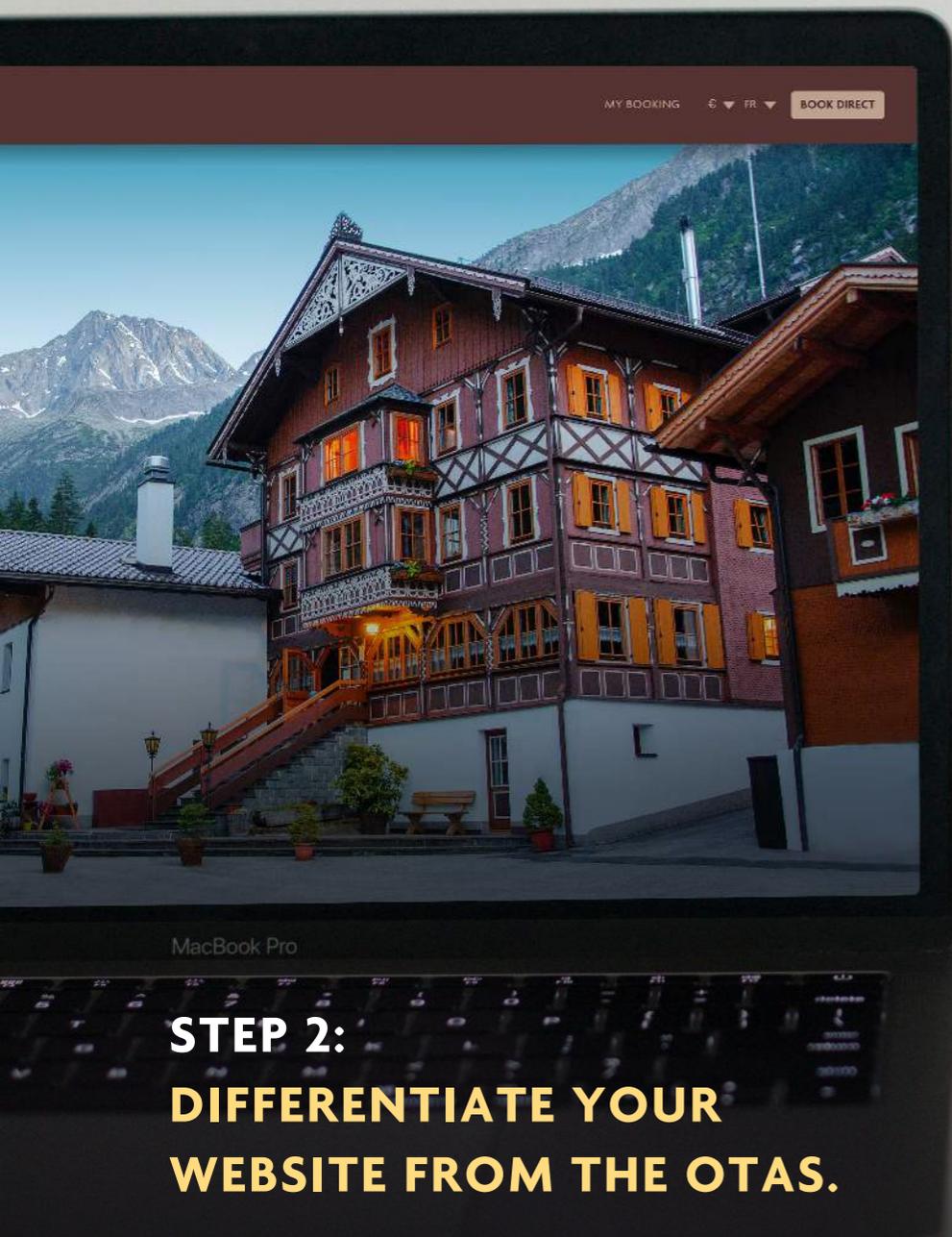
STEP 2:
DIFFERENTIATE YOUR WEBSITE FROM THE OTAS.

THE FEATURE	YOUR WEBSITE	THE OTAS
The best deals and the best terms that searchers can find online	✓	✗
Exclusive promos, packages or extras (E.g., a welcome hamper, a room upgrade, late check-out)	✓	✗
The lowest online rates (HOWEVER: Don't drop rates by any amount ≥ an OTA's commission as you'll make no savings!)	✓	✗
Content that's uniquely yours. Some examples: • An 'About Us' page • An 'FAQ' section • Exclusive videos	✓	✗

Want to avoid overbookings?

Make sure your website is 100% synchronised with both your PMS (property management system) and all your OTAs. You should also be able to **close OTA channels automatically** so that, once you start to fill up, your guests can only book direct with you.

STEP 3:
DON'T FORGET ABOUT REPEAT BUSINESS.

What's better than direct bookers? Repeat direct bookers!

Establish and nurture a great relationship with your existing guests to unlock more direct bookings. Here's how:

- **Acquire your guest's email or phone contact details ASAP.**
  (TOP TIP: Do this no later than check-in.)

- **Anticipate your guest's needs. Don't spam, don't ignore!**
  Automate key communications to send to guests at just the right points before, during and after their stay.

- **Provide clear contact details on your website.**
  Make it easy for guests to reach out to your team!

- **Give guests a promo code when they leave.**
  Entitle them to a discount when they book direct – with the right to pass it on to a friend.

MORE ADVICE FROM THE PROS

To bring you more tips, we spoke to two of eviivo's most experienced partners in the art of encouraging direct bookings: Founder of Boostly, Mark Simpson; and Barrie Poulter, CEO of website provider Inapub. Here's what they had to say...

> *Build a direct booking website that converts. Your website should showcase your best properties, highlights of the surrounding area, local recommendations, and high-quality photography & videos that break up pages of text. A direct booking website should be easy to navigate and, above all else, have a booking engine that emulates the ease of booking on an OTA, which is typically the reason guests use them instead of direct sites.*
>
> *The most common reason a guest won't book directly is because of a poor website experience. If a potential guest is struggling to find where to book or where to find the right information, they're likely going to look elsewhere. Your website should have an FAQ page, detailed listings, regular blog content with helpful information, and a foolproof booking engine that clearly displays your rates and availability.*

Mark Simpson, Founder

> *When thinking about direct bookings for your rooms, it's not only the customer booking journey you need to consider, but also the experience the guest can expect when they come to stay with you. Up-to-date food menus and drinks lists that are easily accessible on mobile devices really make a difference, along with a gallery page with good quality images showing customers having a good time in your bar or restaurant areas. You can reinforce that experience by offering customers a free drink in the bar during their stay when they book direct.*
>
> *Showcasing and then delivering on the experience customers have when they stay with you will help with new and repeat bookings.*

Barrie Poulter, CEO
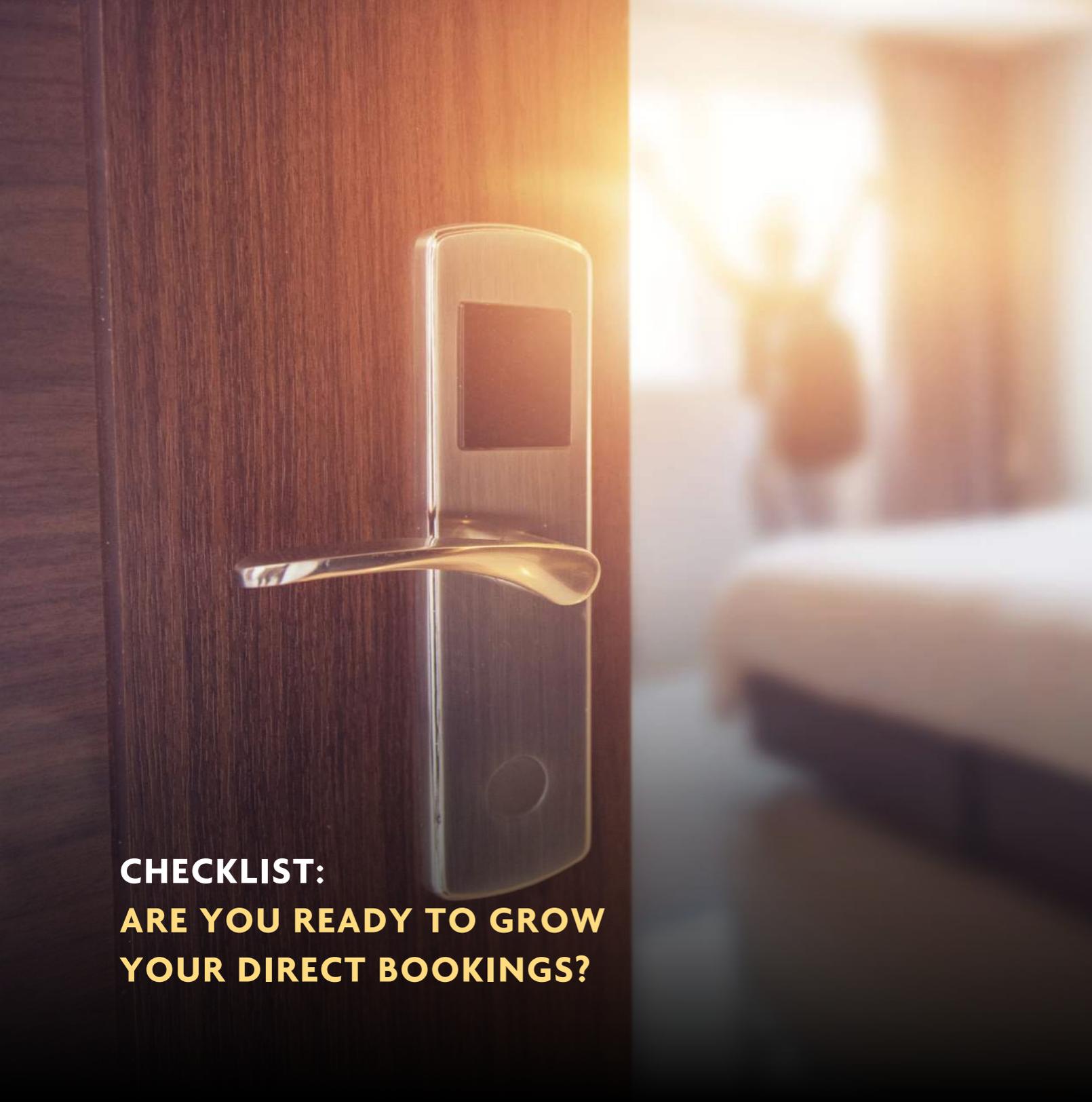
CHECKLIST:
ARE YOU READY TO GROW YOUR DIRECT BOOKINGS?

To make sure you stay on track with the 3-step strategy, we've added all the tips covered in this guide to the below checklist. Tick them off as you progress on your journey to more direct bookings.

My percentage of direct bookings in the last 12 months	%
My revenue earned from direct bookings in the last 12 months	$
My OTA commission costs in the last 12 months	$
Are the rates on my website lower than the OTA prices for my rooms?	○
Do I offer exclusive promos / packages / extras on my website?	○
Can I run promos on my website that are hidden from OTAs' view?	○
Are dynamic rules available to help me increase prices or close OTA channels automatically as my rooms fill up?	○
Do I have great photography on my site?	○
Do I have great descriptions on my site?	○
Do I have pages showcasing my story as a host?	○
Do I have FAQs on my site to address common guest questions?	○
Is the booking process quick & easy?	○
Is the website really commission free?	○
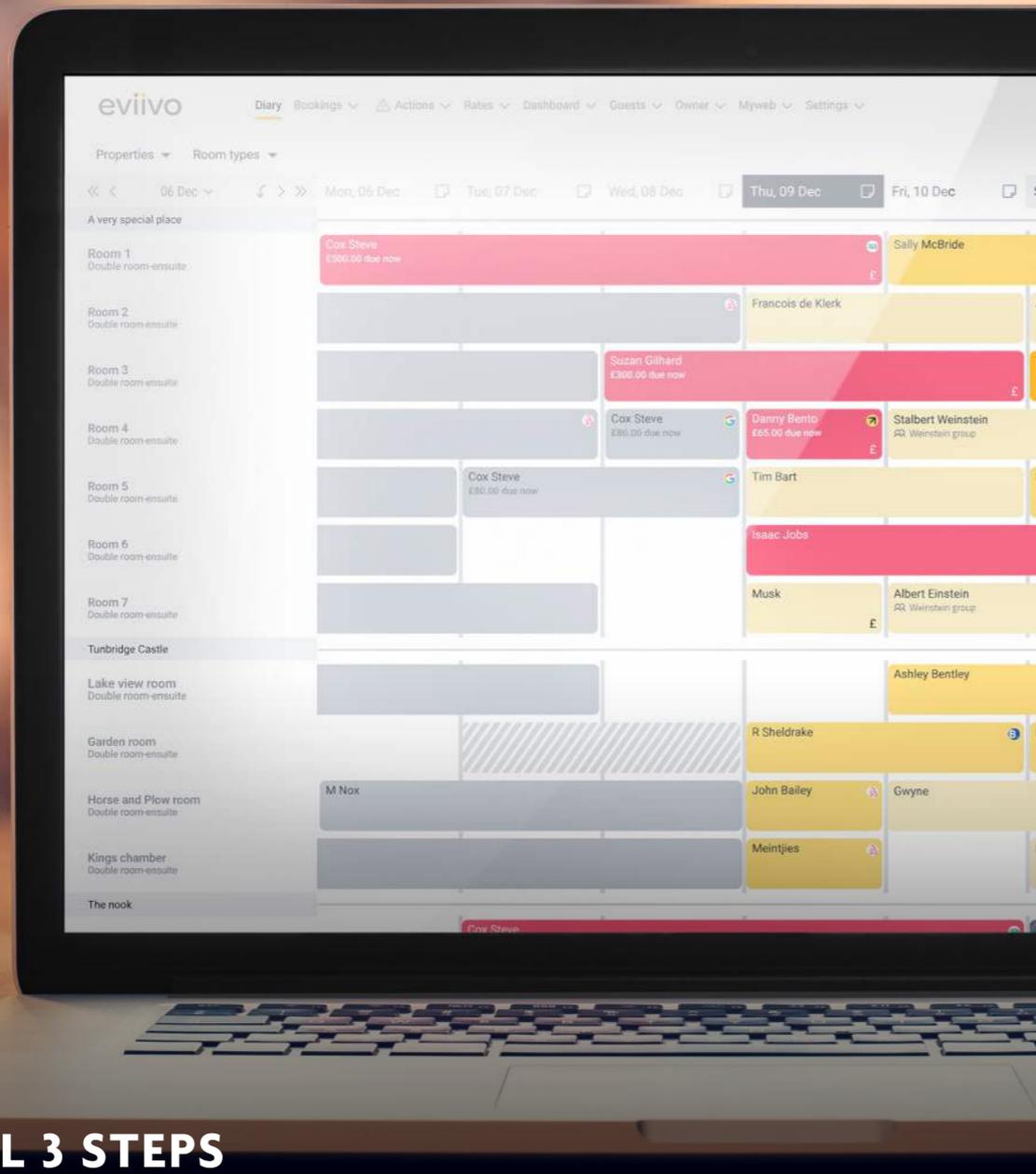
MASTER ALL 3 STEPS
WITH 1 PLATFORM…
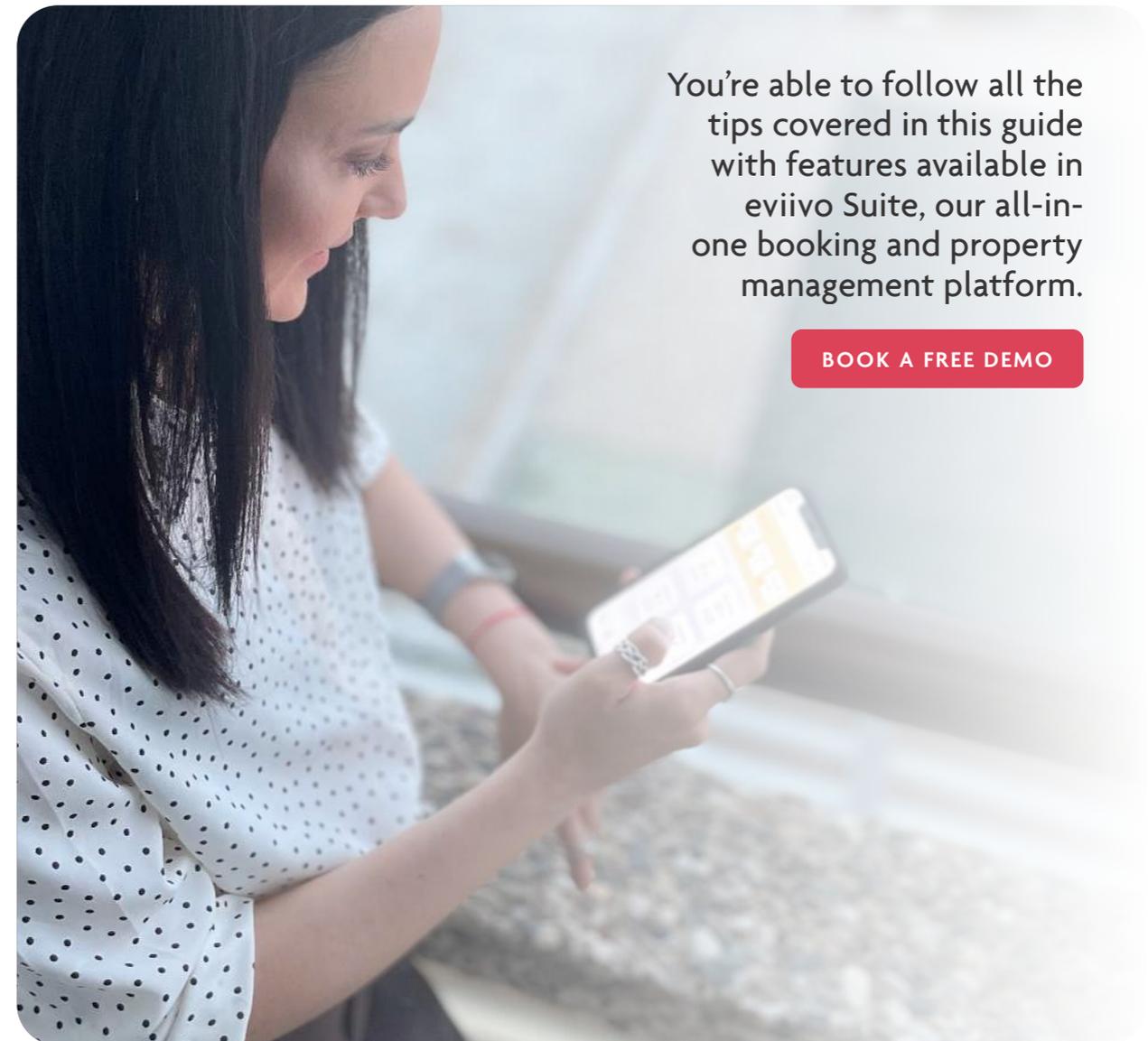
You're able to follow all the tips covered in this guide with features available in eviivo Suite, our all-in-one booking and property management platform.

BOOK A FREE DEMO

Launched in 2011, eviivo is a leading hospitality software company known for its award-winning, cloud-based booking and property management system, eviivo Suite, an "all-in-one" system that allows property owners, hoteliers and hosts to manage guests, bookings and online travel agencies — such as Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia and Vrbo — in one simple, easy-to-use platform, helping them increase revenue and occupancy, improve the guest experience and future-proof their business.

With over **26,000 accommodations** and **660,000 bookings per month**, eviivo's booking and property management platform is the preferred software for hotels, B&Bs, vacation rentals, urban rentals, guest houses, serviced apartments, resorts, inns, villas, cottages, campsites and even unique accommodation, such as windmills, boats, castles and yurts!

over

26,000
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20
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awards
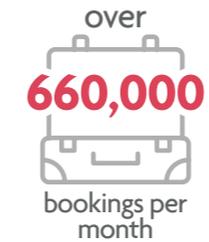
eviivo has seven main headquarters across the globe, including: London, UK (flagship location); Austin, TX and New York, NY (USA); Dusseldorf, Germany; Paris, France; Malaga, Spain; and Tunis, Tunisia.

ABOUT eviivo

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