

# BOOKING ENGINE GUIDE



DESTINATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA®





Tofino, @vancitywild

The best digital experiences are a marriage between what a business needs and what a guest wants. When there is harmony between the two, everyone feels the benefits. Keeping this balancing act in mind, there are a number of factors to consider when choosing to introduce or improve your online booking or ecommerce experience. What is most important to your business? How can you be empathetic to the needs of your guest?

There are hundreds of booking tools out there, and not every business needs the same things, so in this guide we will present important criteria to consider when looking at specific tools and deciding if they are right for your business.

COVER PHOTO: New Denver, Kootenay Rockies Tourism/Mitch Winton



Montana Hill Guest Ranch, Andrew Strain

## FIRST, LET'S CONSIDER WHAT OUR VISITORS NEED



### EASE OF USE

- They need it to be simple and intuitive.

### LIVE INVENTORY

- They want to know that you have availability. If you let them know which days/times/products/services are available for booking, you can save back-and-forth communication, and generate sales sooner.

### CONFIDENCE/ SECURITY

- Present clear, upfront pricing, including taxes and fees where applicable.
- Visitors may be entering their payment details, so ensure that the site and booking engine is secure.

### PROOF

- They want to believe that you are the best at what you do. Use social proof to let them know that others have had great experiences.



# NEXT, LOOK AT WHAT YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS



## EASE OF USE

- Ensure that the people in your organization can maintain the system effectively and efficiently.

## CONVERSIONS (SALES)

- We want guests to take part in what we have to offer.

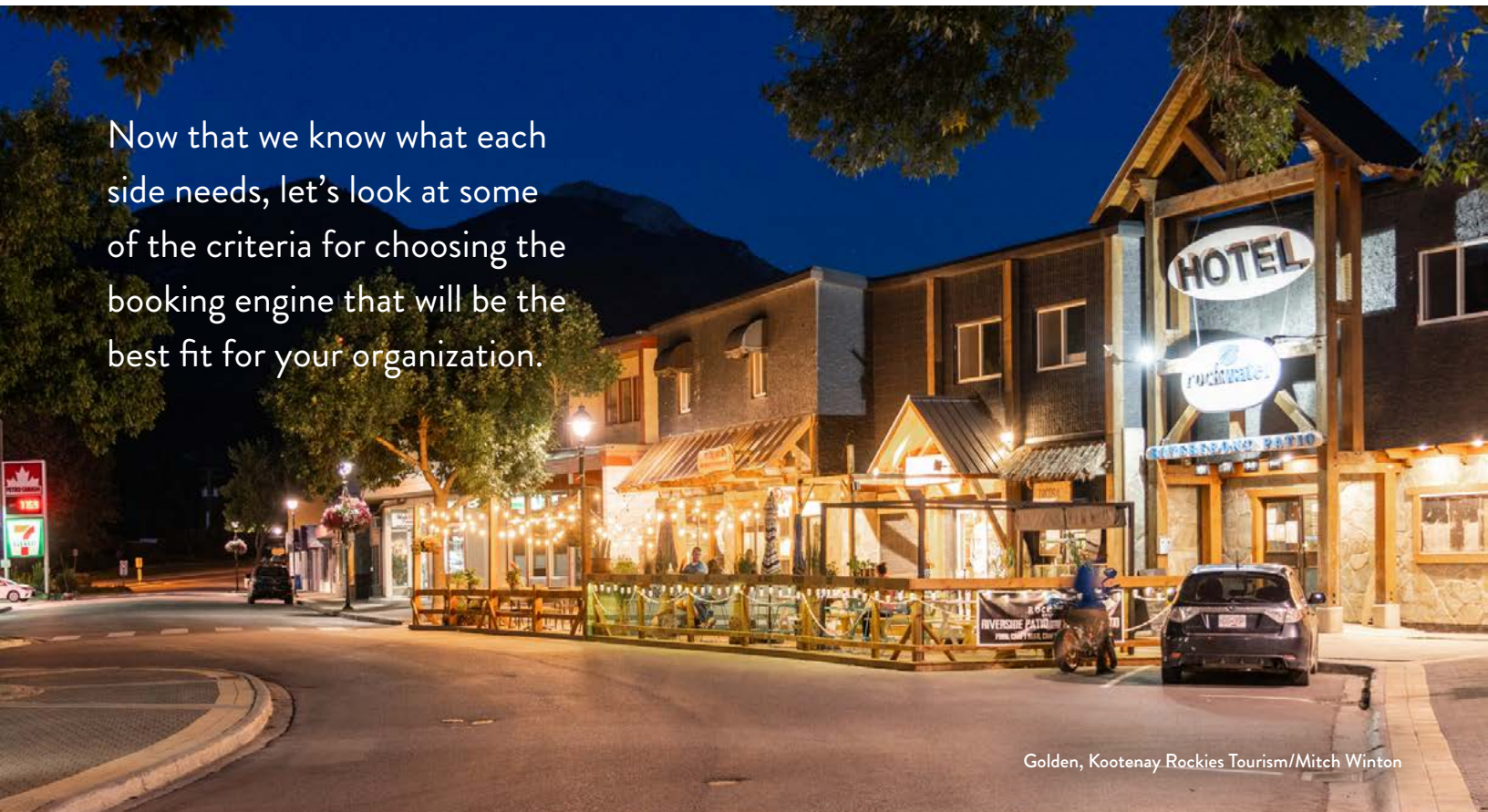
## PASSIVE BOOKINGS

- When tools are running in the background, you and your staff are freed up to focus on other areas of the business, instead of taking phone calls and responding to emails at all hours of the day.

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- Creating an excellent ecommerce experience can give you an edge in the marketplace. In a digital-first world, everyone is vying for the same business.

Now that we know what each side needs, let's look at some of the criteria for choosing the booking engine that will be the best fit for your organization.



Golden, Kootenay Rockies Tourism/Mitch Winton

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A BOOKING TOOL



## QUICK & SIMPLE PROCESS

For both the visitor and staff using it.



## BONUS: URGENCY TRIGGERS\*



## WEBSITE INTEGRATION

Embeddable forms/widgets.



## THIRD-PARTY COMPATIBILITY

Connect with Google, Booking.com, etc.



## ANALYTICS

Sales data, user behaviour and demographics, etc.



## MOBILE FRIENDLY/ MOBILE FIRST

User experience on mobile devices should not present a miniaturized version of a desktop page, such that fields and text are extremely small and require users to “zoom” in to see and interact, for example.



## UPSELL /CROSS-SELL FUNCTIONALITY

Room upgrades, activities etc.



## CUSTOMIZABLE DESIGN

Ensure that your end-to-end experience is consistently branded and builds trust.



## EMAIL AUTOMATION

Send confirmation and pre-visit information.



## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Update rates & inventory across all channels.



## PROMOTION SYSTEM

Discount/upgrade codes.



## MULTI-CURRENCY/ MULTI-LANGUAGE TOGGLE



## SPEED

Fast and efficient checkout processes create more conversions.



## SUPPORT

Good support in a crisis is worth its weight in gold. If the process ever fails, getting back up and running quickly is vital.

\*Urgency Triggers are alerts that inventory is limited and other visitors may be considering booking or purchasing an offering. That often shows up as text such as “Only 2 rooms left at this rate” or “20 people are looking at this property.” Here is an example of how Airbnb creates urgency:

**This is a rare find.** Bill's place on Airbnb is usually fully booked.



With those considerations in mind, it's time to look for a tool that fits your needs. The tools below are popular choices that may work well for specific offerings. Each of these are relatively low cost, and typically charge per room and/or per transaction.

Note: Destination BC does not endorse any product or service in this list. Please evaluate them according to their functionality and your own business' criteria.



Big White Ski Resort, Andrew Strain





Egmont, @dolfvermeulen

## LODGING/RESORTS

- [Little Hotelier](#)
- [WebRezPro](#) (Includes B&Bs, campgrounds, etc.)
- [CloudBeds](#)
- [RMS Cloud](#)



Osoyoos, Indigenous Tourism BC / Indian Grover Riding Stables

## SERVICES

- [FareHarbor](#) (Tours & activities)
- [CheckFront](#) (Tours, activities, rentals, accommodation)
- [Rezdy](#) (Tours)
- [PeekPro](#) (Tours, activities)
- [MindBody](#) (Spas)
- [Acuity](#) (General)
- [Rezgo](#) (Tours & activities)



Vancouver, Tourism Vancouver/Vision Event Photography Inc.

## E-COMMERCE

If your business is not taking booking/reservations but does sell items/gift cards/etc. you may consider a content management system that's equipped specifically for ecommerce. Some options include:

- [Shopify](#)
- [Squarespace](#)
- [WooCommerce](#) (WordPress)





Each of the tools listed above have their own unique design and configuration options, functionality, and cost. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, so you will want to weigh the benefits of each and choose the one that meets as many of your criteria as possible, and provides an excellent experience for visitors.

The right tool will create a positive guest experience, generate conversions and passive revenue, and allow you to focus on developing your business as the tool runs largely in the background.



Hope, Hubert Kang