



**Digital
that
Delivers.**

What Makes Your Experience Bookable?

Requirements for B2B Online Bookings

Requirements for Online Referral Bookings



Requirements for B2B online bookings

Introduction

The main sales channels for customers booking a priced experience online are:

- 1. B2C direct online bookings:** the customer (the end user) books directly via an online sales channel such as your own brand website.
- 2. B2B bookings:** the customer (the end user) books the experience indirectly via a professional travel partner such as an online travel agent (OTA), a tour operator, an online reseller or an online aggregator (whereby availability and prices for experiences are collated in one place so that the lowest price point is clear).
- 3. Referral bookings:** the experience provider receives bookings via partnerships with local, national or global organisations. Examples here could be a partnership between you and an accommodation provider who recommends the available experiences to their guests. Depending on the agreement, partnerships may be based on a zero-charge fee, a commissionable based fee (a percentage of the retail price), or a discount-based fee (a fixed discount off the retail price).



This section explores online B2B bookings and online referral bookings in detail.

Requirements for B2B online bookings

Once the steps to engage in bookable experiences via B2C online direct sales channels have been completed, you can more easily engage in B2B online sales channels that require all the steps as outlined here:

Additional considerations for working with B2B online sales channels include:

- 1. Communications**
- 2. Pricing and fees**
- 3. Access to online inventory**
- 4. Contracts**

1. Communications

Many B2B sales channels require tailored communications from you that will fit the needs of their platforms and you will be asked to complete a specific online template via the B2B partner's platform.

The template includes pre-designated fields and structured data that are carefully constructed, following extensive market testing by the B2B partner to maximise the opportunity for online bookings.

These templates also facilitate translation of content for international markets.

The type of content that the B2B partner will ask for in their templates includes: experience name, short description of the experience, pricing, associated inclusions (e.g., snacks, equipment), FAQs, and so on. See below examples for how content displays via the online travel agents, Get Your Guide and Viator.

To maximise bookings and to ensure mutually beneficial partnerships, it is highly recommended that you diligently follow up on requests for content and data entry exactly as requested by each B2B partner.



Take a look at the content that OTAs use here:

Get Your Guide

Here's the type of information that Get Your Guide needs from experience providers.

The screenshot shows a Get Your Guide listing for a 'Paris: Wine and Cheese Lunch' experience. The listing includes a photo of a group of people dining at a table with wine and cheese. The title is 'Paris: Wine and Cheese Lunch' with a 4.8 star rating from 86 reviews. The price is listed as 'From US\$ 89.85 per person'. The description states: 'Taste 5 different wines from 5 different regions of France, including Champagne and Bordeaux, paired with delicious cheeses. This lovely wine and cheese lunch in Paris is a great opportunity to learn about and taste French delicacies.'

The 'About this activity' section lists the following details:

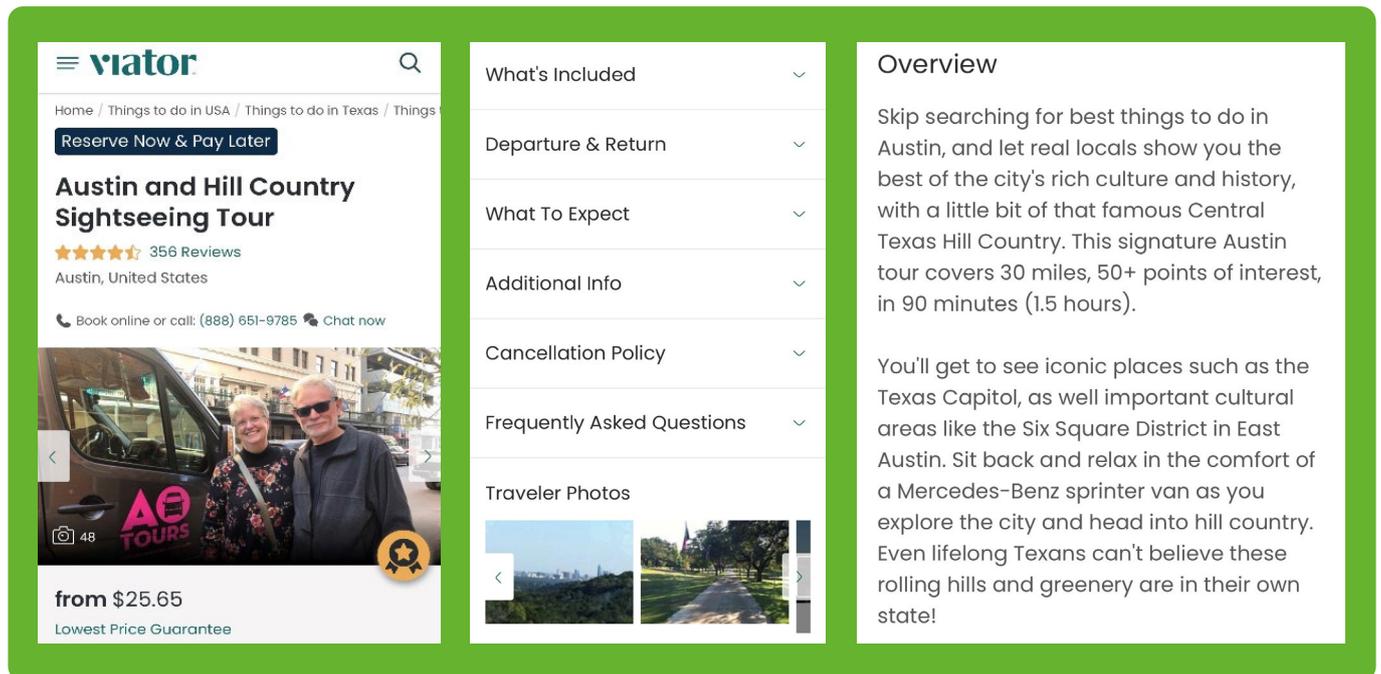
- Free cancellation:** Cancel up to 24 hours in advance to receive a full refund.
- COVID-19 precautions:** Special health and safety measures apply. [Learn more](#)
- Mobile ticketing:** Use your phone or print your voucher.
- Duration 1.5 hours:** Check availability to see starting times.
- Instant confirmation**
- Live tour guide:** English

The 'Experience' section includes:

- Highlights:**
 - Sample superb French cheeses in a lovely location close to the Louvre
 - Try Champagne and a selection of wines in the company of an expert sommelier
 - Learn how to identify French wine varieties
 - Enjoy charcuterie and saussisson from around France
- Full description:** (expandable)
- Includes:**
 - English-speaking sommelier
 - Beautiful tasting room for your group
 - A selection of artisanal cheeses, charcuterie, and bread baskets (same bakery as the President of France)
 - 5 good French wines (including 1 Champagne), served in Riedel glassware
 - List of the wines you will taste and a cheat sheet handed out at the end of the class
 - Tips
- COVID-19 precautions:** (expandable)

Viator

Here's the type of information that Viator needs from experience providers.



2. Pricing and fees

Most B2B partners charge a booking fee for their services. As a guideline, fees range from 8% to 25-30%.

Depending on the B2B partner, fees can be requested on one of the following bases:

- ✓ a commissionable basis (based on a percentage of the retail price)
- ✓ a discounted basis (offering a fixed discount off the retail price)

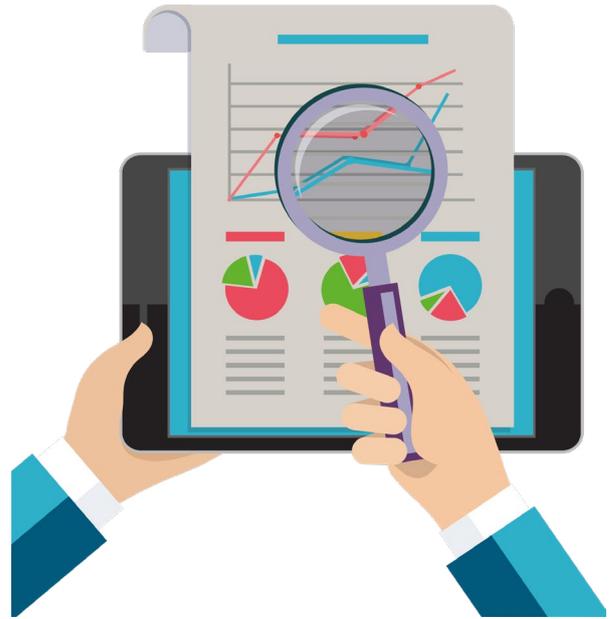
It is worth noting that negotiation is sometimes possible, and some partners have tiered commission rates relating to the type or organisation you are, e.g., not-for-profit or charity.



3. Access to online inventory

It's important to consider how you will sell your experiences to an online B2B partner. The two main ways are on allocation and on a free sale basis.

- ✓ **Allocation:** whereby a partner receives a fixed allocation of inventory. An example of this is where you agree to always make 5 of 50 available tickets/ tours per day to them and you work to agreed terms and conditions.
- ✓ **Free sale:** enabling the B2B partner to book live online availability. Booking methods can vary depending on the partnership you have. One such method is where you supply a unique code to your B2B partner and they apply that code to book your experiences online at their preferred rates.



4. Contracts

Your B2B partners will require you to engage in contracts that include clauses relating to bookability. Be sure to carefully read and understand such clauses before engagement.

Usually each partner will have to “click to accept” type conditions laying out the terms of participating on the platform. Pay attention to:

- ✓ Payment terms
- ✓ Pricing requirements – usually this commits you to best available pricing and broad commission conditions
- ✓ Code of conduct – this is usually referenced in the agreement but is often a separate document



The code of conduct is important because it will commit you to availability conditions and to conditions in relation to using the supplier extranet provided by the distributor. The only way around using the extranet is usually with an approved reservation system or channel manager.

Why would you use a channel manager?

- ✓ In order to work with the world's largest OTAs like [Viator](#) and [Get Your Guide](#) and enjoy the global reach they possess, your product offering, availability and pricing must be constantly updated.
- ✓ This can take a lot of time and potentially lead to you maintaining your product details in every distribution partner you work with.
- ✓ The channel manager gives you the chance to either upload your content and product details into their system one time and have that distributed to OTAs via API connectivity.
- ✓ Some channel managers will even connect via API to your existing reservation system and take the content from there.
- ✓ There are many channel managers that do this. Each one takes responsibility for building and maintaining the API connection with each OTA partner.
- ✓ Some examples of prominent channel managers and their regions are: [Redeem](#) (USA), [Livn](#) (APAC), [Prioticket](#) (Europe), [Globaltix](#) (APAC), [Holibob](#) (Global)
- ✓ There are also some channel manager specialists, who focus on content and connect via technology vendors built within their system such as [Magpie](#) (Global) and [TourismSolved](#) (Global)
- ✓ The result of this is extensive reach and live availability with a large number of distribution channels in markets you would otherwise not be able to access. Or markets that would be cost prohibitive to enter. All the while with a technology-based connection that would be out of reach for most travel businesses to build and maintain.

What is a channel manager?

Some experience providers use channel managers. This software enables experiences to be easily sold across a wide range of diverse sales channels, including B2B. The software can be set up so that purchases are made according to the specific rates, terms and conditions applicable for each customer/partner.

What is the difference between a channel manager and a reservation system?

- ✓ Typically, most reservation systems have channel management capabilities as well.
- ✓ A channel manager will not help you monetise bookings on your own website, but only distribute to third parties.



What about using a reservation system to do this?

Most reservation systems will offer a connection to the main OTAs. However typically a channel manager will also offer connections to other travel businesses especially travel agents. These connections can be in the thousands. For these reasons it is not uncommon for companies to use both a reservation system AND a channel manager.

What are the main reservations systems I should think about?

- ✓ [Regiondo](#) (European)
- ✓ [Bookingkit](#) (European)
- ✓ [Fareharbor](#) (Global)
- ✓ [Bokun](#) (Global)
- ✓ [Rezdy](#) (APAC)
- ✓ [Checkfront](#) (North America)
- ✓ [Peek Pro](#) (North America)
- ✓ [Ventrata](#) (Global)
- ✓ [Treksoft](#) (Global)



There are different types of functionality for these reservation systems, but to try and group them...Fareharbor, Rezdy, Bokun, Bookingkit are very "off the shelf". Regiondo, Checkfront and Peek have good functionality for smaller operators. Treksoft and Ventrata are more enterprise-focused.

What are the major distribution channels I should connect to via a reservation system or channel manager?

- ✓ [Viator](#) – Global
- ✓ [Get Your Guide](#) – Global
- ✓ [Tiqets](#) – Global (Attractions specialist)
- ✓ [Musement](#) – Global
- ✓ [Klook](#) – APAC
- ✓ [Headout](#) – Global
- ✓ [Expedia](#) – Global
- ✓ [Civitatis](#) – Spanish speaking countries

How to get started with winning B2B bookings

While it is often quite straightforward to register with online B2B partners, each one has their own unique requirements and methods for engagement. In most cases, you must consider the following:

First steps

- ✓ You'll be required to provide the business/organisation name and contact information.
- ✓ In some instances, you may need to provide proof of business registration and/or certification of Public Liability insurance.
- ✓ You then must accept terms and conditions (NB: carefully read and understand these before agreeing to the partnership).
- ✓ When the above is in order, you can begin the process of providing content regarding your business and the experience/s available for sale by following the templates they provide

What are the key criteria for B2B engagement?

- ✓ Fees will usually be based on one of these two arrangements:
 - Paid via a commission.
 - Or the B2B partner requests a price that is discounted off the retail price and then places a mark-up (which is their fee) on the discounted prices.
- ✓ The experience you offer must not put travellers or animals at risk. It must be
 - Safe: with appropriate insurance levels.
 - Ethical: (e.g., TripAdvisor has strict guidelines around animal welfare and the management of family friendly tours).
 - Legal: the experience must be legally compliant.

Other points to be aware of

Most professional B2B travel buyers conduct extensive research to maximise booking opportunities. This research can inform specific requirements and standards that you must meet and maintain to establish and maintain engagement.

For example, you could be asked to commit to the following:

- ✓ Show future availability: with at least one future date available for booking.
- ✓ Complete all information fields on the B2B content templates.
- ✓ Upload quality photos: e.g., 2 professional, relevant, family friendly photos.
- ✓ Cancellation rate: to avoid causing customer disappointment and dissatisfaction, the experience provider must avoid cancelling bookings.
- ✓ Average star rating: some B2B partners request a minimum average rating based on guest reviews. For example, they might only work with an experience that has a minimum of 15 reviews and a minimum star rating of 3.
- ✓ Availability and bookability: the experience must be:
 - Instantly bookable (i.e., bookable according to live online availability).
 - Bookable up to a minimum of 4 hours in advance of arrival.

- ✓ Mobile ticketing: i.e., the customer being able to show confirmation of their booking via their mobile phone (e.g., via an email).
- ✓ Cancellation policy: you may be requested to align with the B2B partner's cancellation policy.

How do you get paid for B2B bookings?

It is very important that you, as the experience provider, are clear about how payment is received for booked experiences via the B2B partner and how your B2B partner receives payment from you for their agreed fee.

Many professional travel buyers operate an automated payment schedule whereby payments are made according to an agreed date, usually post the booking date.

The timing of the payments is usually based on a currency schedule. Some distributors have weekly payments and others monthly, but they are almost universally paid based on travel date, rather than booking date. You need to bear this in mind when managing cash flow, if you have to pay in advance for parts of your product e.g., accommodation for multi-day tours.

It's vital that you and your B2B partner can connect, so that your experiences are bookable via the B2B partner's platform. This connectivity can happen in two ways:



1. You independently upload your experiences for sale and availability directly onto the B2B partner's online platform.
2. You upload your experiences for sale and availability onto your Channel Manager, thereby seamlessly connecting your experiences for sale and your availability with the B2B partner's online platform.



Requirements for online referral bookings

Referral bookings are when you receive bookings via partnerships with local, national or global organisations.

Examples could be a partnership between you and an accommodation provider who recommends your experiences to their guests. Depending on the agreement you make, such a partnership could be based on a zero-charge fee, a commission based fee (a percentage of the retail price) or a discount-based fee (a fixed discount off the retail price).

Points to be aware of:

01.

Pricing and fees: Be clear on whether, or not, a referral partner intends to charge a booking fee.

02.

If a fee applies, fully understand and agree on what fee applies and on what basis (e.g., commission or a discount)

03.

Booking methods: the referral partner may wish to easily access your online availability to make a booking and/or refer their customers to your online availability to make a booking. Many experience providers opt for code/tracker led bookings whereby the referral partner receives a unique code that is applied online (by themselves or their guests) to book your experience.

Payments for referral partnerships

1. Via code or tracker-led bookings, the experience provider can measure the exact number of online bookings achieved via the referral partnership.
2. To encourage use of code/tracker led bookings (and thereby accurate measurement), you should consider offering a benefit that acts as an incentive such as a discount off the retail price or a value add (e.g., a free snack, tea/coffee or a discount percentage off merchandise etc.).

If you use multiple sales channels such as online B2C direct bookings, B2B bookings and referral bookings, it's vital to

understand if your experience has limited or unlimited capacity. This helps ensure that you maximise all potential sales opportunities and avoid creating customer dissatisfaction by exceeding what is available for sale.

