

# ONLINE BOOKING

BY JESSICA LE MERLE



## 10 THINGS ABOUT ME

1. Co-founder of [Afundi](#)
2. Digital marketing specialist
3. Passionate about imparting knowledge
4. [Creative](#) and big thinker
5. Survive on coffee
6. Dog lover in particular our puppy Charlie
7. Proud [woman](#) in business
8. Planner and strategist
9. Proudly South African
10. [Love](#) our Island

## WHAT WILL BE COVERED

- Why online booking software is important in 2021
- The importance of a great website
- How to manage the user journey on your website
- How to convert visitors into bookings and other lead generation tactics
- What makes a good online booking platform
- The best platforms available to you
- How to integrate online bookings into your sales process
- Tips and tricks for setting up online booking on your website
- Reporting and evaluating success



# TODAYS SESSION



Missed calls, too many Facebook messages, spreadsheet overload, turning people away??

# ONLINE BOOKING

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN 2021?

- Travel and experience demand is increasing.
- It gives customers control over the experience.
- Customers can book 24/7.
- Customers can have comfort & peace of mind knowing they have planned ahead.
- As a business you can forecast sales & plan ahead.
- Contact tracing for C19 purposes.
- Store contacts for ongoing marketing purposes.



# ONLINE BOOKING

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN 2021?

- Accept online payments versus cash.
- Learn more about your customer's preferences.
- Promote packages or deals (upsell).
- Secure deposits to prevent no shows.
- Promote traffic to your website by advertising online booking - this will have a positive effect on your search ranking.
- Track trends so you can anticipate staff and stock/inventory requirements.
- Be inline with world trends and requirements.
- 70% of travellers research travel on their smartphone (Condor)



# ONLINE BOOKING

## AUTOMATE & MANAGE KEY TASKS SUCH AS:

- Reservations
- Payments
- Waiver signing or legal document acceptance
- Customer relationship management
- Gift cards or sale code redemption
- Reporting and forecasting
- Cross selling services or products
- Key information providing



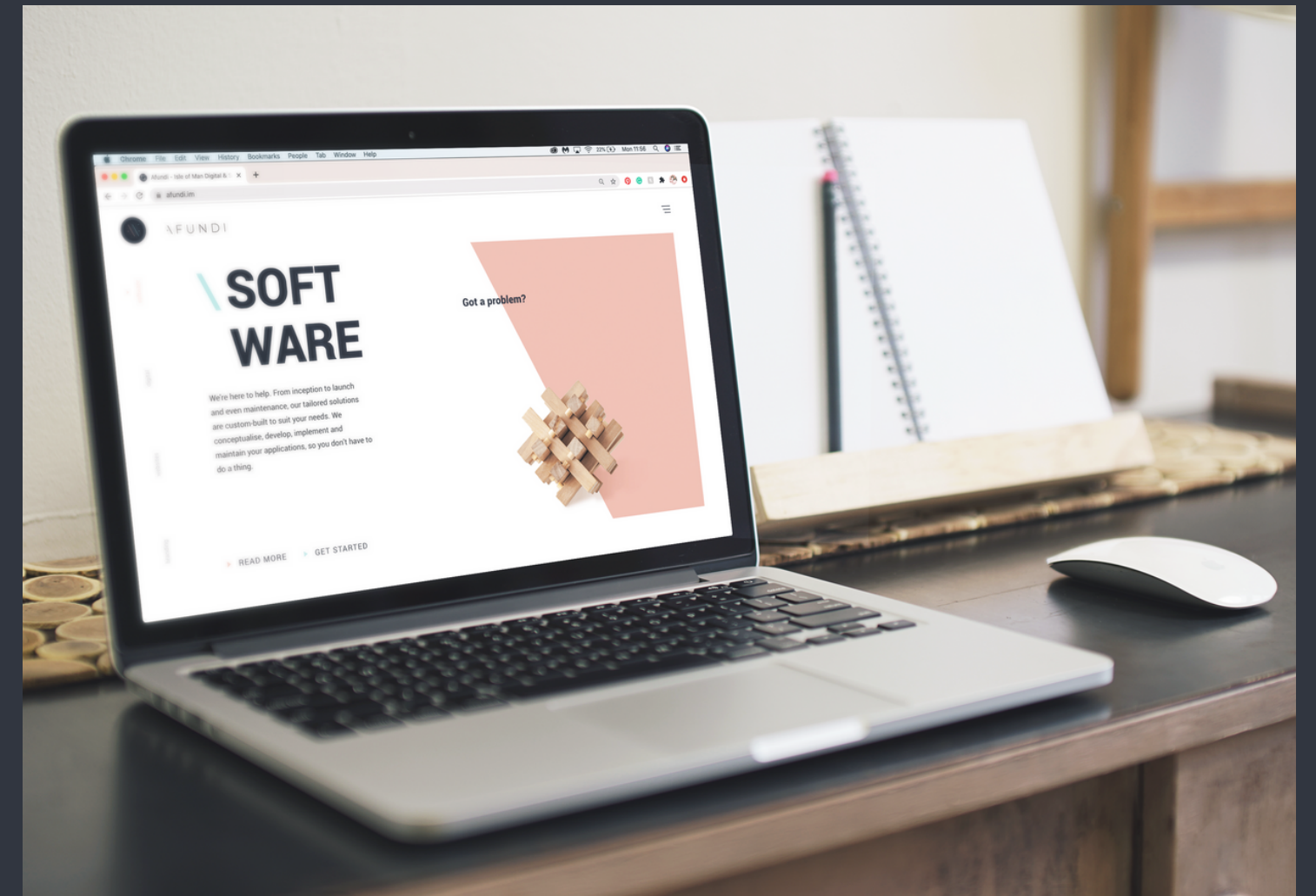


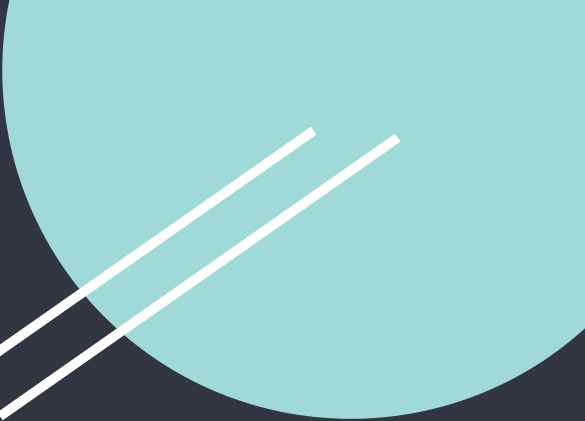


# WEBSITES

## WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT

- Often the first impression of your business
- Establish credibility and trust
- Customer support tool (24/7)
- Business development/lead generation
- Sales & booking tool
- Recruitment platform
- Online portfolio
- Marketing tool
- Improves search ranking
- PR & important announcements
- Showcase your brand and story





**“Websites promote you  
24/7. No employee will do  
that.”**

*PAUL COOKSON*



# SITE APPEARANCE

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

Visual design is paramount to anything else when creating a website – the idea is to catch the user's eye with clever design and guide the user effortlessly through the most critical communication elements.

The use of graphics, text, colour and imagery needs to appeal to your target audience, captivate their imagination and leave them wanting to explore your online presence.

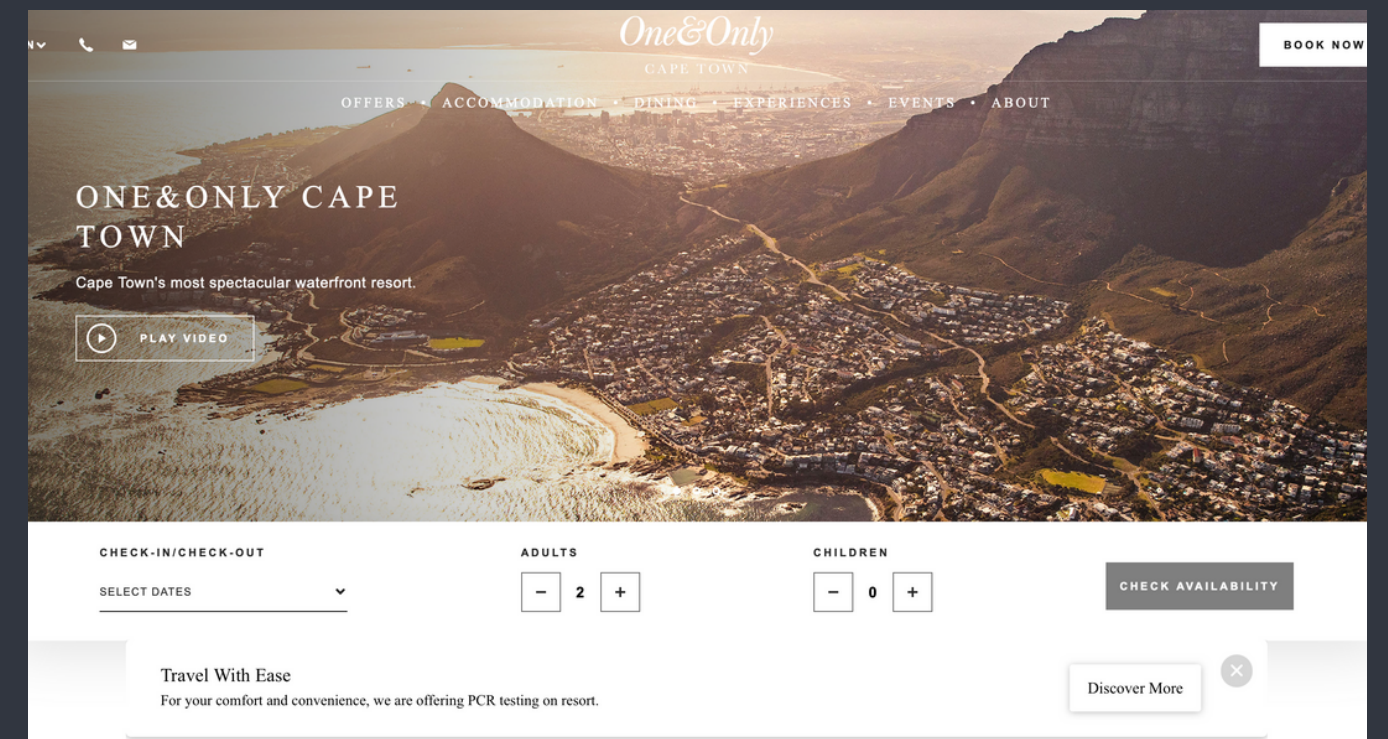


# SITE APPEARANCE

## DESIGN TIPS

What makes a website stand out from a design point of view:

- Cohesive design in line with your brand
- Appropriate use of colour for your audience
- Layout of copy to make it easy to consume
- Use of CTAs
- Negative space
- Typography
- Consistent layouts
- Use of rich media (images sell in this industry)
- Balance
- Contrast



# CONTENT

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

The aim is to have content that is engaging, that succeeds at teaching, persuading and entertaining the user whilst also helping you meet your business objectives.

It is crucial to keep the information on your website concise, direct and memorable. In this industry customers want to be sold on the experience as well as understand the facts.

*Content is* 

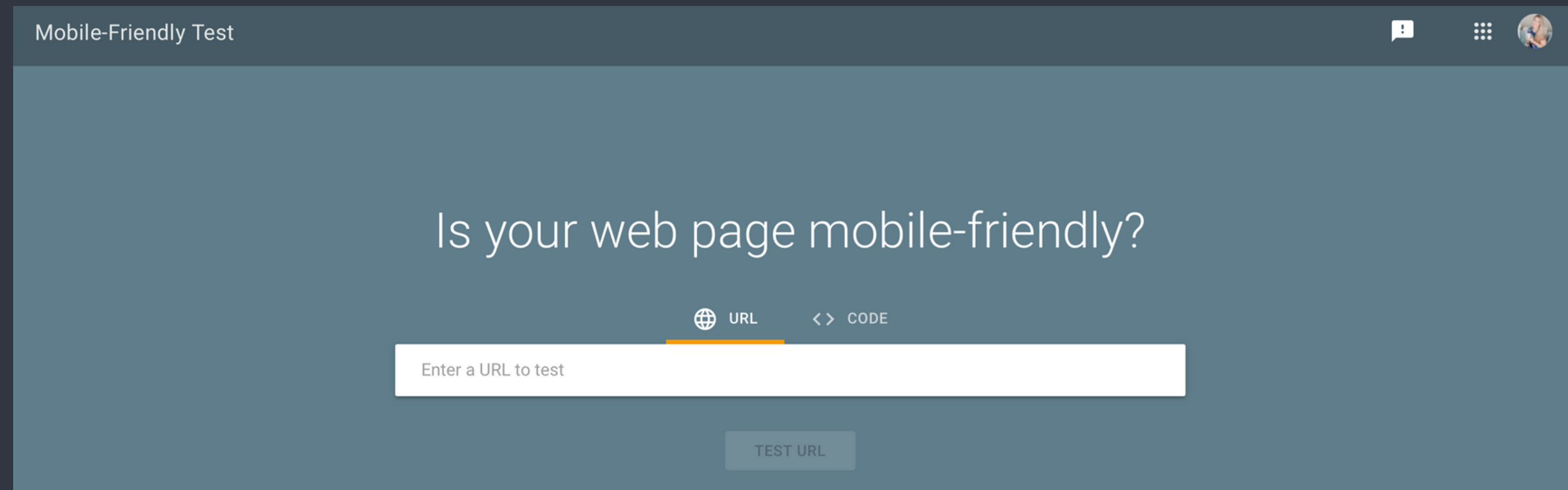
# SEO

## MOBILE OPTIMISED WEBSITE

In 2020 Google announced that it will be ranking website mobile first. Therefore it is critical that your website is MOBILE OPTIMISED if not you could be penalised.

If you are unsure you can test it here:

<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>



The screenshot shows the Google Mobile-Friendly Test interface. At the top, it says "Mobile-Friendly Test" in the left corner and has a notification icon, a grid icon, and a profile picture in the right corner. The main heading is "Is your web page mobile-friendly?". Below this, there are two options: "URL" (selected with a globe icon) and "CODE" (with a code icon). A white input field contains the placeholder text "Enter a URL to test". Below the input field is a "TEST URL" button.

# FUNCTIONALITY

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

Most websites fail to take into account who is going to be visiting the website and the fact that the most users spend an average of two minutes on a website.

For example if the primary function of your website is to sell a package then it is important to clearly display the package and its description as well as have a user friendly check out system so purchasing is quick and easy.

So it's critical you write down your objectives and then ensure your site meets these objectives.

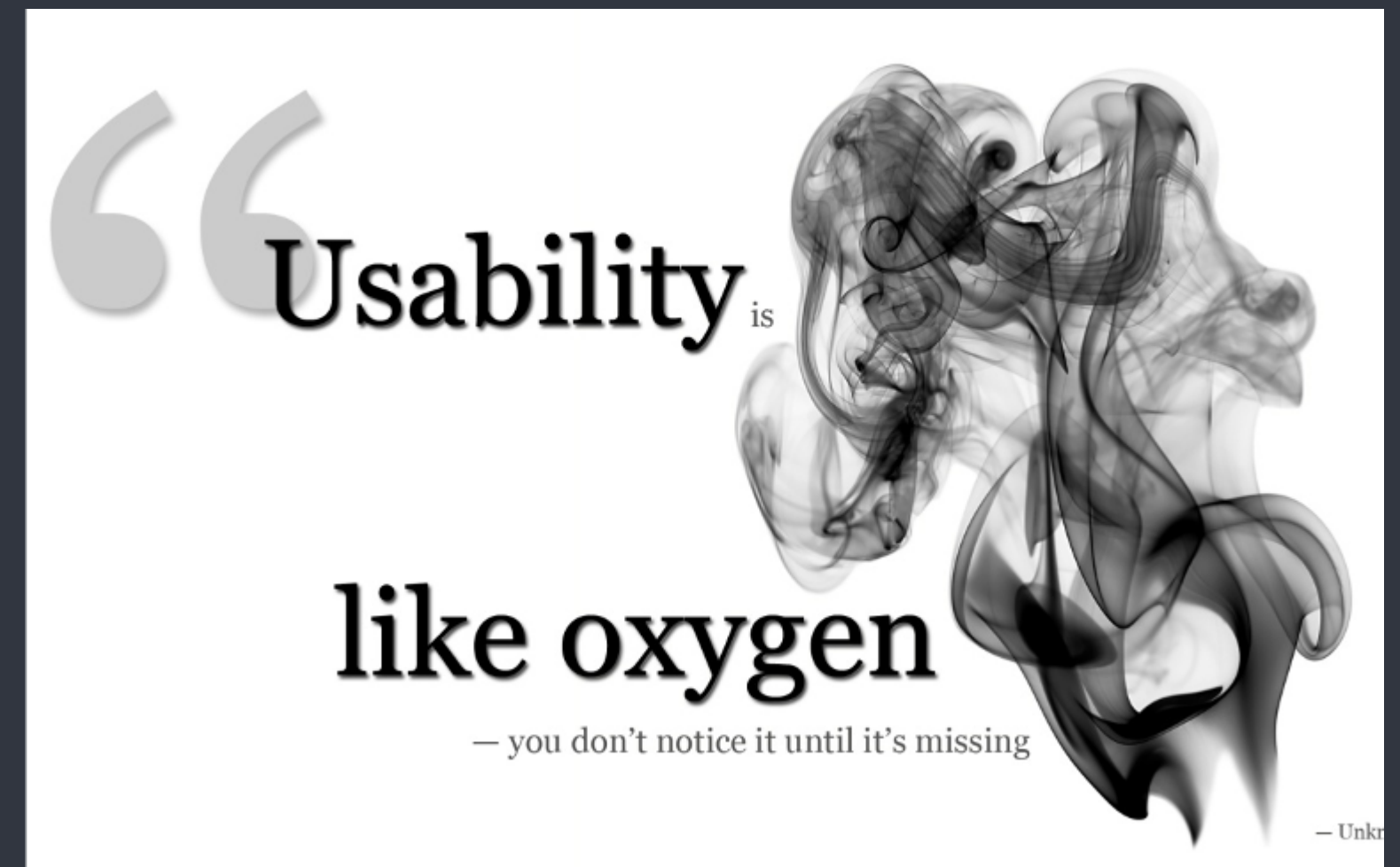


# USABILITY


## WHAT TO CONSIDER

If a website is easy to use, users are more likely to stay on your website for longer resulting in them becoming engaged with your brand and the services or products you offer.

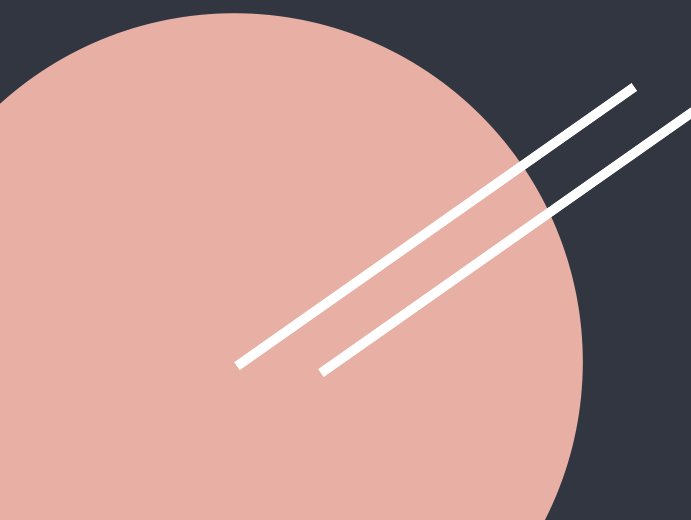
The belief is that a website's success is determined by how it guides its user towards its primary goal.







Website conversion happens when someone completes a **pre-determined** and desired **action** on your website.



# WEBSITES

## USE THE PERFECT CALLS TO ACTION

In marketing, a call to action (CTA) is an instruction to the audience to provoke an immediate response, usually using an imperative verb such as "call now", "find out more" or "book now". CTAs should be visually attractive, action-oriented, and easy to spot on a page.

- Buy Now
- Download
- Start your journey today
- Share
- Sign Up
- Submit
- Contact Us

**SHOP  
NOW**

# WEBSITES

## INCLUDE TESTIMONIALS

These can be copy based, video or images. You can also bring through reviews or testimonials from 3rd party websites such as Facebook or Trip Advisor. Make sure your testimonials are relevant and positioned appropriately.

Longer testimonials with links to the source are most effective.

Eg. Bobby Jones, of Watts Accounts (link to the company website or the persons LinkedIn profile).

This will also have an SEO benefit and give people confidence to book.



# WEBSITES

## IMPROVE YOUR SITE NAVIGATION

Ensure the design of the menu is well thought out, menu tabs should be easily read and the menu should be visually consistent with your brand's themes and colours. Consider a sticky menu as it assists users to quickly navigate to key pages. Name your pages clearly and do not over complicate it.

TIP: Do a test to find certain content on your site. For example, how easy is it to find your contact number? How many clicks does it take to get to your booking page?



# WEBSITES

## SIMPLIFY YOUR USER JOURNEY

Ensure that it is easy for your users to check out/book/submit a form or complete the task you need them to complete.

Things to consider:

- Simply your forms by only including necessary fields
- Make your checkout process is easy by reducing steps
- Ensure your payment integration is trusted

Remember, more fields = more effort = more drop offs and abandoned carts/forms.



# WEBSITES

## GET PEOPLE TO BOOK:

- Have clear CTA's on the site
- The BOOK NOW button should be visible when landing on the site
- Avoid too many advertisements on the booking and payment pages
- Make sure that the registration process is easy
- Only collect the information that you actually need
- Use an SSL secure processing and let the customers know it
- Ensure customers can view your Privacy Policy & Refund pages



# ONLINE BOOKING

## HOW TO CHOOSE:

### THERE ARE THREE OVERALL OPTIONS:

- Use the online booking functionality provided by your website platform, such as WooCommerce or Wix.
- Use a 3rd party booking system that integrates into your website or is linked from your social media pages or similar.
- Get a bespoke system built by a development agency if you cannot find a booking system that meets all of your needs. This will give you full control of the customer journey and experience.



# ONLINE BOOKING

## HOW TO CHOOSE:

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Write a requirements list
2. Consider your customer
3. Google and research options
4. Look at your competitors
5. Consider your budget
6. Try different platforms yourself
7. Make use of free demos
8. Speak to your developer or web designer to find out what will be compatible with your website





# ONLINE BOOKING

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD ONLINE BOOKING PLATFORM

### FOR CUSTOMERS:

- It is user friendly and simple to use
- It is fast and loads quickly
- It has a clear calendar feature or date selector
- It allows for secure payments and multiple payment options (PayPal, Credit Card, Debit Card or Bank Transfer)
- It sends a detailed email with all information regarding the booking
- It is transparent about how it stores personal data
- It has a clear refund policy & cancellation policy



# ONLINE BOOKING

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD PLATFORM

### FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

- It has flexible date selection
- It has flexible or customisable fields
- It has a clear cost breakdown and an easy opt out clause
- It has support (via email or live chat)
- It allows for sales, promotions codes or voucher redemption
- It stores data SECURELY & is transparent about how it handles data
- It has reporting
- It integrates with popular platforms
- It allows for customised & branded emails
- It sends reminders & gathers feedback
- Where applicable, it allows for different languages & currencies
- Where applicable, does it have a waiting list feature

# ONLINE BOOKING

## PLATFORMS:

The logo for eviivo features the word "eviivo" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters "i" and "o" are colored red and yellow, while the others are grey.

Managing your bookings

The logo for free tobook features the word "free" in orange and "tobook" in blue. To the right of the text is a stylized blue bird icon.The logo for GUESTLINK features a blue globe icon on the left, followed by the word "GUESTLINK" in a bold, grey, sans-serif font. To the right of "GUESTLINK" is a vertical line, followed by the words "ONLINE TOURISM SOLUTIONS" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.The logo for SimplyBook.me features the word "SimplyBook.me" in a blue, sans-serif font. The "S" is stylized with a blue checkmark-like shape.The logo for supercontrol features the word "supercontrol" in a green and black, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a green icon consisting of three curved lines. Below the main text is the phrase "Booking & Management System" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for REGIONDO features a stylized orange icon of a smartphone with a checkmark-like shape inside. Below the icon is the word "REGIONDO" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for rezdy features a white circular icon with a stylized blue "z" shape inside. To the right of the icon is the word "rezdy" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

# ONLINE BOOKING

PLATFORMS:



RESY



# ONLINE BOOKING

[SIMPLYBOOK.ME](https://SIMPLYBOOK.ME)

## PROS:

- 4.65/5 rating on trust pilot.
- There are packages to suit all needs.
- You can have a website on their platform or you can easily add their customised widget to your website.
- It integrates with popular payment providers.
- There is a YouTube channel with tons of helpful tutorials.
- It handles memberships.
- Includes extensive reporting.

## CONS:

- Each package has a limited amount of bookings included.
- A generalist platform that isn't specific to an industry.
- To add singular features incurs costs which can add up.

# ONLINE BOOKING

EVIVO.COM

## PROS:

- 4.5/5 rating on trust pilot.
- Specifically for the hospitality industry and focuses on selling rooms.
- It integrates with the Visit Isle of Man website.
- Prices start at as little as £20 per month.
- Has a WordPress plugin.
- Provide an online chat service.
- 30 days free trial.
- Their website clearly shows what it feature replaces.

## CONS:

- There is a transaction fee of £0.50 per confirmed booking.
- Can be a steep learning curve to jump onto the platform.

# ONLINE BOOKING

FREETOBOOK.COM

## PROS:

- 4.5/5 rating on trust pilot.
- It integrates with the Visit Isle of Man website.
- There are packages to suit all needs and even free features.
- Known for their support and management of the onboarding process.
- Sends automated messages and reminders.
- Has solutions for each type of business.
- Facebook integration via their app.

## CONS:

- Integrates with Stripe but not for Isle of Man businesses.
- The user interface is not as modern and slick as many others.
- The free features are likely not to meet all of your needs.

# ONLINE BOOKING

GUESTLINK.CO.UK

## PROS:

- Specifically for the hospitality industry.
- It integrates with the Visit Isle of Man website.
- It sends automated review reminders out.
- Their pricing model is very economical.

## CONS:

- 3/5 rating on Trust Pilot and in fact it has very few reviews.
- The user interface and their marketing website are not as modern, slick and engaging as others.
- Sign up is still via a downloadable form.



# ONLINE BOOKING

[SUPERCONTROL.CO.UK](https://supercontrol.co.uk)

## PROS:

- It is specifically designed for self-catering businesses.
- It is UK based.
- Free 14-day trial
- Premier Partner of Booking.com and HomeAway - their channel manager allows you to update your listing on multiple sites.
- It integrates with the Visit Isle of Man website.

## CONS:

- There is a set up fee of £250.
- New features are often released but not explained or supported properly.
- Onboarding can be a steep learning curve.
- Restricted guest communication.

# ONLINE BOOKING

REGIONDO.COM

## PROS:

- Specifically for the leisure industry.
- Tiered pricing structure allowing you to scale your package based on your needs.
- Allows for multiple languages.
- Mobile and digital ticketing system.
- Has a built in channel manager to integrate with the likes of TripAdvisor.
- Can handle high volumes.

## CONS:

- It is based in Munich meaning English is not first language.
- It is a very big system so it can be overwhelming.

# ONLINE BOOKING

REZDY.COM

## PROS:

- It is specifically designed for tour or leisure operators.
- It has a free trial.
- Tiered pricing packages.
- Has a mobile app for convenience.
- Has multiple payment options.
- Built in CRM.
- Very extensive when it comes to functionality.

## CONS:

- It is a more expensive platform.
- Includes a 2% booking fee per booking.
- Reporting is not as extensive as competitors.
- Steep learning curve.

# ONLINE BOOKING

RESDIARY.COM

## PROS:

- Specifically designed for the restaurant industry.
- Allows for pre-orders and deposits.
- Very well known and has grown to be a giant in the space.
- Comes with table planning and management.
- Includes a waitlist feature.
- Has multiple Covid 19 recovery features.

## CONS:

- It is expensive compared to other software.
- You have a restricted amount of reservations per package.
- It can be fairly complicated and time consuming to set up.
- Support can be slow.

# ONLINE BOOKING

OPENTABLE.COM

## PROS:

- Specifically designed for the restaurant industry.
- Allows for pre-orders and deposits.
- Post dining surveys are sent.
- Has multiple Covid 19 recovery features.
- Has a takeout/online ordering feature.
- Helps manage staff and front of house.

## CONS:

- They do take a fee per booking plus their monthly flat fee.
- It can take time to set up and onboard.
- The mobile app does not have all of the features that the desktop version includes.

# ONLINE BOOKING

RESY.COM

## PROS:

- Best for restaurants.
- Complete reservations and waitlist system.
- It has an events component.
- It includes table management.
- Sends reminders to customers.
- Includes an app for IOS and android.

## CONS:

- It is a fairly expensive platform.
- You have to pay more for custom reporting.
- The user roles are not as flexible meaning you cannot restrict certain elements from staff.

# ONLINE BOOKING

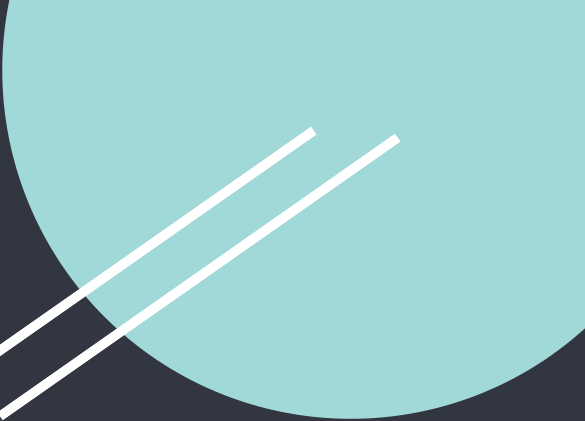
MIQAUNDO.COM

## PROS:

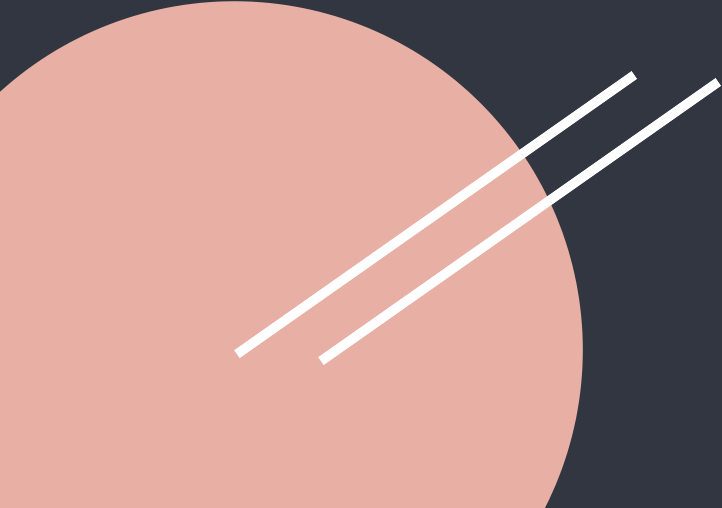
- Local company so you can speak to someone on Island.
- It can be used by many business types.
- They have a free version and their most expensive package is still very economical.

## CONS:

- They are a much smaller company compared to the bigger competitors so new features etc will likely take longer.
- The user interface for both customers and businesses is not as advanced and user friendly as other platforms.
- Limited features in comparison to bigger platforms.



There are many options out there but it is key to choose the right booking system for YOU and your CUSTOMERS.





# SET UP

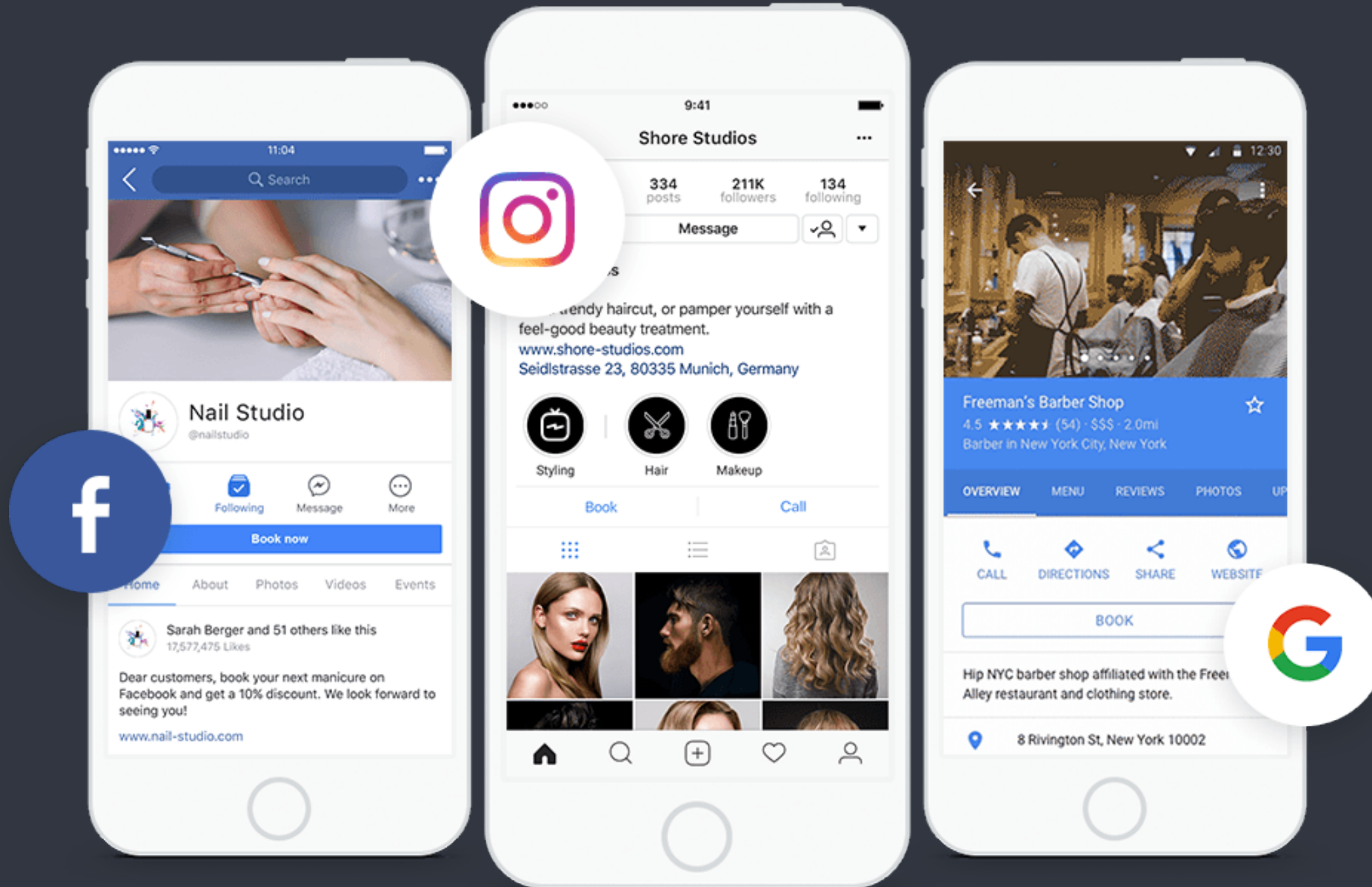
## TIPS AND TRICKS:

### ONCE YOU HAVE PICKED YOUR PLATFORM:

- Decide who is doing the implementation
- Set up the platform
- Test the platform
- Train your staff
- Take it live during an off-peak time
- Publish content on the system on your website & send out emails
- Link your social media channels (book now button) & set autoresponse messages on platforms such as Facebook
- Include info in your outgoing voicemail messages
- Ensure you are available for support to your customers
- Closely watch the bookings - do daily check ins
- Talk to customers and staff

# SET UP

## TIPS AND TRICKS:



# SET UP

## TIPS AND TRICKS:

The image shows a screenshot of the Z Hotels website homepage. The background is a photograph of a hotel lobby with white subway tiles and a receptionist talking on a phone. The website layout includes a top navigation bar with links for CONTACT US, MEMBERS, OUR HOTELS (with a dropdown arrow), and BOOK A ROOM (highlighted with a red box). The main content area features a large heading: "Welcome to Z Hotels Right where you want to arrive". Below this are two buttons: "Explore our hotels" (a red button) and "Find us on a map" (a white button with a dropdown arrow). At the bottom, there is a booking form with fields for "Choose a hotel" (with a dropdown arrow and "Select a hotel" text), "When?" (with a calendar icon and "16th May 2021" text), "How long?" (with a dropdown arrow and "1 night" text), "No. of guests?" (with a person icon and "1 adult" text), and "Member code" (with an input field). A red "Check availability" button is positioned to the right of the form. Small text at the bottom left of the hero image reads "Best Price Guarantee | Manage Booking".

**Z**  
HOTELS

CONTACT US MEMBERS OUR HOTELS ▾ **BOOK A ROOM**

Welcome to Z Hotels  
Right where you want to arrive

Explore our hotels Find us on a map ▾

Best Price Guarantee | Manage Booking

Choose a hotel  
Select a hotel ▾

When?  
16th May 2021 📅

How long?  
1 night ▾

No. of guests?  
1 adult 👤

Member code \_\_\_\_\_

**Check availability**

# YOUR PROCESS

## HOW WILL YOUR INTERNAL PROCESSES CHANGE?

- Your staff will need to be trained on the system
- You may need to reassign staff duties
- Your website will need to be updated
- Your Privacy Policy will need to be updated
- Your daily planning will need to change EG. reserving tables, restricting 'walk ins' or planning check ins
- Your inventory management or schedule may change
- Your invoicing or accounting process will need to be addressed
- Measure guest/visitor experience with feedback via the platform



# SUCCESS OR NOT

## REPORTING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS

- Customer feedback - what are your customers saying about the process?
- Staff feedback - have your staff found it useful?
- Rate of sales - have you sold more or less?
- Average spend - has this increased?
- Planning ease - is having bookings allowing you to plan and manage your time better?
- Return on investment - is the money spent on the system worth it?
- Client loyalty - have you seen repeat visitors?
- Website traffic - has it increased?
- Marketing - are you marketing it correctly?



# SUCCESS OR NOT

## REPORTING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS

- On a daily basis check the bookings and monitor support enquiries.
- On a weekly basis look at your reports and in particular the accounts if applicable.
- On a monthly basis do a trial booking to ensure the system and process is still working well.
- On a quarterly basis do a customer or staff survey to ascertain success.
- On a yearly basis check that the system still meets all of your needs and is still cost effective in comparison to competitor systems.



# USEFUL LINKS

## LEARN MORE HERE:

- <https://supercontrol.co.uk>
- <https://en.freetobook.com>
- <https://info.guestlink.co.uk/default.aspx>
- <https://www.checkfront.com>
- <https://eviivo.com/products/guest-manager/>
- <https://simplybook.me/>
- <https://www.resdiary.com>
- <http://www.miquando.com>
- <https://resy.com>
- <https://www.opentable.com>
- <https://www.capterra.com>
- <https://www.trustpilot.com>

**HELPFUL  
TIPS**



# GET IN TOUCH

## WEBSITE ADDRESS

[www.afundi.im](http://www.afundi.im)

## LINKEDIN

[/jessica le merle](#)

## EMAIL ADDRESS

[jessica@afundi.im](mailto:jessica@afundi.im)