

HotelDost's 6-Step Playbook to Boost OTA Rankings

On platforms like MakeMyTrip, Agoda, or Booking.com, **visibility is everything**. With nearly 45% of hotel bookings happening online, your OTA ranking directly influences how many rooms you sell. Paid features can give you an edge, but they're just one part of the game. At HotelDost, we've created **a 6-step playbook** that gives hoteliers a clear roadmap to grow organically – boosting rankings, increasing bookings, and turning OTA guests into repeat loyal customers.

Step 1. Content That Converts

Your OTA listing is your **digital storefront**. Guests make decisions in seconds, so first impressions must click.

- **High-Quality Photos:** Upload at least 20 professional photos covering rooms, lobby, dining, amenities, and local highlights. Your first photo should grab attention—a sunrise view from the balcony beats a plain bed shot any day.
 - **Complete Profiles:** Fill out **every detail** – policies, amenities, accessibility, nearby attractions. OTAs reward 100% profile completion with better visibility.
 - **Smart Descriptions:** Replace generic claims like “best hotel in town” with unique hooks: “*Festival-view balcony,*” “*5 minutes from Jaipur Literature Festival.*” **Update seasonally to stay relevant.**
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Step 2. Make the Booking Process Easy

OTAs push listings that **convert lookers into bookers**. A smooth booking process = higher ranking.

- **Competitive Pricing:** Always keep rates aligned with your direct site, where you offer additional benefits like “2 pieces of free laundry”. **Even a 1% price gap can sway bookings.**
 - **Attractive Packages:** Add creative offers that **match guest needs**—late check-out after New Year parties, or “freshen up” packages for festival days like Ganpati Visarjan. Keep these **benefits aligned to the seasonal needs** of the guest.
 - **Instant Confirmation:** Guests **love instant bookings**. Delays create doubt and reduce trust. Instant surety keeps you memorable as a trustworthy choice.
 - **Balanced Cancellation:** Mix **flexible policies** (to attract more bookings) with semi-flexible/non-refundable options (to protect revenue).
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Step 3. Reputation Rules

On OTAs, **reviews equal rankings**. More recent, more positive reviews = stronger visibility.

- **Service with Grace:** Small gestures, quick solutions, personal attention, turn neutral stays into 5-star reviews. **Guests want to feel special;** you go out of your way to help them and voila! You have got a repeat customer.
- **Encourage Reviews:** Salons often offer free product samples for reviews; you can offer free souvenirs! Additionally, a simple reminder at check-out or a gentle automated message increases review volume.

- **Fresh is Better:** OTAs value new reviews more than older ones. Keep the flow constant.
 - **Stay Responsive:** Reply to **all, yes all;** reviews within 24 hours. Thoughtful and personalised responses (even to complaints) show attentiveness and improve ranking.
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Step 4. Keep Your Operations Clean

Behind-the-scenes efficiency keeps your OTA profile strong.

- **Always Open:** Load availability **at least 12 months** in advance. OTAs love hotels that look **reliable and consistent**.
 - **Show Variety:** Multiple room types – family, suites, balcony views—improve **appeal and broaden your audience**.
 - **Respond Fast:** OTAs track your **response speed**. Aim for minutes, not hours. If time is a challenge, outsource – it pays back in rankings.
 - **Manage Cancellations:** High cancellations hurt. **Use prepaid and non-refundable offers** at the right place and right time to balance.
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Step 5. Align With Demand

Your hotel needs to stay **relevant to the market pulse**.

- **Target Key Markets:** Run OTA promos for **top feeder regions** (e.g., Gulf travellers to Goa, Delhi tourists for Rajasthan).
- **Go Mobile-First:** Guests increasingly book via apps. More than 50% OTA bookings happen on mobiles! Enable **mobile-only discounts** for higher visibility.

- **Seasonal Relevance:** Align packages with festivals, events, or local celebrations to **capture short-term surges**. Capitalizing on every micro-opportunity keeps the cash flow intact!
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Step 6. Smart Marketing Hacks

Small tweaks often drive **big jumps in performance**.

- **Test Thumbnails:** Rotate lead photos every few months. Track which images get more clicks. First impressions last, keep it high quality and interesting!
 - **Use Keywords:** Add **searchable hooks** like “Near Lalbaugcha Raja” or “5 mins from Airport” to match traveller intent. **SEO is the bed-rock** of your search appearances. **Play the long game and stand out!**
 - **Cross-Promote:** Deals on one OTA create urgency that travellers notice across others.
 - **Build Loyalty:** Once guests stay, **channel them towards direct bookings** for their next trip with desirable benefits.
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Paid Features: The Booster Shot

Paid OTA features **are not a one-stop solution**, but they can give timely advantages.

- **Preferred Status:** Programs like MakeMyTrip Preferred or Agoda VIP+ give an **edge to visibility** (in exchange for higher commission). But these only work if your profile is optimized!

- **Sponsored Listings:** Pay-per-click ads give seasonal boosts when competition spikes.
- **Loyalty Programs:** Being part of OTA loyalty schemes (MMT Black, AgodaCash) puts your hotel in front of repeat travellers.

Winning on OTAs is **not about quick fixes** – it is about consistent discipline. Your photos, pricing, reviews, operations, and seasonal offers all **feed into the algorithm**. Organic visibility built on strong fundamentals lasts longer and costs less, paid promotions are a mere extra kick. At **HotelDost**, we believe the real game is not just **ranking high on OTAs, but converting that visibility into long-term guest loyalty**. That’s how you move from being “just another listing” to being the hotel travellers remember—and return to.