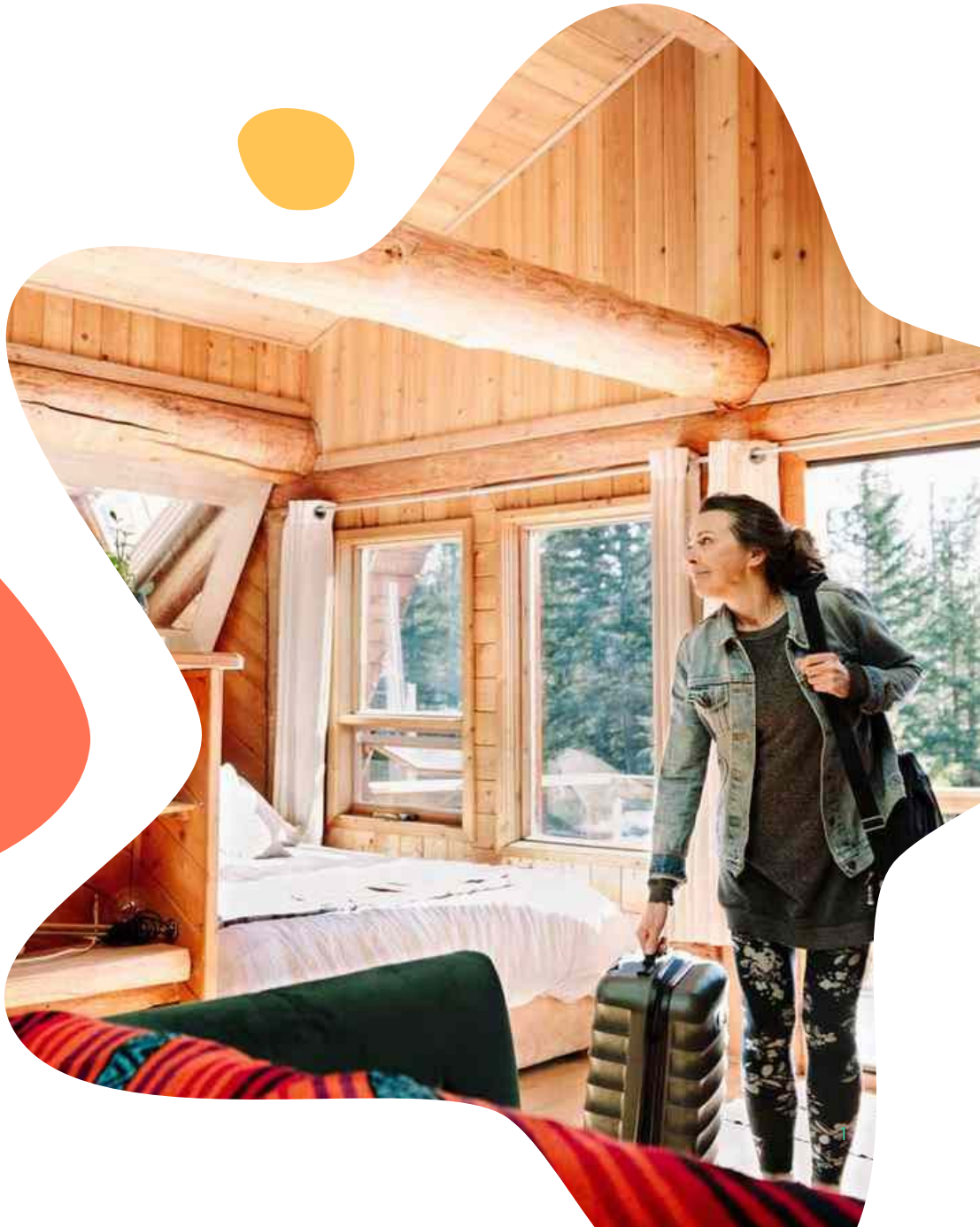
Hostfully

The vacation rental software ecosystem

and what software can do for your business



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My team and I help vacation rental managers solve operational challenges with software every day. But in the fast-paced world of vacation rental management, understanding the software ecosystem (and which vendors can transform your business) can be overwhelming. We see this happen over and over. It takes valuable time to navigate through the array of offerings, and more importantly, understand what each piece of software can bring to the table. In my experience helping vacation rental managers, time is a luxury that is often captured by pressing 'real-world' problems.

Hostfully's Customer Success prepared this eBook to empower you to gain a deeper understanding of the tools that can help save time, resources, and ultimately elevate your vacation rental operations. We start by covering two core concepts, explore the central tool you'll need to build a software stack, and then go over the ecosystem.

Should you have additional questions about software offerings, integrations, or even what a PMS can do for your business, please feel free to reach out at hello@hostfully.com.



Hostfully Yours,
Brise Carpenter, VP of Customer Success

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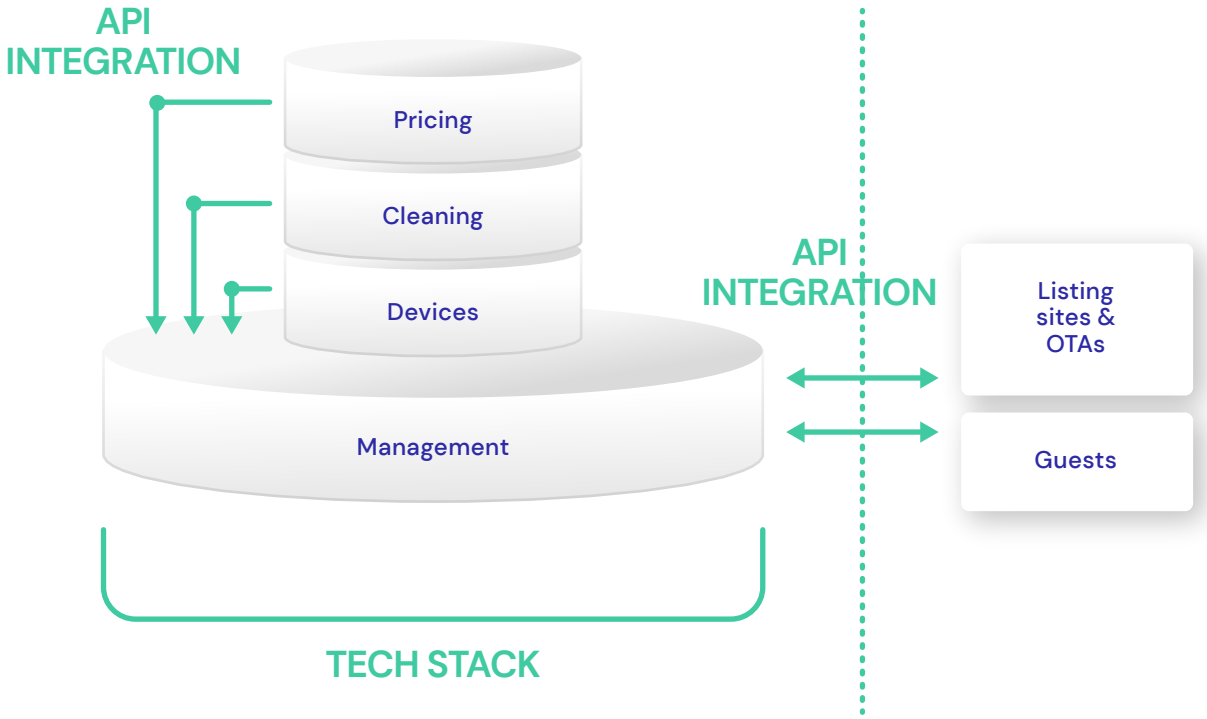
APIs and integrations

Harnessing the power of connectivity

To understand the vacation rental software ecosystem, you'll first need to grasp a core concept: APIs and integrations. Vacation rental software operates in an environment where data exchanges are essential for each component to operate. In order for these software solutions to effectively carry out their individual functions, they must be able to access and utilize reservation details and central calendars. This is where the power of APIs and integrations come into play.

API, or Application Programming Interface, may sound like technical jargon—but it simply refers to the mechanism that allows two pieces of software to communicate with each other. When two software vendors establish an API, they form what's called an integration. These integrations enable the sharing of reservation data, calendar and pricing updates, confirmations of work performed, etc.

When you pick software that is highly integrated, you unlock a world of possibilities for your vacation rental business. With an integrated 'tech stack,' niche software can function within a connected network, empowering you to efficiently manage reservations, automate tasks, and enhance guest experiences.



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A hub for your software tools

How PMSs enable vacation rental software

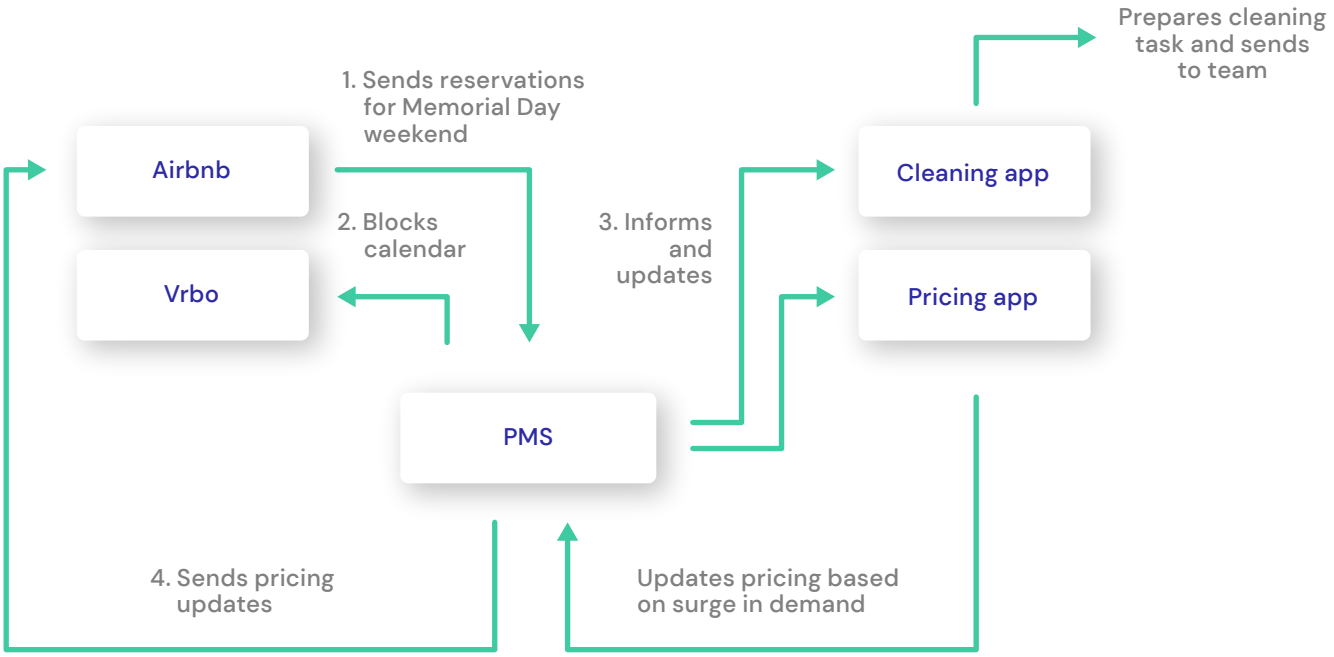
Vacation rental management businesses pivot their operations around reservations. This means reservation data is typically the focal point of vacation rental software functionality.

In the software industry, reservation data is usually housed within a platform called a Property Management System (PMS). PMSs play a critical role as channel managers, connecting your vacation rental business to major listing sites and Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) like Airbnb, Vrbo, Booking.com, Google, Marriott, HomeToGo, and others.

As a centralized hub, PMSs facilitate the flow of reservation data. They receive reservation details and distribute updates to the availability calendars of various listing sites. Essentially, PMSs act as the broker of reservation information, enabling efficient communication and synchronization between different vacation rental software solutions.

In addition to managing reservations, PMSs offer a range of key functions, including automated messaging flows, security deposit collection and refunds, owner portals, report generation, analytics, and much more. Through integrations, PMSs exchange updates with third-party vacation rental software. PMSs are often thought of as the operational hub of your vacation rental business because crucial operational data flows through them.

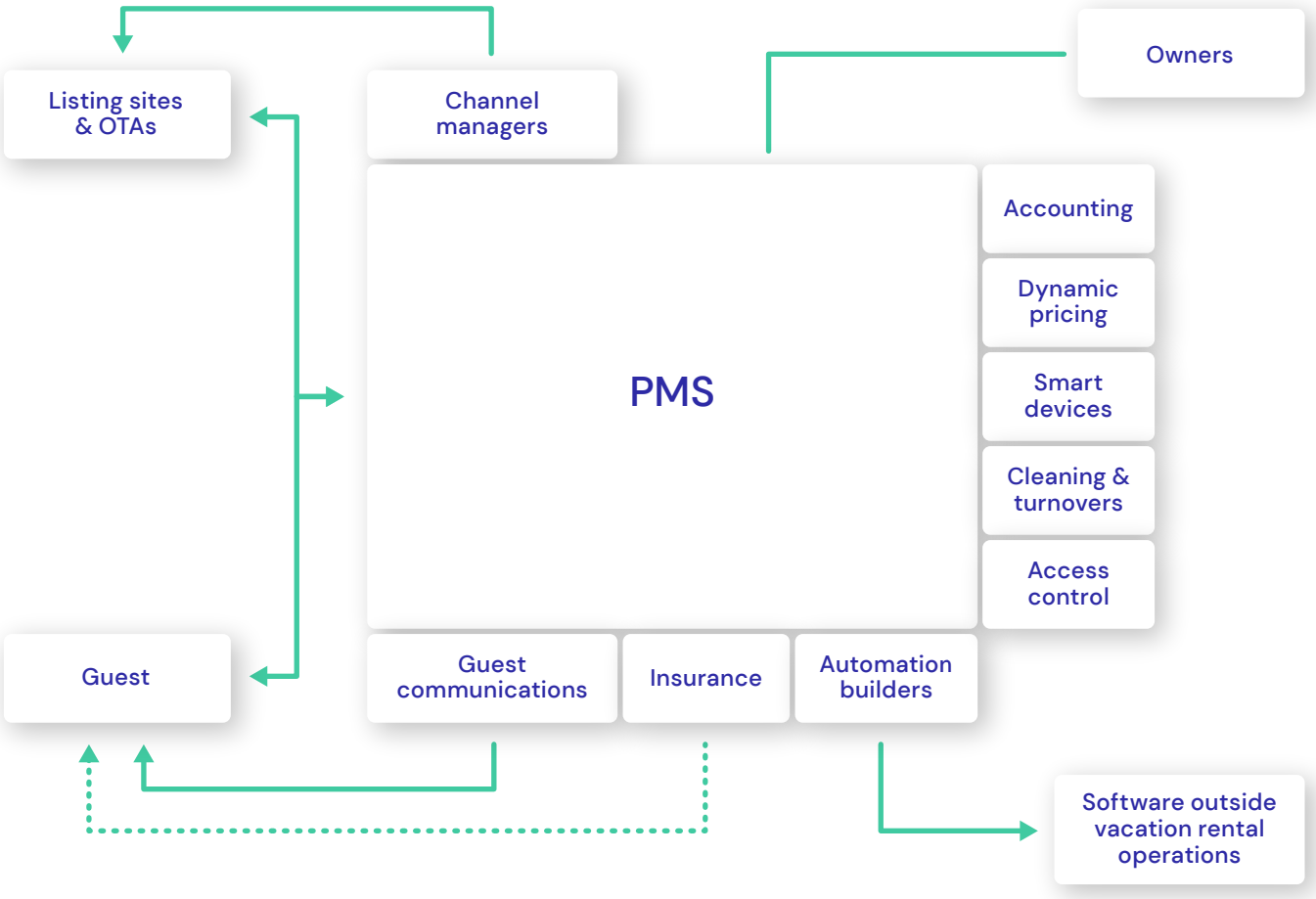
EXAMPLE OF A PMS COORDINATING OPERATIONS



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Mapping the vacation rental software ecosystem

There are currently over 200 vacation rental software providers (includes PMSs, channel managers, guest experience apps, operations software, and niche function tools). And as owners and managers scale their businesses, vacation rental software needs intensify. Mapped out in its entirety, the ecosystem looks as follows:



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Unleashing productivity

Core vacation rental software

Central to any large-scale or quickly-growing vacation rental business is a stack of software which facilitates management, pricing, operations, and the guest experience. These types of software work together to automate repetitive tasks, coordinate team members, and perform complex operations in instants.

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Cleaning and turnover management

Whether you employ contractors or in-house employees, coordinating cleaners is a time-consuming process. Spreadsheets, wall-planners, and group chats leave the door open to manual mistakes which lead to missed cleanings or delayed check-ins. By automating cleaning and turnover tasks, you'll reduce errors, deal with fewer emergencies, and save time on planning.

Core functionality

- Assigns, modifies, or cancels cleaning tasks
- Ensures quality control and photo checklists
- Automatic time tracking and work orders reduce workload
- Centralizes and streamlines maintenance reporting
- Automate payments and inventory management

How it works



Reservation data is received by the PMS and sent to the cleaning and turnover software. From there, the software performs its core functions, typically without further input from the PMS

Top providers (and their unique features)

breezeway
SMS messaging informs guests when the unit is ready

Turno
Cleaner Marketplace helps you find affordable cleaners

EZcare
Linen management and packing tools save planning time

properly
Advanced tools for quality control and turnover management

operto teams
Consolidate issues to streamline repairs, maintenance, etc

Other providers

Cleanstar
Doinn
EZInspections
Gustaff
Jana
LSI
Resort Cleaning
Sweeply
Washbnb

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Dynamic pricing and revenue management

Optimizing your income based on a property's nightly rate and occupancy can be challenging and tiresome. Adjusting rates for seasonality across dozens of properties consumes time, however, using the same base rate means you're leaving money on the table. Dynamic pricing tools adjust your rates in real-time based on market conditions, while their revenue management features make it easy to bulk edit your rates manually when necessary.

Core functionality

- Dynamic pricing continuously optimizes rates according to market conditions, seasonality, weekends, and more
- Revenue management tools help make bulk edits to pricing
- Tools allow for deep-dive analysis on a property's performance

How it works



Dynamic pricing detects an update is needed and sends the details to the PMS, which the PMS uses to modify calendars.
Reservation data is sent to the PMS from the listing sites and OTAs, which is then transmitted to the dynamic pricing app. The app adjusts its pricing models, and pushes further updates to the PMS, restarting the feedback loop.

Top providers (and their unique features)

PriceLabs
Offers advanced revenue management tools and fine-tuning features

Wheelhouse
Market analytics tools give you an edge over competitors

BEYOND
Analytics tools assess the health of a unit or an entire portfolio

DPGO
Integrated market overview offers unique insights beyond rates

nightpricer
Fine-tunes based on booking frequency and can offer last-minute deals

turbosuite
Provides integrated revenue managements strategy and pricing

Other providers

Aristander
Buoy
Quibble
RateGain
RevMax

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Accounting

Vacation rental accounting software receives reservation information from your PMS to keep track of income. The software properly reports income for stays that span a month-end, and provides other advanced features such as trust accounting. Your income and expenses, management fees, and taxes are calculated and tracked based on accounting best-practices.

Core functionality

- Automatically receives income generated from reservations and logs according to best-practices
- Receives, collects, and reports key financial metrics for you
- Issues guest invoices and management fees, shares monthly owner statements, reconciles balances

How it works



Reservation data, specifically dates and revenue earned, sent to the accounting software

Top providers (and their unique features)

Ximplifi

Offers accounting software and fully-managed services by accountants specialized in short-term rentals

extenteam

Offers fully-managed accounting services (as well as other vacation rental operation roles that can be performed remotely)

intuit quickbooks

Mobile app enables your team members to file expenses on the go. Can be customized to your business' unique needs

Other providers

Sage Intacct
Xero
FreshBooks
Clearing

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Property access control automation

Greeting guests at the door is time-consuming. The other option, leaving a key under the flower pot or reusing the same door code, creates risk. With the right tools, you can generate unique PIN codes for the duration of a guest's stay, and track when a team member accessed a property. Individualized codes can be created and revoked (i.e. in case a contractor needs one-time access).

Core functionality

- Automatically send unique PIN door lock codes to guests
- Notifications sent when guests have checked in
- Grant or revoke access to contractors and staff
- Keep records of who and when properties are accessed

How it works



Reservation data is sent to the PMS which notifies the access management app. Codes are created for the duration of the reservation and sent back to the PMS, which then transmits to the guest.

Top providers (and their unique features)

RemoteLOCK
Highly flexible platform with strong monitoring and reporting features

Lynx
Strong focus on making access operations more efficient and easy

operto
Acts as a hub to other services like smart devices, cleaning management, etc

JERVIS SYSTEMS
Guests can also access properties via SMS or secure voice prints

PointCentral AN ALARM.COM COMPANY
Enterprise-level hub that can also manage thermostats, sensors, lights, and more

Other providers

Brivo
tapkey
Everydoor
homeit
Alfred
Astute Access
Klevio
Rently
Seam

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Per-night insurance coverage

Relying on a listing site's damage waiver can be risky for your business, and may leave you open to personal injury liability. Additionally, your business may be exposed to loss of revenue in the event of certain types of severe damage which typically aren't covered by a listing site/OTA or homeowner's policy. With specialized insurance software, your properties are covered for the duration of the reservation and guests are pre-screened before they can book.

Core functionality of all providers

- Automatically purchase insurance policies on properties for the duration of the reservations
- Portal screens guests against dozens of publicly-available databases as well as proprietary high-risk guests lists
- Most claims are handled in under 48 hours as opposed to traditional insurance providers

How it works



Reservation data is sent to the PMS which the insurance provider uses to generate a policy. Some providers will prompt the guest to enter their information in a portal for further screening.

Top providers (and their unique features)

safely

Coverage can be fully automated, and offers free guest screening service

INSURAGUEST

Payouts are quick, and medical coverage can be upsold to guests during their stay

SUPERHOG

Flexible screening options depending on booking source

Other providers

Generali
homesure
JacobStreet
Pablow
Property Protect
Slice
Pikl

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Guest communication

Guest communication tools bridge the gap between your PMS' inbox and other means of communication guests may be using. They also make it easy to create specialized communication flows, tailored guest experiences, upsells, and much more.

Core functionality of all providers

- Expands the communication channels beyond your PMS' offerings such as SMS and WhatsApp
- Unique pre-check-in flows, including digital agreements and customizable guest portals
- Customizable communication flows during a stay such as guest surveys, or feedback portals

How it works



Reservation data is sent to the PMS which the communication software uses to time sending guest messages. Vacation rental business staff can use the communication app for back and forth exchanges with the guest.

Top providers (and their unique features)

akia

Lightweight AI automatically responds to basic common questions, fraud and chargeback checks on security deposits

CHARGE AUTOMATION

Secure portal to capture ID or passport information. Built-in upsell options for added revenue

enso CONNECT

Manages most front-desk functions automatically, and can be used for upsells and custom guest experiences

Other providers

Breezeway
Duve
ConciergeBot
Edgar
Hospitable
civitatis

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Multi-site distribution and channel management

Every top-level PMS offers direct integrations with Airbnb, Vrbo, and Booking.com. Past the "Big 3", PMSs have different offerings of which listing sites or OTAs they may or may not integrate with. Third-party channel managers specialize in building APIs to the 100+ listing sites and OTAs on the market. This allows vacation rental managers to increase their marketing reach beyond what their PMS offers.

Core functionality of all providers

- Automatically syncs and updates listings on multiple sites and OTAs
- Adjusts availability calendars in real-time, and coordinates with your PMS to avoid double-bookings
- Centralizes guest communications for reservations received outside the PMS's channel manager tool

How it works



The PMS and channel manager independently receive reservations via the listening sites they are connected with. They exchange notifications when a reservation is booked to block off calendars. The PMS uses the reservation data to enable the rest of the tech stack.

Top providers (and their unique features)

rentals united

Analytics, data studio and guest planners help the business owner make better decisions on distribution decisions

nextpay

Pay per booking pricing structure. Unifies all income streams to issue single payments, which reduces accounting burden for the operator

RedAwning

Takes over marketing and distribution so the vacation rental business owner can focus on operations and the guest experience

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Smart device management and noise monitoring

Devices like thermostats, motion sensors, cameras, and noise sensors can be controlled remotely and synced to your reservation calendar. This opens up a world of possibilities ranging from energy savings (ie the unit heats up or cools down before check-in and after departure), improved guest experience (ie lights turn right before check-in), damage and fine prevention (ie noise and CO2 sensors detect an illegal party), and even upsells (ie power for guests using an electric vehicle car charger.)

Core functionality of all providers

- Smart devices synced to the cloud will perform routines or functions based on check-in/check-out times

How it works



Reservation data is sent to the PMS which transmits the smart device or noise monitoring app, which run their own set of routines.

Top providers (and their unique features)

operto

Offers a central hub (which also manages smart locks) and other guest experience features such as digital check-in

JERVIS SYSTEMS

Offers a central hub (which also manages smart locks) and is compatible with dozens of brands

MÎNUT

Privacy-friendly noise sensors can prevent damage by detecting excessive humidity, motion, and temperature

NoiseAware

Specialized in privacy-friendly noise sensors, and offers automatic warning services

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Elevating your operations

Specialized vacation software

Niche vacation rental software options focus on one two features which allow vacation rental businesses to deepen their operations, marketing, and guest experience processes. They often complement core vacation rental software, and solve unique challenges.

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Guest screening

Autohost

- Automatically screens guests and returns a risk score for your operations team to take action (if necessary)
- Guest screening software offers deeper checks than the built-in feature from insurance providers

Marketplace analytics

Key Data
AirDNA
Transparent

- Vacation rental businesses looking to expand can use historical and forward-looking market data analytics
- Vacation rental managers can also use these tools to benchmark their portfolio or individual properties against the competition using filters and extra datasets not available in revenue management or dynamic pricing software

Direct booking sites

Boostly
Hudson
Lodgea
ICND

- With integrations to major PMS providers, these design agencies build direct booking websites that automatically change based on input from the PMS.
- Compared to pre-built sites, custom websites are also SEO-friendly, and don't need to be rebuilt if you switch PMS years down the road

Revyoos

- Aggregates reviews from listing sites and OTAs and displays your overall star rating on your direct booking site
- Your site's users can read past reviews from other sites
- Artificial intelligence feature automatically responds to guest reviews, ensuring that each review you leave is unique

Marketing tools

StayFi

- Add an email capture portal to your Wifi (similar to what you experience at an airport Wifi) to grow your email list for future retargeting and boosting your direct booking strategy
- Directly integrate your email list with other marketing tools to create powerful direct marketing campaigns

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Payment providers and credit card handling

Stripe
PayPal
VacationRent Payment

- These international payment solutions integrate with your PMS, allowing you to collect payments from direct bookings, automatically collect and refund security deposits, and enable you to offer upsells to guests

Custom automation tools

Zapier

- With API links to thousands of software across every multiple industries, Zapier acts as the translator between tools that don't have a dedicated integration (for example, connect your PMS to a spreadsheet, or your cleaning management app to an accounting software, the possibilities are endless)
- Zapier also offers a marketplace connecting you to integration specialists who can build fully-custom integrations for you

Guest experience boosters

AIPEX Virtual Concierge

- Enhances guest experiences by providing instant and personalized assistance through a virtual interface
- Guests can interact with the virtual concierge through voice commands or text-based communication to ask questions, seek recommendations, make reservations, or access relevant information

BabyQuip

- Allows parents and caregivers to rent a wide range of baby gear and equipment for temporary use during travel or other occasions
- Equipment is provided by local Quality Providers who offer a cribs, strollers, car seats, high chairs, toys, and more

LuggageHero
NannyBag

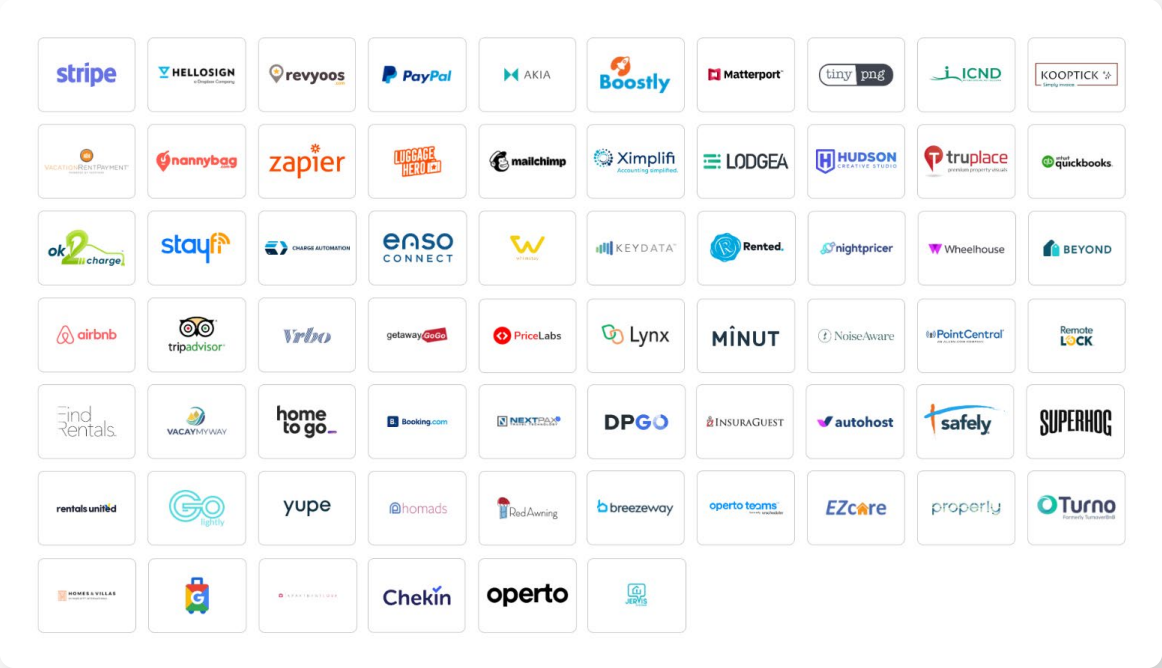
- The platform connects guests with vetted and secure luggage storage locations and reduce time spent taking care of guest's luggages at check-in and check-out

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About Hostfully

At Hostfully, we make software that helps companies save time and earn more. Whether you want to reduce the amount of time spent on manual tasks, deliver better experiences, or run more efficiently, Hostfully can help. Our software automates and optimizes your operations so you can scale with less friction.

When it comes to the software ecosystem, Hostfully is integrated with the industry's best vacation rental software. With over 75 integrations, you can create a tech stack that perfectly suits your needs.



With Hostfully, you also get access to the industry's easiest-to-use, flexible, and reliable PMS system (desktop and mobile app) all at an affordable price. On top of that, benefit from in-house customer support, over 300 DIY and help articles, smooth and quick onboarding, and a host of benefits such as webinars, discounts and promotions.

If you'd like to discover how Hostfully can help you grow and add more value to your business, get in touch to arrange a personalized demo.

Book a demo Email us