



## **Global Booking Network FAQs**

### **What is the Global Booking Network?**

The Global Booking Network markets and sells your inventory in real-time through more than 800,000 travel agents worldwide using the Sabre, WorldSpan, Amadeus, and Galileo Global Distribution Systems (GDS), over 9,000 popular consumer travel sites of various Independent Distribution Systems, the Pegasus Network, and various Local Distribution Systems around the globe.

### **How does the Global Booking Network work?**

BookingCenter software contains all your property's content, description, marketing, rates, and availability. This information is then uploaded to the BookingCenter Central Reservation Service (CRS). When changes are made by you in the software, they are updated everywhere via 2-way data synchronization. All Bookings, Modifications and Cancellations are always made current with Internet updates, allowing an accurate 'single image' of your inventory.

### **What are the Global Distribution Systems (GDS)?**

The GDS are the Sabre, WorldSpan, Amadeus, and Galileo/Apollo Global Distribution Systems. These systems reach more than 800,000 travel agents worldwide and more than 50 million consumers who visit such popular travel sites that are powered by a GDS such as Travelocity and Trip.com. BookingCenter properties receive a significant number of bookings from the GDS. We provide one of the lowest cost connections to the major GDS systems on the market with an initial fee of \$250. Travel Agents can also potentially add 10% commission, on top of the standard 15% GDS commission. All the terms of GDS distribution are stated on the GDS sign-up form you would complete to activate your property on the GDS.

### **How do bookings through the GDS differ from Independent (IDS) and Local Distribution Systems (LDS)?**

The GDS systems are used primarily by travel agents. Bookings from travel agents are unique to each Travel Agent. Some will provide complete details about the guest and the reservation, while others will be vague and only provide a guest's last name. All the information about the travel agent that made the reservation will be attached to each

booking. Simply look at the Booking Details in the BookingCenter Software and you will see the travel agent's IATA (International Association of Travel Agents) number. Then, look in the Agents area of BookingCenter to find the agent and all the historical bookings they made at your property.

## **What is Pegasus?**

Pegasus is a company that provides central reservation services for many of the most popular travel Internet Distribution Partners. BookingCenter offers a direct feed to the Pegasus system, which will often allow your property to sell its inventory on such popular travel websites as Expedia.com, Orbitz.com, CheapTickets.com, Hotwire.com, LastMinute.com, Loding.com, Opodo.com, and TravelHero.com.

## **How do I get more information for some on-line bookings?**

Travel agents will, unfortunately, often not provide full guest details. Sometimes, they will not even provide a credit card, even though you have a "credit card deposit" policy established. This is the reality with agents using the Sabre, WorldSpan, Galileo/Apollo, and Amadeus systems. However, travel agents are supposed to provide any missing information if the property requests it. This can be done by clicking on the Agents IATA (International Association of Travel Agents) number linked from the Booking Details screen in the BookingCenter Software. Or, if that IATA information is not current, you can visit: [http://www.checkacode.com/industry\\_code.asp](http://www.checkacode.com/industry_code.asp) and look up the IATA (Agent ID) number to try and get more recent information on the Travel Agent. The Agent record will contain full contact details for the Agent. Use this information to follow-up on your GDS bookings in the event of a question.

TRAVELOCITY bookings differ slightly from other on-line bookings in that on the booking confirmation you may notice that BookingCenter only provides you with the guest name in addition to the booking details. If you require additional information prior to their arrival, please e-mail [questinformation@travelocity.com](mailto:questinformation@travelocity.com) and use the subject line "Guest Information Request". In the body of the e-mail you must include the following 8 pieces of information; otherwise your request will not be fulfilled:

1. Hotel name
2. Telephone number
3. Name of contact person at hotel
4. Sabre record locator (this is the 6-character code below called "Travel Agency Reservation Code")
5. Name of guest
6. Arrival date
7. Requested information (the guest's address, phone, e-mail, etc.)
8. Reason for request

If you need the Travel Agency Reservation Code, it can usually be seen in the Booking Notes found at the bottom of the Booking Details screen in BookingCenter.

Contact details for the most common GDS and Pegasus sites are included below:

**Expedia**

For Hotels: Phone: 404-728-8787; E-Mail: travsup@expedia.com

For Guests: Phone: 800-936-4500; E-Mail: travel@expedia.com

**Orbitz**

For Hotels: E-Mail: tds.hotelops@cendant.com

For Guests: Phone: 1-866-656-4546 or 1-312-416-0018

**Which sites are included on the Network? Which sites are not included?**

New sites are constantly being added to the Global Booking Network, which currently includes about 6,000 consumer travel sites. In addition, your property type, location, and activities will determine the Network travel sites where you will be distributed. For example, if you are a lodge in a ski destination, then your property may be listed on Snow.com. Samples of some of the more popular Network sites include:

Internet Guides & Web Portals

Yahoo!  
AOL  
Overture (formerly GoTo)  
Lycos  
Looksmart  
Verizon SuperPages

Activity Web Sites

American Skiing Company  
Big Sky Resort  
GORP  
Heavenly Mountain Resort Guide  
The Mountain Zone  
Resort Sports Network  
Snow.com  
Ski Aspen  
Ski Net  
Telluride  
Vail Resorts

Travel Specific Web Sites

AmazingPlaces.com  
BedandBreakfast.com  
Best Lodging  
CheapTickets.com  
Choice Travel  
Delta Airlines

Non U.S.-Based Web Sites

Zuji  
virgin.net  
Opodo  
LineOne  
e-vita.com  
British Tourist Authority  
ASE.net

Digital Travel  
Expedia  
Independent Traveler  
Internet Travel Network  
Jewels of Britain  
Lodging.com  
National Lodging Directory  
PlacesToStay.com  
Rand McNally  
AmazingPlaces.com  
Real Metros  
SABRE (for Travel Agents)  
TravelGuys  
TravelNow  
TravelPrice  
Travelocity  
USLodging

WebTour.fr  
webguide.be  
AOL UK  
FreeServe  
LastMinute.com  
Hotels.de

#### Destination Marketing Web Sites

Over 100 Convention and Visitors Bureaus  
Over 40 State Hotel & Lodging  
Associations  
Over 30 State Tourism Authorities

Some travel sites selectively distribute inventory. For example, AOL uses the Global Booking Network only for Lodges and B&Bs.

#### **How much does it cost to participate?**

BookingCenter offers a simple commission-sharing plan for properties that participate in the Global Booking Network. Our success depends on your success. When BookingCenter accepts an on-line booking (based upon availability and rates you manage), a commission is applied to the total booking. The amount is dependent on where the booking originated from and is paid to BookingCenter AFTER the guest has paid you, the property. BookingCenter can work with each property to increase your rates by channel so your margins are not hurt by commissions.

#### Commission & Subscription Plans:

1. Bookings made from BookingCenter or through your website incur a small commission or a monthly service fee. Contact BookingCenter (+1-707-874-3922 or [sales@BookingCenter.com](mailto:sales@BookingCenter.com)) for a quote.
2. Bookings made through the Global Booking Network or the Global Distribution System (GDS) (i.e. travel agent) incur either a commission, or a small transaction fee and a commission, depending upon where the reservation originates. Properties may also choose to pay a higher commission to increase their positioning in the results of on-line searches at travel portals.

Note: As stated above, GDS Distribution, which includes Pegasus, requires a one-time

activation fee of \$250.

### **What are the requirements to participate?**

1. You must be a BookingCenter customer by purchasing or registering your BookingCenter product (either Desktop Pro, Desktop Lite with Network Add-on, MyPMS, or the Management Tool).
2. Download, complete, and remit to BookingCenter the Property Account Form from our Support area.
3. If desired, have BookingCenter customize and set-up your property 'profile.' This service may be purchased at our on-line Store or by contacting:  
[sales@BookingCenter.com](mailto:sales@BookingCenter.com)
4. If you set-up your own profile, be sure to refer to the Reference Manual and follow the On-line Checklist, both of which are included with your software as pdf files. These documents are also available for download from the Support area of our website.
5. Agree to the terms of service for selling bookings over the Global Booking Network by reviewing them at <http://www.bookingcenter.com/signup.html> (Just click on the 'Sign Up' button). Agreeing to the terms of service will now allow you to perform a full upload of your data to the Network.
6. Once fully set-up, publish your property information to the BookingCenter Global Booking Network to create your property's rooms, rates, policies, etc. Refer to the On-line Checklist to perform a full upload of your data.
7. Begin accepting on-line bookings and performing regular updates to download bookings and update your rate and availability!

### **How long does it take to appear on these travel websites?**

Once BookingCenter quality checks your data and submits you to our Global Network Partners for activation, it usually takes about one to four weeks for your property to be activated. At that point, it may take another three to five weeks for your property to filter through the entire Network. Your property will be listed on some GDS and Pegasus sites before others during this process.

### **Why is my property not appearing on all the GDS travel websites?**

There is not a good way to tell when (or if) a property is fully populated on all the GDS related travel websites. Each GDS-fed travel company pulls/extracts in a frequency that BookingCenter, nor our GDS partners, can track or find any consistent pattern. We have

tried to map it out, but with only limited success. (For example, Travelocity mentioned they try to update every Thursday, but sometimes they do not.)

Typically, throughout implementation, BookingCenter is at the mercy of these businesses, although we do have contacts at most major travel websites. As a result, we do not like to set expectations on something we will never be able to control. We cannot guarantee any specific times on a hotel go-live date with these un-regulated web merchants. Our GDS partners simply publish to the GDS and Pegasus and the travel sites grab whenever they do.

Our usual rule is if the property is not live on a major website within a maximum of six weeks after we sent the 'go-live announcement', then it is time to open an inquiry with the service in question. There are many more websites than the major players listed here: Hotels.com, Travelocity.com, Lodging.com, Cheaptickets.com, Expedia.com, Continental.com, Travelnow.com, Hotellocators.com, Travelhero.com, and Orbitz.com. However these are the largest in terms of bookings. Please keep in mind, it is difficult to determine if the hotel will actually qualify for one or more of these sites, as some cater to criteria such as hotel location, market segment, or even hotel type.

### **Why is my property not appearing on all the consumer travel web sites?**

The on-line travel business is a very dynamic and continually evolving. Currently, there are four chief criteria to gain visible placement and improve your exposure; however, nothing is ever guaranteed. The very complex 'algorithms' that determine your placement on the Network factor in the following:

1. Provide the best rates in your area. Travelers continue to shop by price and expect the Internet to provide comparable value. Competitive rates are the best determinant of success right now on the Internet.
2. Get as many bookings as possible. Many travel sites work according to the free market principle: the more bookings you have received, the better you must be. Therefore, the more bookings you receive, the better your placement will be on Network travel sites.
3. Work with a company like BookingCenter who pays their bills on time! A chief criterion for placement that is used by WorldRes, Expedia, and Travelocity is based upon the company's history of paying commissions on time, therefore giving priority to those who pay their bills.
4. Pay a higher commission. Properties that are willing to pay a 20% commission will gain higher exposure on the Global Booking Network than comparative properties paying a lesser commission.
5. Other factors include estimate sales potential, traveler review ratings, promotional offers, and customer service history.

There is no guarantee for placement for any independent property on the largest consumer travel sites. Properties new to the Network must *inch their way up to the top*. If the property pays a higher commission rate and has competitive prices and policies, then it will get bookings and move up faster in placement and exposure.

In some cases, a property's listing will never be activated, or deactivated, per a travel website's Revenue Management department. This more often than not, takes place in larger markets (i.e. New York, Rome) because of market saturation. In this case, participation in a Merchant partners or NetRate program is the only option that allows property's to be active.

### **My property is not appearing on a travel website and I am not sure if the site I am researching is considered a 'consumer', 'Pegasus', or 'GDS' as described above?**

There is no way to definitively know each travel website on earth and where they get their information from. If you e-mail [gds\\_support@BookingCenter.com](mailto:gds_support@BookingCenter.com) with a specific site that you are concerned with, perhaps we can offer specific feedback. But the best option is to ask a site that you desire being listed with if they pull their information (rates, availability, images, policies, etc) from any of the major systems such as the Sabre, Galileo, Amadeus, or WorldSpan GDS systems, or the Pegasus or WorldRes consumer networks. If they do pull from one of these systems, then do not worry, you are listed through BookingCenter. You may want to request of them to rank your site higher, as each site may have their own specific policy for ranking placement.

If the site you desire being listed on does not pull from any of the major travel systems, then ask them if they pull from an outside system and get them to tell you which systems those are. It is possible BookingCenter does - or will - publish into that system. If they do not pull their information from an outside source, then it is up to you to decide if you want to work with the particular website.

### **Why is my property's image not showing on Orbitz.com or Expedia.com?**

Exterior images/pictures of the property only show on Orbitz and Expedia for those properties participating in the Orbitz Saver Program or the equivalent Expedia NetRate Program. The Orbitz Saver Program is the Orbitz 'NetRate' Program.

### **Why is my property's marketing information not showing correctly on the Global Booking Network?**

The Global Booking Network obtains your property's profile (marketing information, policy information, images, etc) directly from the information contained within the BookingCenter software. If there is an error on one of the Global Booking Network sites,

please check that the property information contained in the BookingCenter software is correct. If all is correct and the travel website is incorrect, please e-mail BookingCenter directly and we will work to have this corrected ASAP.

**What am I supposed to do when I update my property's information (rooms, rates, policy, marketing information, images, etc)?**

The Global Booking Network has a direct link to BookingCenter with respect to your rates and availability calendar. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all of your policy and marketing information. If your marketing and policy information needs to be changed or updated within the Global Booking Network, it must be manually changed by our GDS partners. When you change any marketing information about your property (such as Amenities, Activities, Policies, Rooms, and Room Types) in the BookingCenter system, please contact us by sending e-mail to: [GDS\\_support@bookingcenter.com](mailto:GDS_support@bookingcenter.com). We will then ensure that the information is correctly updated with our Distribution partners.

**How long does it take for the Global Booking Network to update my new information (such as location description, policy message, room types, and images)?**

Once our Distribution partners have updated your new information, it can take anywhere from 24 hours to three weeks to update. The problem here is that each travel website decides when it "uploads" this information to their system. Sometimes it takes a few days, sometimes a few weeks. Unfortunately, BookingCenter, our clients, and the Global Booking Network are at the whim of the various travel websites on their upload schedule.

**As a vacation rental property, is the Global Booking Network for me?**

Regardless of the size of your property, participation in the Global Booking Network can only be beneficial. How can it not be when your property can be seen and booked by thousands of consumer sites and hundreds of thousands of travel agents?

As a vacation rental, there are two suggestions that we have for participation:

1. As stated above, many Travel Agents and travel websites provide very limited guest information at the time of a booking. As a result, it is imperative to get 'active responses' from these travel websites so you are able to contact the guest. In this case, we recommend calling and/or e-mailing the travel website and stating that "you need guest information so they you can arrange where they can pick up their room key. Delivery of a room key must be arranged prior to guest arrival."

2. Many vacation rentals have multiple BookingCenter Site IDs. If this is the case, each Site ID needs a unique/individual phone number. For example two Site IDs cannot share one number. This is a rule from Pegasus and not of BookingCenter. It has to do with multiple properties using one central reservation number, which is not permitted. In order to keep costs low, we recommend getting an eFax phone number or some other type of phone number service to ensure your participation.

### **How far in advance can consumers book my property on the Global Booking Network?**

The Global Booking Network allows reservations to take place one-year in advance. As a result, BookingCenter recommends you create seasons and rates at least 14 to 16 months in advance. We understand that in most cases, it is very difficult to know what your rates will be even six months in advance. If this is the case, just make sure your seasons and rates are updated with high rates. If your property is then booked, it would have been booked at a higher rate.

### **How can BookingCenter help you get better placement?**

1. The first step is to sign up for distribution at the 20% commission level which gives you enhanced placement in the Global Booking Network. Although paying higher commissions alone will not guarantee high placement on a Partner site (i.e. Travelocity, PlacesToStay, AOL Travel, etc), by raising your commission to 20%, we can guarantee that you are in the highest commission bracket that will have a positive effect on your placement.
2. Next, analyze the rates that are being offered to customers for comparative properties in your area and meet or exceed them. BookingCenter offers the Marketing Services Organization (MSO) which tracks your on-line and offline ADR (average daily rate) and can help meet the objectives you set.
3. Aggressively price your rooms to begin receiving increased bookings. This is similar to paying your way to the top of Google through keyword buys and link exchanges. The more 'relevant' you are, the better your positioning will be on the major travel sites. Earning placement is the hard part, but once your bookings build up, it will improve your placement and should allow you to slowly raise rates while maintaining relevancy to the Network algorithms used by each Partner site. The BookingCenter MSO allows you to quantify the 'look to book' ratio for your on-line bookings to see where conversion of inquiries drops off in relation to your rate hikes.
4. Last, create packages and run discounts to drive more bookings to your property through the Global Booking Network. To have your discounted rates appear on travel sites that are part of the Discount Channel, you must have the lowest guaranteed rate available for those rooms on those dates. In addition, the

discounts must run for a minimum of one month and have a minimum of 3 rooms offered a night on at least 80% of the nights during the discount period. Discount bookings incur an additional 5% commission on top of your standard BookingCenter Network commission.

5. Participate in NetRate programs. NetRate programs are agreements between a particular travel website (i.e. Orbitz, Expedia) and a property. Often times, these travel websites require deep discounts on your rack rates, but will provide preferred placement and access to additional information on your property. Almost all the major travel websites have NetRate programs. BookingCenter does allow you to manage this program through our software. For more information on this program, please see the following URL: [http://www.bookingcenter.com/products/net\\_rate.html](http://www.bookingcenter.com/products/net_rate.html)
6. Participate in various rate plan strategies. For more information, please see below under 'What other Rate Plan Strategies can you employ to increase your on-line bookings?'
7. Ensure that you displaying current and high quality photos. Please note that all images must follow the below specs: 480 x 480 max and 300 x 300 min at 72 dpi. Therefore, no one side can be smaller than 300 pixels or bigger than 480 pixels. If you have images bigger than this, that is fine. Please send images to BookingCenter and we can always re-size.
8. Make sure that your Property Activities, Property Amenities, and Room Type Amenities are complete, accurate, and thorough. Keeping this data accurate and comprehensive will improve your exposure.
9. Ensure your property, location, and marketing information descriptions are comprehensive and detailed.

There will probably never be a 'magic bullet' to win on the Internet again. Too many sophisticated business systems and business people have joined the game. However, by observing what works and what does not and responding to the knowledge you have through empirical systems such as BookingCenter, you can stay ahead of the curve of change. This is what drives BookingCenter to perfect tools and processes and why our Marketing Services Organization is for every serious hospitality customer. More information on the MSO and the various programs can be found on our website.

### **How can my property participate in a NetRate or Merchant Model program?**

As explained above, NetRate or Merchant Model programs are agreements between a particular travel website and a property. BookingCenter does allow you to manage this program through our software. The six major NetRate programs are from the following

travel sites:

- Orbitz
- Travelocity
- Priceline
- Hotwire
- Lodging.com

Some other participating NetRate sites include:

- Site59
- Travelweb
- TravelHero
- TravelToday
- HotelLocators
- JumpStart
- Galileo Web

Please contact BookingCenter via e-mail at [gds\\_support@bookingcenter.com](mailto:gds_support@bookingcenter.com) for the necessary forms for Orbitz, Travelocity, and Priceline. Unfortunately, if you wish to participate in NetRate through Expedia, you have to work directly through the Expedia Exrtanet. Expedia does not allow property's to manage their rates and inventory through the GDS.

Orbitz does not require a contract and a property can simply load these rates into BookingCenter under the new Agent ID of 'LDC'. Please work with BookingCenter Support to complete this process.

If you wish to participate in any of the above NetRate programs (besides Orbitz), please follow the steps below:

1. Be willing to offer a rate that is 20-25% less than your rack rate
2. Complete and send the 'Property Participation Form' to each respective travel website
  - a. For Priceline, contact BookingCenter for the regional account manager's contact information.
  - b. For Orbitz and Travelocity, at the time you submit the contract, the regional account manager would contact you.
3. Submit to BookingCenter new Agent & Rate ID\*
4. Merchant Model travel website will then send out confirmation (upon receipt of the agreement and verification that the correct rate/agent ID has been loaded) the hotel is enabled.
5. This process takes place every week; however delay can incur due to mapping or star requirements.
6. BookingCenter and Hotel will be informed by travel website

\* Please contact BookingCenter Support to determine the correct Agent & Rate IDs.

## **What other Rate Plan Strategies can you employ to increase your on-line bookings?**

There are essential four major rate strategies that can be employed for participation on the GDS and Pegasus channels. These include:

1. Rack and Promotion only
2. Rack and Promo with AAA, AARP, Government, Military, and Corporate
3. Rack with rates above as well at Net Rate
4. All the rates listed above as well as negotiated and consortia rates

Please find a summary for each below:

### Rack and Promotion only

All BookingCenter properties on the GDS and Pegasus channels have these two rate plans listed. In most cases the actual rate will be the same for both Rack and Promo. The reason BookingCenter will send two rate plans with the same rate is because certain sites will only list properties that listed a 'Promo' rate.

### Rack and Promo with AAA, AARP, Government, Military, and Corporate

BookingCenter allows your property to sell discounted rates to specific markets. The five major discount rate plans include AAA, AARP, Government, Military, and Corporate. It is often required that properties offer a 10% discount for these rate plans. Please with the BookingCenter Support Department to ensure these are set-up properly.

### Rack with rates above as well at Net Rate

As outlined above, participation in the NetRate program will guarantee preferred placement of your property on some of the major Internet Travel websites. Not only will you get preferred placement, but your property will also be positioned with additional information, included exterior and room type images.

### All the rates listed above as well as negotiated and consortia rates

The travel industry is full of corporations and travel agencies who only book at properties that provide direct, negotiated rates. An example of a negotiated rate would be an IBM rate. This means that IBM employees (or an IBM related Travel Agent) can book directly at a property that participated in an IBM negotiated rate. BookingCenter allows you to create and manage Negotiated and Consortia Rates directly through the software.

## **What else can you do to increase your on-line bookings?**

BookingCenter works with marketing companies to improve Global Booking Network performance - some of these companies are listed at: <http://www.bookingcenter.com/about/partners.html>.

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