The Ultimate Guide
to Data Collection

Everything You Need to Know About Capturing Hotel Guest Data

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Introduction

If you're in the hospitality industry, you know how important it is to keep your guests happy. But how do you do that in a world where guests are constantly bombarded with marketing messages?
The answer is simple: by collecting and utilising guest data.

In this eBook, we'll explore why capturing guest data matters and how it can transform your marketing efforts. We'll also provide practical guidance on what data to collect, how to collect it, and the steps you can take to lead your business to healthy data management.

By the end of this guide, you'll have a deeper understanding of how to leverage data to create meaningful connections with your guests and set your hospitality business apart from the competition.

So, let's dive in and explore the power of guest data in hotel marketing.

Why Capturing Guest Data Matters?

Marketing takes time and creativity alone won't cut it. To effectively communicate your message, you must know your audience. In the world of hospitality, you should know your guests better than anyone else - they are individuals with unique needs and preferences. Meaningful and relevant marketing efforts are key to engaging them.

This is where data comes in.

By gathering information from your guests, you can gain valuable insights that will enhance your marketing knowledge and fuel your creativity. Properly utilised, data can be transformative, helping you achieve your business goals and shape your overall marketing strategy. In fact, data feeds the marketing exploration process, guiding your strategy and directing your marketing efforts.

Moving beyond traditional demographics: a modern approach to understanding your guests

Understanding your guests is the key to providing them with a memorable experience. Collecting and analysing guest data is essential in gaining a comprehensive understanding of your guests wants and needs, which enables you to make informed decisions.

We found that relying solely on traditional demographics like age and location is no longer enough in today's fast-paced digital world. Instead, it's crucial to delve deeper into guest behaviour and preferences. By looking at your guests' booking habits, preferred room types, food and beverage choices, and other behavioural data points, you can tailor your offerings to meet their specific desires and enhance their overall experience. This targeted approach allows you to provide personalised experiences that resonate with guests on a deeper level.

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Data: the backbone of automated marketing

Using the right tools to activate your data is crucial. By collecting and analysing guest data through a powerful Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, you can create personalised and automated marketing campaigns that improve the guest experience and drive revenue.

With a CRM, you can trigger automated marketing communications that are tailored to each guest's preferences and behaviours, making it easier to create a more personalised experience. For example, you can use guest data stored in your CRM to automatically send targeted promotions to guests who have previously booked spa services or who have a history of booking a certain room type. By leveraging a CRM in this way, you can create more meaningful connections with your guests and ultimately drive revenue for your hospitality business.

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A Guide to collecting Guest Data

There are several essential data points that you should collect to build a full view of your guest profile.

Guest information

Collecting guest information is essential for providing effective marketing and business operations.

This includes:

- **Name**
- **Email address**
- **Phone number**

You can also take it one step further and start collecting data that will help you personalise the guest experience whether its on-property for your staff to use, or for you communication strategy.

Here are some ideas:

- **Reason for the stay**: honeymoon, anniversary etc. (to remind them next year, to come celebrate that occasion at your hotel)
- **Birthday date** (to treat your guests on their special day)
- **Postcode** (for geographically localised campaign).

Booking data

Most hotels would use a booking engine to collect this type of data. This system integrated with For-Sight's CRM allows to you to report on booking patterns. The most common insights processed are:

- **Date and time of the reservation**
- **Room types**
- **Length of the stay**
- **Any additional services or amenities** guests have requested.

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Guest preferences

Ask your guests about their preferences and use this information to add unique touches to their experience. Of course, this must be aligned with what you can offer your guests, this could be:

- their **preferred room types**
- river or mountain **view**
- breakfast **dietary requirement**
- **pillows**
- **room temperature**.

Your guests volunteered to share these insights about themselves, get creative, use this knowledge to really exceed their expectations.

Guests' feedback and reviews

Collecting feedback and reviews from your guests is crucial in understanding their experience and identifying areas of improvements.

Additionally with reviews, you can build a positive reputation, enhance your online presence and influence potential guests' booking decisions. Reputation management systems will support you in gathering feedback from your guests and actively managing your online reputation.

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Explicit marketing consent

Guests' marketing preferences are also essential data points to collect. By obtaining their opt-in, you can send targeted marketing messages to guests based on their interests, increasing the likelihood that they will engage with your brand.

It is crucial to bear in mind that spam compliance regulations vary by country before hitting the send button on an email. The legislation applies to the country in which the email is delivered, not the country from which it is sent.

Here is a breakdown of some email laws that you should be aware of when sending emails to guests within those regions:

- United States: CAN-SPAM Act
- Europe: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- California, USA: California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)

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Best Practices for Hotel Data Collection

Train Your Staff and Watch Your Business Thrive

1.Empowering your team with the importance of clean data

To ensure that your team is motivated to collect quality data, it's essential to educate them on the importance of clean data. Clean data refers to data that is accurate, complete, consistent, and free of errors. Explain what it means for your business and how it can improve operations.
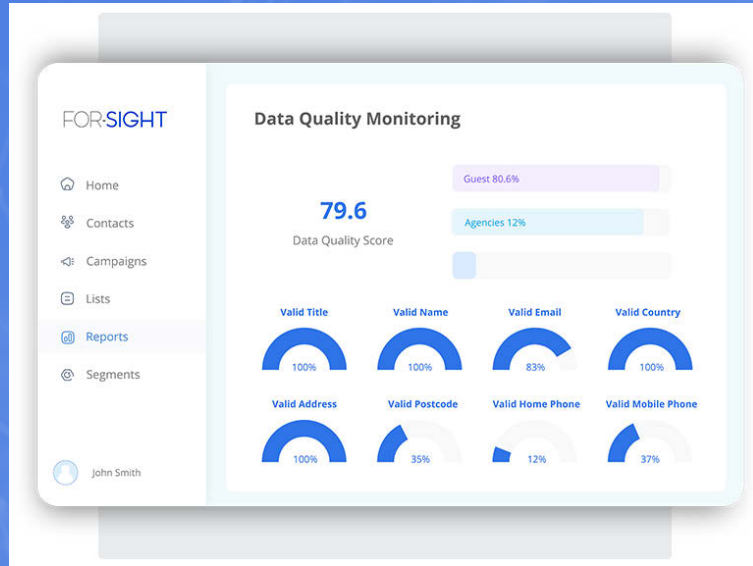
2.Creating incentive programs

Incentive programs are a great way to encourage your team to collect quality data. One way is to offer bonuses or rewards to employees who collect the most data with the highest data quality. This can be done on a monthly or quarterly basis. Offering rewards can not only motivate your team but also help build a culture of data ownership and engagement.

3.Tracking the Success of your incentive programs

To ensure that your incentive programs are effective, it's essential to track their success. Tracking can be done by monitoring the amount and quality of data collected and comparing it to previous periods. Regularly review your incentive programs to determine if they are motivating your team to collect high-quality data. Adjust the programs as necessary to ensure the best results.

With For-Sight's Reporting Suite you can monitor the health of your database over time. The Reports help you track the improvement of your valid data rate (name, email, phone), your contact growth and conversion over time as well as the marketing preferences of your guests.

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Build a strong guest database with email marketing

Email marketing isn't just a way to send communications- it's also a powerful tool for gathering valuable guest data. By tracking metrics like click-through rates and revenue, you can learn about your guests' preferences and tailor the marketing strategy accordingly.

Email marketing also allows you to ask guests directly for their preferences. For-Sight simplifies this process by automating your email communication with guests. You can target specific guests with emails and send them at the optimal time. Plus, you can track your campaigns' performance and tweak them as needed.

By analysing how guests interact with your emails, you can improve your campaigns and create more effective marketing. This, in turn, will help you build a better guest database.

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From OTAs to direct bookings: how to deal with OTA email addresses

While it's undeniable that Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), such as Booking.com or Expedia, play a significant role in generating hotel bookings, many of them charge high commission rates. Consequently, it's essential for hotels not to rely too heavily on OTAs and instead concentrate on increasing their direct bookings. By doing so, you can maintain greater control over the revenue streams and reduce dependency on costly OTA commissions.

It's time to cut out the middleman and embrace direct bookings.

Here's why OTA email addresses are a problem

When a guest books a hotel room through OTAs the email addresses provided by these channels are temporary unique email address created by them. It allows you to communicate with guests for a limited period, as the email address expires shortly after the stay.

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Here's how real email addresses can help

It's important to have a guest's real email address to stay connected with them after their stay. Having your guests' real email address can help you:
- encourage them to come back
- increase your direct revenue
- maximise your marketing efforts
- improve guest satisfaction

With real email addresses, you can send targeted email campaigns and turn one-time guests into loyal returning guests.

Here's a starting point to collect OTA guests' REAL data

To convert OTA email addresses into real ones, the first step is to empower your front desk staff with the necessary tools to identify guests with OTA email addresses upon arrival. For-Sight's Front Desk Report is an invaluable resource that displays key information about upcoming guests, including whether they have a valid email address or not. This allows your staff to easily convert OTA emails to real ones during check-in.

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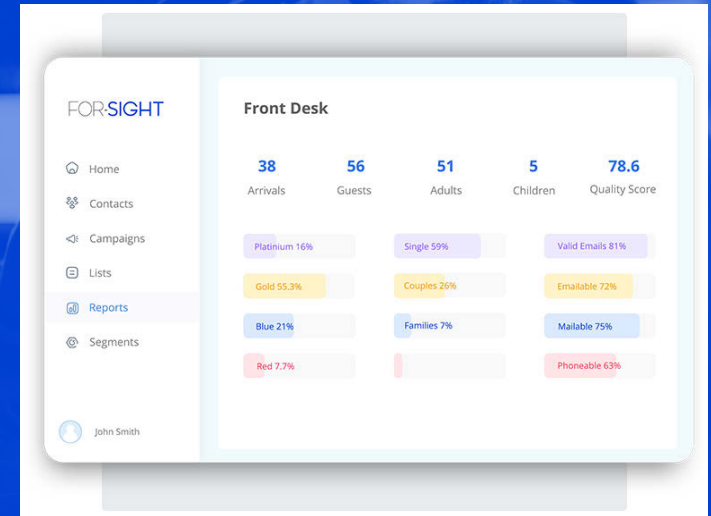
Here's how email marketing drives its own growth

Email marketing can help your business grow by getting more people to share their real email addresses with you. To do this, you can create an automated email marketing workflow that is sent to guests who book with OTAs. You should make sure that the email copy is suitable and provides value to guests so they see the benefit of sharing their email addresses.

For-Sight can detect OTA email addresses and you can use the Marketing Suite to set up an automated workflow that only sends email marketing to these guests.

When you ask guests for their data, be clear about the benefits of signing up for your marketing. Explain how often you send newsletters, what type of deals they will receive, or what values your business stands for. This will help you build trust with guests and encourage them to share their data with you.

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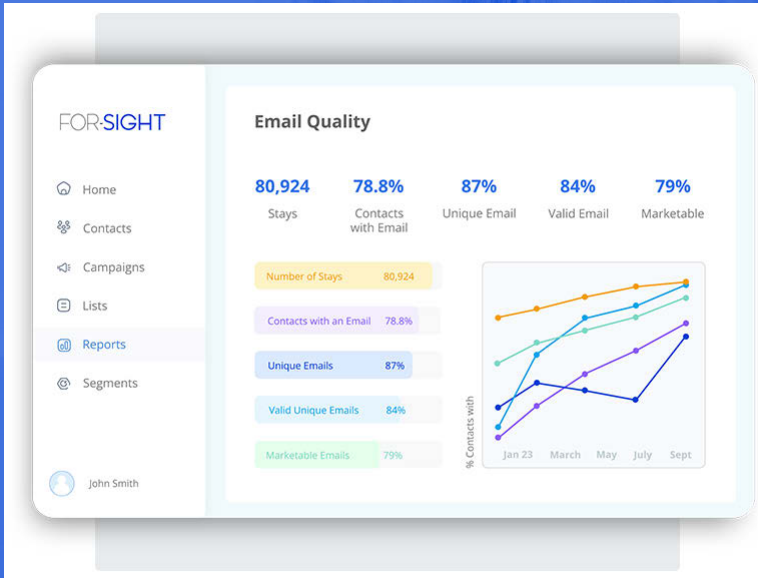
Technology: Making Data Capture Possible (and scalable)

Imagine minimum manual data entry work, more time to focus on what really matters, and accurate data that helps you get to know your guests like never before! With this the right technology in place, you can access accurate, up-to-date information that improves guest communication and fuels data-driven decisions.

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Automating data collection for business growth

Managing vast amounts of data, from guest profiles to booking and reservation data, can be overwhelming for hotels. For-Sight's CRM system is tailored specifically for hospitality businesses, serving as a centralised hub for all guest information, including reservation and booking data, guest profiles, and other crucial details. Additionally, it makes it effortless to activate this data when automating communications.
How does a CRM technology make it all come together?

The effectiveness of CRM technology relies on integrating different systems.

The For-Sight CRM platform collects data from various sources in your hotel to consolidate all of your insights into one place. Systems it integrates with are your Property Management System (PMS), restaurant reservation system, Wi-Fi, booking engine, spa appointments, and more.

Discover For-Sight's integration partners here.

By connecting your systems, you can acquire a complete picture of your guests, enabling you to personalize their experiences. For-Sight's CRM also simplifies tracking customer behaviour and preferences, enhancing your services.

Data on its own is just data. Organised and clean data, however, can provide valuable insights into specific areas of your business and help you track your success over time. For-Sight's CRM generates reports that can aid you in monitoring guest behaviour, loyalty, and revenue.

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Let's Bring It All Together

Guest data is a powerful tool that can help you deliver personalised experiences and drive revenue in the competitive hospitality industry. By collecting and analysing data on your guests' preferences and behaviours, you can gain valuable insights into what they want and need from your business.

With this knowledge, you can create targeted marketing campaigns that speak to your guests, and ultimately, set your business apart from the competition. As the hospitality industry landscape continues to shift and guests' expectations change overtime, it's more important than ever to stay data-driven in your marketing approach.

So don't wait any longer, start harnessing the power of guest data today and see the impact it can have on your business.

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It's Time to Turn Your Data Into Bookings!

Book a demo

For-Sight provides hospitality professionals with its Hotel CRM & Marketing solutions, supporting them to deploy their marketing strategy at scale and generate revenue.

How does it work? For-Sight unites Hotel technology systems to turn siloed guest data from your Property Management System (PMS) and other transactional systems into a central source of truth for each guest and their journey.

For-Sight is the perfect tool if you're looking at:
- personalising the guest experience at every touchpoint
- automating your transactional communications (pre, on and post-stay)
- tracking the success of your campaigns
- accessing unique insights on your guests' behaviour and preferences
And more!

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