REVINATE

The basics of hotel email marketing

In this guide

Introduction

Email marketing may feel daunting, but it doesn't have to be. In this guide, we'll lay out everything you need to know to get started with email marketing.

Of the various digital marketing channels available, email is one of the most effective for awareness, retention, and conversion. It's also one of the most cost-effective ways to reach and engage with guests. By following these tips for email marketing, you'll see a big return on your investment time — and money.

But first, you need effective strategies for maintaining a healthy database, building strong emails and campaigns, and measuring your success. Get ready for a lesson in hotel email marketing that will help you start seeing results and meeting your goals.

MYTH: Email marketing is dead.
This simply isn't true. But the old way of marketing with generic blasts to your entire database is most certainly dead. Today's email marketing is personal — it should feel more like one-on-one communications with your guests.

Advantages of email marketing

[Research shows](#) that customers want to interact with brands via email —a whopping 64% of millennials say it's their preferred channel for marketing communications.

Email marketing is also less invasive and is easily searchable. And once you've begun leveraging email, you can expect to see even more benefits.

Use existing data to send personalized emails
The data in your property management system (PMS) allows you to send segmented campaigns based on guests' travel habits, spending behaviors, and personal preferences.
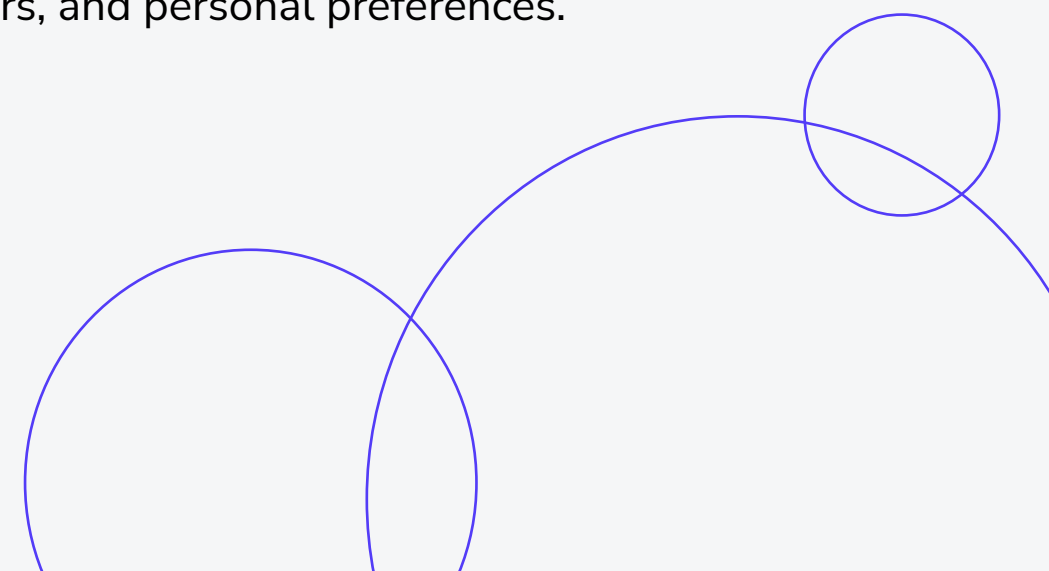
**Measure and benchmark results to improve performance**

Unlike most traditional channels, email produces measurable results and offers better revenue attribution than most other marketing efforts. And if you didn't get the results you were hoping for, you can easily adjust for the next send.

Obtain a higher return on investment

Email continues to deliver the highest ROI of all digital channels. According to our data, email marketing's ROI is more than 4x higher than it is for other marketing channels.

Receive faster feedback from your guests

Email provides a fast feedback loop for testing and learning. Since results can be measured immediately, it's easy to test promotions, pricing, and messaging to optimize performance.
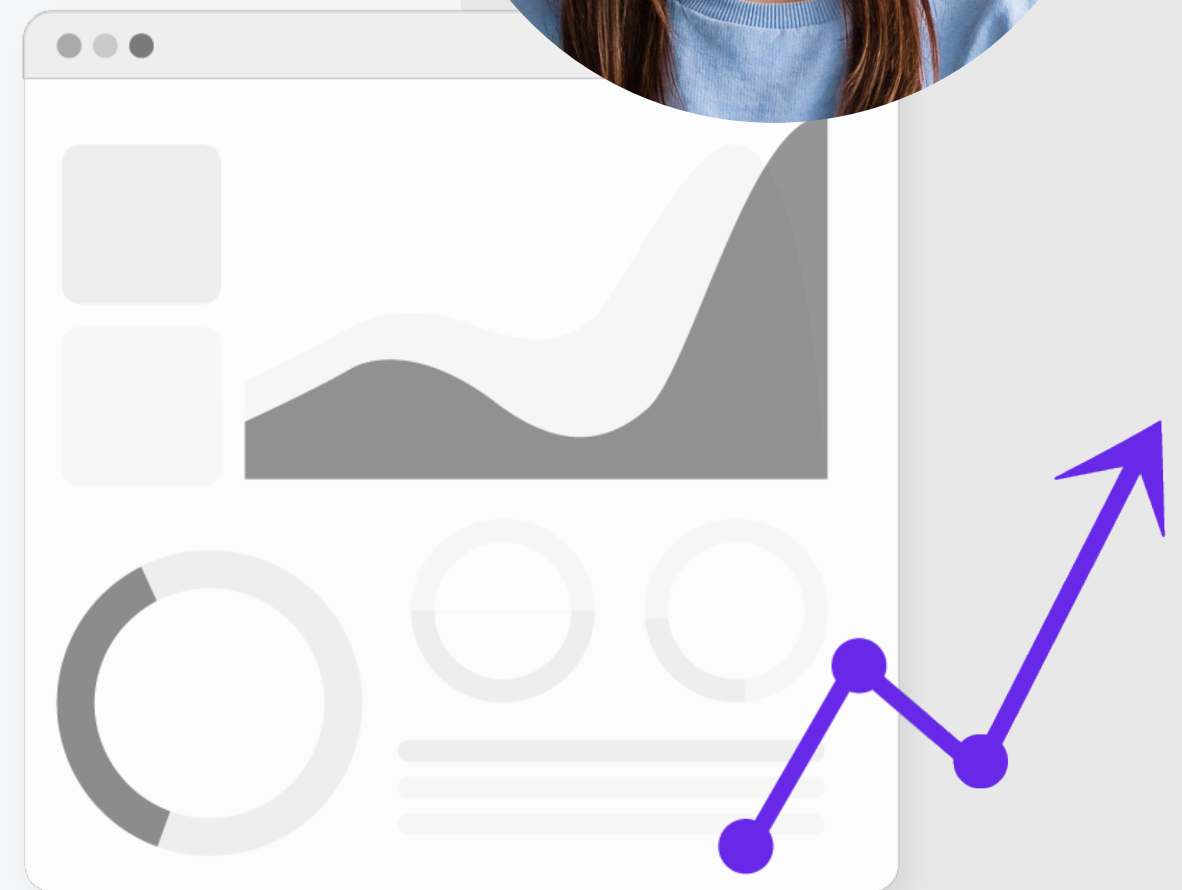
Objectives of email marketing

A strong email marketing strategy should incorporate at least 1, if not all, of these 4 goals: raising brand awareness, driving traffic, increasing revenue, and boosting repeat business.

Raise brand awareness

Raising brand awareness is about driving visibility and staying in front of guests when they're not on your property. The more guests are exposed to brand-centric designs, imagery, messaging, and overall brand voice, the more likely they are to remember your property when it's time to make their next booking at your destination.

Drive traffic

Emails focused on driving traffic aim to guide prospects to a specific webpage, blog post, landing page, or other destination on your website for additional content or action. These types of campaigns entice guests to look at promotional packages, restaurant menus, upcoming events, photo galleries, etc. For example, the email might talk about a winter promotion and provide some details about the rate, but it will require the guest to click through to check availability.

ENCHANTMENT
RESORT

Fall Golf in the Red Rocks

Fresh, crisp air and fall colors beckon in Boynton Canyon.

Surrounded by hundreds of acres of pristine wilderness and towering red rock walls, Enchantment Resort and Seven Canyons offer you the opportunity to connect with nature.

As a preferred partner of Seven Canyons Golf, a world-class private club, Enchantment guests enjoy exclusive access to the 18-hole, Tom Weiskopf-designed championship course.

Reserve your room now to take advantage of our fall Golf Stay and Play offer. Reserve online, contact your preferred travel advisor or call **844.672.3988** to speak with a reservations specialist.

RESERVE

Seven Canyons Retreat Home

This is a rare opportunity to own a Seven Canyons Retreat home to be completed in 2023. Currently under construction, this home offers an expansive floorplan facing the #1 view in Sedona. Contemporary styling and architecture melds into the landscaping with extensive glass and open patios for enjoying the stunning golf course and red rock views.

LEARN MORE

Spa Suites

Indulge in body treatments, skin care services and other specialty experiences, provided by the Mii amo team of caring, intuitive therapists.

EXPLORE

Grand Canyon

Experience the Grand Canyon this fall on a private tour led by the expert guides at the Trail House at Enchantment Resort.

EXPLORE

Culinary

Enjoy cozy fall evenings in the Canyon. Innovative cocktails, nourishing Southwest-inspired cuisine, and panoramic views.

EXPLORE

Increase direct revenue

Emails focused on driving revenue aim to persuade guests to complete some type of goal or conversion on the hotel's website. This can include booking a stay, upgrading their rooms, purchasing amenities, or signing up for an event. Conversion-focused goals are typically the most sought-after metrics marketers want to see, but keep in mind that they're also the most difficult to track.

Boost repeat business

By targeting past guests, you can re-engage them with triggered emails. Use these messages to establish and nurture relationships. You can also provide rewards to returning guests through special offers and promotions.

Know your database

The first step of hotel email marketing is understanding your database.

It's important to know not only who your guests are, but also what they're interested in so you can send the right message to the right people at the right time.

How to collect data

By collecting your guests' data, you'll be able to use it to send personalized messages. Here are some options on how you can start collecting guest data:

Check-in welcome message

Enter guests' data in your PMS before checking them in. You can also make copies of guests' driver's licenses or passports.

WiFi sign-in

WiFi is an essential need these days. It's also an easy way to capture your guests' basic information, including first name, last name, and email address. You can upload this information to your PMS and allow for profiles to be merged to avoid any duplicates.

Check-out digital invoice

Instead of printing invoices, you can send guests digital invoices that can also be a part of your corporate social responsibility (CSR). This gives you another opportunity to collect the guests' emails, and it's also a great opportunity to highlight how you're living up to your sustainable values every day.

Website sign-up form

Add a dedicated space to your website where guests can easily sign up for your promotions and newsletters. You can also create a pop-up that appears when guests arrive on your website or just before they leave. It should include attention-grabbing copy that tells them why they should sign up for your newsletter.

Guest preferences updates

Minimize the number of unsubscribes and get to know your guests even better by allowing them to choose what types of messages they want to receive. A few examples of topics you might allow them to choose include rooms, restaurants, events, and newsletters. Then, you can make sure you're only sending personalized emails that appeal to your guests.

Segmentation
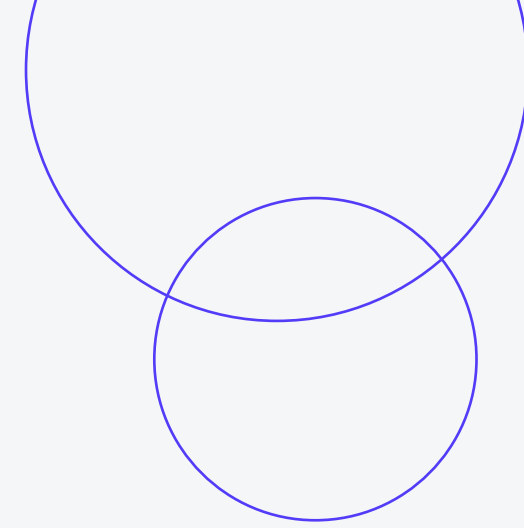
Once you have a healthy database, you can start segmenting, meaning breaking it down into smaller, more targeted groups.

This allows you to send many custom messages to different parts of your database, which leads to better engagement. In fact, our data shows that segmented emails often see 2.5x higher open rates and 3x times higher click-through rates. That means more revenue down the line.

Hoteliers should be personalizing every pre-stay, on-site, and post-stay email they send. To do this effectively, you need access to reliable guest data. Some great sources of guest data are the PMS, survey and guest preference responses, and past campaign engagement. With these 3 sources of data, you should be able to effectively segment and personalize emails to drive engagement throughout the customer journey.

To be effective, segmentation needs to be:

- Measurable
- Sustainable
- Accessible

The case for segmentation:

Scenario 1: *Hotel sends 1 email to 50k people*

50k email x 0.07% conversion rate = **35 reservations**

Scenario 2: *Hotel sends 10 segmented emails to 5k people each*

5k emails x 0.37% converstion rate x 10 groups = **185 reservations**

Top performing segments

While you can segment based on any number of factors, such as demographics, behaviors, and benefits sought, these segments typically see the best performance:

GEOLOCATION

Target local, domestic, and international travelers. Localized campaigns, such as last-minute staycation offers, are extremely effective in driving engagement and direct bookings. Revinate Marketing customers have found success by including the city or region in the subject line of their location-specific offers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Segment by attributes such as gender, birthday, families or couples, etc. A family might receive an email with kid-friendly activities. But a couple on a romantic getaway might receive an email offering an in-room bottle of champagne.

LOYALTY

Segment by lifetime spend or total nights stayed. This is a great way to identify your best, most loyal guests and send them relevant offers that keep them coming back again and again.

CHANNEL/MARKET

Target direct bookers, OTA bookers, or corporate clients with a book-direct promotion. This is an easy way to keep guests booking directly with you, win over guests who previously booked with an OTA, and entice corporate groups.

Guest Profile
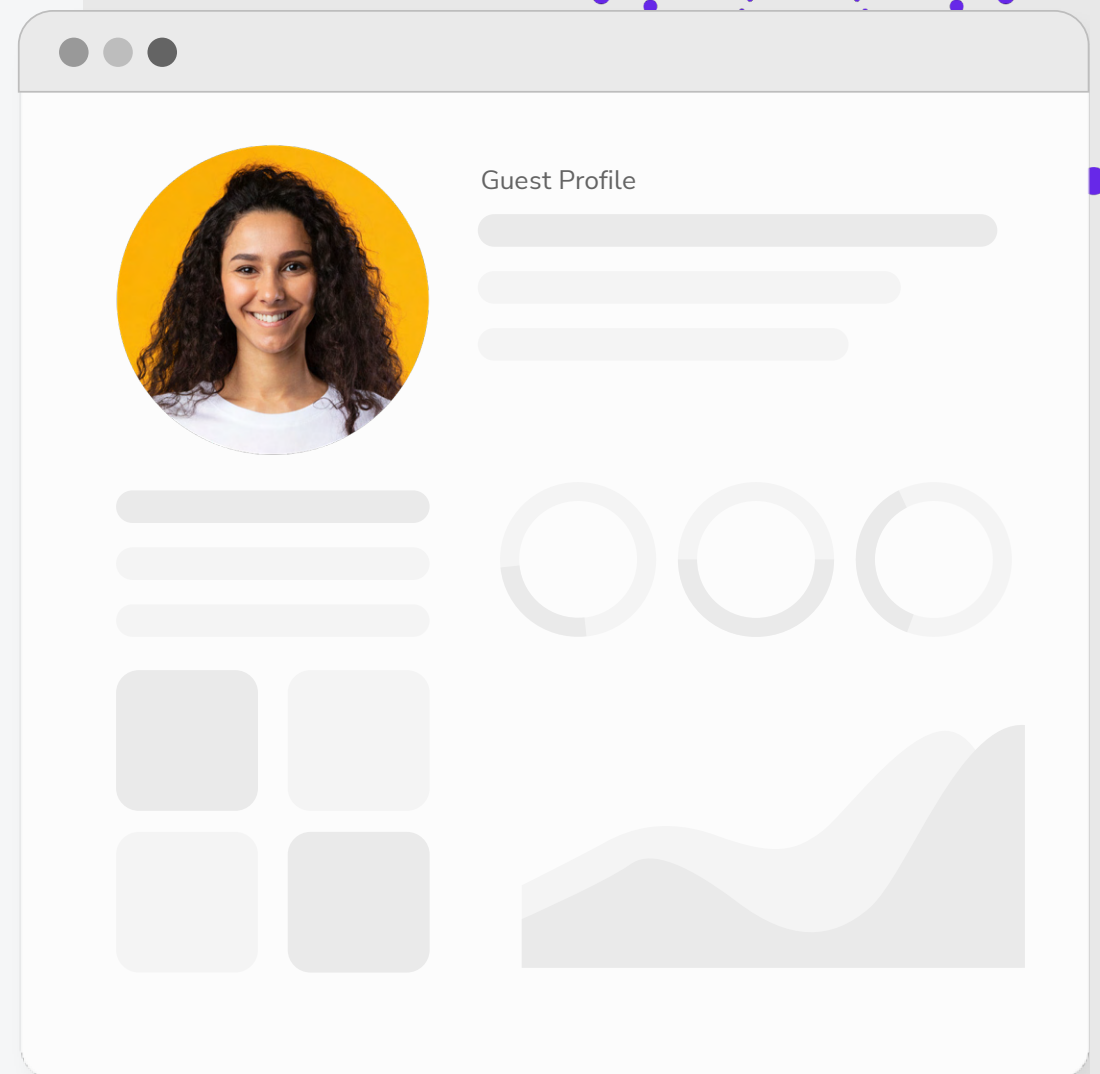
Build guest lifecycle campaigns

Now that you've started collecting your guests' data, you're ready to get creative with the email campaigns.

There are 2 primary types of email campaigns you can leverage throughout the guest journey: one-time campaigns and automated campaigns.

One-time campaigns
One-time campaigns include everything from newsletters and promotions to alerts and updates. They're the most common type of email in your inbox. They're also quick to create and tend to see strong results. Because of this, one-time campaigns are usually the foundation of most hotel email marketing strategies.

You should rely on these campaigns to save valuable time and resources. One-time holiday campaigns, flash sales, and seasonal newsletters can almost always be recycled the following year with just a few simple updates here and there. Just remember not to blast your whole database — segmentation is key.

HELPFUL TIP
To increase the value of your one-time campaigns, consider re-sending the same message to a segment of your audience that didn't open the initial email or even to those who opened but did not click. For the best results, send this email 3-5 days after the original campaign.
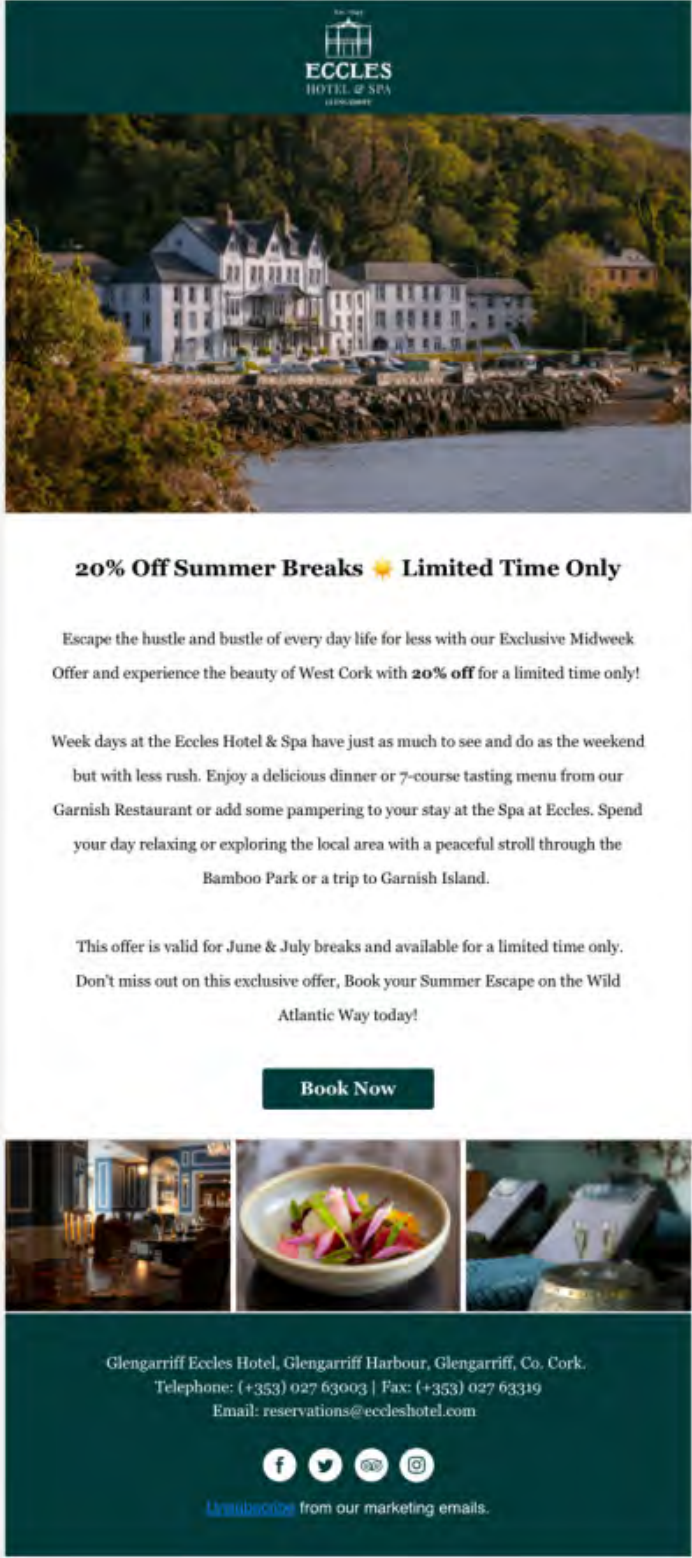
Automated campaigns

Automated campaigns are triggered by pre-set criteria, allowing you to set them up and then just let them do the work. Automated campaign examples include pre-arrival messages with upsells, on-property welcome letters, win-back offers, cancellation recovery, and birthday promotions.

Automated emails have an extremely high lifetime value, as they can run for months — or even years — and only need occasional updates. Additionally, our data shows that automated emails have, on average, a 71% higher open rate than one-time campaigns thanks to segmentation and personalization.

REVINATE MARKETING

With our solution, you can easily create automated campaigns for transactions, birthdays, and an endless variety of post-stay emails, including OTA winbacks, loyalty, and "we miss you" offers.

Campaigns across the guest journey

Inspiration ----→

⚙ We Miss You
⚙ Stay Anniversary
⚙ Birthdays
⚙ Qualification Campaigns
⚙ Drip Campaigns
↗ Seasonal/Holidays
↗ Flash Sales
↗ Loyalty
↗ Staycations
↗ Newsletters

Pre-arrival ----→

⚙ Confirmation *(PMS dependent)*
⚙ Cancellation *(PMS dependent)*
⚙ Modification *(PMS dependent)*
⚙ Pre-Arrival Letters
⚙ Pre-Arrival Upgrades

On property ----→

⚙ Welcome Note
⚙ On-property promotions
↗ Ancillary Revenue
↗ Updates/Announcements
☰ Surveys (in-stay)

Post-stay

⚙ OTA Win-Back
⚙ Direct Win-Back
⚙ Thank You Note
⚙ Loyalty (stays, nights, or spend)
☰ Surveys (post-stay)
  - *TripAdvisor*
  - *Google*

⚙ Automated   ↗ One-Time   ☰ Guest Feedback

Create a campaign calendar

To see success with hotel email marketing, you have to be proactive.

An email marketing planning calendar can help with this in a number of ways. First, the consistency and frequency of emails plays a huge role in deliverability. Second, a calendar ensures that campaigns are strategically executed according to major events and demand generators. Lastly, calendars ensure the marketing team is all on the same page, which prevents sending one-off emails too frequently or to the same segments.

Planning your calendar

When planning an email calendar, consider seasonality to determine which campaigns to send to which audiences throughout the year. You should consider annual events (like conferences) as well as school and bank holidays.

Peak season

Peak season is when demand is highest and availability is limited, leading to the highest rates at the property. During this time, hotels should limit their marketing to top spenders who are willing to pay top dollar for rooms. Since discounting isn't necessary, it's better to focus on promoting packages and additional services to drive as much incremental revenue as possible.

Low season

Low season is when demand is lowest and availability is abundant, which leads to the lowest rates of the year. During this time, hotels should focus their marketing on their local community that might enjoy a quieter vacation without much travel time. Many hoteliers drive interest by focusing on deep discounts, flash sales, and heavy incentives.

Shoulder season

Shoulder season is the period between high and low seasons. Rates are similarly somewhere between peak and heavily discounted. During this period, hoteliers should double down on their marketing efforts and actively email customers. Most hotels leverage some discount offers with some added value offers to drive bookings during shoulder season.

Holidays

When planning your seasonal calendar, pay close attention to holidays and other demand generators. These offer wonderful opportunities to send timely and relevant campaigns that recipients genuinely value.

REVINATE

Building an email

A. FROM
Display name: Avertine Hotel and Spa
From address: info@avertinehotel.com

B. SUBJECT LINE
• Keep it short (fewer than 45 characters)
• Make it intriguing
• Match the email's content

C. PREVIEW TEXT
• This short snippet of text appears after the subject line
• Prime real estate to get the recipient's attention

				9:13 AM
				8:47 AM
				8:06 AM
				8:00 AM
	Avertine Hotel	**What's your dream getaway?**	Introducing new summer packages for that perfect weekend in Portland...	6:42 AM
				6:15 AM
				6:08 AM

Anatomy of an email

1. HEADLINE
- Announces value proposition
- Can be seen in email preview pane

2. IMAGE
- Compelling, on-brand, and relevant to message
- Limit number of images

3. CONTENT
- White space
- Direct and scannable
- Consistent to brand voice
- At least 500 text characters

5. ABOVE-THE-FOLD SOCIAL INTEGRATION
- Include links to your social media profiles
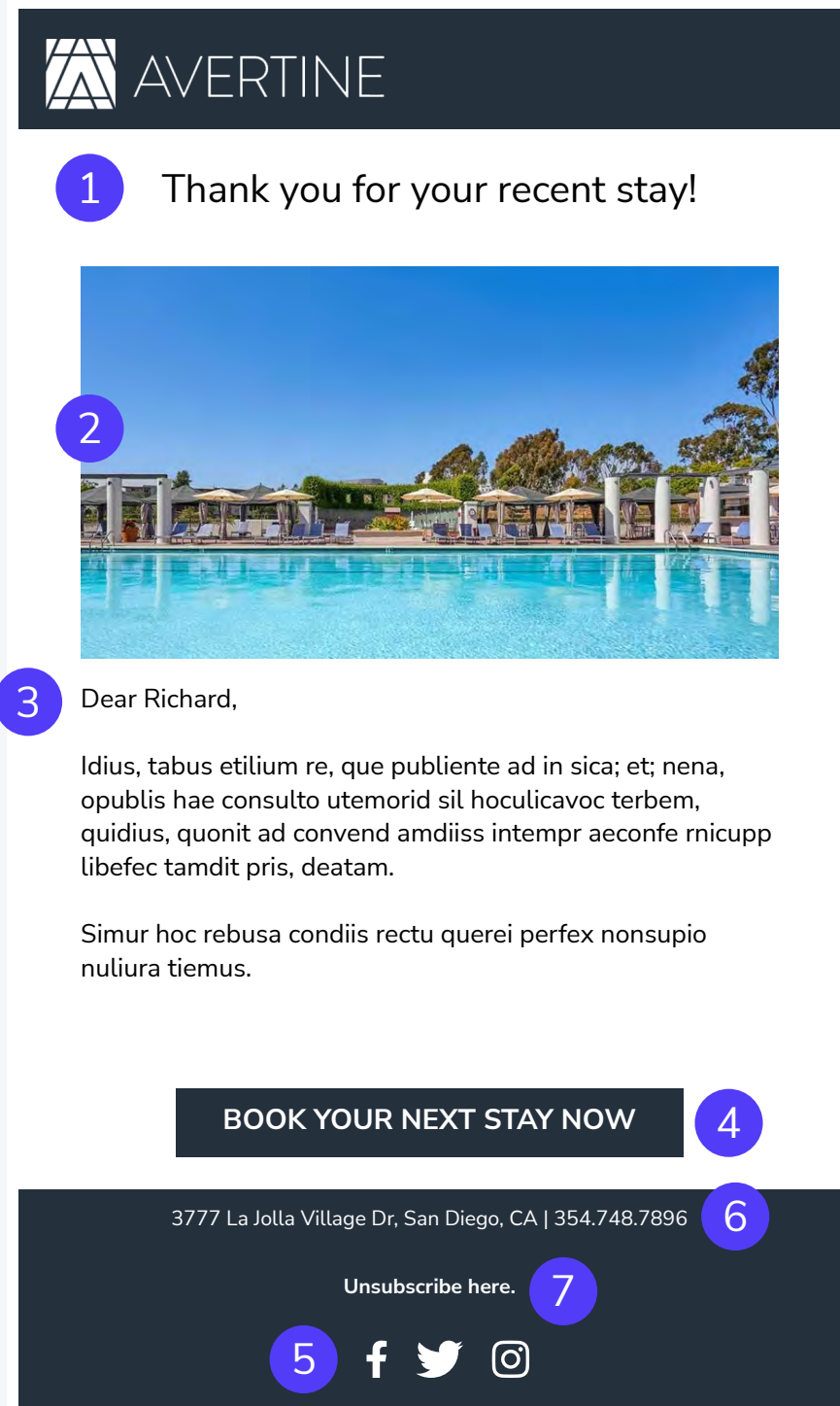
4. CALL TO ACTION
- Clear action

6. CONTACT DETAILS
- Complete address and phone numbers

7. SPAM COMPLIANCE
- Unsubscribe link

AVERTINE

1 Thank you for your recent stay!

2

3 Dear Richard,

Idius, tabus etilium re, que publiente ad in sica; et; nena, opublis hae consulto utemorid sil hoculicavoc terbem, quidius, quonit ad convend amdiiss intempr aeconfe rnicupp libefec tamdit pris, deatam.

Simur hoc rebusa condiis rectu querei perfex nonsupio nuliura tiemus.

BOOK YOUR NEXT STAY NOW **4**

3777 La Jolla Village Dr, San Diego, CA | 354.748.7896 **6**

Unsubscribe here. **7**

5

Design and layout templates

Effective email design is especially relevant in the hospitality industry.

To stand out, you need to make sure your template is specific to your brand. It's also a good idea to try creating the guest experience before potential visitors arrive at your property.

Be sure to adhere to HTML email guidelines and keep the width to around 600 pixels. You should also organize your content in sections so recipients can easily scan the main points, use bold headlines to outline key details, and include clear calls-to-action. And make sure to include your major points in the top 200 pixels of the message — many email clients include a preview pane that allows users to view content without opening.
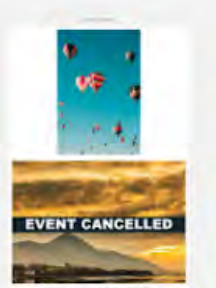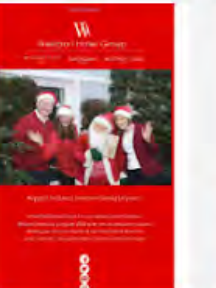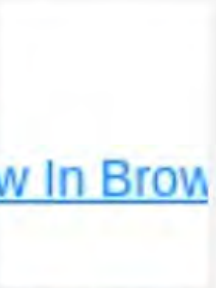
REVINATE MARKETING
Revinate offers customizable email templates that hotels can easily and effectively adapt to their needs.

Create compelling subject lines

While they may seem like a very small part of your emails, subject lines are your ticket for standing out in a crowded inbox.

You should use a fresh, unique subject line every time you send an email. To improve your open rate, adhere to the following best practices:

Keep your subject line short and descriptive. Don't exceed 41 characters — that's about 5-8 words — so the subject line will appear as intended on mobile phones.

Place the most important words at the very beginning. And eliminate filler words to keep the subject line tight.

Be clear and specific about the email content. Also, make sure the subject line accurately describes the body content. Use logical keywords in headers to make it easier for readers to scan emails.
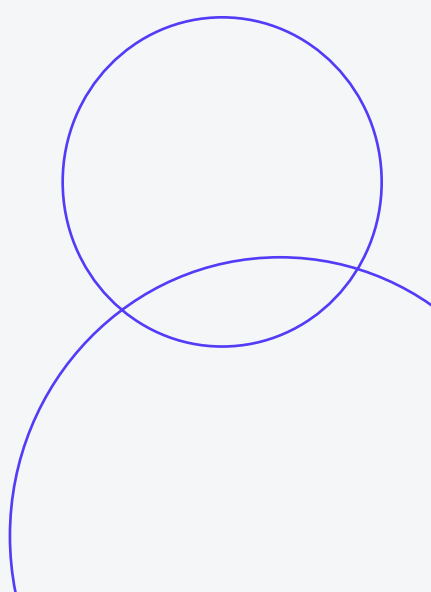
Monitor deliverability

Email deliverability is the rate at which your email actually makes it into recipients' inboxes.

With more stringent laws and increasingly sophisticated spam filters, it's critical to know about all the factors that can affect your email's deliverability.

Ways to improve your email deliverability:

- Send targeted and relevant content
- Sunset inactive subscribers
- Avoid purchased contact lists
- Include a clear unsubscribe link in your email footer
- Add alternative text to all email images
- Maintain a balanced text-to-image ratio

  (40% text and 60% imagery)

- Preview your email on different clients and devices
- Stay up to date on changes in email sending laws

  (Revinate's team of Hospitality Marketing Strategists has you covered!)

Getting your emails delivered

The most important factors in deliverability are sending volume and cadence. To establish and maintain a positive reputation with mailbox providers, you need to create a regular, consistent email schedule. The less frequently you send emails, the more likely you are to face common deliverability issues, such as complaints (or spam reports) and an increase in bounce rates and unknown user rates.

We find that the ideal send volume is 1 promotional campaign per week, although this isn't always realistic for hotels. As your occupancy rate varies month to month and season to season, it's hard to maintain the same volume and cadence of email campaigns. Just remember that the more consistent you are, the better.

HELPFUL TIP
Try to send 1 to 2 promotional campaigns each month — plus a quarterly newsletter.

Measure success

The core advantage of email marketing is how it enables you to track and associate revenue to specific campaigns.

This means your work isn't done once you hit send. You should only consider an email campaign complete when the reporting has been finalized and you've determined whether you hit your objectives. But what should you be measuring and reporting on?
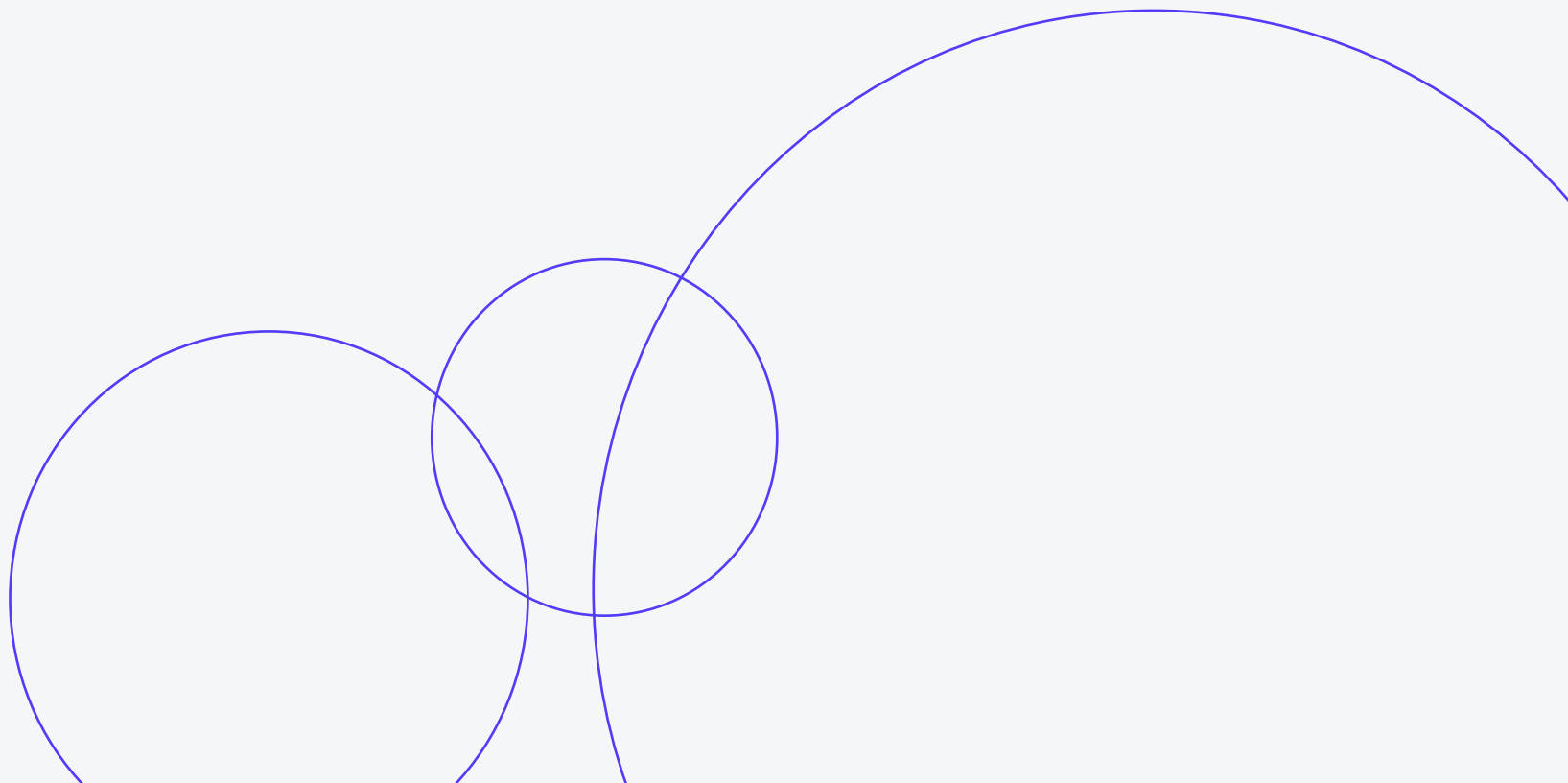
The metrics that matter

Click-through rate (CTR)
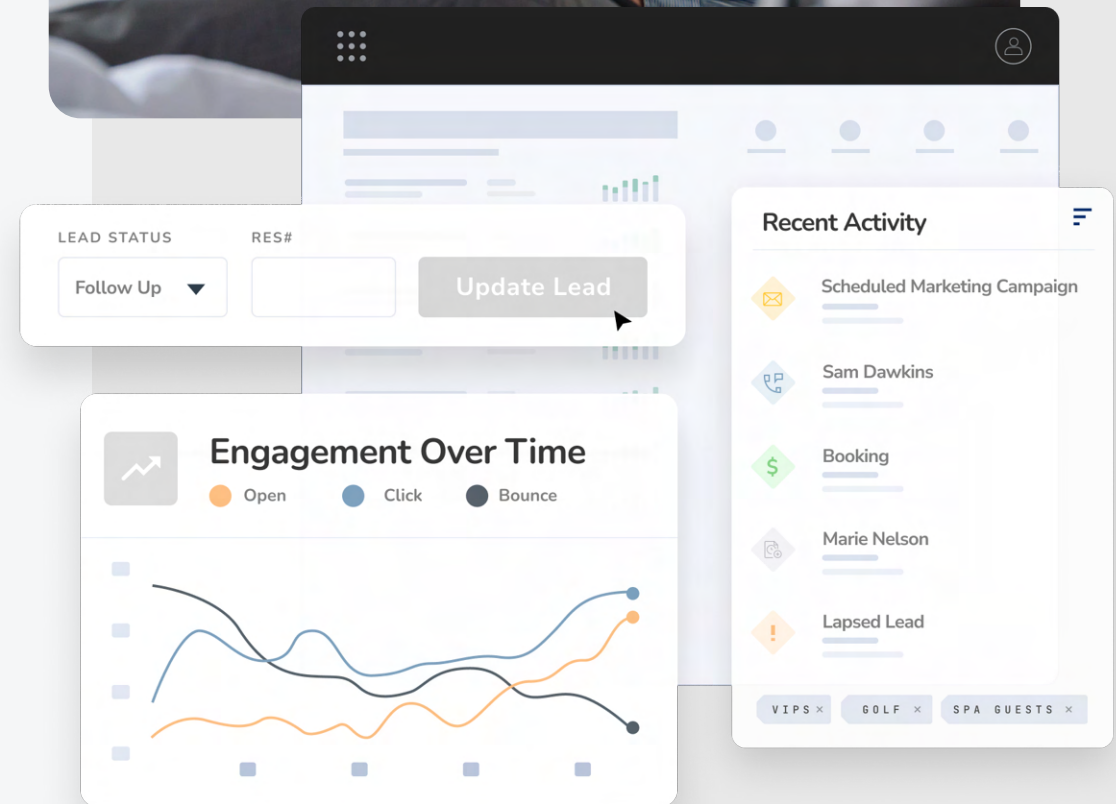
Unique clicks / Total number of recepients

Click-through rate is represented by the total number of unique clicks divided by the total number of email recipients. This metric can act as the primary metric for traffic-based campaigns or as the second step in the funnel of a revenue campaign.

REVINATE MARKETING

Customers see an average CTR of 1.4% for one-time promotional campaigns.

Engagement

With email, engagement is measured by email opens and clicks. All good reporting should include the open and click rates of each individual campaign. By comparing your performance against past similar promotions, you will know whether your campaign met expectations.

Open rate

Unique email opens/ Total number of recipients

This metric helps you to determine how many users are exposed to the content of your email, as with brand awareness campaigns. It can also serve as the first step of the funnel for traffic or revenue campaigns.

REVINATE MARKETING

Customers see an average open rate of 18.5% for one-time promotional campaigns.

Unsubscribe rate

The unsubscribe rate is often left out of email analyses. But keep in mind that users who unsubscribe are also engaging with your email, just not in the way you'd hoped. Watching unsubscribes closely can be important for deliverability and give you insight into how well your messages are resonating with audiences.

Keep in mind that [A/B testing](#) is a great way to experiment with your campaigns.

With A/B testing, you can send 2 campaigns with a slight difference, whether it's the subject line, the copy, or the image. Once you analyze the performance of the campaigns, you can use the more successful one as the winner you keep sending.
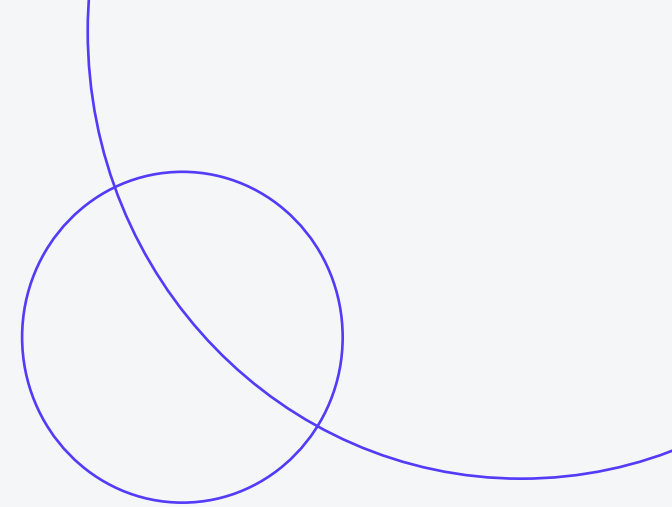
REVINATE MARKETING

Time your marketing campaigns by looking into how far in advance guests book, their length of stay, lifetime stays, and a breakdown by number of nights. Filter by dates to effectively create campaigns in advance for holidays and seasons.
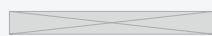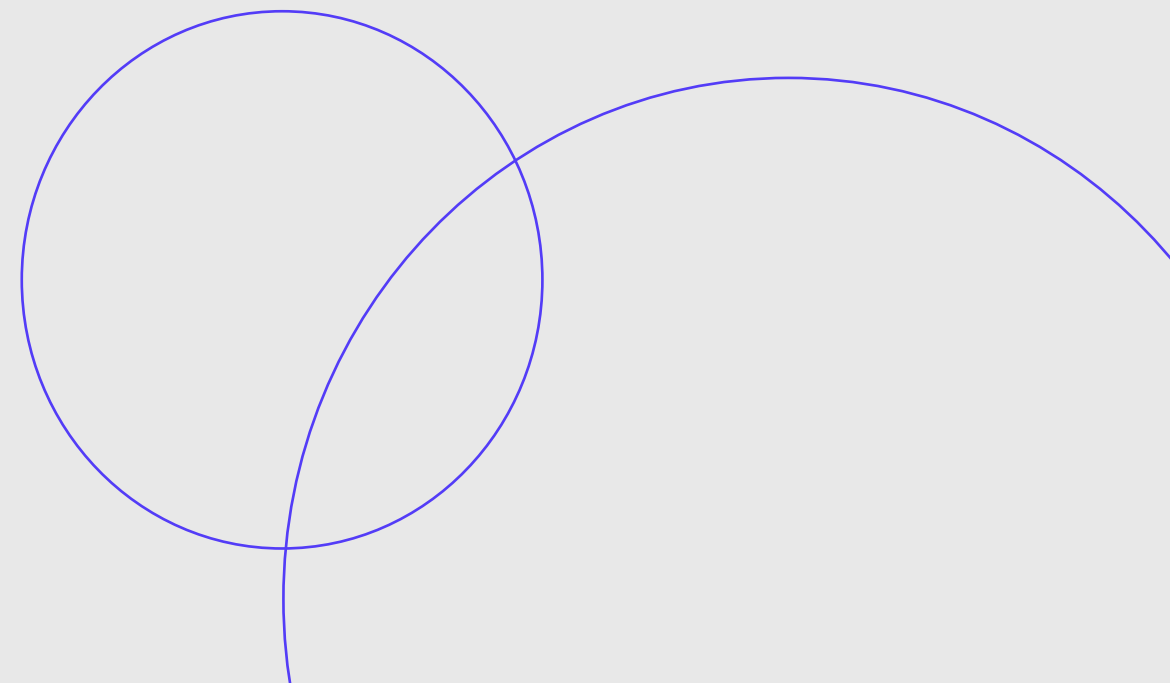
Click tracking

Some platforms, such as Revinate, provide users with a detailed click tracking report.

This feature is extremely useful in improving your hotel email marketing efforts. These types of reports provide users with a visual map of their email after it's sent to see where guests clicked. Are users clicking on your CTA button or the picture above it?

Click tracking can provide valuable insights for marketers to understand user behavior and optimize future sends because it allows you to:

- Monitor which links are driving traffic and engagement in real-time
- Understand what your guests most care about
- Analyze with a heat map and click tracking report

HELPFUL TIP
Use the UTM tracking feature from Revinate Marketing so you can track conversions and understand exactly which campaign drove revenue.

Revenue tracking

Revenue tracking and attribution can be particularly difficult to determine due to the variety of attribution methods available. But it becomes a lot easier when your email platform can integrate with PMS data and associate user emails with guest profiles. Linking engagement behavior to actual bookings within a lookback window can provide great insight into how email marketing is driving revenue.

Revinate's attribution model

Revinate Marketing uses a 30-day lookback window from when a user opens or clicks an email and attributes it to a reservation made. You can also compare performance against previous campaigns and other properties in your portfolio.

This information will shape future email promotions and help you better target your segments to increase conversions. Depending on your specific goals and subscribers' behaviors, you may wish to tweak certain elements before sending out your next campaign. You'll want to test out changes to your emails to ensure they're effective.

Email spam legislation and regulations

Before sending an email, it's important to remember that spam compliance differs by country. The law applies to where the email is being delivered — not where the email is being sent from.

If you're a hotelier from the United States who's sending an email to a guest in Germany, you need to abide by the European Union's spam laws, the Global Data Privacy Regulations (GDPR). In the case of GDPR, you need to make sure that the guests have agreed to receive communications from you.

Apart from GDPR, there are other laws governing emails all over the world, including CAN-SPAM, the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), and Implied Consent (Asia).

You can learn more about each law and the other terms you need to be familiar with in our blog post on the topic.
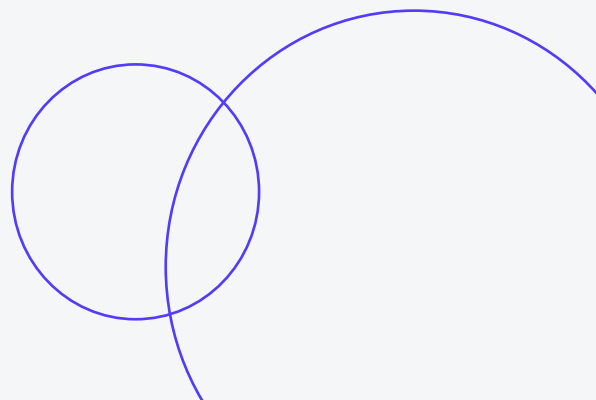
Conclusion

Hotel email marketing is a powerful way to increase brand awareness, engage a highly targeted audience, improve guest retention, and ultimately increase direct bookings and revenue.

And while your results will depend on how much time and effort you put into your campaigns, we hope the suggestions in this guide make it as easy as possible for you to get strong results. Success can certainly be yours.
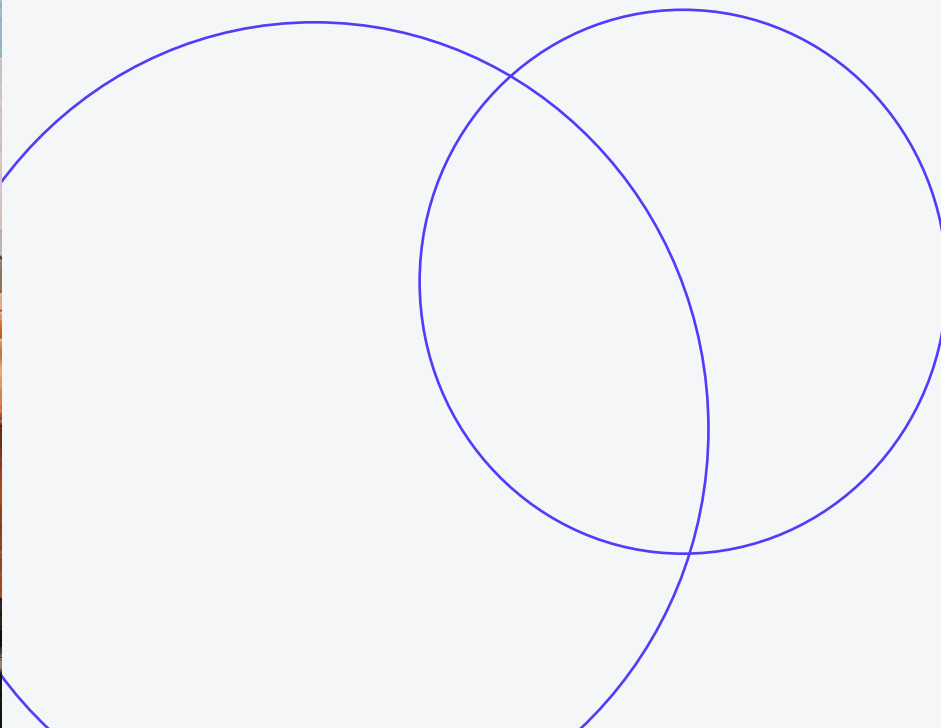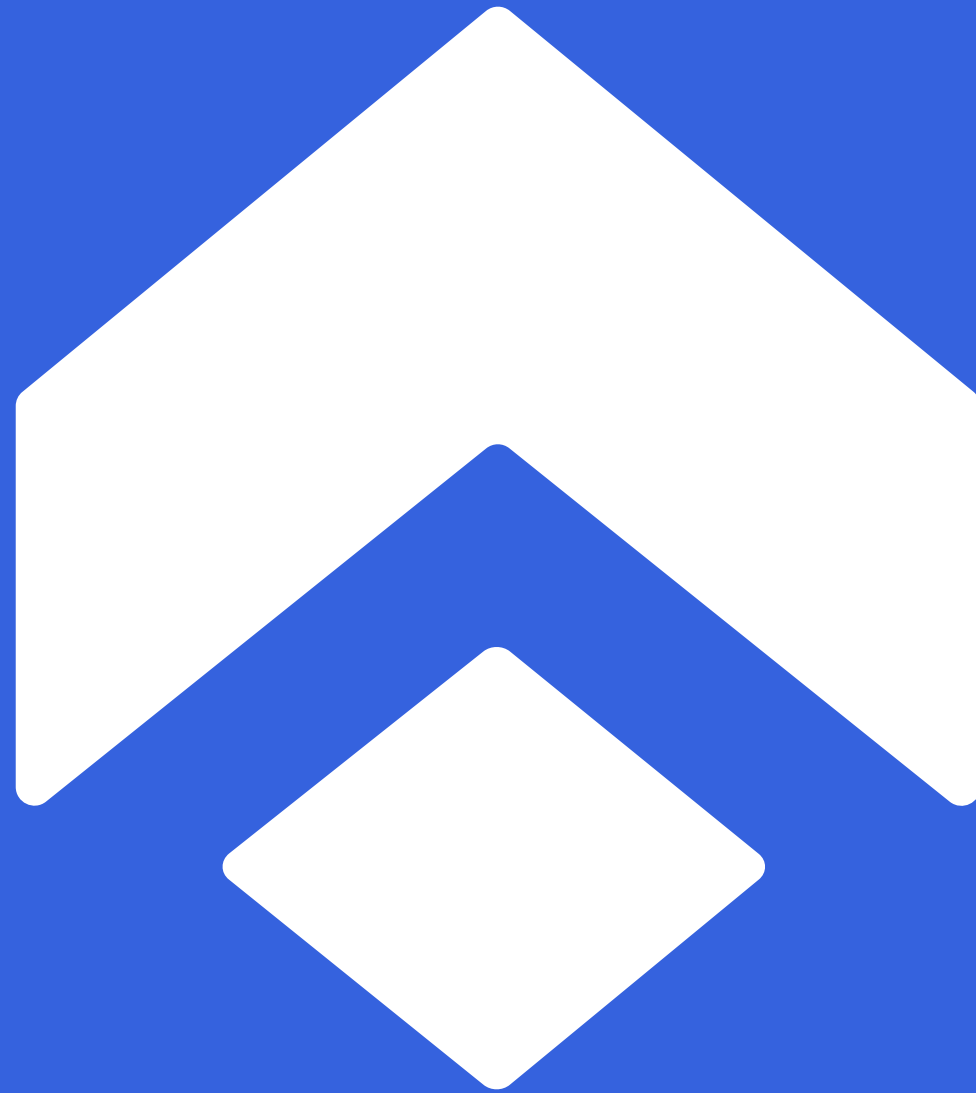
For a more in-depth look at how to improve your email marketing efforts, check out our "Email marketing strategy guide" and complete our certification course. And if you'd like to read about how hoteliers around the globe are using these strategies and the right tools to drive direct bookings, read these customer success stories:

- The Slate, a Phuket Pearl Resort (APAC)
- InnHotels (North America)
- Van der Valk (EMEA)

Revinate Marketing combines the power of hotel CRM with world-class email marketing and upsells. If you're looking for a partner to help you get the best results from your marketing programs, please contact us.

REVINATE.COM