

Vacation Rental Industry Dictionary

*A glossary of the main terms
in the vacation rental industry*

-2018 Edition-

RENTALS UNITED
MORE BOOKINGS - LESS WORK.

- A** **API** → An **application-programming interface (API)** is a set of programming instructions and standards for accessing a Web-based software application or Web tool. A software company releases its **API** to the public so that other software developers can design products that are powered by its service.
- API Connection** → full connection between two softwares that allows data sharing.
Rentals United has API connections with PMS providers, property managers and listings websites such as Booking.com, Expedia, Agoda, Airbnb etc.
- B** **BAR Rates** → BAR stands for Best Available Rate which is the lowest rate of the day that is available for guests to book. The BAR rates are available to the general public, do not require pre-payment and don't impose cancellation or change penalties and/or fees, other than those imposed as a result of a hotel property's normal cancellation policy.
- Book Direct** → This feature allows your guests to book directly with the property manager or owner avoiding going through listing sites and OTAs.
- Booking Fee** → 1. A fee usually charged to confirm a reservation as Down Payment (see below).
2. An extra fee charged on top of the reservation price as an administrative cost.
- Breakage Deposit** → also know as Security Deposit; an fixed amount left as a guarantee by the guests to the hosts in event of damages to the property.
- C** **Changeover days** → Implementing this setting allows selecting days of the week on which guests can never check-in or check-out.
- Channel Manager** → A software that allows distributing automatically hotel rooms, vacation rental properties, B&B's and other type of accommodation onto booking platforms where travellers can book.
- Channels** → listing websites where properties are usually distributed and managed via a channel management software
- Co-Host** → function on Airbnb that allows a host (property owner or manager) to add a co-host who usually helps out to manage the listing.
- D** **Down Payment** → amount paid at booking to secure a reservation, normally a percentage of the total booking amount
- Dropbox** → a way for guests to receive or return keys by depositing them in trusted box, usually in trusted locations such as selected stores.
- Dynamic Content** → content that changes based on user access time, user preferences and personal information. This includes availability and pricing.
- Dynamic Pricing** → is pricing that changes based on the season, number of guests, minimum stay. There are a number of softwares that provide dynamic pricing.
- G** **GDS system** → A global distribution system (GDS) is a network system owned or operated by a company that enables transactions between travel industry service providers, (airlines, hotels, car rental etc) and travel agencies.
- H** **HA-XML** → is the standard format created by HomeAway for receiving listings from Property Managers and Property Management Software Companies.
- HRS** → Hotel Reservation Sites; these sites include Booking.com, Expedia, Agoda etc and specialize in selling inventory in mass. Guests may not always know exactly which property they are staying in as they do not book a specific room.

- I** **Instant Booking** → booking confirmed right away without requesting approval by the property manager or owner.
- Integration** → Connection or the communication between two softwares for data sharing.
- L** **LOS Pricing** → Length of Stay Pricing; pricing that takes into account the amount of days booked and then provides a certain price for those days. This can be used to create discount in cases where the longer the guest stays, the cheaper it is per night.
- M** **Mark up** → price increase, normally a certain percentage to guarantee revenue profit over third party commissions.
- Mapping** → Mapping is a process on which you connect an already existing property in an HRS to one of your account in Rentals United. With this connection method, rates, availability and minimum stay are synchronised.
- Metasearch** → A metasearch is a large platform that uses other search engines to produce its own results. e.g Kayak.
- Multi-Unit** → Multi-unit is a set of indistinguishable properties. The decision of which specific property will be rented lies in the hands of the property owner. A good example of a multi-unit property is a set of identical hotel rooms.
- N** **Net Rates** → The Net Rate is the price without the commission of the travel agent. The distributor can mark-up this price with the margin he wishes to make, or an amount which is contractually agreed. Hotel distribution partners which typically work with net room rates are: Merchant Model OTA. Wholesalers.
- NextGen Software** → as opposed to legacy softwares. Open platforms that connect to different service providers i.e. Rentals United. These are softwares that don't promise to do everything but instead partner with the best of breed.
- Non-Refundable Rates** → lower rates for which the guests can't receive a refund in event of cancellation.
- O** **Occupancy Based Pricing** → pricing strategy where rates differ depending on the number of guests
- One way Communication or Connection** → One-way communication is linear and limited because it occurs in a straight line from sender to receiver and serves to inform, persuade or command.
- OTA** → Online Travel Agents list accommodation and sell them through their own website and network. An OTA has the possibility to offer customers special combinations when booking holiday homes, such as car rentals and airfares.
- Overbooking** → more bookings than the available rooms, properties, tickets etc.
- P** **Payment Processor / Payment Getaway** → A payment processor is a company appointed by a merchant to handle payment transactions, often done with credit or debit cards.
- PCI compliance** → Payment card industry compliance; is adherent to a set of specific security standards that were developed to protect card information during and after a financial transaction. PCI compliance is required by all card brands.
- PMS** → Property Management System: a computerised system/software that facilitates the management of properties, equipment, legalities, personnel and calendars. This includes bookings, client, communications, accounting calendars prices, statistics property information and more.
- Price per Guest** → pricing strategy where rates differ depending on the number of guests

PTBA → It stands for “Preparation Time Before Arrival”, also known as Release Days. The minimum number of days in advance a booking has to be made, e.g min.2 days before arrival. Allows Property Managers to have better control on last minute bookings in order to be able prepare property for guest’s arrival.

Pull Channel → Pulling basically means that to get the information from an integrated software: a request that gets information from an XML API. When a listing sites is a pull channel, it means they pull from the channel manager.

Push Channel → When a listing site is a push channel, it means the channel manager pushes information to them.

R

Rack Rates → Terms used in the hotel industry to describe the cost to a customers that request accommodations for the same day without prior booking arrangements. The rack rate price tends to be more expensive than the rate that the customer could have received if he/she used a travel agency or third-party service. Rack rates can vary based on the day that the room is requested.

Rate Parity → Maintaining consistent rates for the same product in all online distribution channels – Expedia, Orbitz, Hotwire, etc. – regardless of what commission the OTA makes.”

Release Days→ The minimum number of days in advance a booking has to be made, e.g min.2 days before arrival. Allows Property Managers to have better control on last minute bookings in order to be able prepare property for guest’s arrival.

Revenue Management → application of analytics to predict customer behaviour and optimise availability and price accordingly in order to achieve maximum revenue growth.

S

Scale-down → a reduction in nightly rates, usually to encourage more reservations.

Scale-up (mark up) → price increase, normally a certain percentage to guarantee revenue profit over third party commissions.

Security Deposit → also known as Breakage Deposit; a fixed amount lefty the guests to the property manager or owner as a guarantee over

Sell Rates → Final price displayed to the guest, including all fees.

Smart Content → Is content that changes based on user access time, user preferences, and personal information.

Smart Locks → a way for guests to check-in without a key. Remote, keyless access to your guest even when you are away from home.

Static Content → suitable for the contents that never or rarely need to be updated. Such as descriptions, size, location and images.

T

Two-Way Communication → Two-way communication always includes feedback from the receiver to the sender and lets the sender know the message has been received accurately.

Two-Way Connection → We provide information about the listings and the channel returns all reservations, synchronising them with Rentals United including any change in booking status.

V

VR Marketplace → where you can find tons of tech tools from different providers that connect to each other: the way the industry is going (and RU).

VRS → Vacation Rentals Sites; these sites include Airbnb, Misterb&b, LaComunity etc. and they specialise in selling specific inventory. Guests should always know exactly what property they will be staying in.

W

Weekend Pricing → Weekend pricing allows you to add different price per night for Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Welcome app → an website or mobile app that is designed to enrich the guest experience. It will show the guest the information they need, lets your guest book an local activity or in some cases chat with the rental owner.

Yield Managers → Softwares that suggest the best pricing per night (automatic pricing) based on a number of different criteria such as local events, historic booking data, competitors pricing and more...

Yield Management → Yield management is a variable pricing strategy, based on understanding, anticipating and influencing consumer behaviour in order to maximise revenue or profits. Yield Managers are softwares that provide this service for hotels, airlines, vacation rentals etc.

X XML → XML is a format for structuring data in communication between systems.