



WHY GUESTS MAY CHOOSE SOMEWHERE ELSE

The Willow House

Fictional 24-room hotel · Oxford scenario · 25 October 2026

THE SAMPLE VERDICT

Your weekday price asks for a premium.
Your presentation does not explain why.

In this fictional comparison, guests can find a clearer room offer and more visible reassurance at a lower weekday rate. The weekend price is much closer to the competing offers.

The three most likely barriers in this scenario

- Value: £169 on the sample weekday versus a £139 competitor median.
- Confidence: room photos, parking and review responses leave questions.
- Friction: booking terms and the next booking step are hard to find.

How this report should be used

All hotels, observations and rates are invented. This is a demonstration of the analysis format, not a live Oxford market report or an expert-signed assessment. “Likely barriers” are hypotheses; actual reasons for lost bookings require analytics, guest feedback or testing.

01 / WHAT A PROSPECTIVE GUEST SEES

Six visible reasons to hesitate.

For each example, connect the visible problem to the guest's unanswered question. These are simulated findings, not observations of a real hotel.

Example issue	What the guest may think	What to change
E1 · Weak first photos Exterior and corridor appear before the bedroom; no clear bathroom image.	"What will my room actually look like?"	Show an accurate room hero, bathroom, breakfast and arrival view.
E2 · Unclear inclusions Breakfast is included but not stated next to the rate.	"Is the cheaper hotel offering more?"	Put breakfast, room type, total price and terms in the rate summary.
E3 · Parking uncertainty "Parking nearby" without location, cost or walking distance.	"Will arriving be stressful or expensive?"	Explain the actual options and charges; do not imply on-site parking.
E4 · Unresolved review theme The fictional scenario includes recent noise complaints with no response.	"Has anything been done about this?"	Respond factually and explain real mitigation; investigate the underlying issue.
E5 · Hidden booking action The mobile booking button follows a long introduction.	"Where do I check dates?"	Make date search and Book your stay visible early.
E6 · Late cancellation details Guests must continue before seeing the cancellation deadline.	"What happens if my plans change?"	Show the exact deadline and conditions before the commitment step.

Most urgent: E2 and E6

These affect comparison at the moment a guest evaluates the price. Fix them alongside E1 before judging whether a discount is necessary.

In a live report each E-reference would include a source link, dated screenshot and reviewer note. Reviews suggest possible concerns; they do not prove how many bookings were lost.

02 / WHY A RIVAL MAY WIN THE BOOKING

What competitors do better.

Five fictional independent hotels form a local comparison set. In a real review, inclusion would depend on micro-location, room standard, facilities and guest segment - not proximity alone.

Fictional rival	Their visible advantage	What Willow House can learn
The Elm Rooms	Rate card clearly states breakfast and cancellation. Full room and bathroom photos.	Remove uncertainty at the rate decision. This is a clarity advantage, not just a lower price.
The Rowan Lodge	Explains parking costs, check-in and walking directions in one place.	Answer arrival questions before guests have to call or leave the page.
The Cedar House	Room categories have consistent names and images across channels.	Ensure guests know which room they are comparing and purchasing.
The Ash Courtyard	Recent guest concerns receive specific, measured replies.	Show that feedback is read and acted on. Generic thank-you replies do not resolve a concern.
The Orchard Stay	Higher rate is supported by strong room imagery and clear inclusions.	A premium can be credible when the guest can see what makes the stay different.

Your strengths to preserve

In this scenario, Willow House has distinctive interiors, breakfast included and useful walking-distance information. These are saleable strengths; bring them into the first room images and price summary.

Where you should compete

Aim to make the stay easier to understand and trust. Copying a rival’s lowest rate without comparing the full offer may reduce revenue without solving the guest’s concern.

Competitor advantages above are invented examples. A real report would show the competing page or image beside the specific finding.

03 / LOCAL RATE POSITIONING

Are you expensive for the area?

Illustrative Oxford scenario, not observed market prices. One room, two adults, one night, comparable double room, breakfast included, free cancellation until 48 hours before arrival; total price including mandatory charges.

Fictional property	Tue 10 Nov 2026	Sat 14 Nov 2026
The Elm Rooms	£125	£155
The Rowan Lodge	£135	£169
The Cedar House	£139	£175
The Ash Courtyard	£145	£185
The Orchard Stay	£155	£195
Competitor median	£139	£175
The Willow House	£169	£179

WEEKDAY PREMIUM**+21.6%**

£30 above competitor median

WEEKEND PREMIUM**+2.3%**

£4 above competitor median

Interpretation: the weekday offer needs the stronger explanation.

At £169, Willow House is also above the £125–£155 weekday comparison range. At £179 on Saturday, it sits within the £155–£195 weekend range. The sample points to a weekday value gap, not a blanket conclusion that the hotel is overpriced.

Calculation: $(\text{Willow rate} \div \text{median of five rivals} - 1) \times 100$. Rates and dates are illustrative, with availability assumed. The median describes this small set only, not the whole Oxford market. These figures are not a recommendation to set a specific rate.

04 / FIND WHERE THE GUEST IS LOST

Not seen. Not chosen. Not booked.

Low bookings can have different causes. Public-facing review can reveal obstacles; internal data is needed to identify which stage is actually underperforming.

Stage	What to investigate	Evidence needed
1 · Not seen	Can relevant guests find the property? Are the business profile and listing details complete?	Listing views, website traffic, search sources and availability. Do not assume a ranking penalty.
2 · Seen, not chosen	Does the photo, rate, review profile and offer compare well with alternatives?	Room-page engagement, channel comparison, recent review themes and like-for-like rates.
3 · Chosen, not booked	Do terms, date selection, payment or mobile usability create friction?	Booking starts versus completions, device split, error logs and test bookings.

Booking.com versus your own website

Repeat the same date and occupancy search on both channels. Compare the exact room, total cost, breakfast, cancellation and payment conditions. Keep public standard rates separate from member, mobile or loyalty offers. A cheaper restricted rate is not a like-for-like comparison.

What a real local pricing review would collect

Record source URL, search date/time, stay dates, room and board basis, cancellation deadline, mandatory charges and availability for each quote. Use multiple weekdays and weekends; flag event dates separately. Mark sold-out offers as unavailable, never as £0.

Market movement needs repeated observations

A single rate snapshot cannot show a trend, occupancy or demand. Repeat comparable searches over time and combine them with the hotel's booking pace before recommending seasonal or event pricing.

05 / WHAT TO FIX FIRST

Make the next decision practical.

Prioritise the observed barrier, assign an owner and check whether the change helps. The order below follows this fictional hotel's issues.

Priority	Action	Owner / timing
1 · Explain the price	Put room, breakfast, total price and cancellation terms together.	Reservations · 48 hours
2 · Improve the first impression	Lead with a representative room photo; add bathroom and breakfast images.	Owner / marketing · 1 week
3 · Remove arrival doubts	Clarify parking location, cost, directions and check-in.	Front desk · 1 week
4 · Address trust concerns	Investigate noise feedback and reply with factual actions taken.	Manager · 1 week
5 · Review weekday positioning	Check real matched rates, own costs, availability and booking pace before testing a rate or value-added offer.	Owner / revenue lead · 2 weeks
6 · Test the booking path	Complete mobile and desktop test bookings; resolve confusing steps and errors.	Web provider · 2 weeks

What success would look like

Fewer unanswered questions, a clearer comparison with rivals and a smoother booking path. Track booking starts and completions using a consistent definition; compare similar periods and note changes in rates, availability and traffic.

Optional expert help

The following pages show optional services matched to the findings, with draft starting prices. You can implement this plan yourself; no additional purchase is required.

Sample only: no named expert has signed off these fictional findings. A delivered client report should include the reviewer's name, evidence register, review date and clearly stated limitations.

06 / TURNING FINDINGS INTO IMPROVEMENTS

How VenueOwl can help.

Proposed launch pricing for discussion. These are not approved public offers. Confirm scope, expenses and applicable tax before publishing or accepting an order.

Finding / service	What we would do	Draft starting price
Low visibility SEO improvement	One hotel website: baseline review, keyword mapping, titles and descriptions for up to 5 pages, local-profile recommendations and a 30-day progress summary. No ranking guarantee.	£249 Initial 30 days
Weak OTA presentation Booking.com & Expedia	Up to 2 existing listings for one hotel: room descriptions, photo order, amenities and policy consistency. Four weekly checks over 30 days and one summary. Owner-approved changes only.	£349 Setup + 30 days
Unclear booking journey Website setup	Up to 5 pages, mobile layout, supplied copy and photos, contact form and connection to an existing booking engine where compatible. One revision round.	£699 One-off
Inconsistent social presence Social media support	One channel: 8 posts using supplied assets, captions, scheduling and a simple monthly plan. One revision round; no filming or daily inbox management.	£199 30-day package
Unfocused promotion Advertising recommendations	A written plan covering audience, channel, offer, creative direction and a proposed budget. One 30-minute walkthrough. Campaign setup and management are separate.	£99 One-off

Important boundaries

OTA support does not include 24/7 guest messages, reservations handling or ongoing revenue management. Prices cover the stated work only. Hosting, domain, booking-engine subscriptions, paid apps, photography and advertising spend are separate.

No automatic renewal is proposed. Any further month would be agreed separately. Website delivery timing follows a scoped quote and receipt of materials.

07 / THE REAL GUEST EXPERIENCE

From first enquiry to check-out.

An optional mystery-guest assessment tests whether the real stay matches the promise. The visit is authorised by the owner; timing can remain undisclosed to frontline staff.

Service	Included	Draft starting price
Mystery guest visit	One local daytime visit: enquiry, arrival, public areas and service interaction; evidence-based report and debrief. Room stay is not included.	£249 + agreed expenses
Full overnight experience	One guest, one night: booking, pre-arrival contact, check-in, room, cleanliness, comfort, breakfast, service requests and check-out; report and 30-minute debrief.	£449 + agreed expenses

How staff responses would be assessed

Agree two or three ordinary scenarios in advance: ask for an extra towel, request late check-out, clarify a bill or ask how a room concern would be handled. Observe listening, courtesy, ownership, response time and follow-up. Record what happened and distinguish observation from opinion.

Scenarios must be proportionate and must not involve damage, fabricated emergencies or abusive behaviour. Any complaint should concern a real issue or an owner-approved harmless scenario. A single visit is a snapshot, not a verdict on an employee.

Suggested sequence for this fictional hotel

1. Fix the visible offer first: the £349 OTA package addresses the clarity issues identified.
2. Use the overnight assessment only if service delivery needs checking.
3. Commission SEO, a new website or advertising only where the evidence supports it.

Know the full cost before proceeding

Accommodation, meals and travel are agreed separately with a spending cap. No booking or additional service begins without scope and price agreement. All prices here are proposed service fees; the final payable total must state expenses and any applicable tax. The £20 report is a separate service and no credit against follow-on work is currently promised.