



**MEETING
MARKET**

by Expedia

MEETINGMARKET HANDBOOK

TIPS & IDEAS TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH YOUR MICE BOOKING ENGINE





Tips and inspiration to successfully launch and promote your MICE booking engine

Thank you for choosing MeetingMarket by Expedia to automate your MICE business.



After the onboarding of your property/properties, it is now time to plan the launch and promotion of your new MICE booking engine.

This paper will give a variety of tips and ideas you can apply to successfully launch your new MICE booking engine and to make your automated MICE sales fly.

Therefore, we quote eight “must-do’s” and four “can-do’s” hereinafter.



The order of the proposed steps follows to great extend the **AIDAR** purchasing funnel model:

- Make your customers **aware** of your new MICE booking engine.
- Generate **interest** in the benefits of your new service and to encourage the buyer to start to research further.
- Awake **desire** – moving your customer from liking to wanting it by building an emotional connection.
- Influence the buyer to make an **action** – to book a meeting.
- Build a relationship with your customer to move him to **repeat** his bookings.

Please note, that we are pleased to assist you with planning and implementing your launch strategy.

Moreover, we are looking forward to learn about your experiences, when launching the MICE instant book tool, to constantly further develop the present paper.



8 must-do's and 4 can-do's

to successfully launch and promote your new MICE booking engine

1

Make your new website visible and accessible on your website

Objective: drive transactions/bookings

2

Send a press release to announce the start of your new, innovative MICE service

Objective: drive awareness

3

Send newsletters to your MICE and corporate customers to inform about your new service

Objective: drive awareness

4

Share the news on your social media channels by applying different formats

Objective: drive awareness

5

Start sending quotes with the quote generator to pull your customers into the instant book world

Objective: drive transactions/bookings

6

Educate your Customers by explaining your new Service and the Benefits

Objective: drive education

7

Promote your new Service by using existing Communication Channels and Advertising Spaces

Objective: drive awareness / drive interest

8

Influence your customers' buying decision by providing Discounts or free add-ons

Objective: drive transactions/bookings

9

Use search engine marketing

Objective: drive transactions/bookings

10

Chase visitors with a retargeting campaign

Objective: drive transactions/bookings

11

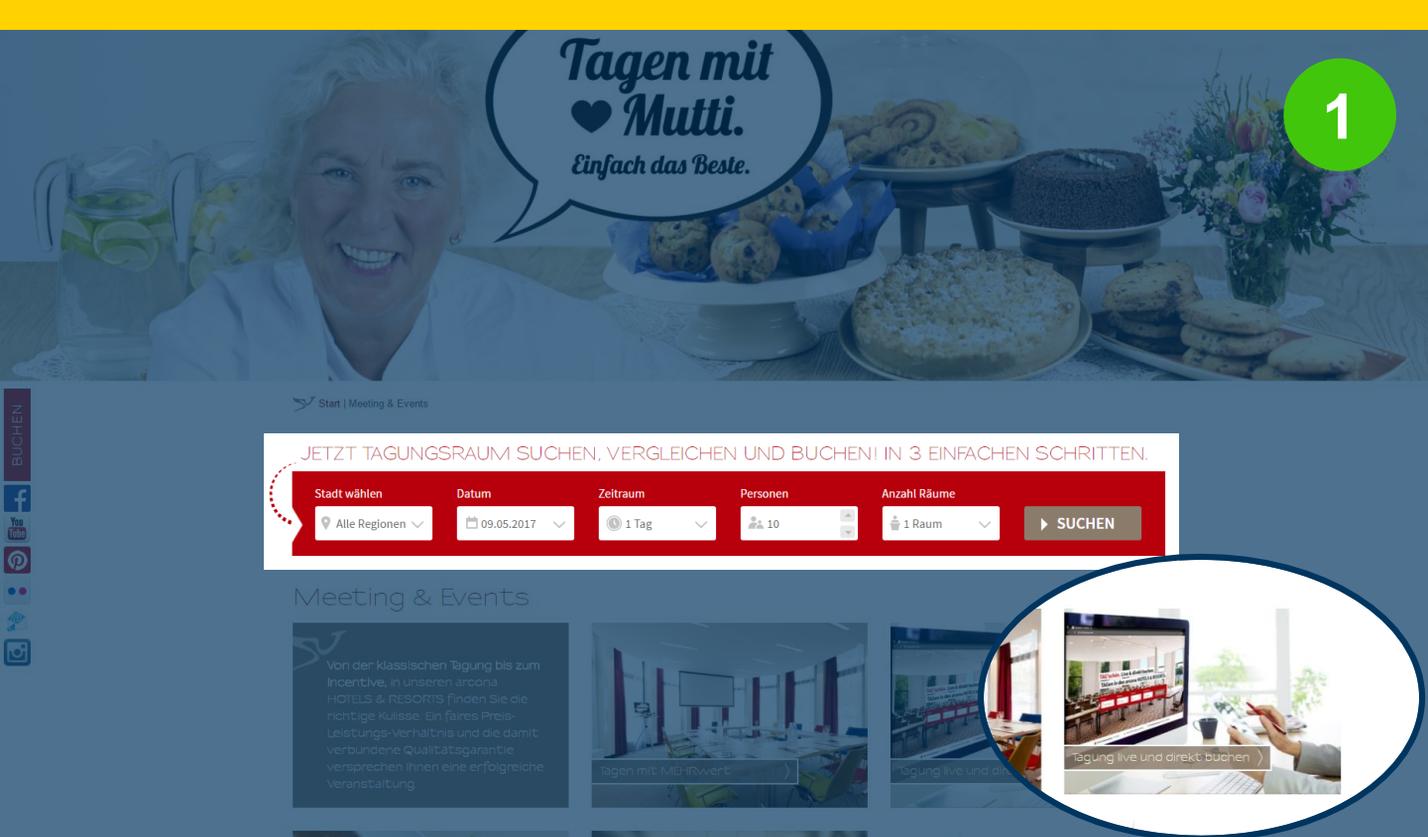
Integrate MICE instant booking customers into your loyalty program

Objective: drive repeat rate

12

Measure customer salience by conducting a post sales survey to

Objective: drive repeat rate



Make your new MICE Booking Engine visible and accessible on your Website

As soon as you customers got aware of your new service, it has to be accessible for them. When entering your website, your customers must easily find information around your new service and the booking engine.



Booking widget on your website

To directly push your customers and website visitors into your sales funnel, a booking widget is the best way to do this. MeetingMarket can provide custom made widgets, you can easily integrate in your website design. Your customers can configure their event directly within the widget and will be redirected to your MICE booking engine for the search results.



Banner ad on your website

Advertise your new service with an online banner on your hotel chain's website (landing page). By clicking on the banner, customers will automatically be directed to your MICE booking engine. Even if your website visitor has no current need for a meeting, this makes them aware of your service.



Use different sales approaches and links

Use all options to drag your customer on your MICE booking engine. E.g. on a page you show your meeting space. Place a button: „Check availability now“ that directs to your booking engine.

Set links from relevant articles (like blog) to your booking engine, so interested visitors of this particular page do not have to search for it..

Send a Press Release to announce the Start of your new, innovative MICE Service

MICE instant book and digitalization is a very up-to-date issue, media loves to share. To communicate your message, being an early adaptor of the revolutionary technology, a press release is a must-do to reach a broad audience. Share your news on all available channels to inform your customers like your website, your blog, your social media channels, your newsletters etc. Also think about using different kind of formats like videos, interview etc. to distribute your message.



Use a to-the-point messaging

Use an easy to understand way to spread your message and try to avoid technical terms, the general public does not understand. Find some clear and to-the-point statements you could use in your communication – not only for news and press releases.

- Our new MICE booking engine is now live.
- Customers can compare available hotels and prices in real-time and book instantly.
- Customers can book meetings space and group lodging online, with just a few clicks.
- Instant prices and availabilities. No long-lasting RFP process.
- Customers can combine meeting space, equipment, catering and group lodging.
- With providing a real-time service, we face changing customer needs for speed and simplicity.
- The engine helps us to reduce handling time per sale and to increase efficiency.
- The engine helps us to yield MICE prices

Send Newsletters to your MICE and Corporate Customers to inform about your new Service



To make your MICE and corporate customers aware of your new service, you can inform them with an dedicated newsletters, or a newsletter campaign.

We recommend to plan a campaign, that introduces your customers step-by-step to your new MICE booking engine, providing bite-sized information.

- Mail 1** Message should be about **WHAT** your new service is about. E.g. “Our MICE booking engine is now live”. This goes back to the news, you shout out to the press.
→ see also step 2.
- Mail 2** We recommend, now to talk about the **WHY**. Why should your customers book meetings online instead of calling you or writing emails?
→ see also step 6.
- Mail 3** Explain your customers **HOW** they can book online. Provide content like educational articles or tutorial videos.
→ see also step 6.
- Mail 4** Now it is time for a promotional mail with a strong **call to action**. To influence your customers decision, you could provide free add-ons. E.g. “Book now and save 20%”
→ see also step 8.



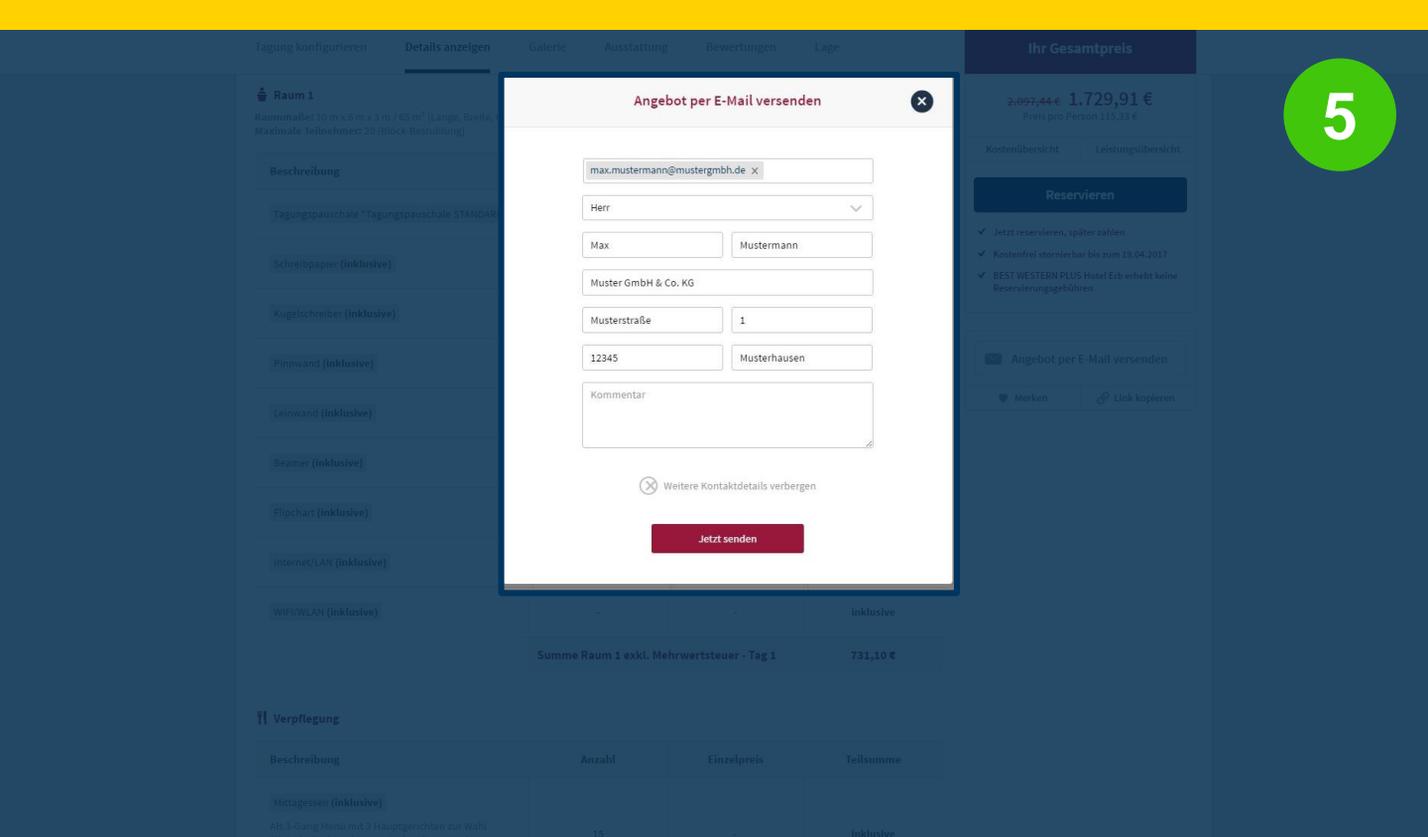
Share the News on your Social Media Channels by applying different Formats

Spread the good news of your new MICE service via your owned social media channels for additional exposure to clients who may not be familiar with your new MICE service. Think of it as adding another resource to your media list. If people connect with the content, they visit your site and become aware of your business.



Different social media channels require different approaches and/or formats to deliver your message. Hereinafter, we list possible content pieces you can and should share on your social media channels:

- the link to the news article on your website
- media articles about your new service, resulting from your press release.
- video statements or interviews, talking about your new MICE service
- educational articles or videos
- promotional campaigns for your new MICE service
- pictures or videos, that are related to your product



Start sending Quotes with the Quote Generator to pull your Customers into the Instant Book World

The most efficient way to pull your customers into the MICE instant book world is to send quotes with the quote generator. This saves you a lot of time, increases your efficiency and provides a super fast service for your customers. As customers confirm or readjust your quotes on your MICE booking engine, they are getting automatically used to your new service. And it is very likely, that your customers will directly go to your MICE booking engine when they want to book the next small meeting in your hotel.



Define requests to answer with the quote generator

MICE instant book to is made to automate your standard business for meetings and groups up to 30-40 participants. You could define the following criteria of requests to answer with the quote generator. E.g.:

- Groups up to 30 people
- max. 3 days max
- max. 2 meeting rooms



Train your sales staff

The only way to successfully introduce this service is to train your sales staff. They have to exactly know, how they can send quotes, have to be able to explain the benefits to the customer and have to know for which requests the automated quote generator is useful. Finally, your staff should see, that they can save a lot of time that can better be invested in bigger, economically significant events.



Set KPIs and measure your success

Define, together with your team, how many quotes you are planning to send by week/month and measure a) conversion in comparison to “classical” quotes, b) time invested quote generator vs. “classical” quote. You will see that conversion of automated quotes is far higher than before and you can save a lot of time in creating, calculating, sending and following up your quotes.



Educate your Customers by explaining your new Service and the Benefits

In your news, you explained the “WHAT”, means that you started to automate your MICE sales and customers can book meeting space and group lodging online. Now, you should talk about the “WHY” & “HOW”. Key is to identify topics, your customers are interested the most. Answer questions your customers could ask and use different formats like articles, social media posts, videos to deliver the content.



Provide content pieces like:

- Save and money by using our MICE online booking engine
- Receive your MICE quote for small meetings in just 5 minutes – word!
- How to research prices and availabilities in a matter of minutes.
- How to book a meeting instantly.
- How to share MICE quotes with your colleagues/ boss.
- How to store quotes.
- Quotations of testimonials



Use different formats to deliver this content pieces like:

- Blog articles
- Interviews
- Videos
- Webinars with your key customers.



Share your content on:

- Your website and/ or blog
- Your social media channels
- Your intranet
- Your newsletters

Promote your new Service by using existing Communication Channels and Advertising Spaces

With certainty, your hotels or your hotel chain is already using a wide range of different advertising space. Use this space to promote your news MICE service. For inspiration, some possible contact points are listed below.



In your hotel

Advertise your new MICE service e.g. in your guest information folders, in your stationeries, on displays in your meeting spaces etc.



Your mail closing

Every day, your team sends out hundreds of emails. Use these mails to advertise your new service by adding a banner to your mail closings. By clicking on the banner, mail recipients are directly directed to your MICE booking engine.

You can also link to other relevant pages like a tutorial video how your customers can now book meetings online on your hotel chain's website.



Online banner campaigns

If you booked online advertising banner campaigns, you can either add a hint to your new service on the existing banner, or use the space interchangeably for the existing campaign and your ad for your new MICE service.



Classic adds in magazines, newspapers or out-of-home media

Advertise your new service in magazines / newspaper that focus on business travel, MICE or office management. If you have already existing key visuals promoting your MICE hotel(s) or MICE facilities, you can place an inset on the existing ads.





Influence your customers' buying decision by providing Discounts or free add-ons

The MeetingMarket software allows to generate discount vouchers. You can generate voucher codes and limit them by booking window, date of validity and % discount. Discount are peculiarly valuable to acquire new customers or to reactivate existing customers.

Another way to influence your customers' buying decision is to provide free add-ons like a free welcome drink/coffee, free parking etc. to influence your customer's buying decision. By giving a benefit for free, you do not have to touch your pricing. With giving free add-ons, you are extremely flexible and quick. Consequently free add-ons work well to increase sales for near-term availabilities.



Nota bene:

You can use voucher function for your outline agreements with your corporate MICE customers. Instead of negotiating flat corporate rates for meetings, you can provide a general discount (floating rate) for your hotel chain. The floating rate has the advantage, that you provide a discount on your yielded BAR rate.



Use Search Engine Marketing



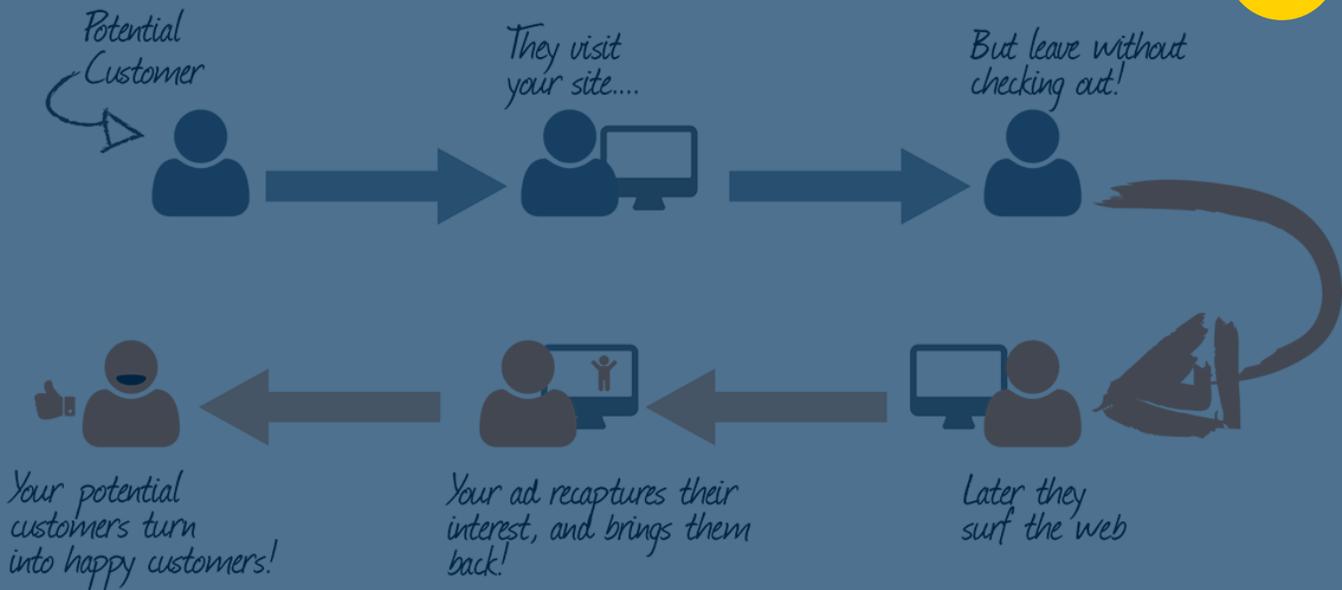
Search engine marketing, or SEM, is one of the most effective ways to grow your MICE online bookings in an increasingly competitive marketplace. With millions of businesses out there all vying for the same eyeballs, it's never been more important to advertise online, and search engine marketing is the most effective way to promote your new MICE service and grow your bookings.

Search engine marketing is the practice of marketing a business using paid advertisements that appear on search engine results pages. Advertisers bid on keywords that users of services such as Google and Bing might enter when looking for certain products or services, which gives the advertiser the opportunity for their ads to appear alongside results for those search queries.

These ads, often known by the term pay-per-click ads, come in a variety of formats.

Search engine marketing's greatest strength is that it offers advertisers the opportunity to put their ads in front of motivated customers who are ready to buy at the precise moment they're ready to make a purchase. No other advertising medium can do this, which is why search engine marketing is so effective and such an amazingly powerful way to grow your MICE online bookings..

Keywords are the foundation of search engine marketing. As users enter keywords (as part of *search queries*) into search engines to find what they're looking for, it should come as little surprise that keywords form the basis of search engine marketing as an advertising strategy.



Chase visitors with a retargeting campaign

Retargeting or remarketing is a concept where your advertisements can chase your previous website visitors around the Internet when they visit entirely unrelated sites. Or in other words, visitors to your website continue to see your ads on other websites after they left your site.

In effect, retargeting provides Internet advertisements based on previous browsing history across different websites. Retargeting is implemented using a tracking cookie, enabling an advertisement broker to know if a visitor to some other site has previously visited your website. If so, your ad will be displayed on the other unrelated website.



Using retargeting in your online marketing, your ads will follow previous website visitors around the Internet, thus reminding them of their previous visit to your website and your offerings. Some may feel retargeting “haunts” them if done too aggressively. Retargeting ads are only shown to people who have visited your website before.

Integrate MICE Instant Booking Customers into your Loyalty Program

For certain, your hotel chain operates an extensive loyalty program. To make your MICE customers returning customers, you can develop a way to integrate those customers into the existing loyalty program by providing them benefits, only your loyalty program members have access to.



Remember that MICE customers are both, business travellers and leisure travellers. Means that benefits, your provide must not necessarily be MICE-related.

Measure Customer Salience by conducting a Post Sales Survey

Learn more about your customer's experience with your new service and stay your customer's memory and gain valuable insights from your customers.

The shorter, the better. It should not take longer than three minutes to answer your survey. Try to focus only on a few questions, that provide maximum insights.



Tip: Combine combine your post sales survey with a promotional offer (voucher code or free add-on) for respondents. This will increase both, response rate and sales.

MICE to Meet You. Please Get in Touch.

Expedia.com Ltd
The Angel Building
407 St John Street
London EC1V 4EX, UK



Martin Munck
Head of Brand Communication MICE & Groups
E-Mail: mm@meetingmarket.de
Phone: +49 (0)761 217 153 017