

Are You Visible to AI?

A 12-Point Checklist for Independent Hoteliers

Everything on this list is free. Most of it takes an afternoon.

YOUR DIGITAL FOUNDATION

- 1 **Google Business Profile — 100% complete**
Every field filled. Photos updated regularly. Post at least weekly. Respond to every review within 48 hours. AI treats your GBP as a primary source of truth about your property.
- 2 **Hotel schema markup on your website homepage**
Add Hotel and LocalBusiness structured data (JSON-LD format) to your homepage. AI reads this structured data before it reads your copy. On WordPress, the Yoast Local SEO plugin handles this without coding. Otherwise, point your developer to schema.org/Hotel.
- 3 **FAQ page with schema markup**
Write the 10 questions guests actually ask: parking, breakfast, check-in time, pet policy, cancellation, distance to landmarks. Mark each up with FAQ schema. AI serves these answers directly in response to voice and chat queries.

REVIEW PRESENCE

- 4 **Respond to every Google and TripAdvisor review**
Your responses are indexed by AI. Use them strategically — thank the guest, reinforce what makes your property distinct, address any concern with specificity. Generic "thanks for staying!" responses are a missed opportunity.
- 5 **Ask every departing guest for a review**
At checkout verbally and via a follow-up email sent within 2 hours of departure. Volume and recency both matter to AI ranking signals. 400 reviews from the past 12 months outranks 1,200 reviews from 3 years ago.
- 6 **Complete your Bing Places, Yelp, and Apple Maps profiles**
AI draws from multiple data sources. Incomplete secondary profiles create gaps in what AI knows about your property. Each profile: identical NAP (Name, Address, Phone), matching hours, current photos, and a description that includes your key differentiators.

CONTENT AI CAN READ

- 7 **Neighbourhood and local area guide on your website**
"Best hotel near [landmark / venue / airport / hospital]" is among the most common AI travel queries. Write dedicated pages or sections for each relevant anchor point near your property. Own those answers on your own domain before an OTA does.
- 8 **Clear direct booking value proposition on your homepage**
Best rate guarantee, complimentary parking, early check-in, welcome amenity — state it explicitly, above the fold, in plain language. AI surfaces this comparison when a guest asks "is it cheaper to book direct?"

FIRST-PARTY DATA — YOUR REAL MOAT

- 9 **Email capture at every touchpoint**
Booking confirmation, pre-arrival communication, in-stay messaging, post-checkout follow-up. Every interaction is an opportunity to collect or confirm the guest's email address. This list is yours. No OTA, no AI intermediary, no algorithm can take it from you.
- 10 **Post-stay email sequence — minimum 3 touches**
Touch 1 (Day 1): Thank you + review request. Touch 2 (Day 7): Local tips, seasonal programming. Touch 3 (Day 30): Return incentive — direct booking offer or loyalty reward. Most operators skip Touches 2 and 3. That is where the relationship and the repeat booking lives.
- 11 **Track where your direct bookings come from**
Add UTM parameters to every link pointing to your booking engine: email campaigns, social posts, Google Business Profile, your website navigation. Free to implement. Know which channel is working before you decide where to invest.

HIGH-VALUE OPTIONAL

- 12 **Wikipedia or Wikidata entry (if your property qualifies)**
Historic property, notable architecture, significant cultural landmark, founding story of genuine public interest — these are the criteria. A Wikipedia entry dramatically increases the frequency AI cites and recommends your property by name. If you qualify and don't have one, this is the highest-return item on this list.

"You can't manufacture brand trust at the moment an AI is making a recommendation.

You build it over years of consistent delivery. Stop optimizing for the platforms.

Start optimizing for what the platforms measure." — Michael Levinson