



Case Study: Hotel Rival

Revolutionizing Direct Bookings with SHR's Transformative Distribution Strategy



Hotel Rival, a 5-star boutique hotel in the Södermalm district of Stockholm, Sweden, offers a unique blend of luxury, charm and cultural legacy. With 99 beautifully designed rooms, this intimate property consistently ranks as a top hotel on Tripadvisor, celebrated for its personalized guest experiences and its iconic owner, Benny Andersson, a member of the legendary music group ABBA.

The Challenge: Distribution Over-Reliance and Lack of Support

Before partnering with SHR in April 2019, Hotel Rival faced critical challenges that hindered its growth:

- Over-Reliance on OTAs:** In 2019, most reservations came from third-party channels like OTAs (Online Travel Agencies), severely limiting control over inventory, guest relationships and commission costs.
- Ineffective Customer Support:** Rival's previous CRS provider failed to deliver adequate support, often providing generic manuals instead of hands-on assistance. As a small operation, Hotel Rival needed a partner capable of seamless integration and collaboration with other systems.

According to **Jesper Sandberg**, *Revenue & eCommerce Manager*, "We needed suppliers we could trust to support us and work hand-in-hand with our team and other partners. For us, this is crucial".



The Solution: SHR's CRS and IBE

To regain control of their distribution strategy, Hotel Rival transitioned to SHR's CRS in April 2019. Initially focused on GDS integration, the hotel soon adopted SHR's Booking Engine (BE) to drive direct bookings. The implementation process was seamless, enabling Hotel Rival to optimize its website and marketing campaigns while maintaining smooth operations.

Results: Transforming Distribution Strategy

- 1. Direct Booking Dominance:** Since 2022, Hotel Rival's website, Rival.se, has become its top-performing revenue channel, consistently outperforming OTAs like Booking.com and Expedia. In 2024, Rival.se emerged as the largest revenue driver, underscoring the success of SHR's CRS platform in capturing direct demand.
- 2. Revenue Growth:** Direct bookings through Rival.se have outpaced overall revenue growth since 2022. SHR's CRS has enabled the hotel to adapt and scale effectively, making direct bookings a cornerstone of its revenue strategy.
- 3. Cost Efficiency:** By prioritizing direct bookings, Hotel Rival has significantly reduced commission costs associated with OTAs. Additionally, SHR's platform has saved the hotel from rising GDS rates imposed by its previous provider.
- 4. Enhanced Marketing ROI:** SHR's tools have enabled the hotel to measure incoming revenue from Google Ads and social media campaigns more accurately. This data-driven approach has optimized marketing efforts, improving ROI and targeting efficiency.

SHR's Key Contributions

- 1. Seamless Integration:** SHR's ability to integrate with Hotel Rival's existing systems ensured a smooth transition and operational efficiency.

- 2. Exceptional Customer Support:** Unlike their previous provider, SHR's team offers quick, hands-on assistance, empowering Hotel Rival to deliver an exceptional guest experience.
- 3. Advanced Functionality:** SHR's CRS intuitive design and robust features have allowed Hotel Rival to capture high-value direct bookings, even in a competitive post-pandemic market.

The Impact of the Pandemic

COVID-19 reshaped Hotel Rival's distribution strategy. During the pandemic, OTAs failed to deliver substantial business, highlighting the importance of direct bookings.

As **Sandberg** noted, "The pandemic cemented the strategy we implemented just before - limiting channels to those that actually deliver".

With SHR's support, Hotel Rival emerged stronger, focusing on capturing higher-yield direct bookings and driving sustainable revenue growth.

Hotel Rival's partnership with SHR has transformed its distribution strategy, allowing the hotel to regain control over inventory, reduce costs and enhance guest experiences. SHR's CRS has been instrumental in this journey, driving Rival.se to become the hotel's leading revenue channel and a testament to the power of prioritizing direct bookings.

As **Sandberg** affirms, "Thanks to SHR's advanced functionality, intuitive design and unparalleled support, we've successfully grown our direct booking channel into the cornerstone of our revenue strategy while maintaining an exceptional guest experience".



Discover the world's leading intelligent & automated hotel technology suite of applications

BE

Booking Engine

Unleash the full potential of your most lucrative channel: your personal booking engine, is an invaluable asset that can significantly boost your business's profitability. By utilizing this powerful tool, you have the ability to maximize your revenue and take control of your bookings like never before.

CRS

Central Reservation System

Empower your hotel with a user-centric central reservation management system that works for you. The CRS streamlines your reservation processes, enhances guest experiences, and optimizes your operations with a system tailored to your specific needs, ensuring smooth and efficient bookings, all whilst reaching a global audience.