

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Introduction

This document aims to give property owners (or would-be owners) some assistance in thinking about how they may choose to successfully market vacation rental properties. The information given is directed towards inexperienced property owners (who may need help in starting out), and more experienced property owners (who may have lost direction, or are not achieving the success they had hoped for). The completed document is not so much 'a formula for success' but more of 'how to build your own formula'.

The document is predominantly in two sections: 1. Advice on how to market your vacation rental property, and 2. How to complete the saidivacations.com property web page proforma? However some of the information provided in 'how to complete the proforma' can be applied to any mechanism for advertising vacation property to rent whether internet based or not.

The writers are the owners and operators of saidivacations.com (a web site advertising vacation property rentals at Mediterrania Saidia in Morocco). They own rental property themselves, and have used rental property for their vacations over a number of years. This experience together with a degree of targeted research has helped to bring together this document. We hope it will be useful whether you choose to advertise with saidivacations.com or not.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Section 1 - Marketing your vacation rental property

Step 1 - Be financially astute

So you've exchanged on a vacation property, or perhaps you're soon to exchange. Your plan is to rent out your vacation property, and use the rental income to, as a minimum, offset the costs of your mortgage payments, or generate a small income from your investment.

Hopefully you have chosen well, and your specific property is ideally located, with a plentiful supply of eager guests ready to pay premium prices for their holiday accommodation. But just in case, one or two words of caution:

1. Some vacation properties take a while before they start to rent regularly.
2. Some properties are more difficult to market than others
3. Some locations have short seasons

There's absolutely no guarantee of quick results - hence you need to be able to make your mortgage payments and service charges without the rental income. If you can't keep up the payments then you'll be forced to sell, and if you're unfortunate this could be at a loss.

On the other hand, with some hard work, drive, plenty of enthusiasm and resilience you can generate a nice little income.

Most properties that are well serviced, clean, maintained and in attractive locations will rent. However to make money you need to maximise yield.

$$\text{Yield} = \frac{\text{No of days in the year}}{\text{No of days rented in the year}} \times 100$$

Or what percentage of the year the property is occupied by paying guests.

Maximizing Yield is all about marketing.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Step 2 - Understanding your target market

My partner and I have twins (they're four years old at the time of writing). When they were about one year old, we wanted to take them on vacation, and started searching for suitable locations and properties to rent. One morning the TAMBA (Twins and Multiple Birth Association) magazine dropped through our letterbox and in the magazine was an advert for a number of rental properties set around a farm in France and a web address. On checking the web site (which was only a few pages, with description and contact details) we quickly came to the conclusion that this was where we wanted to take our twins on holiday. It had everything that we needed from the multiple proper cots (i.e. not travel cots), high chairs, push chairs, steriliser, toys, through to qualified day care, baby sitting, and disinfectant spray. It certainly wasn't cheap (in fact it was quite pricey) but they really had thought of everything - we didn't have to worry about transporting the huge volume of equipment we would normally require just to visit my mother for a day - and perhaps we might even get an evening to ourselves. On enquiry, we were disappointed because they were full, no vacancies at all in that year, and only a few really out of season vacancies in the following year.

This property owner had maximised their yield, they had really understood their target (niche) market, and promoted their holiday rental business in a very cost efficient, focussed manner.

Market segments	18-30	Young Parents	Young Couples	Older Parents	Older Couples	Golfers	Sailors
Market desc.	Groups of singles	Age 20-35 with babies/toddlers	Age 20-35	Age 35-45 with older children	Age 35-55	inc Groups	inc Groups
- 2 Bedrooms (4 beds)	7	7	5	10	3	7	7
- 2 Bathroom	10	5	10	10	10	10	10
- Ground Floor	3	10	3	7	7	5	5
- Gardens	3	5	5	5	10	5	5
- Communal Pool	10	10	5	10	5	5	5
Property characteristics	33	37	28	42	35	32	32
- Beach 10 mins	5	10	5	7	3	3	3
- Marina 15 mins	7	5	5	7	7	3	7
- Shopping 15 mins	7	7	7	7	5	5	5
- On golf course	3	3	5	3	7	10	3
- Bars and restaurants 15 mins	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
- Quiet location	3	10	5	10	10	7	7
- Other sports 5 mins	7	3	7	10	5	7	7
Location Characteristics	35	43	39	49	42	40	37
Total score	68	80	67	91	77	72	69

Every location and property has its own characteristics that align the property with a number of specific market segments. The first stage in understanding your target market is to define the market segments and rate your property (and its location)

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

against these segments. One way of doing this is using a matrix to define the possible market segments, the attributes of your property, and the attributes of your location, and then use a scoring system between 0 and 10 to score each area (where 0 = unattractive, 10 = attractive). There's an example above.

You need to identify and rate against those property and location attributes that are going to make a difference for your specific property rather than the example attributes provided, and the more relevant market segments that you can consider the better. You also need to consider your property relative to other property styles at the same location in order to rate accurately (i.e. is a two bedroom ground floor apartment more attractive than a two bedroom penthouse apartment, or a two bedroom villa). This comparative rating also helps you later with pricing strategy.

There's a general inclination to think that your property is ideal for all types of guest rather than focus on specific target markets. This is sometimes a mistake because you can end up with a property which is not ideal for anyone, its just ok. If your property is considered by a guest to be just ok, then you will be competing with every other property that your guest thinks is ok, and in these circumstances the only way to improve yield is through pricing lower than your competition.

So hopefully you've identified some target markets (and perhaps some niche markets) for your property rental.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Step 3 - Aligning your product to your target markets

Now that you understand your target markets, you can begin to think about what you can do in terms of enhancing the alignment of your properties with your target markets through furnishings, decoration, equipment, services and offers.

Let's explore another example – let's assume your property is set on a golf course, and you want to attract a steady stream of golfers as guests. So imagine you've got four middle aged men wanting a weeks golf - what can you do to make your property the preferred option and therefore improve your yield?

1. Ensure the beds in a two bedroom property can be configured as four singles.
2. Theme rooms (or at least one room) with golf pictures, ornaments
3. Provide storage for golf clubs, trolleys, etc
4. Provide a bucket of balls, tees, etc, for your guests to use
5. Speak to the golf course management about membership, tuition, practise facilities with a view to making arrangements for guests to have privileges, discounts, etc. Don't forget its in the golf course management's interest that your property is occupied by golfers, so get them to contribute
6. Ensure you have the golf channel on the TV package
7. Make arrangement to help them book tee-off times, tuition, practise before they arrive
8. Offer fresh towels every day
9. Provide scorecards, shot savers and course documentation
10. Provide information on other courses in the region that they can visit
11. Buy a putting practice carpet and ball return
12. Provide a case of beer in the fridge for your guests
13. Work with other property owners at your location to offer accommodation for golf groups

Pretty straightforward stuff really - so apply this thinking to your target market.

Hey wait a minute, what if I have more than one target market?

With a bit of thinking you can align your property with several target markets. The golfers really won't care if another room is sailing oriented, or there are beach mats, and buckets and spades in the property. The sailors won't care whether there's a bucket of golf balls and tees in the cupboard. Some property owners get really integrated with their service providers so they can change the pictures, ornaments, etc as part of the cleaning process, or set out the property for different seasons – golf breaks in the spring and autumn and family beach guests in the summer.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Step 4 - Channels to your target markets

Ok so you know which markets to target, and have a plan of how you can align your product to these markets. But what routes are you going to use to promote and sell your product.

In today's market it's preferable to have some kind of web presence. There follows some perspectives on the available website characteristics and the advantages and disadvantages associated with these:

A. *Global 'Contact Only' Web Sites.*

If you type 'holiday rental' into any major search engine, you'll find plenty of these types of sites. Essentially they offer to host your web pages for £100 - £150 per year, and include a 'Send an Enquiry' system which sends the owner an email enquiry and many send a SMS text message as well. These sites host many hundreds of vacation properties all over the world, and their search engine success means they are visited by tens of thousands of web surfing potential customers. Generally, they all operate the same business model, once you've paid your subscription you have access to create and edit your own web page text, contact details, availability information, tariff information and upload pictures which are then published in a predefined page design. For an extra fee, you can opt to have your listing entered into a target market (like golf or ski property), or be featured on the 'special offers/late deals' pages.

The advantages of these sites are that they are a fairly low cost way of having a web presence, and provided you have striking photos and inviting opening text, you are going to receive a level of enquiries from the many thousands of surfers looking for vacation rental property.

You need to understand that:

1. There are many hundreds of other properties advertised on the same site to compete with,
2. The site is global, and therefore any information on the property location and its attractions and travel arrangements need to be in your page content
3. Hopefully, you will receive lots of enquiries which you need to respond to, and the speed and manner of your response is critical to how many enquiries are converted into sales. This is because while the surfer waits for your response they will enquire about other properties.
4. Most potential guests are looking to tie down their flights and accommodation (and car hire) at the same time. So if it's the next day (or worse) before they get answers to all their questions, the flight prices and availability may have changed.
5. The mechanism offered for payment may be a turn off for some potential guests. SWIFT style bank transfers cost the customer c. £25, and often necessitate a visit to a bank, cheque payments have risks for the owner, there are a number of cheque scams about (the overpayment scam being the most famous), and reservation deposit schemes allows the guest to control the cancellation policy.

B. *Local 'Contact Only' Web Sites.*

These work on a similar business model to Global, but are focussed on a specific location, and can therefore provide detailed information on the locations they serve,

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

their various attractions and facilities, within their general web pages. These sites normally rank highly in search engines results when the surfer enters the location name plus 'holiday rental' or similar. While they receive less traffic, they also have less properties, and this helps the astute property owner to make sure his/her property stands out. Otherwise they have the same advantages and disadvantages as global contact only sites. One additional point to note is that they are often operated by a single property management company, who also provide services and maintenance.

C. Book and Pay on-line Sites.

Some global and local sites offer facilities to allow customers to take bookings and payments online. In addition to the web page maintenance, which work in broadly the same as way as for contact only sites, they require the owner to maintain an availability calendar and tariff matrix. When the customer makes a booking the system calculates the tariff and prompts for a payment via a common payment gateway (e.g. PayPal).

Once payment is received, the system updates the availability calendar and sends both the guest and the owner's confirmation of booking emails. Some sites work on a subscription basis and others on a commission or fixed fee per transaction basis.

The advantages of this model are that:

1. Potential guest can finalise their holiday flights and accommodation (and car hire) in one session
2. The volume of enquiries, to which you need to be highly responsive, is reduced. Although a key to this is ensuring frequently asked questions are answered in your web page content
3. Your payment is secure, and you - the owner- has control over any cancellation policy

The main issues with this system are:

- If you don't keep your availability calendar up to date, you can end up double booked – which can be expensive or get you a very bad reputation
- Some customers may prefer easy payment terms (i.e. reservation deposit of 10%, followed by full payment 4 weeks before departure like a travel agent may provide).

Hints & Tips

If your intention is to make an income from your vacation rental property then it's important that you have a secure home computing environment with access to email and the internet. You should consider having more than one computer, perhaps a small notebook with wireless capabilities (so that you can check your email while you're away), or a smartphone or pda phone with synchronised email capabilities. Ensure your virus protection is well maintained, and that you take routine back-ups of your mail file, and other key records.

D. Do-it-yourself web pages.

It is pretty easy to build your own web site and make the pages look pretty smart. The advantages of this approach is that you get the look and feel that you want, and you don't have to pay anyone else for your web presence, the disadvantages are that you will get very limited browser traffic, and will score poorly on search engine results.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Nevertheless this approach can be effective if you are operating in niche markets and using other mechanisms to promote your property.

saidiavacations.com is a local, book and pay on-line site that offer features to help owners work as a community and integrate with service providers.

Just having your property details published on a web page is not going to maximise your yield on its own. You need to get people to visit your site and that means more work. Let's look at some other channels:

E. Advertising in magazines, newspapers, and other publications

Coupled with a web presence and/or a quality brochure, advertising in publications aligned to your target market can be an effective mechanism to increase bookings. As our French 'baby friendly' properties example has shown, if you can identify publications that are tightly aligned with your target market, this channel can be highly effective.

Always remember that what you're trying to achieve is to encourage potential customers to view your specific property on your web pages, or request a brochure. Very few customers will purchase from an advert directly - they will seek the extra comfort they get from the photographs and text on your web page or brochure.

F. Local advertising

Many people like to buy from local suppliers or businesses. The local factor can provide you with a very low cost route to your target market, because you can produce your own advert which you post on notice boards. Certainly you will get sales from posting an advert on your workplace notice board, but in addition, go for local advertising aligned with your target markets.

If your target market is golfers then advertise at your local golf clubs, for a sailing market at the sailing club, and so on.

When advertising locally, always include your phone number (its the area code that catches the eye), offer a discount for customers who quote a promotional code (printed on the advert), and include some printed slips with the property and contact details on, that people can tear off (in the owners section at saidiavacations.com, there's information on a simple solution for creating and linking tear off slips).

G. Travel agents

Some independent travel agents will sell holidays in your property on a commission basis. Although expensive (as the commissions expected can be high), this channel can be effective with some target markets. Client's who have no access to the internet, no confidence in the internet, or perceive the travel agency services helps them align the right holiday with their needs.

All travel agents will have 'villa' style brochures which are worth considering.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

H. Brochures

Developing a brochure can also be a very effective aid, allowing you to use other marketing channels to receive phone enquiries, you can then send out brochures and booking forms. Brochures may also be used in combination with travel agents. The disadvantage of brochure is the production costs and limited lifespan.

At the very top end of the market, high quality, professionally produced brochures are expected. Mid-range properties can provide a reasonable quality downloadable brochure which includes higher quality photographs of the property and location (there's a template on the owners pages on saidiavacations.com).

Because it's a common conversation topic (everyone likes to talk about where they are going on holiday, or where they've just been), providing a brochure can really help 'word of mouth' sales.

I. Overflow

Being overflow accommodation for local hotel owners and other property owners can be very useful, particularly for picking up business outside your target markets.

Get to know the local hotel owners and ask them whether they would be happy to use your property for overflow accommodation. They will certainly want to inspect the property, and ensure it meets their standards, they may also wish to deliver services when their guests are using the property (e.g. tea and coffee making, changing beds, etc). The advantage of this mechanism is that you can pick up business that you're just not targeting (e.g. the business sector, or wedding guests). The disadvantage is that the hotel will want a cut.

Working with a community of other property owners (ideally with similar properties) is also a great route to market. Any enquiries that one member of the community cannot service are passed onto other members of the community, group bookings can be managed, it provides options for rescheduling, and can help in the event of a disaster (i.e. if you have something like a water leak and your property is just not habitable for a short period). Your probability of filling a cancellation is increased, and you also have the opportunity to use common service providers and gain a bit of buying power or influence.

To maximise your yield you need to select the channels that best align to your target markets. In principle, the more channels to market that you can use the better, but you need to balance this against the cost (all channels have costs) and also be able to service each channel (e.g. there's no point in having lots of telephone enquiries unless you can answer the phone). So you need to think about which mechanisms best suite your personal circumstances.

Often the formula is about combining channels to enable you to be really responsive. For example, you can achieve this by advertising including the web address for your 'book online' service, or advertising and including an agents phone number so they pick up the calls on your behalf.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Hints & Tips

It's absolutely key to maximising yield to be highly responsive. Consider getting a second phone line installed and/or a specific mobile phone for your enquiries. Answer all calls or emails promptly and professionally, and if you use an answering service, check it regularly, and return all your calls.

One area that I haven't mentioned is language. Some websites offer facilities to enable you to publish your property details in various languages. If you're going to do this you need to think it through:

1. The translations for the site need to be professional. Customer's are unlikely to buy anything that been translated using an on-line translator, or schoolboy standard stuff.
2. You need to be able to respond to enquiries (whether over the telephone or by email) in the chosen languages.

So advertising in multiple languages needs to be reserved for those few of us who very talented in this respect, or those prepared to pay for agents that are.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Step 5 – Pricing

First of all you need to understand your costs and your objective. The purpose of understanding your costs is to appreciate how you are meeting your objective, and not to determine pricing.

To understand your costs, you need to develop a spreadsheet (example below). This spreadsheet will comprise all of your fixed costs (i.e. the items you are paying for whether you have guests in the property or not), such as mortgage or loan repayment costs, any subscription based advertising costs, TV subscriptions, golf memberships, etc. Plus your variable costs (i.e. the costs which are only incurred when the property is occupied) such as cleaning costs, utility bills, etc.

Fixed Costs	Amount	Period	Annual Cost	
Mortgage/Loan Repayments	£500	Month	£6,000	
Property Maintenance (inc Utilities)	£150	Month	£1,800	
Advertising Costs	£250	Year	£250	
TV Subscriptions	£30	Month	£360	
Golf club membership	£450	Year	£450	
Rates & other taxes	£900	Year	£900	
Other (insurance, etc)	£350	Year	£350	
<i>Subtotal - Fixed Costs</i>			<i>£10,100</i>	
Variable Costs	Amount	Period		
Meet & Greet	£20	Week		
Cleaning	£20	Week		
Basic food & cleaning materials	£15	Week		
24 Hour telephone contact	£30	Week		
<i>Subtotal - Variable Costs</i>	<i>£85</i>			
Yield	50%	60%	70%	80%
Fixed Cost (per week)	£389	£324	£278	£243
Variable Cost (per week)	£85	£85	£85	£85
Total Cost (per week)	£474	£409	£363	£328
Selling price (per week)	£500	£500	£500	£500
Weekly Gross Profit £	£26	£91	£147	£172
Weekly Gross Profit %	5.2%	18.2%	29.4%	34.4%

To understand your costs, you will need to estimate a yield. This will depend on your property location and purpose.

Many ski chalets will only rent in the winter season, and some locations have a defined low season (when everything is closed). Other locations can rent out all year round, with different target markets using the property at the various times of the year, resulting in different yields in different times of the year.

You also need to understand your objective. Some investors are looking to obtain rewards from capital appreciation and use rental as a means of offsetting loan interest, in these cases they may opt to limit the work they are prepared to put into

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

marketing their rental property. These investors may be happy with lower yields, choose to use agents to manage the property, or enter a guaranteed rental income contract.

Other investors may be looking to generate an income from rental, and are less concerned by capital appreciation. These investors are most likely to expect to put more effort into marketing their rental property, and look for maximum yields, less likely to use agents, and not wish to be constrained by a guaranteed rental income contract.

Pricing strategy is more about what the market will stand, or expect to pay. Customers expect to pay for quality, so if you price to low, yet market your property as luxury, then the customer will not believe the property is luxury.

Customers expect to pay more in high season, than mid season or low season. For example, family beach locations can expect to return a premium during the school holidays, etc. Some target markets will expect to pay more than others and some channels have higher costs which you may wish to reflect in your prices.

It's essential to do some research to help you set your prices. There are many sources of intelligence:

1. Your competition - similar properties advertised on the web at the same or similar location, or advertised in publications aligned with your target markets.
2. Travel agents brochures (especially good for understanding the premium in the various seasons at each location)
3. Hotel prices in the locality. Where you can compare the star rating with the price, and rate your property against the hotels standard of accommodation.

Once you've completed your research, you will normally identify a lower and upper range for the various seasons, and your target markets. You can then position your pricing appropriately in this range. You can decide whether to charge more for specific attributes or benefits that you may offer that your competitors do not, or alternatively, price similarly trusting that these additional facilities will mean that you get the bookings and better yield as a result.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Step 6 - Delivering the product (repeat business and recommendations)

Every time you get a booking you want that guest to become a regular customer, come back year after year, and tell all their friends and relations what a wonderful time they've had. To achieve this you need to think about what you can do to help your guests have a great holiday. Firstly the basics:

- Your property must be clean - if its not then in many warmer climates you'll be quickly invaded by non-paying and unwelcome guests with six or eight legs, and it will take some time to evict them.
- Arrival and departure arrangements are a necessity - don't keep your guests hanging around - make arrangements so that they can pick up their keys and get into the property at the designated check-in time and arrangements so they can leave their luggage in a secure location on the departure date. Even better if you can arrange for a clean facility where departing guests can use the toilet, wash and shower after they have vacated their property.
- Make sure any requests you have agreed to or extras they have paid for are provided.

There follows some additional ideas that can help:

1. Make sure that your guests receive a good quality information pack (see the template in the owners section of saidiavacations.com) as soon as they have made full payment
2. Provide full contact details and send them your brochure (assuming you have one) when you receive a booking
3. Send details of attractions that your guests may like to visit
4. Help guests understand how to arrange flights, car hire, etc or anything else they need
5. Consider providing fresh flowers, a bottle of wine or other gift as a thank you
6. Discretely check with your guests mid way through their holidays, and at the end of their holiday
7. Take all feedback seriously
8. Compensate guests who you (or your service providers) have let down. This doesn't have to be cash, often an apology, a bunch of flowers or a discount of their next vacation will suffice.

Follow these steps and you can build your own maximum yield formula.

If you've found this guide useful, then please let us know by using [contact us](#) on the saidiavacations.com website. We are always looking to improve, so if you have any ideas for this guide, or hints and tips that have worked for you then we'd like to hear about them.

Read on for details of how to complete the saidiavacations.com web page proforma, and some more ideas about advertising your holiday let.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Section 2 - How to complete the Webpage Proforma

As previously described, some of the information provided in this section can be applied to any promotional material whether it is a webpage, advertisement, brochure, or just a tear-off slip.

We are not going to feature those elements of the proforma which are self explanatory, but just pick out the areas where we think we can provide some guidance.

Property Details

On saidiavacations.com (or pretty much another property rental site we've seen) when prospective guests first browse properties they will see a search result where properties, that match the criteria of the search, are displayed in a random order. Displayed on this search result are the property headline photo, the first paragraph of your property description, the range of tariffs you offer, and the property feature icons.

First impressions are everything at this stage. Potential customers will scan your photo and the tariff range, and use this to decide whether to bother to read the introductory text. If your headline photo is poor, or the range of tariffs is outside their budget, then they will not bother to read the text. The introductory text needs to include key words which indicate that this property is aligned to their target market. Then, and only then, will they click on the 'read more' link and look at the full property details.

Your headline photo should be the best exterior photo of your property that you can obtain. Some potential guests think that if you use photos of the interior, the pool or garden as your headline picture then you're trying to hide something. The possible exception to this is Riad style properties, where the 'garden' is in an open air courtyard at the centre of the property. Some properties are more difficult than others to get this photo right (apartments for instance), but there are many examples where property developers, estate agents, and other owners have got this right - so do some research to make sure you get this right - its worth it.

A story from our research: We were checking out a number of websites for some examples of what we thought were great headline photos and poor headline photos (naturally we cannot publish these). Anyway we came across a property that had a headline photo including three people sitting on a balcony with a decent view in the background. We think the idea was to show the view, but actually the picture looked more like a very average holiday shot and your focus was drawn to the people (presumably the owners) in the foreground (which included a top less overweight bloke, and two middle aged ladies in T-shirts). Our initial thought was that this property really wasn't worth looking at, because of the badly misjudged headline photo. Just for a laugh we clicked on the link, and there sitting behind this nightmare of a headline photo, was a really nice looking property and some excellent property details. They even had some peak time bookings. I am convinced that just by changing the headline photo this property would have been packed.

Back to the web page ...

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

When taking your own photographs its worth remembering that high definition photographs are not necessary. In fact, web pages load much more quickly with lower resolution images. Sharp, in focus, well lit and well composed pictures taken with a 1 Megapixel camera (or higher resolution camera at its lowest resolution) will suffice. At saidivacations.com we generally look to apply standard photo sizes of 165 x 124, or 240 x 160. We may therefore opt to resize and/or crop the photographs provided.

To get the key words correct in your introductory text, refer back to steps 2 and 3 above, and identify the attributes that you wish to emphasise, and from this deduce the key words to include. The introduction needs to be as inviting as possible - try to get your reader to imagine themselves relaxing in your property, maybe on a lounge on your terrace sipping a pina colada, or similar.

It's essential that you are factually accurate in your property details. If customers do complain, it's often because they consider the advertisement to be misleading or plainly incorrect.

In your property details, we recommend that you provide a brief summary of the features of each room. The details need to draw out the attributes that align with your target market (for example: Plasma TV, with subscription to sky sports and golf channel).

For each room in your property we recommend you include a photo with a caption. The captions help readers to understand which room is which (i.e. master bedroom, first bedroom, second bedroom, en-suite, main bathroom, etc.). The photos can either be included alongside the property details text, or in your photo gallery. For each photo you can also include separate 'hover text' - the text that appears when your pointer is positioned on the image. This hover text can be useful to emphasize features, interest or fun to your photos.

As well as photos of the property exterior and interior rooms, you should also include photos of communal facilities within your development like a clubhouse, playground, swimming pools, gardens, etc.

Feature Icons

Using the property feature icons you can define common property features that appear on the search result, and are may also be used by prospective guests to search for property. When identifying which features to include, read the hover text first to be sure you appreciate what the feature icon really means. As with all property details you must avoid misleading the guests.

Extras

You have the opportunity to define chargeable extras. These appear on the booking form, where your guests can select the extras that they require. When a guest has selected extras, it your responsibility as owners to ensure the extra is provided. Therefore, its better to ensure the service or product is in place before you start offering extras.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

Tariffs

You need to define weekly tariffs which apply between sets of dates, without any breaks in the dates. If you leave a gap between the dates then the guest may receive an error message when they attempt to book, or an incorrect price. It's up to you to decide how much to charge, and for what period that price will apply. You should look to set your prices for, at least, the current year. Don't forget there's no harm in setting prices for following year as well, as some guests may look to book a year ahead.

Saidiavacations.com also gives you the option to do automatic last minute reductions. For example, any bookings in the next thirty days will receive a ten percent discount on the regular tariff for that period. You need to define the period, and the discount level you provide in the proforma.

Availability Calendar

As soon as your property web page is published, guests can start making bookings, so it's important that the availability of your property is defined in advance. You will need to define when your property will become available for rent, and any bookings that you have already taken. There's absolutely nothing wrong with publishing your property web page before its available, and marking up your availability calendar accordingly. For new builds this is one way that you can have everything in place, so that you can begin to accept bookings as soon as the property is handed over, and you have your utilities and service provision in place.