



## **Central Reservation Solutions For Cooperatives**

*Definition - A tightly formed group of accommodation service providers who work in cooperation to cross market each other's service. This may include group marketing, operating a call center, and simple processes that allow consumers to book direct and members to make bookings for other members.*

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## ***Introduction***

BookingCenter provides a combination of Property Management Systems (3 different types for differing needs), Central Reservation Services, Global Distribution, and marketing intelligence services to serve association's needs - on an individual property and group basis. BookingCenter is a California company based in Sonoma County, California, USA. We work in partnership with Global Network Partners to provide international access to consumers and travel agents through the top booking systems on Earth (Sabre, WorldRes, WorldSpan, Galileo, Amadeus, AOL, etc).

An Association Cooperative enables the Association to maintain a 'single image of inventory' on their Portal and allow partner organizations (PR firms, marketing and advertising agencies, and tourism authorities) to work to create a brand image and buying network. By working together, an association can work directly with Travelocity, Expedia, Orbitz, Opodo, AOL and others. By working together, the Association can negotiate with the large travel portals to bring the association direct to the world's travelers, providing a consumer and travel agent experience at reduced commission levels.

The solution is fully integrated with a comprehensive marketing analysis and booking engine. The Booking Engine can be accessed from the Internet in a variety of ways to complete online bookings. This integrated system accomplishes the following –

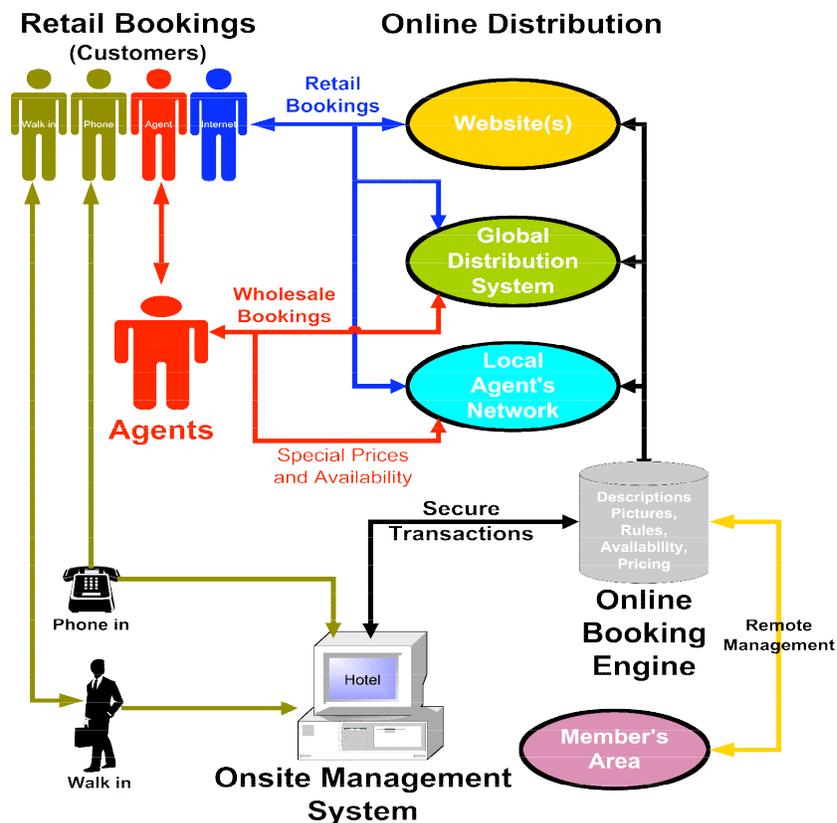
- High quality presentation of property and room features along with rules and policies for usage.
- Dynamic room pricing calculated based on customer criteria, sales channel, and pricing policies (seasons and holidays, length of stay, days of the week, etc.)
- Room Availability automatically derived from actual availability and in 'sync' with thousands of other travel sites.
- Safe and secure payment systems. Each operator can have unique advance payment rules and policies. All payments go directly to EITHER the individual member or the cooperative.
- Ultimate control to accept or reject all bookings resides with the individual inn.
- Seamless integration of Guest, Booking and Payment detail from Internet booking to the BookingCenter Property Management System (if they use BookingCenter) or to an property's Member's Area (if they use other systems).
- Central control over a diverse and growing number of Internet sales channels.
- Central Reservation Capability that allows operators to see availability, make new bookings and cancel existing bookings. No special equipment, or software required as everything runs through a simple browser interface.

The Booking Engine can be integrated into any website that will allow outside links, or urls. Clicking these links will open a new browser window that will either step the guest through an availability search, or provide property profile information.

- **Availability Search** (to be used for demonstration)  
<http://requests.bookingcenter.com/enquiry.phtml?site=DEMO>
- **Property Profile** (to be used for demonstration)  
[http://requests.bookingcenter.com/site\\_profile.phtml?site=DEMO](http://requests.bookingcenter.com/site_profile.phtml?site=DEMO)

Every link has a unique source id to provide better visibility over where bookings originate. It is also used to pay rewards to distribution sources for listing your service. We call these **Affiliate Payments**. There is no extra cost to inns for Affiliate payments as they are inclusive in basic commission rates. Affiliate payments will increase your distribution, and encourage better placement than other accommodations that don't pay rewards for bookings.

## Creating an Online Distribution Network



Customers come in 4 basic manners – Walk-in, Phone-in, through agents, or directly through websites. Customers may be repeat or referral customers, or they may be totally new. The BookingCenter system supports every sales opportunity, all integrated into one complete solution. Customers like the convenience of online booking. Accommodations like the simplicity to managing availability. The opportunity to buy online closes more

sales. The ability to further the cooperative's brand to consumers is enhanced and the value to membership is increased.

## **Covering A Variety Of Sales Opportunities**

- **The Association's Website**, enabling the Association to either transact or refer business to a member property is key to success. Using Gift Certificates as deposit payment is empowered for each property, as well as the ability to sell add-ons such as certificates, packages, robes, etc.
- **Individual Property Website(s)**, an unlimited number of websites can be activated for Online Booking using simple cut and pasting of links. BookingCenter offers the most robust room allocation and pricing controls of ANY systems in the market. Thus, participation in other local initiatives (Chamber of Commerce, Visitor's Bureau, direct Agents, etc) are offered to properties as a bonus.
- **Global Distribution System**, Sabre, WorldSpan, Amadeus, and Galileo and major Internet Travel Portals like Yahoo, Travelocity, Best Lodging, Orbitz, and WorldRes are powered through this cooperative. Sample sites below:



- **Local Agents Network**, Local Agents are Regional and Local Tourism Authorities, Booking Agents and other operators. Online Booking provides low cost solutions to serve information to a broad network of resellers.
- **Member's Area**, all properties will have total visibility of availability at every property in their network, making it easy to complete bookings from the cooperative's website or a Call Center. Members are also able to availability and complete bookings for their associate members directly online. Properties can pay each other commissions, or make bookings on a buddy system.

## **Cost – One-time Fees and Ongoing Fees**

**One-time Fees for Properties** – Each property in the association will need to choose a way to connect to the system. Many will be using a Property Management System such as BookingCenter, GuestTracker, Rezovations, etc. For those who require a new service to participate, BookingCenter is happy to provide personal assistance to come aboard.

**Package 1: BookingCenter Quick Start – Lite \$995**

Suitable for accommodations with less than 10 rooms.

**Includes:**

- [BookingCenter Lite](#) with Network *Property Management Software* (PMS).
  - Network Add-On
  - Complete customization of the PMS.
  - PMS set up to synchronize with bookings from inn's site and the Global Booking Network.
  - 150 minute telephone orientation and training for your staff.
  - 3-months free support.
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**Package 2: BookingCenter Quick Start – Pro \$1,495**

Suitable for accommodations with more than 10 rooms.

**Includes:**

- [BookingCenter Pro](#) *Property Management Software* (PMS).
  - Complete customization of the PMS.
  - 150 minute telephone orientation and training for inn staff.
  - Internet Booking Engine installation
  - PMS set up to synchronize with bookings from inn's site and the Global Booking Network.
  - 3-months free support.
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**Package 3: Management Tool – \$395**

Suitable for any member who does not desire to run BookingCenter software at their location.

**Includes:**

- Complete customization of the Management Tool with the inn's data (<http://manage.bookingcenter.com> or demo at <http://www.BookingCenter.com/demo>).
- 120 minute telephone orientation and training for the inn staff.
- Internet Booking Engine installation on the property's website (optional)
- Complete set up to the Global Booking Network.
- Ongoing free support.

All locations will need a computer, either Mac or PC. Each location will also need a second phone line for a dial up Internet connection or a broadband connection. It is also recommended to have a website for individual properties.

**Ongoing Fees** –Great flexibility in the business model can be offered, as the Association knows best what will work for their members.

Commissions are a great way to charge for bookings, but there are other models that work - and the cooperative can work with these models as well. For example, we can work out flexible commission and/or subscription and/or flat booking fees. Even a mix – determined from where the booking originates from - of all there are supported.

The only strict policy is applied to bookings occurring through a Global Network channel such as a WorldRes, Travelocity, or a GDS site. Because these business agreements require BookingCenter to pay the Network Agent (WorldRes, Sabre, Galileo, etc) up to 11% of the booking fee, these bookings require a commissions charge. Only 'completed & paid' bookings, not booking attempts or early check-outs, are liable for commissions.

For a cooperative, fees vary based on the source of the bookings. An *example* fee structure might be:

1. **Retail (5% commission or \$5 flat fee)** - any booking that does not involve an agent or the GDS. Typically, these are retail direct bookings that come from consumers booking direct at [www.Association.com](http://www.Association.com) or links on the individual websites.
2. **Agent Sales (5% + the agreed Agent's commission)** – Agents have the ability to log in and see special room availability and pricing specific to each Agent from each property. Agents can complete bookings online without the hassle of calling for availability or even confirmation. All advance payments are paid directly to the property. Properties and Agents have online administration facility to track bookings to completion – the Agents Area (<http://agents.bookingcenter.com>) and the Portal Admin. This system provides a low cost and efficient alternative to existing agent systems and can help your cooperative grow Agent-direct business.
3. **GDS Sales (15%)** - GDS, or Global Distribution Systems are made up of airline ticketing systems like Galileo, SABRE, WorldSpan, and Amadeus, plus over 3,900 Internet Travel Portals like Yahoo, Travelocity, WorldRes, the Pegasus Internet Distribution Systems. In some cases, travel agents will seek additional commissions.
4. **Member's Area Sales (1% or \$1 flat fee)** - This is a private area used by the accommodation to take bookings offsite. It is your Central Reservation System. No special equipment is required, just Internet access.

The Association may decide that it is appropriate for members to get a small reward (commission) for making bookings with their associate member properties. It is advised that Association's contribute a percentage of receivables *back* to a central fund. This fund can be used to pay for group marketing and advertising of the initiative.

## Tracking the Business

Accommodations have many controls that allow them to manage what rooms are available online, and at what price. Commissions (Network and Agent) are collected after bookings are completed. On the first of every month, the property accountant receives a detailed activity statement showing completed booking from the previous month. Operators reconcile their bookings, canceling all bookings that did not result in a completed stay.

Payment of Agent commissions who develop relationships with the Association can be included in this same process, or done direct to Agents. Agents usually agree to abide by the reconciliation process, leaving one simple process to manage commission payments. The system tracks all Agent relationships specific to every accommodation, assigning a commission/flat rate (controlled by the property or Association) for each booking.

All accommodation owners also have the opportunity to become Agents and get paid commissions. Commissions could be earned for booking into other Associations

accommodations, or selling complimentary services such as airport shuttle transfers, tours, etc.

BookingCenter maintains an Affiliates Program whereby we pay distribution channels for placing links that lead to online bookings. This incentive drives more sites to carry Association's listings, and may eventually result in numerous free listings.

BookingCenter or the Association pays Affiliates from the basic commission rate – there is no cost extra for the operator.

The BookingCenter Marketing Service Organization provides analytical intelligence about *who* books, from *what* sites, and at what *rates and dates*. With this service, the Association and the individual property has the capability to track the effectiveness of their Internet marketing efforts in ways that were previously impossible through website tracking programs. Examples can be viewed at:

<http://www.bookingcenter.com/products/mso.html>

## **Conclusion**

BookingCenter has proven that participation by the small, independent provider is key to an Association's success. Here is an example of a independent, 11-room owner working with BookingCenter:

Matt Parker, **Seven Seas Street Inns**, Nantucket, MA

*I would recommend speaking to...BookingCenter as probably the best company able to implement such a system for<The Association>. This is based on personal experience with the company and observing their expertise and customer service over the last 12 months. Our 11 room Inn has taken just shy of \$50,000 in on-line bookings for 2003 which represents about 15% of our total booking revenue so far this year. These bookings are coming from 3 basic sources. Dedicated travel websites such as Travelocity, Travelnow.com ( and The Association in 2004?), Travel Agent GDS systems, and directly from our web site. **The important point here is many of these bookings (25% ?) came during off peak times which otherwise would have remained unoccupied.** The argument against paying a commission is weakened significantly by the revenue that was realized by opening up a to new markets and thus improving overall occupancy and net revenue.*

BookingCenter maintains an ongoing relationship with all of our customers built upon mutual advantage. In other words, if the system doesn't work and we don't bring bookings and efficiencies, we don't get paid. Our long-term success comes from providing excellent service to your Association and its members, agents, distribution services, and of course - the Guests.

We provide ongoing development of the system and continue to look for new ways to increase the opportunity to provide value that leads to ever increasing occupancy and inn owner's satisfaction. There are many opportunities with Internet marketing that will be explored as buyers and sellers and systems mature. We have built a truly revolutionary service.

The BookingCenter system supports Association's **now** without need for any modification and we could have any system up and running in one month. And you won't

have to establish complex money handling procedures for commission collection – BookingCenter handles it all.

Adding new members is easy. Each new member simply registers the appropriate property management system or online Management Tool. Members that quit the Association will retain a valuable asset and can continue to operate their own independent online booking system.

We hope that your Association has been stimulated by the opportunities laid out here. Please feel free to contact BookingCenter with questions. We have served the independent hospitality market for over a decade and will continue doing so, hopefully in partnership with your Association.

Sincerely,

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## **Examples of Live Sites using BookingCenter**

*Please Note that these are Live Sites, so please don't complete any bookings*

*– unless you intend to take a vacation.. 😊*

**Enter Tahoe** - <http://www.entertahoe.com/>

EnterTahoe is a privately-operated concierge service in the Lake Tahoe area. They provide a one stop online booking and call center service for 100's of accommodations in the Tahoe area.

**Bruern Holiday Cottages** - <http://www.bruern.co.uk/>

Holiday rentals of high end cottages and castles in England. Look for the online booking engine embedded in their site, or click this link -

<http://requests.bookingcenter.com/enquiry.phtml?site=BRUSTA1>

**Avalon Luxury B& B** - <http://www.avalonluxuryinn.com/>

A Boutique Bed & Breakfast in Northern California. Look for the online booking engine embedded in their site, or click this link-

<http://requests.bookingcenter.com/enquiry.phtml?site=AVALON>

## **Examples of Demo Sites using BookingCenter**

These links are examples used for demonstration. Please feel free to make bookings.

- **Availability Search**

<http://requests.bookingcenter.com/enquiry.phtml?site=DEMO>

- **Property Profile**

[http://requests.bookingcenter.com/site\\_profile.phtml?site=DEMO](http://requests.bookingcenter.com/site_profile.phtml?site=DEMO)