

Urgency messaging

Exploratory analyses and next steps

October 9 2020



Objectives and methodology

The **assignment** is to "understand the movement of the price as the day approaches the check-in date" with the **goal** of supporting price-based urgency messaging implementation

Objectives

- Build <u>Framework</u> to analyze bookings
- What assumptions underly pricebased urgency messaging?
- Which bookings are propitious to what level of urgency messaging?
- Analyze data according to framework
- How can our framework inform where to focus urgency messaging?
- Design testing for urgency messaging
- How can we test our framework's assumptions and move forward with an urgency messaging test plan?

Methodology

Timeline from October 2020 to early-Nov 2020

Methods

- · Desk research on price-based urgency messaging
- Exploratory framework based on desk research
- · Data exploration and modelling

Next steps

- Meeting to present and discuss first results (10/9)
- Additional data collection and re-analysis
- Update informal meeting with PO ('are we on the right track?')
- A/B testing urgency messages according to framework
- Results presentation and decisions ('enough net value created to integrate as a feature?')

Findings and recommendations

Main findings

- There is a slightly negative relationship between booking-tocheck-in time and ADR at property level
- ADR decrease steepens as bookingto-check-in days near 0
- 23% of all bookings are made the day before or day-of check-in
- 1 in 4 bookings were made by 'dealseeking' customers

Recommendations

- Understand
 booking decision
 drivers
- Explore additional datasets/variables
- Update framework assumptions
- Test urgency messaging
- Type
- Level
- Calculate net benefit of Urgency Messaging
- Cost-Benefit analysis.
- 'Are gains from this messaging hurting us elsewhere?'

Table of contents

Framework

Analyze data

Booking price trend

Customer predisposition

Testing/next steps

Price-based urgency messaging: definitions and assumptions

Definition

- Applies to a booking
- A booking is composed of:
 - Person
 - Property/ room/ date/ duration combination
- Types of urgency messaging
 - Inventory-based
 - Price-based

Assumptions

- Truth: Used when there is actual probable rise in price
- Continuous use: effect is not dampened by repeated use
- Time-invariant effects: far-away price rises can be successfully messaged
- Versatile: can be applied to different stages of sales process/funnel

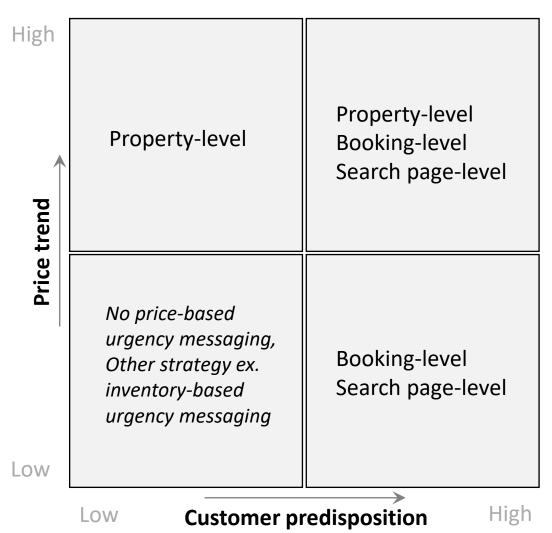
Price-based urgency messaging can be introduced along two axes: the predisposition of the customer, and the trend in price



This framework yields an initial breakdown of our bookings data into useful, testable segments, but does not address the efficacity of different urgency messaging strategies.

A simple framework to identify bookings which may benefit from pricebased urgency messaging, and at what level

(Potential level of urgency messaging intervention)



Data constraints mean that imperfect methods must be chosen to address each component of the framework

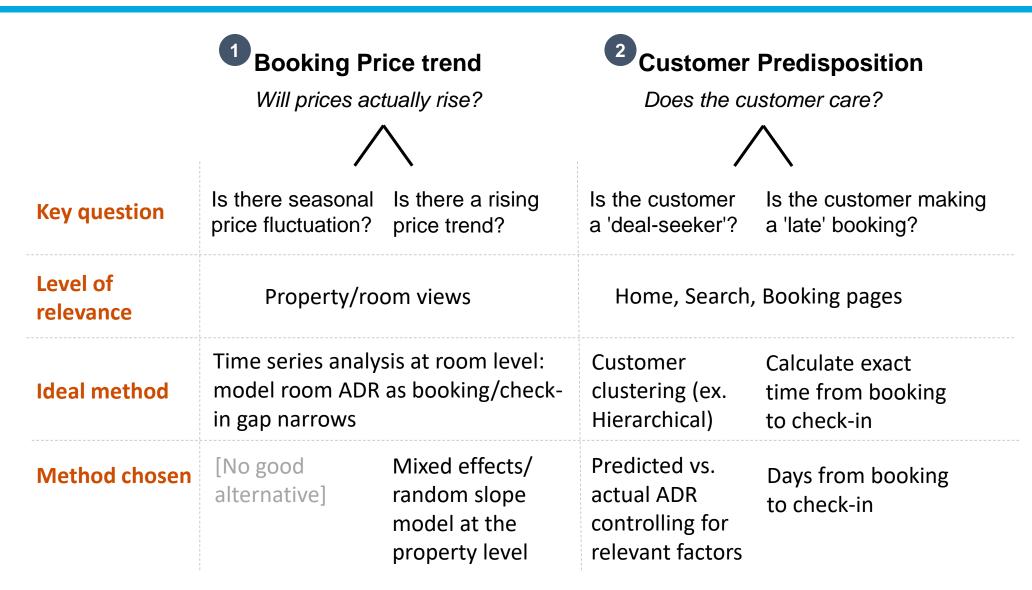


Table of contents

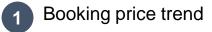
Framework

Analyze data

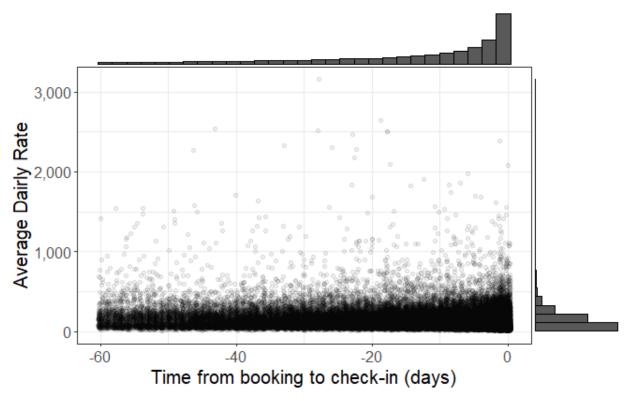
Booking price trend

Customer predisposition

Testing/next steps



ADR goes down slightly as booking-to-check-in days decrease



Most people book cheaper

15.7% of all bookings are under an average of 50 dollars a night and 44.6% of all bookings are under 100\$ a night

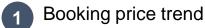
People tend to book later

- 22.9% bookings made one day in advance or on the day-of
- Only 17.3% of bookings made more than 1 month out

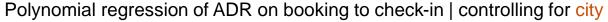
A weak negative relationship

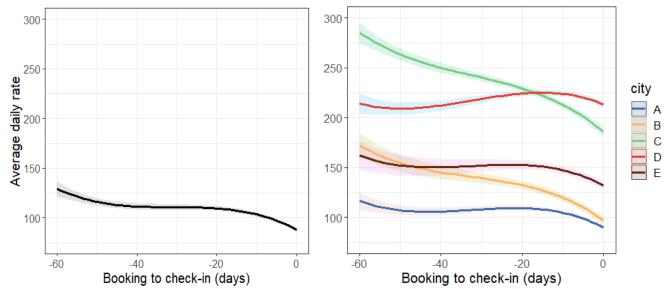
 On average, a 1-day nearer 'B2C' is associated with a 99 cent lower ADR

Almost 1 in 5 bookings are both cheaper (under 90\$) and later (5 days and sooner away)



The decline in ADR is increasing under ~20 days to check-in date, at different levels across cities

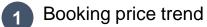




Note: 95% confidence interval displayed on estimates

- Disparity of bookings: City A accounts for 46% of all bookings
- Disparity of level: average price levels in cities C and D are higher than A, B, E
- Disparity of change: price levels drop faster overall in cities B and C as B2C declines

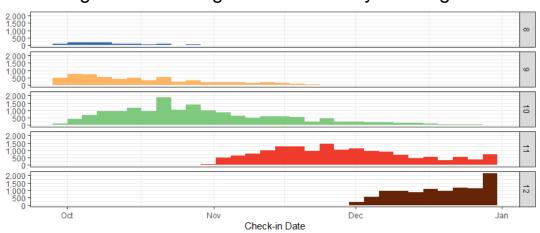
Variation in ADR between cities explains only 16.25% of total variation in ADR



Bookings made in Sept-Oct explain some of the high ADR/high 'booking to check-in gap' observed

Month	Median B-to-C days	Median ADR	% Booking City C, D	% Booking City A
August	50	114.9	46	36
Sept	26	133.1	42	41
Oct	8	113.4	35	45
Nov	8	108.4	34	47
Dec	3	109.2	30	48

Histogram of booking check-in date by booking month



- August and September bookings are highervalue, made further out
- They are more likely to be in City C and D (more expensive overall)
- However they are not more likely to be in a different type of property

Booking price trend

Some higher-ADR properties (Resorts) are still booked earlier on average

Booking value

Hotel bookings are higher-value...

Apartment bookings are lower-value...

Resort bookings are higher-value...

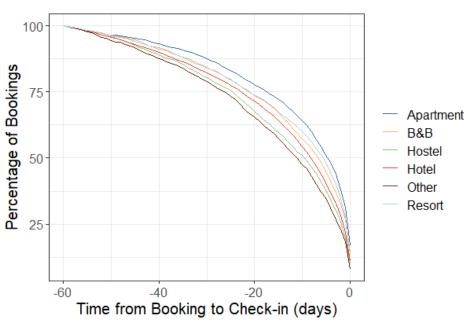
300 Average Daily Rate Apartment B&B Hostel Hotel Other Resort B&B Resort Apartment Other Property Type

Booking timeline

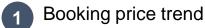
...and are booked earlier

...and are booked later than other types

...and are booked later than hotels

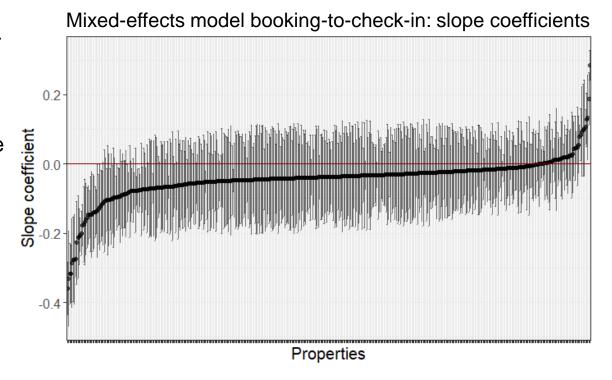


Note: boxplot outliers were excluded above ADR = 300 (total 10% of the sample)



A property level analysis of ADR on 'booking to check-in gap' must account for variation seen in city, booking type and booking date¹

- Overall, a weak/null trend in ADR over booking-to-check-in by property
- 13% of slopes (61 properties)¹ are statistically significant, mainly negative
- The slopes from this model are adopted as a measure of 'booking price trend'



Why look at the property level?

- Practical reasons (data)
- Price differences between properties account for over 77% of the variation in ADR
 Confounding variables missed here
- Patterns in differentiated room quality / price over booking to check-in times

¹Only properties with 10 or more bookings were included in this process (455 total)

Table of contents

Framework

Analyze data

Booking price trend

Customer predisposition

Testing/next steps

Later and last-minute bookings are different from bookings made more in advance

Overall¹

Later bookings are more likely to be...

...in **chain hotels** (0.5 days more buffer on average than non-chains)

...made on Friday/Saturday

...for fewer days of stay (2.7 days more buffer for each additional stay day).

A 100\$ more expensive booking is expected to have 1 day's additional buffer on average.

Last minute bookings² 2-weeks+ Last minute advance bookings³ bookings Area 88.6 **Median ADR** 132 City A 51 41 % bookings City B 13 9 City C 6 20 City D 16 22 City E 13 7 Hotel 69 73 % properties Hostel 5 6 Resort 9 **Serviced Apt** 8 5 B&B 7 5 1 67 40 stay days 2 23 34 3 10 26

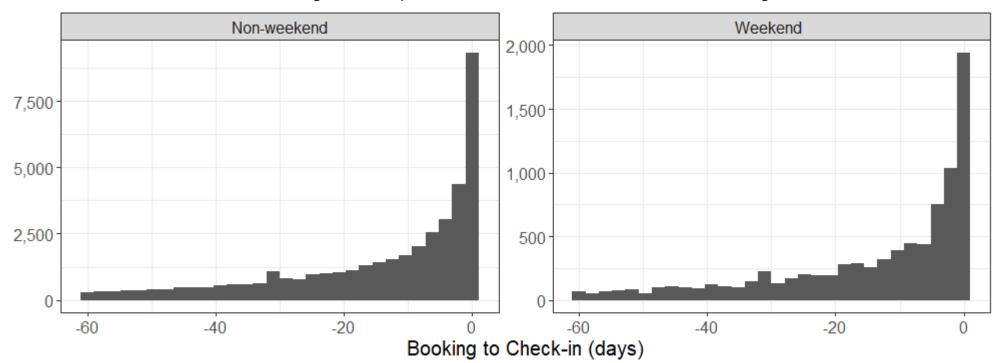
¹ In a linear model controlling for city, property type, star rating, hotel chain, booking date, days stayed and day of the week booking. See annex for model output.

² All row-wise group differences statistically significant (tested with 2proportion Z-test)

³ Calculated as bookings made 1 day before check-in or day-of check-in

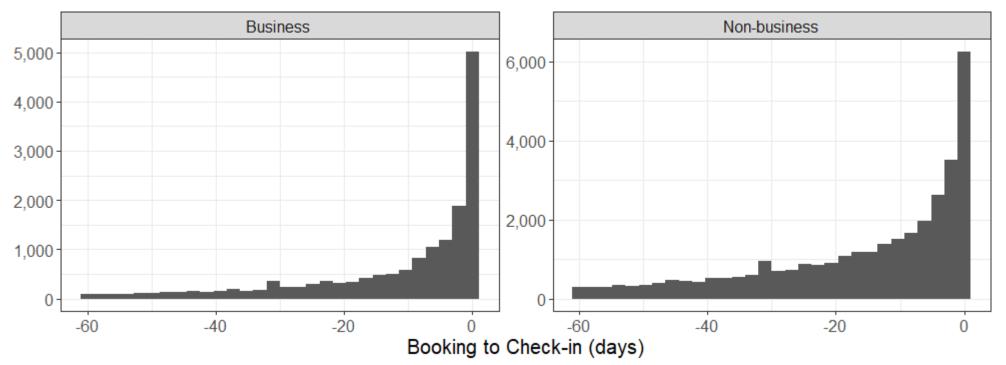
Weekend trips (Saturday check-in and Sat/Sun check-out) are not more spontaneous than other bookings

Histogram comparison, Weekend/Non-Weekend bookings



Business travelers¹ are more likely to make last-minute bookings

Histogram comparison, Business/Non-Business bookings



- Business bookings are made on average 4.3 days closer to check-in time
- Business bookings are lower-value: accounting for city differences, 23 dollars less per booking²

¹ Business trips are defined here as trips with check-in day between Monday and Friday, which last a single day.

² See annex for model output

Creating a measure of the lateness of booking, using the days between booking and check-in

Those who book late

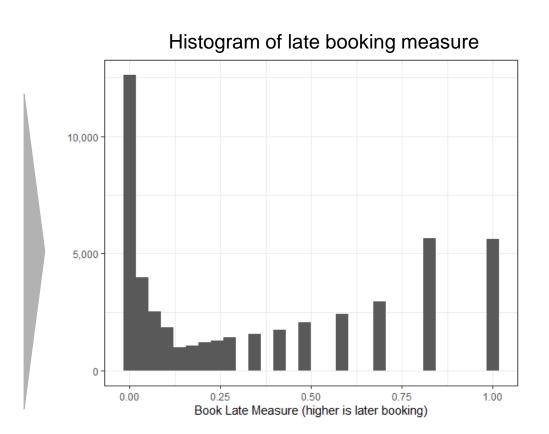
Definition

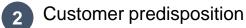
When bookings are done with little time to spare from start of stay (penalizing bookings made farther out less and less)

Measurement

Late booking = λ^k

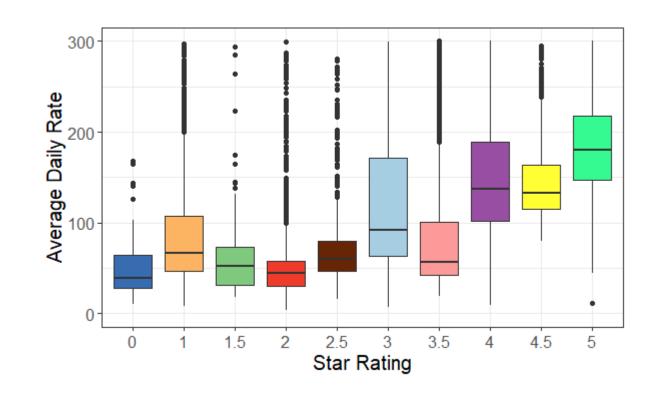
Where *k* is the booking-to-checkin days and λ is a constant (here $\lambda = 1.2$ is chosen)





Some low-starred bookings are not 'worth it' –the same price yields similar high-and low-star bookings

- When controlling for city, the average 2-starred booking is statistically indistinguishable from the average 0-star booking in ADR
- We could consider bookings at good cost-tostar ratios as done by 'deal-seekers'.



Creating a measure of the deal-seeking bookings, using the residuals on a regression of ADR on city and star rating

Deal seekers

Definition

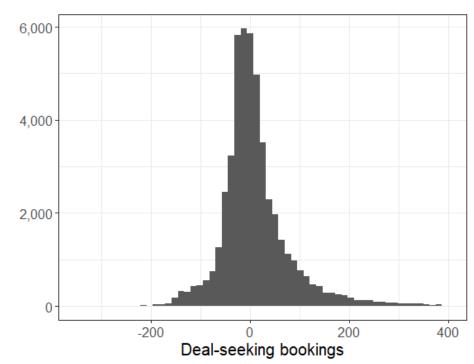
When bookings perform well in price compared to their star rating, controlling for the city

Measurement

 $ADR_{actual} - ADR_{predicted}$

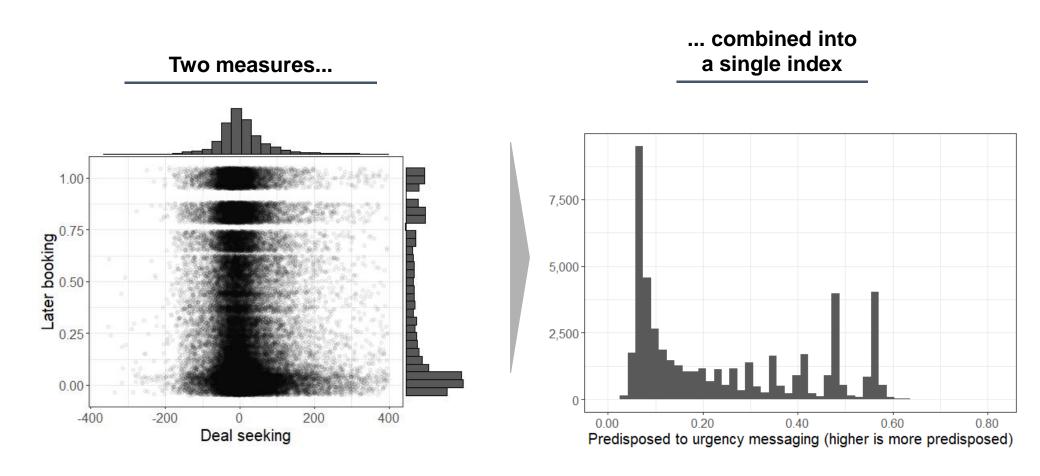
Where ADR_{actual} is the booking's ADR and $ADR_{predicted}$ is the fitted value of log ADR regressed on city and star rating

Histogram of deal-seeking measure

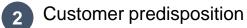


Note: Outliers were excluded above 400 for the histogram

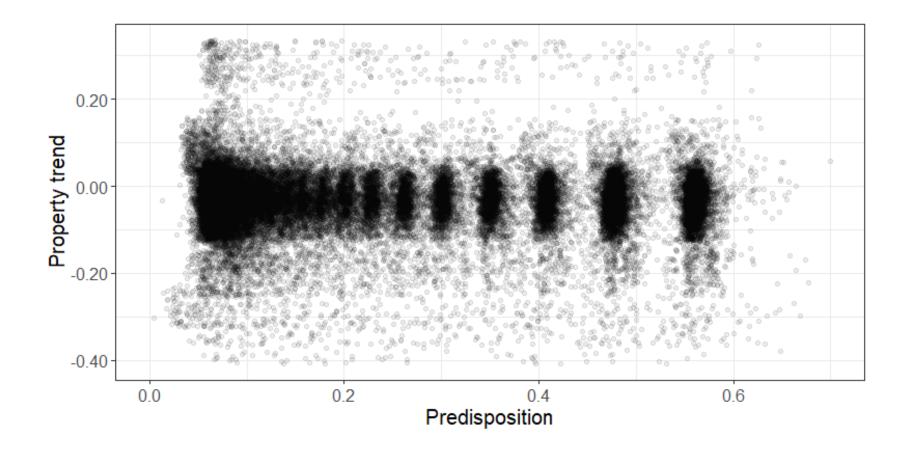
Scaling and averaging 'late bookings' and 'deal-seeking' yields an index of predisposition to urgency messaging



Note: Variables scaled using min-max scaling and combined by simple average



Predisposition to urgency messaging and property trend framework together



Predisposition to urgency messaging and property trend framework together



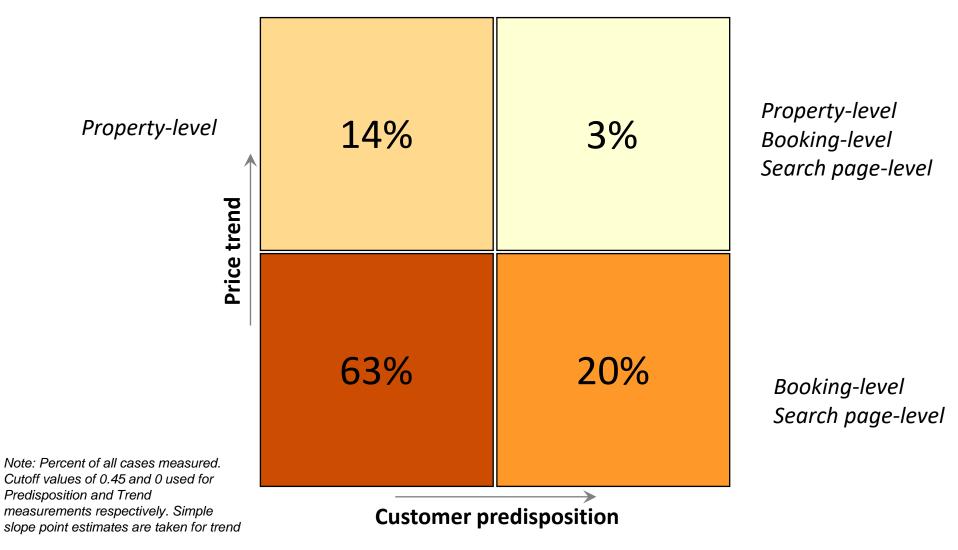


Table of contents

Framework

Analyze data

Booking price trend

Customer predisposition

Testing/next steps

Findings and recommendations

Main findings

- There is a slightly negative relationship between booking-tocheckin time and ADR at property level
- ADR decrease steepens as booking-to-checkin days near 0
- 23% of all bookings are made the day before or day-of check-in
- 1 in 4 bookings were made by 'deal-seeking' customers

Recommendations

- Understand what drives booking decisions
 - Explore more complete dataset
 - Update framework assumptions
- 2. Test urgency messaging
 - Target high-value sales first
 - Type
 - Level
- 3. Calculate net benefit of urgency messaging
 - 'Are gains from this messaging hurting us elsewhere?'

Next steps

Data required

- Room price over time at different bto-c levels
- Room differentiators
 - Room square meters
 - Room bed size
 - Room is suite or not
- Time from search to booking
- Method of payment
- Time of booking (hour)
- Customer previous bookings
- Specific booking/customer level data (above)
- Level at which booking stopped

Use of data

Room-level time series by date and b-to-c

	Room at B-to-C_x	10/1/2016	10/2/2016	10/3/2016	10/4/2016
	Room_a_b2c_1	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]
	Room_a_b2c_2	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]
	Room_a_b2c_3	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]
	Room_a_b2c_4	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]
	Room_a_b2c_5	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]	[ADR]

 Customer clustering analysis, profiling of customers

Framework testing

- Group covariate balance tests
- Construct 'booking success' variable

A/B testing: effect of urgency message on booking



```
Call:
lm(formula = log(ADR USD) ~ city + book 2 checkin + I(book 2 checkin^2) +
   I(book 2 checkin^3) + city * book 2 checkin, data = df)
Residuals:
             10 Median
    Min
                              3Q
                                     Max
-2.88259 -0.43681 0.00734 0.43796 3.12139
Coefficients:
                  Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
                4.332e+00 6.914e-03 626.523 < 2e-16 ***
(Intercept)
                 -3.352e-02 1.364e-02 -2.457 0.0140 *
citvB
cityC
                  5.241e-01 1.398e-02 37.478 < 2e-16 ***
         8.290e-01 1.088e-02 76.174 < 2e-16 ***
cityD
      2.418e-01 1.345e-02 17.977 < 2e-16 ***
citvE
book 2 checkin -1.790e-02 1.309e-03 -13.675 < 2e-16 ***
I(book 2 checkin^2) -5.759e-04 6.331e-05 -9.097 < 2e-16 ***
I(book 2 checkin^3) -5.649e-06 7.943e-07 -7.112 1.16e-12 ***
cityB:book 2 checkin -5.020e-03 6.467e-04 -7.763 8.44e-15 ***
cityC:book 2 checkin -6.720e-03 5.578e-04 -12.047 < 2e-16 ***
cityD:book 2 checkin 2.623e-03 5.146e-04 5.098 3.44e-07 ***
cityE:book 2 checkin 1.473e-03 7.337e-04 2.008 0.0446 *
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1
Residual standard error: 0.657 on 49049 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.2323, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2322
F-statistic: 1350 on 11 and 49049 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

```
Call:
lm(formula = log(ADR USD) ~ city + book 2 checkin + I(book 2 checkin^2) +
   I (book 2 checkin^3), data = df)
Residuals:
   Min 10 Median 30
                                Max
-2.8744 -0.4381 0.0099 0.4401 3.2029
Coefficients:
                  Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 4.324e+00 6.394e-03 676.255 < 2e-16 ***
citvB
                 3.500e-02 1.037e-02 3.373 0.000743 ***
cityC
                 6.560e-01 9.252e-03 70.904 < 2e-16 ***
        7.880e-01 7.905e-03 99.687 < 2e-16 ***
cityD
      2.271e-01 1.048e-02 21.667 < 2e-16 ***
citvE
book 2 checkin -1.768e-02 1.299e-03 -13.609 < 2e-16 ***
I(book 2 checkin^2) -5.417e-04 6.329e-05 -8.559 < 2e-16 ***
I(book 2 checkin^3) -5.484e-06 7.954e-07 -6.894 5.47e-12 ***
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1
Residual standard error: 0.6589 on 49053 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.2278, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2277
F-statistic: 2067 on 7 and 49053 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

```
lm(formula = book 2 checkin ~ log(ADR USD) + city + type + star rating +
      chain hotel + booking date + dayweek booked + stay days,
      data = df)
 Residuals:
               10 Median
                               30
  -49.890 -7.315 2.469 9.885 31.272
 Coefficients:
                                         Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
                                        -3.687e+03 3.518e+01 -104.792 < 2e-16 ***
  (Intercept)
                                     -3.683e+00 1.373e-01 -26.821 < 2e-16 ***
 log(ADR USD)
                                    1.960e-01 2.658e-01 0.737 0.460884
-2.129e+00 2.625e-01 -8.111 5.15e-16 ***
 citvB
 cityC
                                    1.580e+00 2.229e-01 7.089 1.37e-12 ***
1.761e+00 2.403e-01 7.328 2.38e-13 ***
1.407e+00 1.458e+00 0.966 0.334286
 cityD
 cityE
 typeBungalow
 typeGuest House / Bed & Breakfast -1.378e+00 9.230e-01 -1.493 0.135489
 typeHoliday Park / Caravan Park -7.878e+00 7.865e+00 -1.002 0.316537
                                       -2.425e-01 3.726e+00 -0.065 0.948107
 typeHome
                                       -3.619e+00 9.341e-01 -3.874 0.000107 ***
 typeHostel

        typeHostel
        -3.67e+00
        3.57e+01
        -1.571
        0.116245

        typeLove Hotel
        -2.083e+00
        7.863e+00
        -0.265
        0.791094

        typeMotel
        -1.189e+00
        2.964e+00
        -0.401
        0.688247

        typePrivate Villa
        8.408e-01
        3.322e+00
        0.253
        0.800217

        typeResort
        -2.604e+00
        9.513e-01
        -2.737
        0.006200
        **

 typeResort Villa
-1.716e+00 1.146e+00 -1.497 0.134418
dayweek bookedTue
                                       -1.027e+00 2.239e-01 -4.589 4.47e-06 ***
 davweek bookedWed
                                       -9.964e-01 2.248e-01 -4.432 9.35e-06 ***
 stay_days
                                        -2.657e+00 8.100e-02 -32.798 < 2e-16 ***
 Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
 Residual standard error: 13.53 on 49022 degrees of freedom
 Multiple R-squared: 0.2563, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2557
 F-statistic: 444.6 on 38 and 49022 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

```
Linear mixed model fit by maximum likelihood ['lmerMod']
 Formula: ADR USD ~ book 2 checkin + (book 2 checkin | hotel id) + city +
     star rating + type + month booked + dayweek checkin + dayweek booked +
    stay days
    Data: df prop
              BIC logLik deviance df.resid
  66779.7 67192.0 -33342.8 66685.7 47674
 Scaled residuals:
     Min 10 Median 30
 -11.9080 -0.3770 -0.0759 0.2199 20.0635
 Random effects:
  Groups Name
                        Variance Std.Dev. Corr
  hotel id (Intercept) 0.692358 0.83208
        book 2 checkin 0.006485 0.08053 -0.22
 Residual 0.223778 0.47305
 Number of obs: 47721, groups: hotel_id, 455
 Fixed effects:
typeResort Villa
                                                                                                                 0.192144 0.498921
                                 Estimate Std. Error t value
                                                                                                                                           0.385
                                                                   typeRyokan
                                                                                                               -0.363056
                                                                                                                             0.645876 -0.562
                                                                    typeServiced Apartment
                                                                                                               -0.304157
                                                                                                                             0.456849 -0.666
                                                                   month booked9
                                                                                                                 0.063229
                                                                                                                             0.016926
                                                                                                                                             3.736
                                                                   month booked10
                                                                                                                 0.076544
                                                                                                                             0.016837
                                                                                                                                              4.546
                                                                   month booked11
                                                                                                                0.092249
                                                                                                                             0.016926
                                                                                                                                              5.450
                                                                   month booked12
                                                                                                                0.134637 0.017606
                                                                                                                                            7.647
                                                                   dayweek checkinMon
                                                                                                               -0.206756 0.008421 -24.554
                                                                    dayweek checkinSat
                                                                                                                0.040200
                                                                                                                             0.007222
                                                                   dayweek checkinSun
                                                                                                               -0.196842 0.008120 -24.241
                                                                   dayweek checkinThu
                                                                                                               -0.068536
                                                                                                                             0.007857 -8.722
                                                                   dayweek checkinTue
                                                                                                               -0.193809
                                                                                                                             0.008399 -23.076
                                                                    dayweek checkinWed
                                                                                                               -0.139251 0.008212 -16.958
                                                                   dayweek bookedMon
                                                                                                               0.029400
                                                                                                                             0.008103
                                                                                                                                             3.628
 typeGuest House / Bed & Breakfast -0.199067   0.437433   -0.455

        typeHome
        -0.32480
        0.437433
        -0.455

        typeHostel
        -0.032480
        0.944857
        -0.034

        typeHostel
        -0.411249
        0.443529
        -0.927

        typeHotel
        -0.321680
        0.432231
        -0.744

        typeMotel
        -0.355723
        1.048289
        -0.339

        typeResort
        -0.092185
        0.450079
        -0.205

                                                                   dayweek bookedSat
                                                                                                               -0.001501
                                                                                                                             0.008546 -0.176
                                                                    dayweek bookedSun
                                                                                                                0.012542
                                                                                                                             0.008555
                                                                                                                                            1.466
                                                                   dayweek bookedThu
                                                                                                                0.013624
                                                                                                                             0.008076
                                                                                                                                            1.687
                                                                   dayweek bookedTue
                                                                                                                 0.017625
                                                                                                                               0.008083
                                                                                                                                              2.180
                                                                                                                               0.008123
                                                                                                                                              2.528
                                                                    dayweek bookedWed
                                                                                                                 0.020532
                                                                   stay days
                                                                                                                 0.014187
                                                                                                                               0.003056
```

```
Call:
lm(formula = ADR USD ~ business, data = df business)
Residuals:
   Min 10 Median 30
                                Max
-151.77 -82.91 -35.36 43.26 3000.47
Coefficients:
                   Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
                           1.070 122.18 <2e-16 ***
(Intercept)
                  130.736
businessNon-business 25.658 1.301 19.72 <2e-16 ***
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1
Residual standard error: 134.8 on 49059 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.007866, Adjusted R-squared: 0.007846
F-statistic: 389 on 1 and 49059 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

```
Call:
lm(formula = ADR USD ~ business + city, data = df business)
Residuals:
    Min 10 Median 30
                                          Max
-212.22 -59.73 -24.66 34.36 2925.25
Coefficients:
                       Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)
                         85.522 1.131 75.619 <2e-16 ***

      businessNon-business
      23.140
      1.194
      19.373
      <2e-16 ***</td>

      cityB
      16.235
      1.943
      8.357
      <2e-16 ***</td>

      cityC
      122.949
      1.711
      71.878
      <2e-16 ***</td>

                       cityD
                       39.072 1.965 19.888 <2e-16 ***
cityE
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1
Residual standard error: 123.4 on 49055 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.1689, Adjusted R-squared: 0.1688
F-statistic: 1994 on 5 and 49055 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

```
Call:
lm(formula = log(ADR USD) ~ city + relevel(star rating, ref = "2"),
   data = df
Residuals:
              10 Median
    Min
                               30
                                      Max
-2.87391 -0.30978 -0.00985 0.28890 3.11019
Coefficients:
                                 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
                                 3.634725 0.009908 366.841 <2e-16 ***
(Intercept)
                                 0.073464 0.007549 9.732 <2e-16 ***
cityB
                                           0.006983 151.345 <2e-16 ***
cityC
                                 1.056841
cityD
                                            0.006202 147.952 <2e-16 ***
                                  0.917540
                                            0.007502 29.286 <2e-16 ***
cityE
                                 0.219714
                                            0.036731 0.804 0.421
relevel (star rating, ref = "2") 0 0.029547
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")1
                                            0.013132 -18.851 <2e-16 ***
                                 -0.247551
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")1.5 -0.347405
                                            0.023921 -14.523 <2e-16 ***
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")2.5 0.401168
                                            0.014355 27.946 <2e-16 ***
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")3 0.565068
                                            0.010498 53.826 <2e-16 ***
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")3.5 0.479180
                                            0.011390 42.071 <2e-16 ***
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")4 1.072017
                                            0.010486 102.232
                                                             <2e-16 ***
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")4.5 1.372928
                                                             <2e-16 ***
                                            0.017097 80.304
relevel(star rating, ref = "2")5 1.658667
                                            0.012042 137.740 <2e-16 ***
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1
Residual standard error: 0.4636 on 49047 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.6178, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6177
F-statistic: 6098 on 13 and 49047 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16
```