

REVISION 3.0

# Listing Quality



HomeAway, Inc.  
is the world's  
leading online  
vacation rental  
marketplace.

HomeAway, Inc. is the world's leading online vacation rental marketplace. Everything we do revolves around being the best marketplace for Property Managers, Homeowners, and their Solution Providers.

We constantly work to improve the quality of the listings available on our websites. By contributing to this effort, Property Managers and their Solution Providers can help improve the experience for travelers searching on our sites, thereby increasing inquiries and bookings for their properties. We also reward high-quality listings by improving their ranking within subscription levels. To improve your ranking within your level, make sure you do the following:

- Enable online booking when available
- Upload the maximum number of photos
- Maintain an integrated calendar
- Collect positive and recent reviews for each listing
- Ensure that you have entered valid address and latitude/longitude information
- Integrate your rates when possible



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Listing Quality Scorecard Information

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## Listing Quality Scorecard

The industry is changing, and travelers searching for vacation rentals have high expectations when planning their travel online. HomeAway has a tool for Property Managers to meet those expectations efficiently: The Listing Quality Scorecard in the HomeAway Dashboard includes new metrics reporting to help Property Managers know which listings are more apt to lead to more bookings and which ones would benefit from additional attention. Not only is listing quality important from a traveler perspective, but after subscription level, listing quality is the most important factor in determining where listings fall in the search results. The Listing Quality Scorecard allows a Property Manager to:

- View components of listing quality
- See how their listings score overall
- Drill down to each listing to see which components of the listing could use some additional attention
- Export their scorecard data to a CSV file to more easily make updates in their software
- Positively influence their search ranking within their subscription level by improving listing quality

## Online Booking and Payments

Over 85% of travelers prefer to book online, and you can take advantage of this feature to get more bookings, as well as increase your listing score. With online booking, you will have control over your rental decision: Take 24 hours to communicate with guests and accept or decline requests right in your software. Online booking for Property Managers with integrated software requires an integration upgrade to provide travelers with up-to-the-minute quotes directly from your software, as well as streamlining your account if you have more than one. The integration upgrade also allows travelers to enter their credit card information that goes securely into your software so that you can use your own merchant service provider. Contact your Account Manager to discuss how you can get online booking added to your listings.

## Guest Reviews

Reviews are very important to travelers when making a booking decision, and travelers tell us that reviews written within the last two years are more helpful than older reviews when making a booking decision. You have two ways to get credit for reviews:

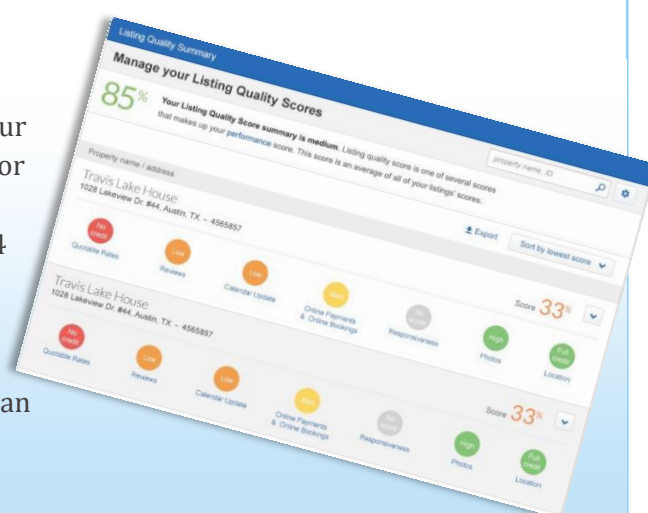
- If your software integration supports imported reviews and you have online booking, you will receive full credit for reviews that can be verified as having come from a HomeAway traveler. All other imported reviews will receive partial credit.
- You can also get full credit for reviews collected on HomeAway's site. We suggest soliciting reviews through the HomeAway Dashboard, by clicking "Reviews" on the left-side pane and selecting "Request a Review" for your property. We recommend at least 12 recent reviews.

## Photos

Travelers want to see many high quality photos for each listing. Your photo score can be maximized based on the number of bedrooms for each listed property: 0-1 bedroom listings need 19 photos, 2-3 bedroom listings need 22 photos, and 4+ bedroom listings need 24 photos to receive maximum credit.

## Rates

The highest-converting listings have accurate rates that travelers can easily understand. You can get full credit by integrating your rates.



**Location**

It is important that we have complete, accurate addresses and latitude/longitude on file for each of your listings. We will use this to improve location searches because travelers want to know where a property is located before booking. Make sure you include an accurate latitude/longitude position and correct address, including country, for each listing in your integration, so we can provide travelers with an idea of where your properties are in relation to where travelers want to be. We will not provide exact addresses to travelers on any listing.

**Calendars**

Travelers want to be able to see when your properties are available. You can get maximum credit by integrating calendars for all of your listings. Because your last calendar update date is displayed on your listing, it is important to make sure that your calendars are updated regularly.

**Responsiveness**

It is important to keep in mind that over 80% of travelers expect a response to their inquiry within 24 hours, and those that get a response within 24 hours are 55% more likely to book your property. Furthermore, travelers that get a helpful response within three hours are 130% more likely to book. Even though integrated Property Managers are not currently scored on their responsiveness, your average response time will be displayed on your property pages and can be edited by logging into your Dashboard and selecting “Brand Info” on the left-side pane. There you will find a drop-down menu with response time options, and can select the time that is most reflective of your responsiveness. Please note this includes nights and weekends, not just business hours. In the future, integrated Property Managers will be scored on responsiveness.

### Listing Quality Content Suggestions

**Headlines**

While they do not factor into your Listing Quality Score, headlines play a key role in quality listings. They are the first thing that a traveler sees on your listing, so it is important to make sure that they are attention-grabbing. Here are some important things to keep in mind when writing your headlines:

- The most effective length is around 70 characters long
- They should include property type (ex. cabin, home, condo)
- Special amenities should be highlighted (ex. hot tub, deck, WiFi)
- Describe suitability for certain groups of travelers (ex. couples, families, pet owners)
- Include proximity to local attractions (ex. beaches, theme parks, etc.)
- Should not include property IDs or addresses
- Avoid using all capital letters
- Avoid repeating headlines
- Example: *Newly Remodeled Historic Home 10 Minutes from Downtown w/ Pool and BBQ Grill*

**Descriptions**

Just like headlines, property descriptions also do not play a role in your Listing Quality Score but are heavily relied upon by travelers, so they can learn as much as possible about a property to feel comfortable enough to book it.

When writing effective descriptions, it is important to keep in mind the following:

- The most effective length is between 700-1000 characters long
- They should highlight the property’s selling points in the first sentence
- Property details should be clearly stated (ex. 4-bedroom villa, 2,500 sq. ft. home, etc.)
- Size of beds and amenities in each bedroom should be specified

**Descriptions (continued)**

- Provide details about the property's special amenities
- Describe property's suitability for certain groups (elderly, couples, families, etc.)
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Scan descriptions in software for raw HTML: Certain characters will not feed properly (i.e. !,+,",&, etc.)

**Photo Quality**

As previously mentioned, photo count factors into your Listing Quality Score. Currently, we do not score photos for quality, but we do have some suggestions on how to post photos that will attract more travelers:

- Having as many photos as possible will benefit your listings; please see the previous section on photos to see how many photos will benefit your listings the most
- The recommended resolution is 1024 x 768 pixels (horizontal/landscape orientation is best)
- The maximum photo size is 4.5 MB
- The first photo will serve as a thumbnail and should be most representative of the property
- Include exterior views, all bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, living area, other amenities, and floor plans
- Watermarks, logos, text, arrows, and photos not relating to property are not permitted
- Fill in all captions with information pertinent to the photo

**Minimum Content Requirements for Listings**

To ensure that all listings meet basic quality standards, all new listings must include the following in order to go live on our site:

- Headlines must have at least 20 characters
- Descriptions must have at least 400 characters
- Each listing must have at least 6 photos
- Bedroom and bathroom count should be included for each listing
- An accurate address and latitude/longitude is required for each property
- Updated calendar and rates information

**Thank you, and please contact your HomeAway Account Manager or Listing Quality Coordinator with any questions.**

