BookingSuite

Simplify check-in with smart online tools

How a simple tool can save you time, delight your guests – and give your profits a boost.

If you ask anyone about first impressions, they'll tell you one thing: they matter. A lot. Those first few seconds set the tone for an interaction – and can end up defining an entire relationship.

But what about the relationship between a property and their guest, the key relationship for your business?

The accommodation equivalent of any initial business handshake is check-in.

If check-in is smooth, personable and free of complications, your guest will form a good impression of you and your property – and this can carry through the whole stay, all the way to the moment they leave a review. If it isn't smooth, you might already be shaving points off your final review score before your guest has even got to their room.

What if you could turn that small but vital moment into a success, every time? That's what check-in technology offers you. Not to mention benefits like less admin, better data security and fewer cancellations – and more profit.

The best bit? Rather than eliminating the personal touch, this technology can actually help you deliver an even friendlier welcome than before.

Online check-in tools are easy to implement for your small to medium sized property and give your profits a boost.

Learn more

What is check-in technology?

Check-in has remained almost unchanged for centuries. But now, technology has been developed to help make it quicker, smoother, safer – and even more profitable for you.

Let's start by explaining what we mean by check-in technology.

It's a digital service that you, as a hospitality professional, can sign up for, usually for a monthly fee. In exchange, you'll get access to a platform that is either a software or cloud-based.

This platform is designed to manage various elements of check-in – with the aim of making everything easier for both you and your guests.

Here are some of the features you can expect:

- Automated self-check-in
- Local authority ID integration and verification
- Digital signature systems
- Secure payment methods
- Guest arrival confirmation
- Keyless system
- Direct, automated and customised communication
- Facilities, policies, and rules guide

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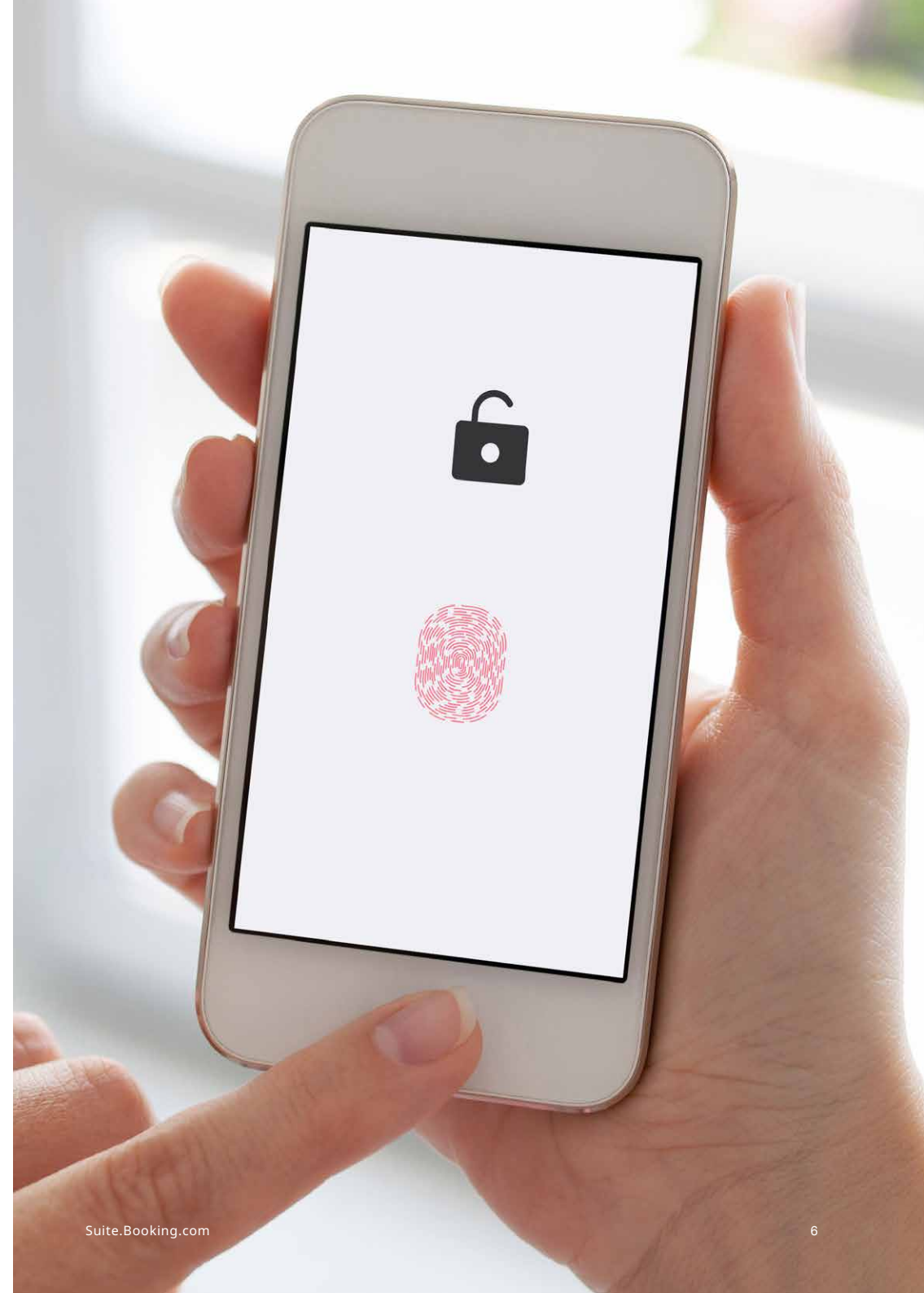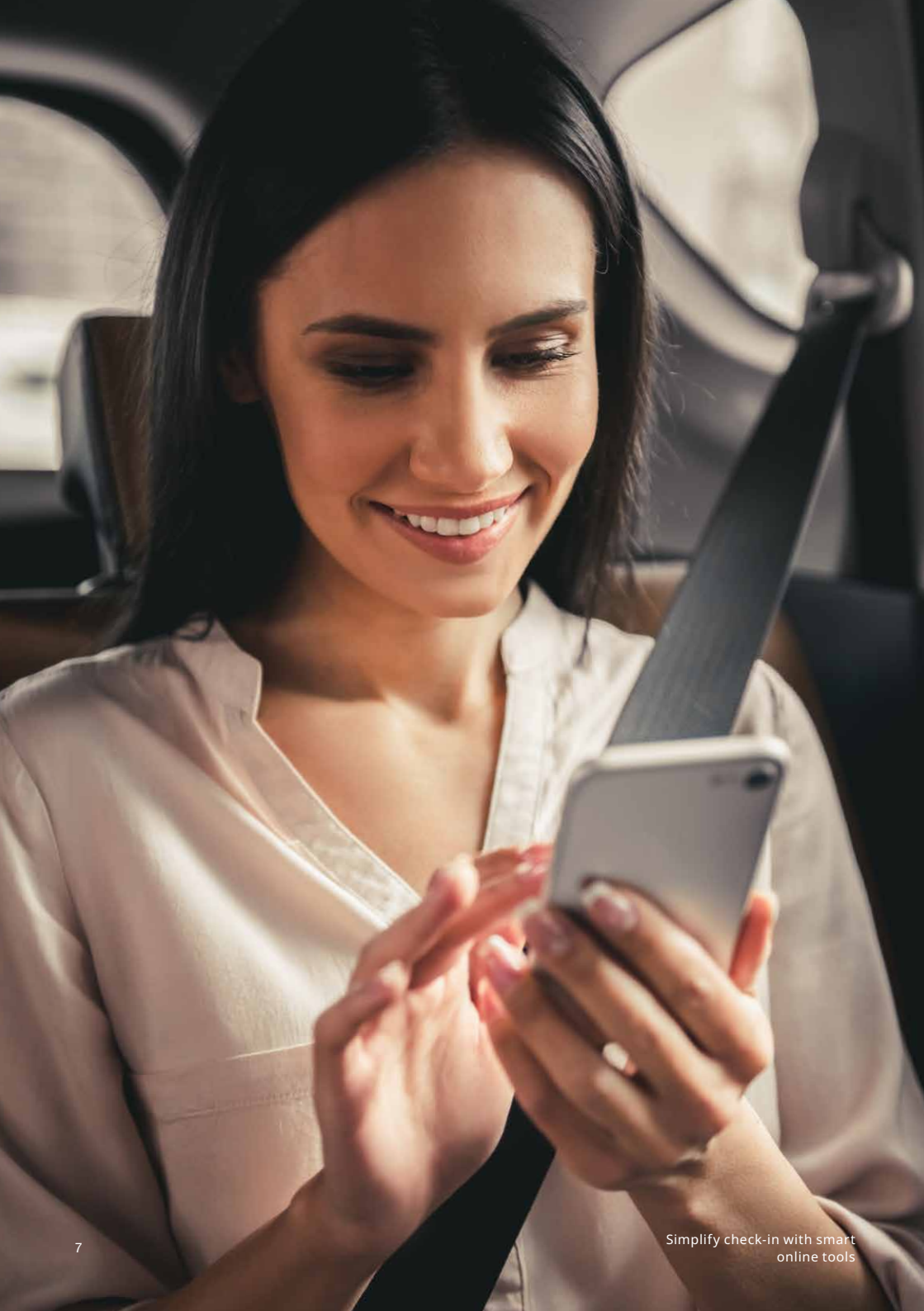
Benefit 1: Simplify check-in

When a guest arrives at your property, there's a good chance they'll be tense after their journey. Whether they've had to deal with flight delays, unfamiliar public transport or screaming kids in the back of a car, it's not until they get to their room and shut the door that they can truly start to unwind.

Think about how it affects that guest's first impression if they have to queue at reception, spend time filling out forms and waiting for you to scan their ID. It just heightens that tension – and every extra second's wait shaves a decimal point off your end review score.

Check-in technology allows you to get all that paperwork out the way before your guest arrives.

If you need your guests to sign any forms, you can automatically send them a link to those forms a few days before they arrive. They can then complete that process digitally, within a couple of clicks. Any ID documents can be photographed, sent to you and collected by the software.

Then, all of a sudden, all you need to do at check-in is meet, greet and show them to their room. No queues, no admin – just a friendly welcome free of forms, protocol or procedures.

Reduce your workload and create a more personal check-in experience for your guests with online check-in tools.

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Benefit 2: Say goodbye to paperwork

With all the form-filling sorted digitally, all those print-outs and filing cabinets become a thing of the past – meaning you can really unclutter your front desk, and your entire office.

This has several benefits, on top of the obvious physical ordering of your workspace. First, there's no need to rely on printers and scanners, which tend to fail just when you need them most (and when they do, your panic ends up rubbing off on your guests).

Having your guests' documents scanned and saved in your system makes other processes easier for you.

Depending on where your property is located, you might have to share guest details with local authorities such as the police or national tourist board. With everything digitalised – and scanned by your guests beforehand – you don't need to spend time scanning documents and uploading profiles. And when it comes to sharing

these documents with the relevant authorities, you can set the technology to do it for you – so you don't have to worry about sending any more emails with your guests' information.

Additionally, it's actually a lot safer from a data security perspective. Printed forms can be mishandled or misplaced, whereas secure check-in technology stores data in the cloud, and connects to the right systems at the right time.

Finally, you'll cut down on a lot of needless paper usage, which is great for the environment. So this technology can have the unexpected benefit of helping your property become more eco-friendly.

Handle guest documents more securely and reduce paper waste by using effient online check-in tools.

Learn more

Benefit 3: Enhance your guest's experience – and boost profits while doing it

When a guest books a stay at your property, what is it they're looking for? A quiet getaway in the country? Quality time with their family? Or just a comfy bed and easy access to business meetings?

Different guests have different expectations – but one thing they all love is to be delighted. Any little improvement to their stay counts, and every gesture adds up.

Check-in technology allows you to enhance your guest's experience. When you send your initial email, you can include information about any extra services you offer.

It could be a recommendation for a great local restaurant that serves authentic regional cuisine, or a discount on a local theme park – or even a cut-price massage after a long day's business.

This could include meals and spa services, room upgrades or even in-room bonuses. Even if they don't contract them then and there, it's good to get them thinking about that moment of delight ahead of time. And it's also a great way of starting a conversation that will help you get useful information about their particular tastes and expectations.

Don't forget what check-in looks like when you've got all the paperwork out the way beforehand, either. With no forms to fill in, you can have a normal person-to-person conversation – which is a chance to recommend possible cross-sell opportunities without it seeming too forced or formulaic.

Benefit 4: Reduce cancellations

The internet's impact on hospitality has been huge. Guests can find and book properties all over the world at the click of a button, and for properties, it's opened up a whole new set of international customers that had never been possible before.

However, there are some downsides to this, from the property's point of view. Flexible cancellation policies mean that a lot of guests now book several properties at the same time, only deciding later on which one they'll actually stay at – safe in the knowledge that they won't be penalised for cancelling the others. That's great for the guest, but obviously less so for the property – especially if it's a small one.

Check-in technology is a great way of getting buy-in from your guest. The act of filling in a form and providing payment details helps to commit them to your property above the others.

Once they've gone to the trouble of sharing information with you, it then feels like more of a hassle to undo that administrative work by cancelling.

So aside from simplifying your processes and enhancing your guests' experience, check-in technology can actually help in the key area of cancellations, too.

Guests are more committed to your property when using online check-in tools to guarantee their stay.

Learn more

Conclusion

Whenever some new technology comes out that can change people's lives for the better, it takes a while for everyone to get onboard. It can seem scary, complex and just too new – after all, what's wrong with tried and trusted methods?

But usually, once people get used to their new tools, they look back at their previous methods and smile at how inefficient and long-winded they were. And they often wonder how they ever used to manage at all.

Think of check-in technology as one of those new tools. It takes a lot of the hassle out of one of the most critical moments of a guest's stay. It cuts down on administrative work, frees you from your reliance on office equipment, and allows you to get straight into a person-to-person conversation.

Online check-in provides guests with the benefit of a smoother arrival and a more personalised set of recommendations from you.

Finally, investing in this technology can have a direct impact on your bottom line. With more opportunities to cross-sell and upsell, and fewer cancellations, it's the kind of tool that can help your business go from strength to strength.
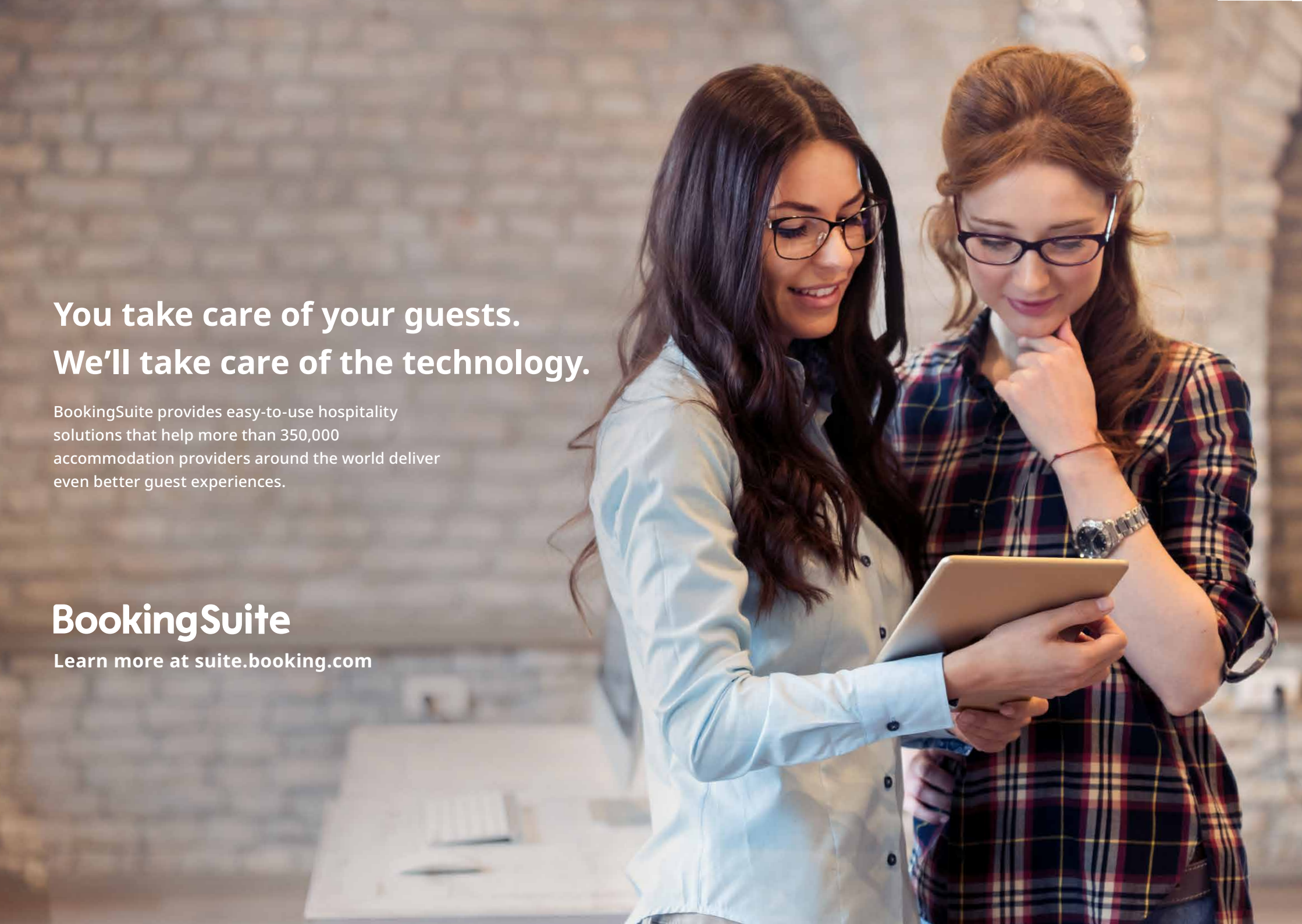
With so many products out there, it can be hard to know where to start.

Fortunately, BookingSuite's App Store simplifies that process, with a range of quality technology solutions for hospitality businesses.

All solutions are recommended by our industry experts – and they all come with a free trial period, so you can try them out to see if they're right for you.

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We'll take care of the technology.

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