

Are You Visible to AI?

A 13-Point Checklist for Independent Hoteliers

Everything on this list is free. Most of it takes an afternoon.

YOUR DIGITAL FOUNDATION

1 Google Business Profile — 100% complete
Every field filled. Photos updated regularly. Post at least weekly. Respond to every review within 48 hours. AI treats your GBP as a primary source of truth about your property.

2 Hotel schema markup on your website homepage
AI reads structured data before it reads your copy. On WordPress, Yoast Local SEO handles it without coding. Otherwise, point your developer to schema.org/Hotel.

3 FAQ page with schema markup
The 10 questions guests actually ask, marked up so AI serves them directly in voice and chat queries.

REVIEW PRESENCE

4 Respond to every Google and TripAdvisor review
Your responses are indexed by AI. Use them strategically — thank the guest, reinforce what makes your property distinct, address concerns with specificity. Generic "thanks for staying!" responses are a missed opportunity.

5 Ask every departing guest the right question
Not "how was your stay?" Ask: "Did we meet your needs — and is there anything we could have done better?" It gets specific answers instead of polite ones. 400 outcome-focused reviews from the past 12 months outranks 1,200 generic ones from 3 years ago.

6 Complete Bing Places, Yelp, and Apple Maps profiles
AI draws from multiple sources. Incomplete secondary profiles create gaps in what AI knows about your property. Each profile: identical NAP, matching hours, current photos, and your key differentiators.

CONTENT AI CAN READ

7 Neighbourhood and local area guide on your website
"Best hotel near [landmark / venue / airport / hospital]" is among the most common AI travel queries. Own those answers on your own domain before an OTA does.

8 Clear direct booking value proposition on your homepage
AI surfaces this when a guest asks "is it cheaper to book direct?" State it explicitly, above the fold — best rate guarantee, complimentary parking, early check-in, welcome amenity.

9 Use your guest reviews to populate AEO content
Feed every review into AI and ask it to find the themes — not the ratings, the use cases. What problems did guests arrive with? What outcomes did they leave with? Build a "Who Stays Here and Why" page from those patterns. Each use case is a match an AI agent can make with confidence.

FIRST-PARTY DATA — YOUR REAL MOAT

10 Email capture at every touchpoint
Booking, pre-arrival, in-stay, post-checkout. This list is yours. No OTA, no AI intermediary, no algorithm can take it from you.

11 Post-stay email sequence — minimum 3 touches
Day 1: thank you + review request. Day 7: local tips, seasonal programming. Day 30: return incentive. Most operators skip Touches 2 and 3. That is where the repeat booking lives.

12 Track where your direct bookings come from
UTM parameters on every link to your booking engine — email, social, GBP, website nav. Free to implement. Know which channel is working before you invest.

HIGH-VALUE OPTIONAL

13 Wikipedia or Wikidata entry (if your property qualifies)
Historic property, notable architecture, significant cultural landmark — these are the criteria. A Wikipedia entry dramatically increases how often AI cites and recommends your property by name. The highest-return item on this list if you qualify.

"You can't manufacture brand trust at the moment an AI is making a recommendation. You build it over years of consistent delivery. Stop optimizing for the platforms. Start optimizing for what the platforms measure." — Michael Levinson