

# THE ULTIMATE TECH STACK GUIDE

The Tools and Software That Power  
the Top Professional Vacation Rental Managers

D. BROOKE PFAUTZ



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POWER THE TOP PROFESSIONAL  
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*The Ultimate Tech Stack Guide: The Tools and Software  
That Power the Top Professional Vacation Rental  
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# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

**L**ife in the vacation rental industry is constantly evolving. And I mean constantly. What worked perfectly yesterday may feel completely outdated today, and it's almost guaranteed that what's effective today will be obsolete tomorrow.

Technology has reshaped everything from bookings to property management. For instance, automation tools now streamline guest communication, manage bookings, and optimize pricing—tasks that were once done manually by property managers. Taking advantage of the most efficient technological tools is no longer just a luxury but a necessity for staying competitive.

The challenge, however, is that the industry isn't just *evolving*—it's *accelerating*. Today, dynamic pricing tools and remote property automation software are no longer rare—they're table stakes and completely expected. Guests demand a seamless experience, from booking to check-in, and vacation rental managers (VRMs) who aren't using the latest technology will likely miss out on bookings. Consider a few of these statistics:

- » "By 2027, a staggering 83% of total revenue in the vacation rental market is projected to be generated through online sales."<sup>1</sup>
- » "Seven-in-ten (70.1%) are using artificial intelligence technology, alongside their vacation rental software, to run their business."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Statista, "Vacation Rentals - United States," Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/outlook/mmo/travel-tourism/vacation-rentals/united-states>.

2. Hostaway, "How Many Short-Term Property Managers Are Using Artificial Intelligence?" Hostaway Blog, accessed September 30, 2024, [https://www.hostaway.com/blog/ai-short-term-rental-report/#:~:text=Seven%2Din%2Dten%20\(70.1,managers%20are%20happy%20about%20it](https://www.hostaway.com/blog/ai-short-term-rental-report/#:~:text=Seven%2Din%2Dten%20(70.1,managers%20are%20happy%20about%20it).

- » “75% of travelers in 2023 credited social media posts for inspiring their travel destinations.”<sup>3</sup>

The rise of remote work has also created new opportunities as more guests look for extended stays that allow them to work while traveling. If you’re not keeping up with these trends, it won’t be long before you’re outpaced by competitors who are. While this constant evolution may seem overwhelming, it presents tremendous opportunities.

## **THE VACATION RENTAL INDUSTRY IS NOT JUST KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES; IT’S AT THE FOREFRONT OF DRIVING THEM.**

In the words of the great H. G. Wells, “Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature’s inexorable imperative.” The most successful VRMs embrace change, adopting new tools to enhance the guest experience, improve efficiency, and boost profits.

Much as you might dislike the speed of technological transformation, adaption is the key to survival.

## **A BREAKTHROUGH**

One of my enjoyable daily rhythms is posting thought-provoking content to my LinkedIn page. I emphasize thought-provoking because in a sea of AI blah, it’s easy to just post and repost content that sounds great but isn’t practical. Hands down, the content I enjoy the most is that which is linked to real-life stories. I love sharing the insights I’ve learned from others because it helps me process what I’ve learned and allows others to chime in with their own thoughts.

Sometimes, my posts feel like a dud and don’t resonate. Then, there are other times when I know I’ve connected. The likes and comments increase, and shares go up quickly. Almost a year ago, I wrote a post introducing a fresh series that dove into the world of short-term vacation rental leaders and their “tech stack essentials.”

3. Stratos Jet Charters, “Travel Booking Data Points for 2024,” *Stratos Jet Charters Blog*, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.stratosjets.com/blog/online-travel-statistics/>.



## A TECH STACK IS THE COLLECTION OF TECHNOLOGIES AND SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS USED TO POWER YOUR BUSINESS.

I wanted to learn which tools our industry leaders were using and how they were using them. Why? Because the right tools can transform businesses and enhance efficiency and productivity. In my last book, *Vacation Rental Secrets*, I interviewed several dozen VRMs and asked them to share the top ten mistakes they'd made in building their vacation rental management business. Many of them echoed the words of Maureen Regan, saying that one of their greatest regrets was, "Not getting technology as soon as we should have."<sup>4</sup>

They knew they needed to, but they didn't. It was too hard, too frustrating, and their business seemed fine as it was. Only *after* they made the change did they realize how much they'd been missing.

To develop the content for my tech stack LinkedIn series, I asked over fifty VRMs four key questions.

- *Question #1:* What core software tools do you use to power your business?
- *Question #2:* What's the latest game-changing product you've added in the last year?
- *Question #3:* What's the one software product you can't imagine parting ways with?
- *Question #4:* What's your under-the-radar product that's been a game-changer for you that others maybe haven't heard of before?

Within minutes of posting my first set of responses to these four questions, I knew I was on to something. Everyone had something to say, and for fifty-five days straight, I followed this same template and posted different VRMs' responses to these same four questions. As a result, my LinkedIn community was

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4. Brooke Pfautz, *Vacation Rental Secrets: The Short-Term Rental Industry's Top Experts Disclose their Biggest Mistakes and Share their Hard-Earned Wisdom* (Vintory Press, 2023).

deeply engaged, vendors interacted, and feedback poured in from all sides.

It became clear to me that I had tapped into something significant. If so many people from differing backgrounds were responding so positively, it was evident that I had identified a real pain point that many were experiencing. It wasn't just about one niche group. Technology as a whole was at the heart of it, and the challenges surrounding it resonated with a broader audience than I initially imagined.

## AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY

In writing this *The Ultimate Tech Stack Guide*, I aim to get your wheels turning. As a VRM, you have a tremendous opportunity.

The U.S. vacation rental market is expected to bring in over \$20 billion by 2024, with user numbers rising from 64 million in 2024 to 72 million by 2029.<sup>5</sup> This shift toward vacation rentals reflects changing travel preferences, as more people choose alternatives to traditional hotels.

A major opportunity lies in the unused supply of vacation homes in the U.S. Currently, only 15% of the 6.7 million homes in vacation rental markets are listed on platforms like Airbnb and VRBO, leaving plenty of room for growth. As more property owners realize the income potential of short-term rentals, the market is expected to expand, with institutional investors taking more interest.<sup>6</sup>

The global STR market is projected to grow at an annual rate of 11.2% from 2023 to 2030, driven by the demand for flexible and unique travel experiences. Professional management of

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5. Statista, "Vacation Rentals - United States," *Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality*, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/outlook/mmo/travel-tourism/vacation-rentals/united-states#:~:text=The%20Vacation%20Rentals%20market%20in,US%2424.78bn%20by%202029>.

6. U.S. Census Bureau, Wall Street Research. Reflects sum of 2023 U.S. housing inventory classified as "Held off market – Occasional Use," "Held off market – URE," and "Seasonal," as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.

vacation rentals is becoming more common, with companies managing anywhere from a few properties to over 300 units. This shift is helping to professionalize the industry and fuel further growth.<sup>7</sup>

That's a lot of opportunity...if you are willing to step up and take advantage of it.

## SMALL IMPROVEMENT CAN LEAD TO MONUMENTAL CHANGE

Building a strong tech system you continuously refine can be life-changing. But it doesn't happen overnight. It only happens through a series of micro improvements and building clear technological systems that serve your end goal. It's the whole Sir Edwards Deming continuous improvement idea. Even the smallest daily improvement can save massive amounts of time, energy, and resources.

In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear writes, "The purpose of building systems is to continue playing the game. True long-term thinking is goal-less thinking. It's not about any single accomplishment. It is about the cycle of endless refinement and continuous improvement."<sup>8</sup>

When Clear speaks, he often talks about the story of the British cycling team, Team Sky, which later became Team INEOS.<sup>9</sup> Team Sky was born in 2010, with one clear goal: win the

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7. Grand View Research, "Short-term Vacation Rental Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report By Booking Mode (Online/Platform-based, Offline), By Accommodation Type (Home, Resort/Condominium), By Region, And Segment Forecasts, 2023 - 2030," Grand View Research, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/short-term-vacation-rental-market-report>.

8. James Clear, *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* (Penguin Publishing Group, 2018), 27.

9. ConvertKit, "1% Better Every Day - James Clear at ConvertKit Craft + Commerce 2017," YouTube video, accessed September 30, 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNeXuCYiE0U&ab\\_channel=ConvertKit%E2%86%92SoontobeKit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNeXuCYiE0U&ab_channel=ConvertKit%E2%86%92SoontobeKit).

Tour de France within five years. Sir Dave Brailsford, who had already transformed British Cycling, brought with him his philosophy of “marginal gains.” The idea was simple but powerful—if you could improve every element of a cyclist’s performance by just 1%, all those tiny improvements would stack up to a massive advantage over time.

Brailsford and his team looked at everything. They made the bike tires lighter, adjusted the seats to be more ergonomic, and even had their outdoor racers wear indoor racing suits to cut down on drag. They split-tested things most people wouldn’t think about—like which massage gels helped recovery best—and even taught the riders how to wash their hands to avoid getting sick. They figured out what kind of pillow gave their cyclists the best sleep, making sure no stone was left unturned.

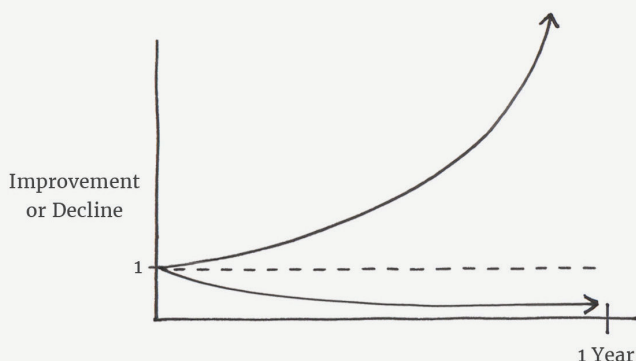
The results were incredible. Brailsford thought it would take five years to win the Tour, but they did it in just three, with Bradley Wiggins taking the title in 2012. That same year, British cyclists dominated at the London Olympics, winning 70% of the available gold medals in cycling. It’s proof that small improvements can lead to massive success when applied consistently. In fact, if the average person gets just 1% better every day, they will get 37 times better by the end of the year.<sup>10</sup>

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10. James Clear, “This Coach Improved Every Tiny Thing by 1 Percent and Here’s What Happened,” James Clear Blog, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://jamesclear.com/marginal-gains>.

# The Power of Tiny Gains

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{1\% better every day} & 1.01^{365} = 37.78 \\ \text{1\% worse every day} & 0.99^{365} = 0.03 \end{array}$$



JamesClear.com

As VRMs, we must adopt this mindset. Small technological changes that increase the efficiency of our businesses can lead to massive long-term growth.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

Almost every technology conversation we have today will likely feel outdated in just a few years. It reminds me of that famous 1994 TV exchange when Katie Couric asked her cohost Bryant Gumbel, "What is 'Internet?'" We laugh at how crazy that idea once seemed, all the while forgetting that we might be having our own "What is 'Internet?'" moments every day.

The advancements in technology and software have been nothing short of game-changing. I still remember meeting people not too long ago who used dry-erase boards and colored markers to manage their bookings and only accepted payment

by check. It's hard to imagine that now, but it shows how far we've come.

We've seen the rise of online bookings, digital locks, property management systems (PMS), and revenue management tools—all of which have completely changed how the industry operates.

In his influential 2011 essay, "Why Software is Eating the World," Marc Andreessen argued that technology companies are transforming entire industries by leveraging software to create new business models and disrupt traditional players.<sup>11</sup> This idea directly applies to the short-term rental industry, where software has not just changed the way properties are booked but redefined how the entire business operates.

Property managers who once relied on manual processes now use integrated software to automate everything—from pricing and guest communications to digital check-ins and smart home controls—making technology the true backbone of modern vacation rentals. It's no longer just about having a website or a basic property management system. Technology is now touching every part of operations. From enhancing the guest experience to managing rates and optimizing revenue, software has become an essential tool.

For example, when I started Vantage in 2007, revenue management was almost unheard of for most property managers. Today, it's hard to find anyone in the industry who isn't using some form of it.

Online bookings were just gaining traction. I remember having conversations with people who were dead set against the idea, saying things like, "We'll never allow online bookings; we need to talk to our guests." They believed that personal interaction was key to building relationships. Today, "80% of travelers worldwide prefer to book their entire trip online,"<sup>12</sup> and most

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11. Marc Andreessen, "Why Software Is Eating the World," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2011, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111903480904576512250915629460>.

12. Stratos Jet Charters, "Travel Booking Data Points for 2024," Stratos Jet Charters Blog, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.stratos-jets.com/blog/online-travel-statistics/>.

VRMs who refused to evolve are no longer in business.

Back then, major distribution channels didn't exist or were just getting started. We had to rely heavily on traditional marketing strategies to get our properties in front of potential guests. I still remember one of my first marketing campaigns—it involved placing an ad in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper. Even then, it felt a little outdated, but that was how you reached people.

It wasn't until I discovered VRBO that things really began to shift. Once I started listing properties there, the inquiries poured in, and suddenly, I didn't need to rely on traditional marketing channels anymore. Today, platforms like Airbnb, VRBO, and Booking.com have become the marketing backbone of many property management businesses.

This has sparked ongoing debates about whether these platforms empower VRMs by increasing visibility or erode their control over pricing and guest relationships. The emergence of channel management tools has helped tie everything together, making it easier to market properties across multiple platforms seamlessly.

Also, it's only recently that many VRMs have changed their means of internal communication. In *Vacation Rental Secrets*, Leslie Anne Morris wishes she had adopted new technological communication channels for her teams earlier. "Not creating shared tools for team members fast enough" was one of her greatest regrets. As she shared, "Frequently communicating through text messages has its perks—quick and easy—but when we would try to refer back to these previous conversations, the communication was quickly lost."<sup>13</sup>

Back in the day, I remember hearing from VRMs who swore they'd *never* use remote locks because they wanted to greet guests in person. And then there were those who flat-out refused to take credit cards, insisting that checks were the only way to go. Looking back now, it's almost funny to think that was the norm just ten or twenty years ago.

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13. Brooke Pfautz, *Vacation Rental Secrets: The Short-Term Rental Industry's Top Experts Disclose their Biggest Mistakes and Share their Hard-Earned Wisdom* (Vintory Press, 2023).

When I first started, I used to send out PDF instructions for my rental properties, which, while useful, was still manual and time-consuming. Today, I can send a digital guide filled with videos that answer common guest questions and even include post-stay surveys. Technology has elevated the guest experience to a level that would've been hard to imagine a few years ago, touching every single piece of the business puzzle in ways we never thought possible.

These tech advancements haven't just changed how we run things—they've made us way more productive. Technology has allowed us to create smoother, more efficient processes and offer an improved guest experience. We're now able to provide the level of convenience, security, and personalization that guests expect, all while making it easier for VRMs to handle day-to-day tasks.

## **AI IS CHANGING EVERYTHING**

It's not just the short-term rental industry—technology is now a key part of almost every industry. Where it once played a smaller role, today, companies across the board rely on multiple tech solutions to keep things running smoothly, and this trend is only growing.

There's hardly a business out there that isn't using some kind of tech to stay productive. But with that comes the challenge of finding the right solutions. Picking the wrong software can be costly, both in terms of money and frustration. As my former boss at LiveRez, Tina Upson, used to say, "Switching property management software systems is like getting two root canals a week." *Her goal?* To make it feel like just one a week! The truth is that software implementations, especially for something like a property management system that runs your entire business, are tough. But when done right, the long-term benefits are worth it.

We're also just scratching the surface regarding artificial intelligence (AI). I truly believe AI will become a massive game-changer in the vacation rental industry in the near future.



Today, it's pretty basic. Some companies already use AI tools like ChatGPT or incorporate AI into their products, but we haven't yet seen that one transformative AI tool that changes the entire industry.

I bet that within the next one to two years, we'll see an AI product that completely revolutionizes how we manage properties and interact with guests. When it does, it will simplify operations and take the industry to a whole new level.

While the rise of technology in our industry has made profound changes, in the words of my friend Steve Schwab with Casago, "Technology should make us bionic, not robotic." Technology should enhance human capabilities rather than replace them. Technology should be a tool that empowers individuals to do more, extending their abilities and efficiency rather than turning them into mechanical or mindless operators.

I'm excited to see what's on the horizon because the future of tech in this space is just getting started.

## HOW IT'S CHANGED

The biggest shift I've noticed is how deeply software has integrated itself into every aspect of running a business. Technology has now woven itself into every corner of the business, from attracting new homeowners to automating guest communication and streamlining the booking process. That said, not every software product is a perfect fit for everyone, and it's crucial to recognize that when exploring your options.

This guide is intended to be just that—a guide. It's a starting point, a tool to help you navigate the wide range of available options, but it's by no means exhaustive or definitive. Balance is everything. In *Vacation Rental Secrets*, I write,

When it comes to technology in vacation rental management, finding the right balance is key. For older VRMs, focus on providing basic tools and training. For those eager to embrace every new tech innovation, encourage drawing a line to maintain a personal touch. Prioritize

efficient operations while preserving the human connection that makes the experience special. Striking this balance allows VRMs to leverage technology while delivering exceptional, personalized guest experiences.<sup>14</sup>

I encourage you to view this guide as the beginning of your journey toward finding the best solutions for your needs. My hope is that it gives you the basic framework you need to begin your research, enabling you to dive deeper into product demos and perform your due diligence in selecting the right platform for your business.

It's also important to note that there are many incredible software products out there that may not be listed here. The absence of a product from this guide doesn't necessarily mean it isn't of high quality or won't work for you. The software landscape is vast, and what's included here largely reflects the data gathered from the people I've interviewed, which is inherently influenced by the individuals I've come into contact with.

I fully acknowledge that this selection is likely skewed based on my personal experiences, biases, and the specific group of people I've had the opportunity to engage with. For example, most of Vintory's customers and partners are based in the U.S., which means there is limited international representation within the scope of this guide.

Your needs and preferences may be quite different from others, so I encourage you to take the time to explore a wide range of products and platforms, even those not mentioned here, and consider how they align with your specific goals. I've compiled a comprehensive list of software vendors in the industry, which can be found in the appendix of this book, to assist you in your search for the right solution.

The goal is to equip you with the foundational knowledge to begin the process, but ultimately, your exploration will lead you to the right choice tailored to your business's unique needs.

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14. Brooke Pfautz, *Vacation Rental Secrets: The Short-Term Rental Industry's Top Experts Disclose their Biggest Mistakes and Share their Hard-Earned Wisdom* (Vintory Press, 2023).

# ONLY AS GOOD AS YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT

I often say *leveraging software is only as good as how much you take advantage of it*.

Many businesses invest in numerous software products with extensive capabilities, but often only use a fraction of what they offer. It's like the human brain—people typically only tap into a small percentage of its full potential. The same can be said for our inventory acquisition platform.

I've always compared it to a Ferrari, but the problem is that most users are stuck in first gear and don't know how to drive stick. They're not fully exploring its capabilities, much like giving a sixteen-year-old a Ferrari and expecting them to handle it without proper training. If users aren't properly trained and educated on the full spectrum of tools available, it's no different than giving a powerful car to someone who doesn't know how to drive it.

But if you hand that same Ferrari to an experienced race car driver, they can do amazing things with it. The same principle applies to software—those who invest time in learning and taking advantage of all its features will see far greater returns. This is why it's crucial for companies to make the most of their tools and invest in proper training and education. Without it, they're missing out on the full potential of what they've invested in.

If you're a new VRM, I challenge you to get started on the right foot. Don't make the same mistake James Mannings made by not investing "in truly scalable technology from the beginning."<sup>15</sup> Make good decisions early that will have a ripple effect on your business.

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15. VRS

## OVERCOME YOUR FEARS

Much as I might seem like some tech guru, I can assure you that is far from the case. I like what technology can do, but I don't enjoy the process of changing from one technology platform to another. I agree with Tina that this process feels like a root canal.

Change isn't easy. It can even be a bit terrifying. *What if you make the wrong decision and pick a tech service that doesn't work? What if you wind up worse than before? What if you invest a ton of time and money into a product that only makes your business more complicated?* Trust me, I get it.

Like most people, I'm naturally fearful of change. That said, I'm even *more* fearful of complacency. I fear missing out on untapped potential growth that great tools could provide. It's easy to talk about the cost of making a new decision, but it's easy to miss the unseen cost of lost potential.

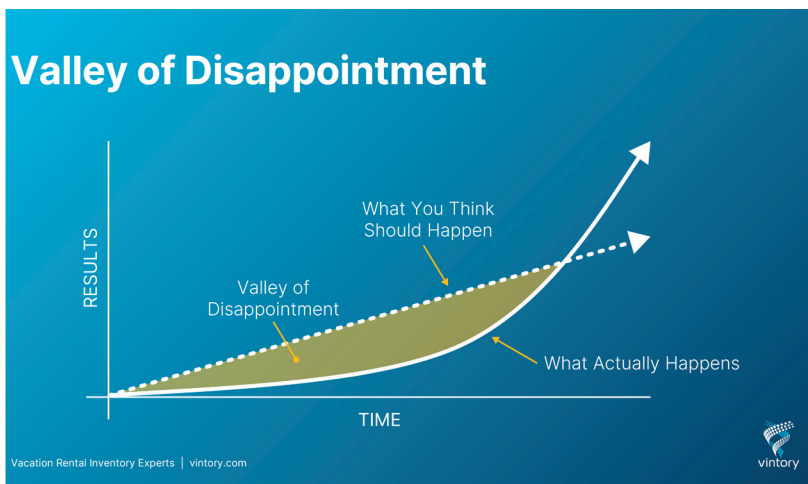
*Could one or two tech services make your life a lot easier?* Probably so. But the key is to be open to change. If you're reticent, I wish I could offer some magic pill that instantly pushes you past your fears. But since no such pill exists, I've found the secret is committing to the process and understanding that a short-term investment of time can have a major payoff in the long run.

Unfortunately, many VRMs work against themselves. They're like the person who says, "I'm so busy, I don't have time to delegate." They know they need help, but training someone feels like more effort than just doing it themselves.

However, my response to these leaders is always the same. I say, "If you don't take the time to train, you can't complain about being too busy."

It's just like going to the gym or starting a diet. You have to sacrifice some time and effort upfront, but over time, the results make it all worthwhile. It's about making that initial investment to see long-term success. If people can shift their mindset from avoiding the short-term pain to focusing on the long-term benefits, they'll be much more likely to change.

# VALLEY OF DISAPPOINTMENT



If you're a relatively new VRM, you're either at or near the "Valley of Disappointment." This is a phase that occurs early in many growth trajectories, whether in business, technology, or personal development. As you can see, the chart visually represents two distinct expectations for progress: the dotted line labeled "What You Think Should Happen" shows a steady, upward trajectory where individuals expect continuous and predictable results.

However, reality often plays out differently, as shown by the solid line, "What Actually Happens," where initial progress is slow or minimal. This gap between expectations and actual results creates a dip, called the "Valley of Disappointment." During this phase, the results don't seem to match the effort put in, causing frustration, loss of motivation, and even doubt in the overall strategy or path being followed.

This period of slowed growth can be discouraging, as you often feel like you're exerting significant energy without seeing tangible rewards. It's a critical phase because many give up during this valley, believing that success isn't achievable. I prefer to see this phase not as wasted effort, but as building potential energy, which, when released, leads to exponential growth and results. However, this graph also highlights that growth begins to accelerate once this phase is navigated, leading to results

that far exceed initial expectations.

Pushing through the “Valley of Disappointment” requires patience, perseverance, and a long-term vision. It reminds us that progress is often non-linear, and the most substantial gains frequently come after overcoming the initial hurdles. The key takeaway is that sustainable success often requires enduring the uncomfortable early stages before momentum builds, leading to compounding results.

Keep making good choices, including choosing the right technology, and trust that your good choices will compound to lead toward your success. In the words of Andrew Pokrzywinski, “Build out your tech for the company you want to be, not the company you are at the time.” If you don’t, the results can be disastrous.

## **YOU CAN ADAPT**

We all know the horror stories of companies that have failed to adapt and the costs they have paid.

In the 1980s, IBM faced a crucial decision when developing its personal computer. Instead of choosing an established operating system, they conducted extensive research and opted to partner with a small, relatively unknown company—Microsoft. This strategic decision helped turn Microsoft’s operating system into an industry standard and transformed both companies, illustrating the value of making informed, long-term decisions.

In the early 1990s, Kodak had access to groundbreaking digital photography technology but hesitated to fully embrace it. Their leadership underestimated the importance of digital solutions and failed to implement the software and technology that would have kept them at the forefront of the photography industry. While they had the right tools at their disposal, their failure to properly research, evaluate, and implement them ultimately led to their decline, underscoring the importance of adopting and integrating new technology effectively.

Don’t be IBM or Kodak. Choose to adapt. Being open to new tech strategies will involve some short-term growing pains.

Embrace them, but keep focused on the long-term rewards.

Yes, the vacation rental industry is moving fast, and if you're not keeping up, it's easy to get left behind. But here's the good news: technology isn't just a *challenge*, it's an *opportunity*. The tools available today can completely change how you run your business, from streamlining bookings to boosting your profits. It's no longer about whether you should adopt these tools, but how quickly you can do it.

One of the common practices I have my team do each week is to carve out a certain amount of time to process new technological trends. I want them to ask questions like, *What's one tool I can use to make me more efficient? How can I maximize my team's efforts? Are there any repetitive tasks I'm doing now that could be automated?*

Even if you don't consider yourself technologically savvy, I've got good news. You can learn, and you're not alone. Through reading these responses from other successful VRMs, I hope you're encouraged and inspired to grow. Maybe you don't adopt every strategy, but maybe there are one or two technological solutions that might make you 1%, 2%, or even 10% better.

In my books, that would make me willing to adapt Any. Day. Of. The. Week.

# 1. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS

**Question #1:** What are your core software tools you use to power your business?

- 1 Breezeway 35 votes
- 2 Vintory with 29 votes
- 3 Key Data with 26 votes

**Question #2:** What's the latest game-changing product you've added in the last year?

- 1 Breezeway with 10 Votes
- 2 ChatGPT with 5 Votes
- 3 Vintory, Track, and Akia with 3 Votes each

**Question #3:** We all have that one software product we can't imagine parting ways with. What's the essential tool you'd never let go of?

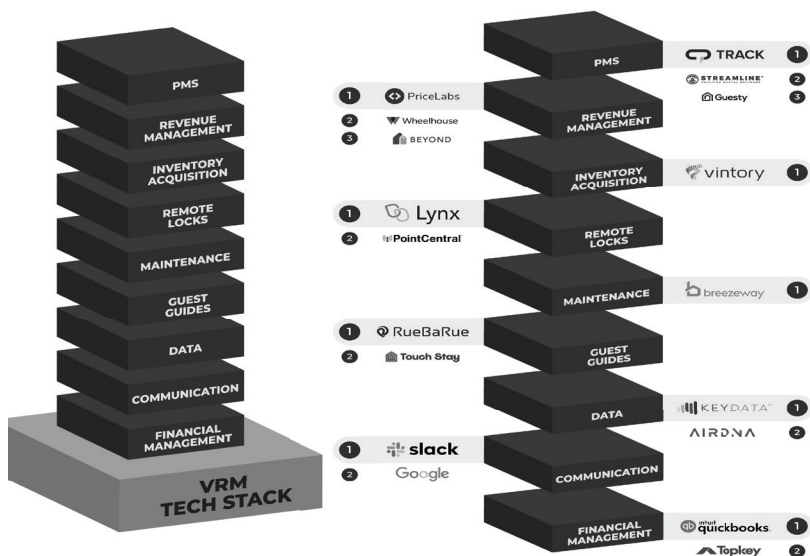
- 1 Breezeway with 12 votes
- 2 Key Data with 4 Votes
- 3 Three-Way Tie with 3 votes each – Slack, PriceLabs, RueBaRue

**Question #4:** Discover hidden treasures! What's your under-the-radar product that's been a game-changer for you that maybe others may haven't heard of before?

- 1 TopKey with 6 votes
- 2 Breezeway with 3 votes
- 3 Six-way tie with 2 votes each – Vintory, Zapier, ChatGPT, IntelliHost, Loom, Predictive Index



## 2. TOP VOTED BY APPLICATION



### Property Management Software

- Track with 15 Votes
- Streamline with 13 votes
- Guesty with 9 votes
- Hostfully with 6 votes
- Escapia with 4 votes
- OwnerRez with 3 votes
- LiveRez with 2 votes

## **Revenue Management**

- PriceLabs with 20 votes
- Wheelhouse with 14 votes
- Beyond with 8 votes
- RevMax with 4 votes

## **Remote Lock**

- Lynx with 13 votes
- PointCentral with 5 Votes
- RemoteLock with 5 Votes

## **Cleaning/Maintenance**

- Breezeway with 35 Votes

## **Inventory Acquisition**

- Vintory with 28 votes
- OwnerPoint with 1 vote

## **Guest Screening**

- Autohost with 5 votes
- Guest Ranger with 3 votes

## **Digital Guides / Guest Guides**

- RueBaRue with 5 votes
- Touch Stay with 4 votes

## **Data**

- Key Data with 26 votes
- AirDNA with 6 votes

## **Communication**

- Slack with 17 votes
- Google Workspace with 16 votes
- RingCentral with 7 votes
- Microsoft Teams with 5 votes

## **Financial Management**

- QuickBooks with 17 votes
- TopKey with 7 votes

## **Property Management Platform**

- BeHome247 with 2 Votes

## **Best of the Rest**

- StayFi with 9 votes
- Zapier with 7 votes
- Akia with 6 votes
- Asana with 6 votes
- Better Talent with 5 votes
- Canva with 5 votes

### 3. CASE STUDIES AND PERSONAL STORIES

**A**fter reviewing the tech stacks in the previous chapter, I reached out one more time to some VRMs to collect their feedback. I wanted to get some more detail. *Why did they pick the technologies they did? What made some tech work for them and others not? What common mistakes would they avoid if they could have a second chance?*

The answers I found were powerful.

But before I get there, a brief illustration. In the mid-1800s, the American railroad system underwent a massive transformation. Railroads' rapid expansion reshaped industries, linking distant cities and enabling businesses to grow at unprecedented rates. However, this technological evolution wasn't without its challenges.

Leaders who once managed stagecoach lines or operated in slower-paced industries grappled with complex, new systems. Yet, those who embraced this change and adapted thrived in unimaginable ways. They discovered that success wasn't just about the technology itself but about *how they applied* it to streamline operations, scale efficiently, and meet growing demands.

The same can be said today for VRMs navigating the rise of new technologies. Application is *everything*. Just as the railroad transformed commerce in the 19th century, technological tools have revolutionized the vacation rental industry, redefining how properties are managed, guests are served, and businesses are scaled.

This chapter explores the personal journeys of industry leaders who, like the pioneers of the railroad era, realized that adapting to these tools would improve efficiency and provide the competitive edge necessary for long-term success.

## AHA! MOMENTS

For starters, every VRM has had a series of *aha!* tech moments—moments when they suddenly realized technology was more important than they thought.

Some VRMs embrace technology early on. Jed Stevens with Koloa Kai Vacation Rentals & Management said technology was non-negotiable from the start. “Based on my engineering background,” he writes, “I knew that the correct technology component would be crucial to business success. I would not have gotten into this business if the technology had not been there to support it in the first place.”

For Chris Walker with Luxury Rentals of Hilton Head, the need for technology was a gradual realization. His time in the hospitality industry trained him in the art of multitasking. “I thought that when I got into real estate, it would be almost a natural transition since I have a keen ability to deliver what people want,” he said. “After a few years of selling, I decided to open my vacation rental company and thought ‘this would be easy’ compared to the food and beverage life.”

But that wasn’t the case. Chris soon discovered this industry was not all fun and games and that there were a *lot* of moving parts. For this reason, he shares, “Technology has been key in my ability to stay organized, grow, and retain my clients. Without the technology we have today, any property manager would be looking at half their inventory and double the staff to support it.”

Steven Chrobak with Myrtle Beach Destinations had a very different *aha!* technological moment that changed his business forever. “Before my company started,” he said, “I managed my own property remotely and only listed on Airbnb. I was shopping around different companies, and I learned that by using Airbnb alone, I had outperformed one of the largest management companies in our area by double the annual revenue that they did for an identical condo in the same complex.”

Again, the power of technology.

For reasons unknown to him, Steven said the other company didn't adapt to technology and still doesn't list their rentals on Airbnb. This gave Steven a massive competitive edge. In his words, this *aha!* moment "showed me the importance of adapting to technological and market changes. This is a main factor that inspired me to take the leap of faith to start the company, knowing that embracing the changes in technology and the industry would set us up for success."

For many VRMs, the realization that technology is indispensable often comes through firsthand experience. Stacy Wesson with Cascara Vacation Rentals powered by Casago recounted a pivotal moment in 2013, when she took the helm of her family's vacation rental business. She writes, "When I entered my family's business, one of the first things I did was get a new PMS software. We were using an archaic DOS-based system, and we switched to Escapia. That was a huge change! We needed to take a big step and get into the new PMS software that was out there, which was way ahead of where we were."

For Matt Durette with Cozi Vacation Rentals, it became evident early on, particularly in managing the check-in and check-out process. "Automation was crucial in streamlining these tasks," he writes. "The transition to keyless systems and automated instructions drastically improved operational efficiency while enhancing the guest experience." This transition from a legacy system to a modern PMS marked the beginning of a technological transformation that would set the foundation for his company's future growth and efficiency.

Perhaps no VRMs actively illustrate the role of technology in their business better than Eric and Regina Thibodeaux. They're so passionate about staying up with the times that they've even adapted this concept into their company name. "When we created Current Tides," they write, "we knew and wanted technology to be a big part of our company. The word 'Current' in our name demonstrates that our company is current on technology, how to operate a business, and the safety of our owners and guests. In all things we do, we want to be current."

They illustrate that technology is not just an optional add-on but a foundational element for success in the vacation rental business.

## THE VALUE OF GREAT TOOLS

Taking advantage of great technological tools can be a game changer.

To CJ Stam with Southern Comfort Cabin Rentals, investing in great tech tools is like buying bandwidth. They help you maximize time and talent, which can be reinvested in other areas, like working with your team and focusing on activities that better serve your stakeholders. These tools not only solve specific problems but also enhance overall business performance.

John An found that revenue management systems showed him that he could drive up revenue substantially beyond what others in the market were doing, giving him a strong competitive advantage.

Matt Durette writes that his proprietary bulk editing and pricing automation tool has been transformative. “Previously, updating pricing and revenue management across our 350-unit portfolio would take days,” he says. “With automation, we can now implement changes within minutes, resulting in significant time savings and optimizing revenue for our property owners through improved average daily rate and occupancy rates.”

Stacy Wesson shares how the AI-powered guest screening and identity verification system Guest Ranger became indispensable for her business. “Guest Ranger was huge for us,” she writes. “We had an issue with a stolen credit card and a trashed home that cost us! Trying to figure out how to prevent credit card fraud issues was nearly impossible. Having tech like this is a game changer and is the most needed and powerful tool. This one app, which is so cost-effective, can save tens of thousands in just one bad credit card.”

The implementation of tech tools like Guest Ranger not only prevents financial losses but also enhances trust and reliability among property owners and guests.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TECH TOOLS

Choosing the right tech tools is a strategic decision. While each VRM approaches this differently, the key is to pick a system that is tailored to meet your unique business needs and growth strategies.

### KNOW WHAT YOU VALUE AND WHY YOU VALUE IT.

Stacy Wesson now places a high priority on reliable support—especially after COVID-19. “Post COVID, I only use companies with solid support,” she says. “Software is great, but even the best software is only as good as its support!”

Chris Walker had a slightly different set of priorities and focused on market dynamics and the necessity to stay agile in a competitive environment. He writes, “The latest for me has been a price-setting tool. Given the prevalence in the market today, I thought this was an absolute necessity. If everyone is using a pricing tool, you best be in the game, or you may be left out if you aren’t checking pricing at least on a weekly basis.”

Others choose the right tech tools through a whole lot of trial and error. “I was the idiot that onboarded and offboarded over fifteen different PMSs searching for the PERFECT PMS,” John An shared. “Only to learn that it doesn’t exist. I’m a slow learner.” My guess is a whole lot of VRMs relate to John. No one wants to learn the hard way, but sometimes you don’t know until you try.

Other times, the sheer monotony of a task drives us toward technology. Jed Stevens writes, “I have always taken an iterative approach to adding technology. When I realize that I’m doing a repetitive task that can be automated, I usually either create a tool on my own or start shopping for something that does what I’m looking for.”

This is a great rule of thumb:



## **WHENEVER YOU'RE DOING A TASK THAT FEELS TOO REPETITIVE, IT'S PROBABLY A SIGN THAT IT IS TOO REPETITIVE AND THAT THERE IS A BETTER SOLUTION.**

When you focus on weeding out repetitive tasks, you free yourself up to do the work that only you can do.

One way to do this is through using cost-effective automation. Steven Chrobak puts this into practice by choosing tech tools based on what he thinks will be the most cost-effective way to automate as many processes as possible. His goal is to solve as many problems as possible with a single tool. By focusing on cost-effectiveness and automation, Steven ensures that his technological investments yield substantial returns in operational efficiency.

Cheyenne Hayes with Red Rock Vacation Rentals provides a nuanced perspective on tech stack selection. She says, "I would encourage anyone just starting in their industry not to stress out too quickly about adding elements. There is a whole industry within our industry of selling tech, and just because that is true, it's not necessarily the right fit or timing for your group."

For Cheyenne, having the right tech stack is invaluable. Still, it's imperative to do your due diligence, be intentional, ask for references, and not feel pressured into something you aren't ready for. In other words, *just be you!* Don't chase every latest technological tool. Find what works for you and your business. It's really that simple.

For Valerie Gangas with Juniper Holiday + Home, selecting the right tech tools is about streamlining operations and enhancing the guest experience. "Soon after we launched," she said, "we realized we needed to reduce the time spent manually answering repetitive questions while still maintaining consistent communication with our guests."

One of the first tools she introduced was Akia's guest messaging software, which provided instant responses to common inquiries and significantly reduced the team's workload.

This shift gave her team more time to focus on higher-level tasks, such as handling unique requests and creating personalized, magical stays for their guests.

“A tool that made a significant impact for us was Breezeway, which we now use to manage housekeeping and maintenance tasks,” she said. “Before adopting it, our team was bogged down with manual processes like responding to emails, taking phone calls, and managing spreadsheets. Task tracking was time-consuming and often difficult. Breezeway automated everything, allowing us to assign tasks, monitor real-time progress, and ensure accountability.”

This move has been a game-changer, especially during peak seasons when Valerie’s team juggles multiple turnovers daily.

## **SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH TECHNOLOGY**

One of the primary goals of all technology is to solve problems.

**TECHNOLOGY IS MEANT TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER, NOT HARDER. IT SHOULD STREAMLINE HOW YOU DO OPERATIONS, NOT ADD TO THE COMPLEXITY.**

When you save time on one task, you have more time to devote to another. As Stacy Wesson writes, “Usually, we are trying to save ourselves time in how we do something. I think anything that can save us time or employees is critical to our operations and overall overhead.”

By automating routine tasks, you can allocate resources more effectively, reducing operational costs and improving service delivery. Lino Maldonado provides a concrete example of how technology can revolutionize specific processes. He writes,

One example of how a tech tool made a significant difference for us is in housekeeping. Years ago, we would have dozens of housekeepers waiting around for hours every morning until ten a.m. to begin cleaning. Fast-for-

ward to today, and the entire process is automated, including messaging and dispatch to cleaners, inspectors, and guests. This has completely transformed our operations.

This automation enhances efficiency and ensures timely service delivery, improving the overall guest experience.

When used well, technology can dramatically increase your communication and productivity. After his team started using Slack, Michael Pedenko writes, “Office productivity has gone through the roof, and the fact that employees can turn off their notifications is a nice relief for them.”

John An discusses how technology helps manage repetitive and predictable tasks. He states, “Over time, I learned that while there are a lot of moving parts in operating a short-term rental business, the vast majority of the moving parts are very predictable and repetitive. So, whenever I ran into a problem or issue more than two or three times, I looked for the trigger that caused the problem to occur and sought technology to help anticipate or mitigate its impacts.”

Cheyenne Hayes found that adding Trainual, a software designed to create training materials for each new employee based on their job description, made a significant difference for her team. She writes, “It has saved us countless hours of training.” By standardizing training processes, Cheyenne ensures that all team members are adequately prepared, enhancing service consistency and operational reliability.

As a shameless plug, Steven Chrobak says that Vintory was the major tool that helped his business scale. He writes, “It helped us grow from zero to one-hundred-plus properties in less than two years.” He adds, “It allowed us to effectively advertise to new owners with a landing page, direct mailers, cold email, and much more, all while managing the leads effectively through their CRM.”

Jed Stevens echoes these thoughts. “One of the most transformative pieces of technology was our adoption of the Vintory business development system, which took a random

collection of things that I would do to try and build a business and made a fluid process out of it, resulting in the ability to add as many properties as we wanted pretty much on demand.”

Jed also found using RueBaRue as his guestbook not only cut down on the amount of direct guest communication he was handling but also significantly reduced the amount of guest communication that was necessary because we were able to answer the questions that the guests were repeatedly asking before they had a chance to reach out and ask them.

Stacy Wesson also praises RueBaRue for its multifaceted impact on her business. “RueBaRue was, I think, my favorite tech tool, in that it solved our problem of needing a better way to communicate with the guests, share information about our homes, and improve our Google rating. It is easy to learn and use, which is critical when our staff already has so much to learn and do. The cost is great considering it isn’t super expensive.”

Jed adds his team also onboarded beyond pricing just after the pandemic lockdown opened up and saw a 35-to-40% rate increase within the first several months. “This was one of those things that I did not see coming,” he writes. “I was pretty confident that we were doing a good job at revenue management until I saw the power of dynamic pricing and the 24/7 nature of those adjustments being made in real-time. Now that I realize what we were leaving on the table, I would never go back.”

These examples illustrate that technology can address a myriad of operational challenges, from communication inefficiencies to manual task management. However, the basic goal of every VRM remains the same:

## **TECHNOLOGY MUST SOLVE A PROBLEM AND MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER.**

Technology streamlines operations and helps overcome significant business challenges. The key is to know what technology will do and how long it will take to adapt. A core challenge is the length and scope of the adoption process.

As Chris Walker writes, “VRMs like me have so little time on their hands as it is. For anyone to offer any additional products to my company, my #1 question is: ‘How long?’ I weigh this against the benefits, and if the time is long (like a PMS change), then the benefits best be absolutely incredible.”

Another challenge is overthinking. John An reflects on the iterative nature of selecting the right PMS and says, “I would not have wasted SO much time and energy looking for the perfect PMS that could do everything the way I wanted/needed. Instead, I would find a reasonably good PMS that meets 70-80% of my needs and then build a best-in-class cocktail of technologies to supplement the PMS.”

These narratives illustrate how technology serves as a crucial tool in addressing and resolving various operational and security challenges within the vacation rental industry.

## **ISSUES WITH IMPLEMENTING NEW TECH**

Despite the numerous benefits, integrating new technology into existing systems often presents challenges. Each VRM I contacted shared numerous hurdles they encountered during their “tech adoption” phase.

“Implementing a new Property Management System is a major undertaking,” Matt Durette says. “One of our key lessons was the importance of appointing a dedicated project manager to oversee the onboarding process. This ensures that each implementation phase is executed flawlessly, minimizing disruptions.”

Stacy Wesson recounts her frustrations with one of the large OTAs. “We have had set them up twice now, and each time, we have ended up canceling them. They have horrible support, and their platform doesn’t work for our business. Sometimes, it is better to let it go and move on. You will free yourself of headaches and frustration that drags you down versus losing funds for a tech that just doesn’t work.”

Stacy's experience highlights the importance of not becoming overly attached to technology solely based on financial investment. If a tool fails to deliver the expected benefits, the best decision might be to cut it loose and avoid ongoing frustration and inefficiency.

John An echoes similar sentiments regarding the promises of tech vendors. "The sales team of any tech promises the world, and if a desired feature doesn't exist, then they tell you that it's on the roadmap for completion in the next one to two quarters! I've had a PMS company salesperson tell me that a big channel integration was on the roadmap, and it was not completed even after two years! I had left that PMS well before the two years."

This cautionary tale emphasizes the need for due diligence and realistic expectations when evaluating tech solutions. Relying solely on vendor promises without tangible results can lead to major problems, highlighting the importance of doing change well.

Lino Maldonado writes, "Change management needs to be carefully considered before deciding to make a change. It's always amusing to me when a department complains about a particular tool, then you change the tool, and then they start complaining about how the new tool doesn't do some of the things the old tool used to do," he writes. "It's best to bring in all stakeholders upfront, clearly understand current pain points in the process, and address them directly."

Lino's approach underscores the necessity of involving all relevant parties in the decision-making process and ensuring that the chosen technology aligns with the organization's practical needs and workflows. Eric and Regina Thibodeaux also highlight the challenges of implementing new technology:

Implementing new technology comes in different forms. There is the vendor who will help with almost everything and remove pain points when implementing. Some vendors do not provide a lot of assistance when implementing and help when the pain point is exceeded. We switched to a new booking channel, which took us around sixty hours to cut over. This is not what we had

in mind when we said yes. Which tech support or assistance you receive when implementing new technology must be considered during the selection phase.

Yes, new technology can be wonderful, but you can always count on an adjustment process. Sometimes you might realize the headache of switching isn't worth the potential upside.

## TEAM INVOLVEMENT IN CHOOSING TECH

Thankfully, a whole lot of issues can be avoided if you look at new technology with a team rather than in isolation. Rather than picking a few on your own and forcing your leaders to adapt, you sit down with them and hear what they have to say. *Will this grand new technology you've fallen in love with actually fit their needs, or will they see it as an impediment?*

In the words of Chris Walker, "My team is my company. They review everything we do because, at the end of the day, they are the ones who have to live with the decisions." He goes on to say, *"Do I always 100% agree with them?* Maybe not, and that is because sometimes the changes that need to be made simply may require more from my team, and that was their deciding factor. Not that it wasn't a good thing to do, but that it was going to be a pain in their side if we made the change."

Matt Durette prioritizes involving his team from the start by giving members ample notice about upcoming tech changes, outlining the purpose and value, and presenting a clear implementation roadmap. "Comprehensive training is then provided to ensure the technology is adopted successfully across the company."

"Including the staff is huge," Stacy Wesson writes. "I tend to start the research first and then give staff some options to sift through if there are any. I am good at hyping up the software and getting staff excited about the changes."

However, as Stacy points out, the staff can resist change, especially if someone like her is constantly talking about new tech. By initiating the research process and presenting options

to her team, Stacy ensures that her staff feels involved and invested in the technology adoption, reducing resistance, and fostering a collaborative environment.

Cheyenne Hayes underscores the value of team feedback in technology adoption. “For new tech,” she says, “you really need team buy-in, or else they will be resistant from day one. If everyone likes it and is on board, it makes the new tech much more enjoyable.” By ensuring that the entire team is on board, Cheyenne minimizes resistance and promotes a positive attitude toward technological changes, enhancing the likelihood of successful implementation.

Lino Maldonado has a structured approach to team involvement. He reviews current pain points or gaps in current tools and processes. Then, he targets those areas for functionality enhancements with current vendors or new ones. This methodical approach ensures that technology adoption directly addresses existing challenges, making the transition smoother and more effective.

Eric and Regina Thibodeaux also highlight the importance of team involvement. “Using our technology stack allowed us to follow the business activities and communicate with the team. When we returned home, we were able to be up to date on what was happening and then visit with owners and the team to manage any issues.” Their experience demonstrates how technology facilitates communication and collaboration, ensuring that team members remain aligned and informed, even when managing operations remotely.

These insights reveal that active team involvement not only fosters buy-in but also ensures that the selected technology aligns with the organization’s practical needs and workflows.

## **ADVICE FOR NEW ENTRANTS IN THE INDUSTRY**

Perhaps the most interesting question I asked these VRMs to answer was what they would do if they were to start over again with tech. Reflecting on their journeys, they each shared some extremely insightful responses.



“I would start slow!” Stacy Wesson said. “There is so much tech out there, and my new favorite word to hate is the tech stack because all that tech is taking money out of my pocket. We don’t need all the tech at the start. If you get a decent PMS, push it to 80% before looking for any new tech. For instance, we have Streamline, and their Property Care section works fine. It isn’t flashy, but it works.”

That 80% rule works well for Stacy’s team. “Once we get to about 80%,” she says, “then we can start looking around. Before you look around though, you need to create an honest list of what is working and what isn’t. There is nothing worse than looking at new tech and getting caught up in shiny objects and realizing after the fact that they don’t actually solve your problems.”

Chris Walker emphasized the importance of strategic investment. “Pay a little more now to save you from having to re-tool later down the road. If you are looking to be a growth company, buy the biggest and best of everything you can because, by the time you get to where you want to be, you are going to be spending a lot more on re-tooling to meet your needs.”

Lino Maldonado has chosen a more streamlined approach. “I have simplified my tech stack to a PMS and BeHome247. That’s it,” he says.

As Jed Stevens notes, there is always a learning curve when it comes to new technology—it is unavoidable. He says, “Most people get excited about new technology and what it could do but fall short on the setup and execution to realize the benefits.” This is why he says having the right approach to technology is important. “It is like learning to use a new tool or playing a new instrument,” he says. “It takes time and effort to master each new tool. Still, once you do, your toolkit has just been expanded by another degree, which helps you overcome challenges in new and different ways because you added a new dimension to your capabilities.”

Jed adds, “It is important not to get overwhelmed and give up because then you have invested time and money into something that you get nothing out of; keep at it until you’ve

gotten the hang of it.” He goes on to say:

The biggest piece of advice that I give to people when they are starting out is to choose the right pieces of technology for the next three to five years. Just because a piece of software works for your needs today does not mean that it will continue to work as your business grows and changes over time. It might be more expensive in the short term to buy a more robust tool. Still, if you are planning on continuing in the space for a long duration, it usually makes sense to go with a better and more established or, at the very least, a more capable tool so that you do not have to waste time onboarding another replacement tool in twelve to eighteen months.

CJ Stam shared this helpful nugget. He once heard someone ask, “Do you often feel like we are helping these software companies fix or solve problems within their product?” *His response?* “Yep!”

But he goes on to say, “For me, the difference really comes down to the attitude and culture within the software company. *Do they make you feel like it’s your fault and gaslight you, or is it a collaborative effort where there is some form of ownership or recognition in exchange?*” To CJ, this type of collaboration is the only way a software/user relationship can be called a partnership. He suggests always asking for customer referrals and choosing a couple of them yourself—not just the ones they suggest.

Matt Durette says, “Choosing a tech stack that aligns with your business model and customer needs is essential. Additionally, ensure that the technology is scalable and capable of evolving as your business grows. Future-proofing your tech infrastructure is key to long-term success.”

Michael Pedenko advocates for active engagement with the tech community. “Go to conferences, meet the vendors, and play with software so you know what you’re getting,” he says. By immersing yourself in the tech ecosystem, you can gain firsthand experience with different tools and make informed decisions based on practical insights rather than vendor promises.

As John An writes, “Your business is unique, and so your tech stack should be built around your needs—not your business built around the tech.” Technology is meant to serve your business objectives rather than dictating them.

In the words of Steven Chrobak, “There is no perfect solution out there, so don’t get too worked up over finding certain tech tools.” He suggests “picking the brains of actual users in the industry who run a company that you are striving to get to, so you can put the correct tools in place from day one.” Steven says you should trust the end user more than the salesman who will try and sell you the perfect product. As he says, “The proof is in user satisfaction.”

By seeking feedback from experienced users and prioritizing practical satisfaction over sales pitches, you can select tools that genuinely meet your operational needs.

## **KEEP ADAPTING AND KEEP APPLYING**

The path to technological integration is not without its obstacles.

Just as the railroad pioneers encountered logistical challenges and resistance, VRMs such as yourself will grapple with implementation hurdles, team buy-in, and the relentless pace of innovation. This is just a reality and emphasizes the importance of developing a strong team.

Team involvement emerges as a crucial factor in successful tech adoption. Just as railroad construction requires the collaboration of engineers, laborers, and investors, integrating new technologies in vacation rentals demands the collective effort of property managers, support staff, and owners.

By encouraging teamwork and making sure everyone gets and backs the tech changes, you can create a smooth and efficient operation—kind of like how a big rail network runs seamlessly together.

The key is to keep adapting and keep applying. Be willing to try something new, even if you don’t get the perfect results.

Every VRM is looking for the magic bullet when none exists. As Steven Chrobak notes,

I went to conferences hoping someone would tell me the solutions to what I needed, only to find out everyone's situation is quite different, and there isn't just one "right answer." We chose tech tools based on what we thought would be the most cost-effective way to automate as many processes as possible, so we tried to solve as many problems as possible with a single tool. To my knowledge, no single tool will solve all problems.

The railroad illustration teaches us that embracing change, investing strategically in technology, and fostering teamwork are the cornerstones of enduring success.

**FOR VRMS LIKE YOURSELF, THE TRACKS YOU LAY TODAY WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGIES WILL DETERMINE THE SPEED, EFFICIENCY, AND REACH OF YOUR BUSINESS TOMORROW.**

## 4. SIX PRACTICES THAT HELP YOU KNOW WHICH TECHNOLOGY TO CHOOSE

**W**hat would you consider the greatest technological advancement of all time?

If your answer is the Gutenberg printing press, you'd be in agreement with many historians. Johannes Gutenberg's invention in the mid-15th century is widely credited with revolutionizing the spread of knowledge—similar to how modern software can drastically improve a business's efficiency and scalability.

But here's what's interesting: The printing press didn't achieve success overnight. It took extensive research and experimentation to perfect the movable type, and even after its invention, users had to invest time in learning how to use it properly.

Like today's software solutions, the full potential of the printing press would have been wasted without proper training and commitment.

In the same way, as a VRM, you need to think beyond the immediate payoffs and commit yourself to a process. You'll need to experiment and find the right tech stack that works for you.

### COMMON PITFALLS

There are numerous pitfalls VRMs face when adopting new software. One of their biggest mistakes is not fully investing in learning how to use the product effectively. It's easy to get excited about new tools during the demo phase. Still, when it comes time to implement, many users don't take advantage of the training and coaching resources available.

Skipping this crucial step leads to wasted potential, as you're only scratching the surface of what the software can offer. It's essential to carve out time for thorough onboarding, including

hands-on training sessions, coaching calls, and fully exploring all the features.

Another pitfall is assuming that the software alone will solve all your problems without needing much effort on your end. Software can provide powerful tools, but it's *your* responsibility to invest the time and effort to figure out how to integrate it into your workflow effectively. Without committing to learning the ins and outs of the system, you're likely to experience frustration and ultimately miss out on the full range of benefits.

Another pitfall is resistance to change, which can come from both you and your team. Even if the software has the potential to revolutionize your processes, if people are reluctant to learn something new, they'll default to what they already know, even if it's less efficient. This happens often when companies don't adequately prepare their teams for change or don't offer enough support during the transition. It's important to recognize that change takes time and effort, but if you can push through the initial discomfort, the long-term benefits will be worth it.

Lastly, failing to communicate clear goals and objectives during the software implementation process can also be a major pitfall. If your team doesn't understand what they're trying to achieve with the new system, they won't be motivated to fully engage with it. Make sure that everyone understands why the software is being implemented, how it will improve their work, and what success looks like. Setting clear, measurable goals and offering ongoing support ensures everyone stays on track and gets the most out of the investment.

To avoid these common pitfalls, I recommend five stages when considering adopting new technology in your business.

## **STAGE 1: IDENTIFY PAIN POINTS AND DEFINE GOALS AND NEEDS**

Before diving into the software selection process, identify your pain points and define some clear goals.

Start by assessing which areas of your operations need improvement—whether it's automating manual tasks, streamlining guest communication, or optimizing revenue management. Engage your team in this step, as their day-to-day insights will reveal practical challenges that might not be immediately visible.

Once the pain points are identified, outline what success looks like. Defining your needs and expectations will serve as the foundation for evaluating solutions and help you avoid getting distracted by features that aren't aligned with your core objectives.

## **STAGE 2: RESEARCH EXISTING SOLUTIONS AND CREATE A SHORT-LIST**

This should be a no-brainer.

A great way to start is by reviewing the companies mentioned in this book. This will provide a solid foundation for your search. Beyond that, conducting a simple Google search can reveal additional options. Trade associations, such as the Vacation Rental Management Association (VRMA) or VRNation, are also valuable resources. These organizations often feature sponsors and partners that offer software solutions, making them excellent references. In addition, we've created a guide in Appendix A of just about every technology provider we could find, organized by category. (Side note: If you're a vendor not listed and would like to be listed, please contact me via LinkedIn, and I will happily add you.)

Research is critical. When you don't do your research, you will face inevitable setbacks. Take Heather Bayer, for example. After getting caught up in "the bells, whistles, and promises of a property management software company," she realized she'd made a huge mistake. "It took up six months of our time, thousands of dollars, and a huge amount of stress to ultimately roll it back when we realized it was incompatible with our Canadian tax system," she told me.

As Jen Mucha warned, “Our industry is always changing, and often, those changes are only trends and not fully vetted.” Another challenge is cost. Steve Taggart regretted “getting excited about new tech, without considering the REAL use and cost.” This is why he now tells other VRMs to “only invest in technology if it saves you money or improves your business operations.”

There are lots of ways to conduct research. Attending industry conferences is highly beneficial, as you can interact directly with software providers, ask questions, and gain insights from experts in the field. This initial research phase ensures you’re looking at a broad selection of potential tools and companies.

Talk to other property managers, and industry experts to see what they’re using and what has worked for them. Join groups like Tristan Webb’s STR Directors Mastermind or attend networking events to exchange insights. Learning from others’ successes and failures can save you time and money. Just remember that one size doesn’t fit all, and what works for one company might not work for yours—use these conversations as a guide, not a guarantee.

Once you’ve gathered a list of potential software solutions, visit their websites. Familiarize yourself with what each platform offers, paying close attention to whether the features and functionality align with the problems you’re looking to solve. This step will help you assess how well each solution might meet your business needs.

Be sure to read customer reviews to understand how other users have experienced the software in real-world settings. User feedback can be invaluable, as it often reveals strengths and weaknesses you might not immediately notice. Ultimately, only invest in technology if it saves money or improves your business operations.

## **STAGE 3: CONDUCT DEMOS**

After narrowing your options, it’s time to schedule demos with three or four software providers. This step is critical because it



lets you see the product in action and ask questions about your business requirements.

As Lauren Madewell shared, she's never regretted a demo. "If you know me," she said, "you know our tech stack is small. But these demos give me many good ideas for our own operations. I get to keep my finger on the pulse of what's out there and at what cost, and I get to know the very people I run into at conferences."

When setting up these demos, it's important to have a list of prepared questions to fully explore the software's capabilities. Some important areas to cover include how user-friendly the platform is, how it integrates with other tools you're using, and whether it can scale with your business as it grows. Additionally, it's worth discussing customer support and the onboarding process.

I highly recommended that you involve other key stakeholders from your organization at this stage. This way, you can gather diverse perspectives on how the software will fit into your operations. Encourage your team to attend the demos and ask their own questions to ensure all viewpoints are considered. Different departments will often have unique needs, and it's essential that the chosen solution accommodates those as well. A collaborative approach will help you make a more informed decision.

To keep track of all the information you're gathering, create a detailed spreadsheet to compare the software options side by side. Treat this like a job interview—set up a structured comparison method that includes criteria like features, ease of use, customer support, and pricing. We like to give more weight to questions that are more important to us so we can tabulate the scores based on stakeholders and compare them at the end.

By having a clear comparison, you can ensure that each option is evaluated fairly and consistently. Ensure the questions you're asking each provider are consistent to draw accurate comparisons. Ultimately, the goal is to choose the software that best solves your company's specific pain points, so having a well-organized evaluation process will make it easier to make the right decision.

## STAGE 4: DIVE DEEPER

After narrowing your options to two software solutions, you'll want to conduct additional meetings or demos to gain a clearer picture of the best option. As Justin Ford told me, "Don't sign on with a software platform just because others are. Deep dive into all of them and find the one that works for you."

One VRM named CJ said one of his greatest regrets was "believing what a salesperson told me and going with the flow on select technology decisions without thorough due diligence or reference checking." Speaking of reference checks, I always ask for two types: their "staged list" and the last three implementations that they just finished. This way, it is a more realistic list of actual customers, not the cherry-picked friends of the company's owner.

One critical factor to remember is that sometimes the cheapest option isn't necessarily the most cost-effective in the long run. It may seem like you're saving money by choosing a lower-priced solution, but hidden costs can quickly add up.

For example, a \$1,000-per-month software may seem appealing compared to a \$2,000-per-month alternative. Still, if the cheaper solution requires more staff hours or additional resources to operate, those costs can quickly outweigh the initial savings. The more expensive software may require less manpower and offer a smoother user experience, ultimately saving time and money. The key is to think long-term and avoid being short-sighted when deciding.

In addition to considering costs and manpower, evaluating the software's scalability is crucial. A solution that works for your business now may not be sufficient as your operations grow. Ask yourself if the platform can handle increased usage, additional users, or expanded services without requiring a costly upgrade or migration. As your business evolves, your software should be able to grow with you, minimizing future disruptions and expenses.

Another important aspect is the quality of customer

support. Even the most user-friendly platforms will occasionally present issues, and having a reliable support team can make a significant difference in your ability to resolve them efficiently. Before committing to a solution, research the company's reputation for customer service. Read reviews, ask for client references, and determine what kind of support is included in the contract. *Is 24/7 assistance available? Are there additional costs for premium support?* Knowing this ahead of time will save you from unpleasant surprises later.

Lastly, consider the integration capabilities of the software. Your business likely uses multiple tools for various functions—whether it's accounting, marketing, or communication platforms—and the software you choose should seamlessly integrate with those systems. A platform that lacks strong integration features could create data silos and inefficiencies, forcing your team to manually transfer information between systems. A well-integrated solution, on the other hand, can streamline your workflows, reduce errors, and improve overall productivity.

By considering scalability, customer support, and integration capabilities, you'll ensure that the platform you choose is suitable for your current needs and will be a sustainable and efficient tool as your business grows. Taking the time to thoroughly evaluate your options now will save you time and money in the long run.

## **STAGE 5: ONBOARD AND IMPLEMENT**

Once you've decided which software to use, you'll move into the crucial phase of onboarding and implementation.

This is where careful planning becomes essential. You must set aside dedicated time for this process and define clear goals and objectives that align with your business needs. Make sure you involve the right people from your team—anyone who will be working directly with the software should be included in the onboarding process. Collaboration is key, both within your team and with the software provider, to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

For instance, many companies have entire departments dedicated to helping clients onboard and implement their software solutions, and you should take full advantage of that expertise. Property management software systems, in particular, tend to require larger onboarding efforts, especially when transitioning from one platform to another. The metaphor often used is that it's like trying to change the wheels on a bus while it's still moving—you need to keep your business running while simultaneously moving onto a new system. This can be tricky, as it often requires running two systems in parallel for a while. This makes the implementation phase even more critical to ensure a successful transition.

The software provider's experience with onboarding can make or break the process. For example, we've onboarded over 800 partners at Vintory, which has given us a tried-and-tested process, though it's never without its challenges.

Switching from one system to another can be painful, especially for larger, more complex property management systems. The good news is that the process is typically a bit easier if you're starting fresh and not transitioning from a previous platform. Nevertheless, effective onboarding requires close coordination, and any hiccups during this phase can cause significant disruptions to your business.

Change management is a vital aspect of implementation that often gets overlooked. Communication is crucial. Make sure *everyone* on your team is aware of the upcoming changes and understands the timeline for the transition. Proper training is also essential. This goes back to the earlier analogy of driving a Ferrari.

Remember that if your team doesn't know how to use the software to its full potential, it's like driving a powerful car but never shifting out of first gear. Many people resist change, and when faced with a new system, they often revert to familiar processes, even if they're outdated or inefficient. It's like starting a workout program. It's hard to stick with it initially, but you can't imagine returning once you build momentum and the new habits become second nature.

I think of one of our clients who initially struggled with a new software implementation because their team was reluctant to adopt it. They kept defaulting to old habits, which caused delays and inefficiencies. It wasn't until they fully embraced the new system and received the necessary training that things turned around. Once they understood how to leverage the software effectively, it became an indispensable part of their operations, and their business saw significant productivity and revenue management improvements.

The onboarding and implementation phase is just as critical as selecting the right software. Proper training, clear communication, and long-term thinking are the keys to ensuring your new system becomes an asset rather than a burden. Don't underestimate the importance of giving your team the tools and knowledge they need to fully embrace the change.

## **STAGE 6: ENSURE SUCCESS**

The real work begins once the software is implemented and your team is onboarded.

**SUCCESS DOESN'T END AT THE LAUNCH.  
IT'S SUSTAINED THROUGH CONTINUOUS LEARNING, REGULAR USE,  
AND CONSISTENT REFINEMENT OF PROCESSES.**

This is where building good habits around the software is essential.

Encourage your team to engage deeply with the system by exploring all its features and functionalities. While initial training will cover the basics, ongoing practice and troubleshooting will reveal the software's more nuanced capabilities, which can help streamline workflows and improve efficiency. The goal is to get comfortable with the platform and become adept at using it to solve problems, improve operations, and drive growth.

Invest time and effort into mastering the software beyond the initial setup. Many software providers offer advanced training, webinars, or even user communities where you can

share tips and learn best practices from other users. Take advantage of these opportunities to ensure your team gets the most out of the system. As your team becomes more proficient, they can uncover features that were perhaps overlooked during onboarding—features that might save time, improve accuracy, or reduce the workload for certain tasks. Encouraging this continuous learning and curiosity mindset helps ensure the software evolves with your business needs.

Additionally, don't hesitate to customize the software to better fit your specific operations. Most software solutions offer configurable settings or workflows that can be tailored to your particular use case. Take the time to fine-tune these options. For example, automating routine tasks, integrating third-party applications, or setting up custom reports can significantly boost your team's productivity. Regularly reviewing your system's performance and adapting as needed can turn your software from a static tool into a dynamic part of your business strategy.

Troubleshooting is another important habit to cultivate. As with any technology, issues are bound to arise, but how you handle them can make all the difference. Develop a process for quickly identifying, addressing, and resolving problems. Whether it's a minor glitch or a more significant challenge, having a structured approach to troubleshooting can prevent downtime and ensure your team remains productive. Over time, your team will become more adept at diagnosing and solving issues independently, further enhancing your software's value.

Engaging with other users is one of the best ways to avoid underutilizing the software. Finding a community or joining a mastermind group where other users of the same product share their experiences can be incredibly valuable. In these groups, you can see how others are leveraging the tool in creative ways that you might not have thought of.

Often, users find workarounds or shortcuts that even the software company may not be aware of, and learning from these real-world applications can drastically improve how you use the system. This shared knowledge can help you avoid common mistakes and streamline your usage, making the product even

more effective for your business.

Lastly, set aside time for regular reviews of how the software aligns with your long-term business objectives. This step is often overlooked but is crucial for making sure the software continues to meet your needs as your business grows. Assess whether you're utilizing all the key features and whether new functionalities are being released that could further enhance your operations.

Schedule periodic check-ins with your team to gather feedback on the software's performance and explore potential improvement areas. This proactive approach ensures that you're getting the most out of your investment and keeps your business agile and ready to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. Ultimately, the key to long-term success with any software is fostering a mindset of continuous improvement.

By building good habits around regular use, ongoing training, problem-solving, and strategic assessment, you can ensure that the platform grows with your business, helping you remain competitive and efficient. Taking these extra steps now will prevent future headaches and set your business up for sustained success, allowing you to leverage technology to its fullest potential.

## GO THE EXTRA MILE

When you're trying to help your team and current clients adjust to a new system, make sure you take time to walk them through the process. Be methodical and slow down if people are struggling with the new system. Help them adjust and remember that *no one* likes change.

Mike Harrington admitted his challenge was "being too 'tech' focused with a team that wasn't 'techie.'" He said, "Most of the time, your team is not as excited about that new tech you want to roll out. In fact, they secretly hate it!" Lance Sticher with Seaside Vacation Rentals and Sales confirms Mike's point by sharing how he and his team went down the "technology rabbit

hole.” “We onboarded the latest and greatest guest app, which had a ton of shiny new features,” he said. “The sales team was amazing, but we didn’t have the human capital to make it work.”

Shiny new tech toys are great, so long as they fit the business you’ve created and you understand how to operate them. If your team feels left behind, it doesn’t matter how great your technology is. They’ll still be in the dark and be much more likely to give up.

I was recently reminded of the importance of this lesson. A while back, I signed up for an email service after hearing several people rave about it. The service’s concept was to make inbox management significantly more efficient, helping users achieve the coveted “inbox zero.” The platform was designed with speed in mind, allowing you to move through emails quickly using keyboard shortcuts and productivity features. *It sounded great!*

The idea was that by spending less time in your inbox, you could focus on more important tasks throughout the day. However, at \$30 a month, it seemed like a steep price for a service that, at its core, already exists through free or low-cost options. I was intrigued but skeptical. Still, I decided to give it a try.

In the first couple of weeks, I started adapting to the system. The shortcuts made a difference, and I became faster at sorting and responding to emails. I could feel the potential the service promised. But then I hit a roadblock—there was a particular shortcut I just couldn’t figure out, and it was crucial to getting the full benefit of the platform.

The onboarding process had been great up to that point. The representative I worked with was helpful, patient, and thorough. When I reached out, hoping for a quick follow-up Zoom call to resolve the issue, I expected to get the same level of support.

Unfortunately, things didn’t go as smoothly this time. She told me her next available slot for a meeting was three weeks away, which, for someone already paying for a premium service, was far too long to wait. I asked if someone else could assist me, but she explained no one else was available then. Instead, she pointed me to a support article that was supposed to explain



how to fix the issue. I read the article, but it wasn't clear or easy to follow. After several failed attempts to get the shortcut working, I grew frustrated and canceled my subscription.

I've shared this story several times with my team because it highlights a critical moment in the customer journey—the point where a customer either continues to engage with your service and becomes a loyal advocate or feels neglected and decides to leave. In my case, if the representative had been able to hop on a quick Zoom call and guide me through the issue, I would probably still be a subscriber today. I'd likely be telling everyone how great the service is and becoming a raving fan. But because of the lack of timely support, I went in the other direction and canceled.

This is why I constantly remind my team about the importance of going the extra mile, especially when customers are at these critical decision points. A small extra effort—whether it's jumping on a quick call, following up promptly, or providing hands-on help—can make all the difference between a customer staying for years or leaving in frustration. These moments build loyalty and trust.

## **DON'T LOSE YOUR HUMANITY**

### **TECHNOLOGY IS GREAT FOR PRECISION; HUMANS ARE GREAT FOR INTUITION.**

When you implement new technology, your team needs to feel supported, especially when they're learning something new or navigating a complex issue. If we miss that window to guide them through, we risk losing them. The onboarding process is crucial, but ongoing communication and accessible, high-quality support are equally vital. A little extra effort in those moments ensures that a customer stays with us and becomes a long-term advocate for our company.

It's not just about making a sale—it's about retaining the customer by being there when they need help the most. In the end, it's those small, thoughtful actions that make the biggest

difference in building lasting relationships. So be decisive and embrace new technology, but just make sure those on your team and those in your client base can keep up.

When Steve Schwab with Casago implemented one form of new technology into his business, he shared that they started to lose their humanity with their guests and owners. He writes, “Casago’s formula is to make sure that the human touch, love of our homeowners, and genuine hospitality for our guests are the key ingredients in the recipe.” But when guests didn’t feel this, business started to go off the rails.

It is easy to forget that technology should serve people, not replace the essential human connection. While efficiency and automation can streamline processes, businesses (especially those in the vacation rental space) must be careful not to lose sight of the human element that makes relationships meaningful. Those personal interactions, empathy, and understanding create loyalty and trust with customers and teams alike. No matter how advanced technology becomes, the value of a warm conversation, a thoughtful gesture, or a quick, caring response will always stand out.

When we rely too heavily on technology and neglect the personal touch, we risk alienating the very people we seek to serve.

## **CUSTOMERS AND TEAM MEMBERS DON’T JUST WANT FLAWLESS TRANSACTIONS—THEY WANT TO FEEL UNDERSTOOD, VALUED, AND SUPPORTED.**

Technology can never fully replace the experience of a genuine interaction where someone feels heard and cared for. Maintaining a balance between technological efficiency and human compassion is critical, especially when problems arise. Being there for someone in a moment of need, with empathy and quick resolution, can leave a lasting positive impression that no software can replicate.

For internal teams, the same principle applies. It’s important

to recognize that while technology can enhance productivity, it cannot build culture or foster deep engagement. As a VRM leader, you must prioritize maintaining a culture of communication, support, and personal growth, ensuring that no one feels like another machine cog. Investing in people—whether customers or employees—through meaningful interactions is what will set a business apart in the long run.

## BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

In summary, as you choose and implement new technology for your business, always remember that the tools you select are meant to *enhance* your operations, not *replace* the personal touch that sets your business apart.

Technology can streamline processes, boost efficiency, and even help scale your business. Still, human connections—your relationships with your team and your customers—are the true foundation of long-term success. Don't let the excitement of new features or tools cause you to lose sight of what's most important: the people who make your business work.

It's tempting to think that the latest software or tool will solve all your problems, but the reality is that technology is only as effective as the people using it. That's why investing not just in the tools themselves but in your team's ability to use them is crucial. Offer continuous training, open up space for feedback, and provide the support they need to thrive with new systems. By helping your team feel confident and capable with the technology, you'll empower them to bring their best selves to work, which ultimately improves the customer experience.

At the end of the day, it's not about the technology—it's about balance.

When you blend powerful tools with human connection, you create an experience that not only meets your customers' needs but exceeds their expectations. Taking the time to go the extra mile, whether offering personalized support to a client or helping a team member overcome a hurdle, shows that you care about people, not just the bottom line. That's what makes a business

truly thrive in the long run.

So, as you embrace new technology, remember to keep your humanity front and center—because that’s what will really set you apart and ensure your success.

## 5. FUTURE TRENDS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

It's tough to say where our industry is headed in the next few years. Technology is like that. It's both slow and fast. On one hand, we're not driving flying cars—as some of us probably thought we would be when we were kids. However, the pace at which technology is increasing is so fast that it can change an entire industry overnight.

*Will this happen with the vacation rental industry? Will two or three tools come out in the next few years that turn our business upside down? Again, it's tough to say.*

### **BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN: TECHNOLOGY WILL CONTINUE TO SHAPE OUR INDUSTRY IN WAYS WE CAN'T FULLY PREDICT.**

Staying adaptable and open to innovation is crucial if you want to thrive amid these changes. Embracing new tools and technologies—even those that seem disruptive at first—can provide opportunities to enhance operations, improve guest experiences, and stay ahead of the competition.

As this book has shown, advancements in artificial intelligence and automation are already beginning to streamline tasks like pricing, guest communication, and property management. These tools can help you save time, reduce costs, and focus more on exceptional service. As technology becomes more integrated into our daily operations, those who leverage it effectively will likely find themselves at a significant advantage.

Moreover, guests are increasingly expecting seamless, tech-enabled travel experiences. I know it doesn't seem fair, but that's how it is. From easy online bookings to smart home features in rental properties, technology enhances how guests interact with vacation rentals. By adopting these innovations, you can meet

and exceed guest expectations, leading to higher satisfaction and repeat business.

In the face of uncertainty, the best strategy is to remain flexible and proactive. Monitor emerging trends, experiment with new technologies, and involve your team in the adoption process. By doing so, you'll be better prepared to navigate whatever technological advancements come your way and position your business for long-term success.

As many VRMs have noted, AI is already being used for dynamic pricing, guest communication, and content creation. However, the industry is only scratching the surface of AI's potential. The ability to automate guest communication through chatbots, manage dynamic pricing in real-time, and even optimize energy usage through smart home devices are just a few examples of how AI could revolutionize vacation rental operations.

AI will also impact how you interact with guests and owners. Personalized marketing campaigns powered by AI can target specific guest preferences, while AI-driven guest reviews provide insights into customer sentiment. This technology will help you improve guest experiences and streamline operations.

## **WHERE WE'RE GOING**

So, where are we going? It's tough to say, but here are a few educated guesses.

CJ Stam writes, "1000% AI and automation that help keep your team engaged on your customer's needs and hospitality experiences." He believes these technologies will streamline "personalized guest experiences, optimize communication, and improve operational efficiency, ultimately providing faster and more customized customer service and experiences."

As Chris Walker notes, "This is such a complex industry simply because it has been borne out of so many wonderful entrepreneurs who all are trying to make things better for everyone else." Walker writes that the challenge, even today, is

that “because of all of these pioneers, we are dealing with so many ‘variants’ trying to do similar things.”

As a tech developer, Chris knows how diverse these systems are. While he believes this diversity fosters competition and keeps the market moving forward, he also believes it hinders the development of truly innovative systems. “One day soon some ‘all-encompassing’ systems will be developed,” he writes, “and I think we all look forward to those days when we don’t have to ‘pick and choose’ how to run our business, reach our guests, or deal with day-to-day operations.”

AI has been revolutionary for Jed Stevens. “In my experience,” he says, it’s the “equivalent of adding several entry-level interns in different areas. The comparison here is that an entry-level intern has very little experience with the actual practice of any discipline, so while it is helpful to have them around, all of their work needs to be checked, and they need to be given very specific tasks and guidelines.”

With AI, Jed writes, “We have found that if we take this approach in content creation—being very deliberate with our instructions and spending time reviewing and proofreading—we can achieve great content.” However, he adds, “This doesn’t mean there isn’t still a lot of hard work involved.” The work now revolves around “knowing how to correctly prompt the AI, iterating until we get the right type of content, and finally proofreading and editing it so that it is appropriate and accurate.”

John An notes, “The ability to integrate tech is the most important. AI will be a big part of that—software can be integrated using AI and low-code/no-code tools. Another important tech progression will be the creation of ‘infrastructure’ products and services that enable more creative innovations.”

Lino Maldonado predicts that “EV charging infrastructure that can be monetized will be important, and AI tools that can improve back office, CRM, and distribution/pricing quality will be key.”

Steven Chrobak foresees the impact of AI chatbots and says, “A fully functional AI chatbot will be a big difference maker.

Once AI can handle 99% of guest communications accurately, it will be a game changer.”

Valerie Gangas also highlights the potential of AI-driven tools, writing:

Boom leverages AI-driven insights to optimize property operations and enhance guest experiences, which aligns perfectly with our goals at Juniper. This technology could help us predict maintenance needs, deliver more personalized guest experiences, and even automate problem-solving. I see AI tools like Boom as a way to lighten the operational load, creating a more streamlined workflow for VRMs and ultimately allowing us to better serve our clients and guests.

How many of these predictions will come to pass? Will we have that “all-encompassing” system that Chris Walker writes about? Again, it’s tough to say. But I think we can count on at least a couple of these predictions coming true. If they do, here are some potential disruptions that might occur.

## **IMPROVE BUT NOT REPLACE**

One of the most significant challenges VRMs face today is their reliance on online travel agencies like Airbnb and VRBO. These platforms offer immense exposure to millions of potential guests but also come with high commissions and reduce a manager’s control over the booking process. As VRMs grow more aware of these drawbacks, increasing direct bookings has become a top priority.

Tools like direct booking websites, price comparison tools, and AI-powered marketing campaigns are helping VRMs reduce their dependence on OTAs and regain control over their bookings. By doing so, they can improve profit margins, build stronger relationships with guests, and create more personalized experiences.

In the future, direct bookings will likely become even more important. As AI and machine learning continue to advance,



VRMs like yourself must stay ahead of the curve to ensure your direct booking strategies remain competitive. AI can optimize everything from website interfaces to marketing campaigns, helping managers target the right customers at the right time.

Dynamic pricing algorithms powered by machine learning can adjust rates in real-time based on demand, seasonality, and competitor pricing. Additionally, AI chatbots can handle routine customer inquiries, allowing VRMs to focus on more complex and personalized guest interactions.

Jed Stevens remarks, “Operational platforms are going to continue to be imperative as the vacation rental industry matures and becomes a more regular alternative to hotels. Future travelers will need confidence that they will receive a high-quality experience comparable to established alternatives like hotels or timeshares. The only way short-term rental and vacation rental companies can rise to this level is through operational discipline and continuous improvement.”

Chris Walker adds, “I don’t think there’s any way that technology will replace what we do as property managers. We are a ‘people business,’ and that is the absolute key factor that tech will not be able to replace.” He emphasizes that while technology can streamline certain processes, the personal connection between VRMs and guests remains irreplaceable.

However, Chris does foresee some reduction in human interaction, particularly with younger generations who prefer a more seamless, tech-driven experience. “The new generation of travelers may prefer fewer interactions with humans, but they’ll still need us to make it happen.” This balance between technology and human interaction is at the core of the future of vacation rental management. Matt Durette, reflecting on the long-term potential of AI, writes,

I don’t foresee immediate disruption, but from my extensive training in AI over the past two years, it’s clear that success will hinge on building strong human relationships, particularly in sales and hospitality. While AI will enhance processes, the human element will remain irreplaceable, especially in travel. The future of luxury

will likely center on deeper human connections, with AI enhancing but not replacing the guest experience.

Chris and Matt hit on a great point.

## **TECHNOLOGY IS A GREAT TOOL BUT A TERRIBLE REPLACEMENT FOR HUMAN INTERACTION.**

There will always be some things that only humans do best. The industry is clearly evolving, and AI, automation, and machine learning are playing transformative roles. Yet, it's worth repeating that technology cannot fully replace the human touch that defines exceptional hospitality. It can only enhance it by making processes more efficient, allowing VRMs to focus on providing a more personalized, high-quality service.

## **PUNCH ABOVE YOUR WEIGHT**

The growing importance of guest satisfaction is driving many VRMs to invest heavily in AI-powered guest services. As travelers increasingly expect seamless, personalized experiences, tools like automated messaging systems, AI chatbots, and smart home integrations are becoming more mainstream. These technologies not only elevate the guest experience but also significantly reduce the operational workload for property managers, offering a dual benefit that enhances both efficiency and guest satisfaction.

For example, smart home devices can automatically adjust lighting, temperature, and security settings based on individual guest preferences, creating a custom experience that feels both luxurious and intuitive. In addition, AI-powered voice assistants offer guests easy access to property information, local attractions, and personalized recommendations, all without requiring direct communication with management.

Automation in property maintenance is also on the rise, with predictive analytics enabling VRMs to anticipate issues such as wear and tear, minimize disruptions, and ensure a smoother stay for guests. Tools like RueBaRue and Beyond Pricing are

already helping managers save time, optimize pricing strategies, and improve operational efficiency, and this trend is expected to accelerate.

AI-powered automation tools will also level the playing field for smaller property managers, allowing them to compete with larger companies by reducing the need for human intervention in routine tasks. By automating these processes, smaller operators can focus their efforts on strategic growth and enhancing the quality of their guest experiences.

Jed Stevens also highlights the leveling effect of technology in the industry. “The proliferation of quality tech tools has leveled the playing field,” he notes. “It used to be that only large companies could afford sophisticated technology that provided streamlined processes and economies of scale. But today, even smaller operators can be operationally efficient and provide excellence in the hospitality sector.”

Jed says, “Just like other pieces of technology that replaced manual effort, AI will continue to allow smaller and smaller companies to provide outstanding service and content without the need to fund a large staff. Rather than simply replacing a sector of content creators, AI will allow smaller companies to have more content and to be more efficient with the creation of that content.”

AI offers small businesses the tools they need to level the playing field. Previously, creating large volumes of high-quality content and managing a robust guest communication system would have required a significant investment in staff and time. With AI, VRMs can scale these efforts without the same overhead, producing more content and managing more complex operations with far fewer resources.

CJ Stam expands on this, envisioning the role of future technologies. He writes, “Robotic housekeeping assistance, augmented reality inspections, true voice assistance within homes (that actually works), and blockchain payments.” CJ notes that AI and machine learning have limitless applications in the industry, from drafting property descriptions and enhancing

photos to improving rate suggestions and refining customer service responses.

His perspective underscores the belief that nearly every aspect of the vacation rental industry will eventually be touched by AI. CJ echoes a sentiment expressed by Joel Neeb of YPO, who refers to the current era as the “insight age.” Joel warns, “If you’re still coming up with your own ideas, you’re losing ground to someone who is using AI.”

Stacy Wesson also believes that AI will provide a significant competitive edge in the race for bookings: “As we all try to grow and step out of the shadows as businesses continue to be bought up, we are all trying to find our edge. The more bookings one can get, the more it gives you the edge.” For property managers, gaining that edge often means using AI to optimize operations, improve guest interactions, and drive more bookings.

John An similarly sees AI as a game-changer for smaller companies. “AI will continue to allow smaller companies to provide outstanding service and content without the need to fund a large staff. AI will enable us to focus more on growth and superb guest experiences,” he explains.

By automating routine tasks, AI frees up valuable time and resources, allowing you to concentrate on strategic growth and enhancing guest satisfaction. With AI, smaller operators can punch above their weight, offering the same level of service as larger companies with far fewer resources.

Lino Maldonado emphasizes the impact of AI on human hospitality, stating, “By allowing us to perform better quality human hospitality interactions, these technologies will change how we deliver personalized experiences to guests.” Rather than replacing the human touch, AI serves as an enabler for more personalized, high-quality guest interactions. It allows VRMs to focus on building stronger relationships and providing a higher level of service, fostering deeper connections with guests, and driving higher satisfaction levels.

Steven Chrobak envisions AI reducing operational costs while maintaining service quality. “The need for guest messengers will

drop significantly, and management companies will be able to reduce headcount because of this,” he predicts.

This is the real beauty of technology.

**IF YOU'RE A SMALL BUSINESS, YOU CAN STILL PUNCH ABOVE  
YOUR WEIGHT AND COMPETE WITH GIANT ORGANIZATIONS—  
SO LONG AS YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TOOLS.**

## **HUMAN OVERSIGHT IS NEEDED**

While everyone wants a technology they can “set and forget,” all technology requires some form of human oversight.

As Stacy Wesson says, “No tech will solve all of your issues, but it needs to solve more than your current tech with the least amount of additional issues. AI can write our descriptions, but if we don’t check it and just throw it out there, we can end up losing because Google will scrape it or guests will see it and feel the product being offered isn’t authentic.”

AI adoption is not a cure-all for operational challenges. Again, AI can assist in producing and managing content, but it cannot replace the human element of understanding context, emotion, and nuance. Therefore, even as AI becomes a crucial tool in property management, the need for quality control and maintaining authenticity remains critical.

John An envisions AI’s role in automating guest communications and foresees a future where VRMs rely on these systems to deliver more immediate and consistent responses to guest inquiries. He notes, “AI chatbots can handle common guest inquiries 24/7, reducing response times and improving customer satisfaction. Automated messaging can send personalized, automated messages to guests before check-in, during their stay, and after checkout.”

The benefits of AI extend beyond guest communication. Lino Maldonado discusses AI’s potential impact on customer relationship management and distribution systems, stating, “AI

tools can improve back office, CRM, and distribution/pricing quality, allowing for better understanding of customer needs and more efficient operations.”

AI-driven CRM systems are particularly valuable because they can analyze vast amounts of guest or homeowner data to provide insights into preferences and behaviors, enabling more targeted marketing and personalized service offerings. For example, AI can track booking patterns, guest preferences, and satisfaction ratings, allowing VRMs to tailor their marketing efforts to specific segments of guests or adjust pricing based on real-time data. This data can also be leveraged to create homeowner-specific campaigns, identifying those most likely to benefit from professional management services or making a switch while customizing your outreach based on their unique needs, property types, or location.

AI’s ability to process and analyze data far exceeds that of any human team. It can track every aspect of a guest’s journey—from the initial search to booking, through their stay, and even post-checkout feedback. By leveraging this data, VRMs can make smarter, data-driven decisions about everything from pricing strategies to marketing campaigns, ultimately leading to increased revenue and guest satisfaction.

Lino’s point about AI improving pricing quality is particularly important in an industry where dynamic pricing can be the difference between full occupancy and empty properties. AI algorithms can analyze historical booking data, competitor pricing, seasonality, and even local events to suggest optimal rates, ensuring that properties are priced competitively and maximizing revenue.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND ANALYTICS**

In an industry as competitive as vacation rentals, data and analytics have become indispensable tools for driving informed decision-making and achieving operational excellence.

However, as several managers point out, data is only valuable if it is actionable. Collecting data for the sake of it won’t

improve a business; it's how that data is analyzed and applied to optimize operations, improve guest satisfaction, and enhance revenue that truly matters. This is where data literacy becomes essential.

In the future, VRMs will need to develop stronger skills in interpreting the vast amounts of information generated by their tech tools. The ability to understand and act on data will be a key differentiator in an increasingly crowded marketplace, ensuring that managers stay ahead of their competitors by making informed, real-time decisions.

Stacy Wesson underscores the role of data in identifying weaknesses within an organization, noting, "The more data we get that can show us our weaknesses so that we can turn around and quickly start fixing it with AI or whatever else is huge. This is a fast and high learning curve in this industry, and we have to jump in and go or we will be left behind."

Stacy's point speaks to the dynamic nature of the vacation rental industry, where trends shift rapidly, and agility is key to success. By using data to quickly identify areas for improvement, you can adapt to changes in the market and continually refine your operations. This kind of responsiveness is crucial in maintaining competitiveness and ensuring long-term growth.

CJ Stam elaborates on the importance of not just collecting data but applying it effectively. He writes,

It's not just about having data, but how you analyze and apply it that matters. By understanding patterns in guest preferences like cart abandonment, booking trends, maintenance needs, etc., you can make more informed decisions. The goal is always to enhance the guest/owner experience and improve operational efficiency. For me, turning data into actionable insights that drive improvement and increase bandwidth is where the smart use of AI is a game changer!

Chris Walker touches on the varying importance of data depending on the scale of operations. "For smaller VRMs," he writes, "the data is not as important, but for larger operators, data is KING. When you offer so many properties, data is the one

thing that helps you stand out from the competition and keep your ownership.” Chris adds, “Data from all directions—including your website visitors and how they interact with your website to operational data that helps you to streamline processes to be able to run a much more efficient team—are key to being able to remain profitable.”

Jed Stevens drives home the point that data and analytics are essential for running an efficient business. He writes,

The importance of data and analytics cannot be understated. If you do not understand your company from the perspective of having quantifiable data, then you will never truly be able to operate efficiently or make sound choices based on solid data. Just as I discussed in other areas, the excuse of not operating based on data will soon go away, and managers will have to find a way to embrace the data moving forward, or they will be edged out of the market by those that do.

Jed’s observation highlights the industry’s shift toward data-driven decision-making. VRMs who fail to incorporate analytics into their operations risk falling behind those that can optimize every aspect of their business through data insights. As Jed adds,

There is an old saying that you cannot improve what you cannot measure, and if you are measuring something, you are creating data. The takeaway here is that if you are generating data and you make decisions based on that data, you are able to make solid improvements. If you are making decisions without consulting data, you are essentially just guessing, and sometimes you might get it right, but you will often get it wrong, which is nuts. Trying to make decisions in business without a foundation of data is basically gambling.

This statement reinforces the fundamental role data plays in not just tracking performance but actively driving continuous improvement.

John An offers a specific example of how data can impact revenue, noting, “The revenue management systems I played



with and tested out showed me that I could drive up revenue substantially beyond what others in the market were doing, giving me a competitive advantage.”

By leveraging data-driven revenue management, John can maximize both occupancy and revenue, staying ahead of competitors by adjusting pricing strategies in real-time. This kind of proactive revenue management is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in a fluctuating market.

Lino Maldonado underscores the need for actionable data, advising, “Any data we collect should be ‘actionable’ or serve a purpose. Have a goal in mind as to ‘what’ you want to learn and ‘how’ you will use the results.”

His point speaks to the importance of intentional data collection. Collecting data without a clear goal or strategy can lead to information overload, where valuable insights are lost in a sea of irrelevant data points. By focusing on actionable data, you can ensure that the information you gather directly informs your decision-making processes and contributes to your business objectives.

“Data-driven decisions are needed,” Cheyenne Hayes says. “They remove emotion from decision-making, bring clarity, and instill confidence among your team and clients. Numbers do not lie and can often tell a story that is just beginning to unfold.” For Cheyenne, data offers an objective foundation for critical business decisions, cutting through the noise of personal bias or emotion. This objectivity helps to build trust within teams and with clients, as decisions are backed by concrete evidence.

Michael Pedenko highlights another key area where data plays a vital role: pricing. “We already use it every day for pricing and to stay competitive with competitors,” Michael remarks. In the vacation rental industry, where demand can fluctuate seasonally or even daily, having dynamic, data-informed pricing strategies is critical. By analyzing daily market trends, competitor rates, and guest booking patterns, you can adjust your pricing in real time to maximize occupancy and revenue.

Instead of setting static rates or relying on outdated data, they can react quickly to shifts in demand. This flexibility

ensures that they remain competitive in a crowded marketplace and helps them avoid underpricing their properties and leaving money on the table, or overpricing and missing out on bookings.

John An takes this a step further by discussing the role of data-driven revenue management systems in optimizing earnings. “Revenue management systems can analyze market trends, competitor rates, and historical booking data to suggest optimal pricing, maximizing occupancy and revenue.”

John’s insight illustrates how advanced Revenue Management Tools can take dynamic pricing to the next level by integrating multiple data sources. These systems can forecast future trends, allowing VRMs to anticipate demand spikes or dips well in advance. This ability to make informed pricing decisions based on comprehensive market data ensures that managers can maintain a competitive edge, driving higher revenues and maintaining consistent occupancy throughout the year. By leveraging these tools, VRMs can stay ahead of competitors who may not have the same level of insight into market conditions, giving them an advantage in pricing strategy.

Cheyenne Hayes emphasizes how data also enhances operational efficiency, particularly in employee training. “Trainual has forced us to create more SOPs, create more training videos, and really focus on what is most helpful for employees to know in their first week. It has saved us countless hours of training and ensured consistency across the team.”

In this context, data isn’t just about improving revenue; it’s about optimizing internal processes that contribute to long-term business success. Cheyenne’s use of data to inform training programs helps streamline onboarding and ensures that employees are equipped with the knowledge they need from day one. By standardizing training through data-driven insights, you can maintain consistency in service quality, reduce the learning curve for new hires, and ensure that all staff members are operating with the same set of expectations and procedures.

When harnessed effectively, data can revolutionize how vacation rental businesses operate. It can inform smarter pricing strategies that adapt to real-time market conditions, improve

operational efficiency through better training and standardized processes, and ultimately enhance guest satisfaction by delivering a more personalized and responsive experience. The cumulative effect of these improvements is increased profitability and sustained business growth.

However, the real power of data lies not just in its collection but in how it is applied. Data that is simply gathered but not acted upon is essentially wasted potential. Therefore, you must develop a keen sense of data literacy to translate raw information into actionable insights that lead to meaningful business outcomes. Whether it's identifying weak points in operations, fine-tuning pricing strategies, or improving guest experiences, data offers a roadmap to continuous improvement and long-term success in a highly competitive industry.

## KEEP BEING ADAPTABLE

Technology is advancing rapidly, and while we can't predict every development, one thing remains certain: *being adaptable and open to innovation is essential!*

We've already witnessed how artificial intelligence is transforming the industry, handling tasks like pricing, guest communication, and content creation. Tools that once seemed futuristic are now part of our everyday operations. Importantly, they're leveling the playing field, enabling smaller companies to compete with industry giants by automating routine tasks so we can focus on what truly matters—our guests.

However, it's important to remember that technology is a tool, not a *replacement* for the personal touch that defines exceptional hospitality. While AI and automation can enhance efficiency, they cannot replicate the human connections that create memorable guest experiences. The future belongs to those who can blend technological innovation with genuine human interaction.

Data and analytics have become invaluable assets, providing actionable insights that allow us to identify weaknesses, adjust pricing, and tailor experiences to what our guests truly

want. Looking ahead, we can expect AI and automation to continue pushing boundaries. Yet amid all this technological advancement, let's not lose sight of the core of our industry: *delivering exceptional, personalized experiences that make guests feel at home.*

Technology should enhance this mission, not overshadow it. By automating routine tasks and using data to gain deeper insights, we free ourselves to focus on the human connections that turn a good stay into an unforgettable one.

In the end, moving forward in the vacation rental industry comes back to balance. Embrace new technologies, but don't let go of that personal touch. Stay adaptable, invest in data that helps you make better decisions, and never forget the human element. That's how we'll not only keep up with industry changes but lead the way into the next era of vacation rentals.

# CONCLUSION

Throughout this book, we've examined how staying ahead in this fast-paced landscape isn't just about knowing the latest tools—it's about strategically adopting and integrating technology into every part of your business.

One of the main themes of this guide is the incredible power of technology when we use it effectively. Automation tools have transformed tasks that used to be manual and time-consuming—like communicating with guests, managing bookings, and optimizing pricing.

But with these opportunities come challenges. Technology is moving so fast that what works today might be outdated tomorrow. As a VRM, you must navigate a complex array of software options, each claiming to be the next big thing. It can be overwhelming, leading to either hesitation or quick decisions that don't align with your long-term goals.

The key is to keep focused on marginal gains. Regularly assess your tech stack, spot areas for enhancement, and be open to making incremental changes that add up over time.

However, remember that technology is only as good as how you implement it. Investing in powerful software solutions but only using a fraction of their capabilities is like having a high-performance car but only driving it in first gear. Proper training, involving your team, and a commitment to learning are crucial to getting the most out of your tech investments.

Another key point highlighted is overcoming resistance to change. Change can be tough, especially when it disrupts familiar workflows or requires learning new systems. But as many VRMs have shared, sticking with the old ways can be riskier than adapting. You might go through a "Valley of Disappointment"—a period where the effort doesn't seem to match the immediate results. But pushing through often leads to significant growth and success.

Let's also remember that technology shouldn't replace the human elements that make hospitality special. It's about

enhancing what we can do, not eliminating the personal touch. Tools like AI and automation can handle repetitive tasks and provide data-driven insights, freeing you and your team to focus on delivering personalized, memorable experiences to your guests.

When choosing technology, a strategic, well-researched approach is key. The six-stage process outlined in the guide—identify pain points and define goals and needs, research existing solutions and create a short-list, conduct demos, dive deeper, onboard and implementation and ensure long-term success—serves as a roadmap to navigate the complex tech landscape. Getting your team involved not only eases the transition but also fosters a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Balance is crucial. As you integrate new technologies, keep the core of your business—the human connection—front and center. Technology should help enhance relationships with guests and owners, not overshadow them. Whether it's through personalized guest interactions, attentive customer service, or just being there when your clients need you, the human touch remains irreplaceable.

Looking ahead, the future of the vacation rental industry is both exciting and unpredictable. Emerging technologies like advanced AI, machine learning, and even blockchain have the potential to further disrupt and elevate the industry. VRMs who stay adaptable, keep learning, and remain open to innovation won't just keep up with these changes—they'll lead the way.

*The Ultimate Tech Stack Guide* isn't just about picking the right software or tools; it's about fostering a mindset that embraces change, prioritizes continuous improvement, and values the blend of technology and human interaction. The vacation rental industry may be evolving rapidly, but with a strategic approach to technology and a commitment to exceptional service, you can position your business for sustained success.

As you move forward, remember that every tech advancement is an opportunity—not just to streamline operations or boost profits but to enhance the experiences of your guests and the efficiency of your team. By leveraging the insights and strategies

shared in this guide, you'll be well-equipped to navigate today's tech-driven environment and capitalize on the opportunities ahead.

The journey won't always be smooth, and challenges will come up. But with perseverance, a willingness to adapt, and a focus on both tech-savvy and human connection, you can not only meet the demands of the modern vacation rental market but also set new standards for excellence. Embrace the tools that empower you, invest in your team's growth, and never lose sight of the personal touch that makes your business unique.

Here's to your continued success!

# LIST OF SOFTWARE VENDORS

## Property Management Systems + CM (STR)

Alphaletz - [alphaletz.com](https://alphaletz.com)

Anytime - [anytimebooking.co.uk](https://anytimebooking.co.uk)

BananaDesk - [bananadesk.com](https://bananadesk.com)

Beds24 - [beds24.com](https://beds24.com)

Bookerville - [bookerville.com](https://bookerville.com)

Booking Studio - [bookingstudio.co](https://bookingstudio.co)

Bookipro - [bookipro.com](https://bookipro.com)

Brightside - [bookonthebrightside.com](https://bookonthebrightside.com)

CabinKey - [cabinkeyapp.com](https://cabinkeyapp.com)

CiaoBooking - [ciaobooking.com](https://ciaobooking.com)

BeeRent - [beerent.com](https://beerent.com)

Creative Technologies - [creative-technologies.ch](https://creative-technologies.ch)

Direct - [directsoftware.com](https://directsoftware.com)

Egluu - [egluu.com](https://egluu.com)

Estar Booking - [estarbooking.com](https://estarbooking.com)

Eviivo - [eviivo.com](https://eviivo.com)

FantasticStay - [app.fantasticstay.com](https://app.fantasticstay.com)

Fewoboss - [fewoboss.de](https://fewoboss.de)

FewoFlow - [fewoflow.de](https://fewoflow.de)

FewoManager - [fewomanager.de](https://fewomanager.de)

FreetoBook - [freetobook.com](https://freetobook.com)

Guesty - [guesty.com](https://guesty.com)

Homeres - [homeres.com](https://homeres.com)

Hometime - [hometime.io](https://hometime.io)



Homhero - [homhero.com.au](http://homhero.com.au)  
Hospitable - [hospitable.com](http://hospitable.com)  
Hostfully - [hostfully.com](http://hostfully.com)  
Hosthub - [hosthub.com](http://hosthub.com)  
Hostify - [hostify.com](http://hostify.com)  
Immobinet - [immobinet.it](http://immobinet.it)  
iPro - [iprosofttech.com](http://iprosofttech.com)  
irent.net - [i-rent.net](http://i-rent.net)  
Lavanda - [getlavanda.com](http://getlavanda.com)  
LiveRez - [liverez.com](http://liverez.com)  
LMPM - [lmpm.com](http://lmpm.com)  
Lodgify - [lodgify.com](http://lodgify.com)  
Lodgix - [lodgix.com](http://lodgix.com)  
Mapro - [mapro.io](http://mapro.io)  
myRent - [my-rents.com/en](http://my-rents.com/en)  
net2rent - [net2rent.com/en/](http://net2rent.com/en/)  
OwnerRez - [ownerrez.com](http://ownerrez.com)  
RealTimeRental - [realtimerental.com](http://realtimerental.com)  
Rentability - [rentability.gr](http://rentability.gr)  
RentalWise - [rentalwise.com](http://rentalwise.com)  
Rentivo - [rentivo.com](http://rentivo.com)  
Res:Harmonics - [resharmonics.com](http://resharmonics.com)  
RNS - [rental-network.com](http://rental-network.com)  
RuralGest - [ruralgest.net](http://ruralgest.net)  
Septeo - [septeo.com](http://septeo.com)  
Smoobu - [smoobu.com](http://smoobu.com)  
Staylist - [staylist.com](http://staylist.com)

SuperControl - [supercontrol.co.uk](https://supercontrol.co.uk)

Talkguest - [talkguest.com](https://talkguest.com)

TravelNet - [tnsinc.com](https://tnsinc.com)

Uplisting - [uplisting.io](https://uplisting.io)

xsigns - [xsigns.de](https://xsigns.de)

Your.Rentals - [try.your.rentals](https://try.your.rentals)

Zeevou - [zeevou.com](https://zeevou.com)

## **PMS + CM + RM (STR)**

365Villas - [365villas.com](https://365villas.com)

AvaiBook - [avaibook.com](https://avaibook.com)

AvailRoom - [availroom.com](https://availroom.com)

Avantio - [avantio.com](https://avantio.com)

Barefoot - [barefoot.com](https://barefoot.com)

Booker Tools - [booker-tools.com](https://booker-tools.com)

Booking Automation - [bookingautomation.com](https://bookingautomation.com)

Bookster - [booksterhq.com](https://booksterhq.com)

Ciirus - [ciirus.com](https://ciirus.com)

Destination Solution - [ds-destinationsolutions.com](https://ds-destinationsolutions.com)

Escapia - [escapia.com](https://escapia.com)

Futurestay - [futurestay.com](https://futurestay.com)

Guesty - [guesty.com](https://guesty.com)

Hostaway - [hostaway.com](https://hostaway.com)

Janiis - [janiis.com](https://janiis.com)

Lodgable - [lodgable.com](https://lodgable.com)

Maxxton - [maxxton.com](https://maxxton.com)

Mr. Alfred - [mralfred.com](https://mralfred.com)

RentalReady - [rentalready.com](https://rentalready.com)

Sibo - [sibo.io](https://sibo.io)

Streamline - [streamlinevrs.com](https://streamlinevrs.com)

Tokeet - [tokeet.com](https://tokeet.com)

## **Revenue Management Solutions**

Aristander - [aristander.ai](https://aristander.ai)

PriceLabs - [hello.pricelabs.co](https://hello.pricelabs.co)

Wheelhouse - [usewheelhouse.com](https://usewheelhouse.com)

Buoy - [buoypricing.com](https://buoypricing.com)

Beyond - [beyondpricing.com](https://beyondpricing.com)

DPGO - [dpgo.com](https://dpgo.com)

Nightpricer - [nightpricer.com](https://nightpricer.com)

Turbosuite - [turbosuite.com](https://turbosuite.com)

RateGain - [rategain.com](https://rategain.com)

rented.com - [rented.com](https://rented.com)

RevMax - [getrevmax.com](https://getrevmax.com)

Smartpricing - [smartpricing.it](https://smartpricing.it)

Tokeet - [tokeet.com](https://tokeet.com)

Quibble - [quibblerm.com](https://quibblerm.com)

## **Inventory Acquisition**

Vintory - [vintory.com](https://vintory.com)

Comparent - [comparent.com](https://comparent.com)

Katanox- [katanox.com](https://katanox.com)

Nectar - [usenectar.com](https://usenectar.com)

Revinate - [revinate.com](https://revinate.com)

STR Insights - [strinsights.com](https://strinsights.com)

Rabbu - [rabbu.com](https://rabbu.com)

Dibooq - [dibooq.com](https://dibooq.com)

OwnerPoint - [ownerpoint.io](https://ownerpoint.io)

## **PMS + Website Builder (STR)**

Anytime - [anytimebooking.co.uk](https://anytimebooking.co.uk)

Avantio - [avantio.com](https://avantio.com)

Booker Tools - [booker-tools.com](https://booker-tools.com)

Direct - [directsoftware.com](https://directsoftware.com)

Egluu - [egluu.com](https://egluu.com)

eviivo - [eviivo.com](https://eviivo.com)

Futurestay - [futurestay.com](https://futurestay.com)

Guesty - [guesty.com](https://guesty.com)

Hostaway - [hostaway.com](https://hostaway.com)

Hostfully - [hostfully.com](https://hostfully.com)

Hosthub - [hosthub.com](https://hosthub.com)

Hostify - [hostify.com](https://hostify.com)

iCNEA - [icnea.com](https://icnea.com)

Janiis - [janiis.com](https://janiis.com)

Lavanda - [getlavanda.com](https://getlavanda.com)

LiveRez - [liverez.com](https://liverez.com)

LMPM - [lmpm.com](https://lmpm.com)

Lodgify - [lodgify.com](https://lodgify.com)

Lodgix - [lodgix.com](https://lodgix.com)

OwnerRez - [ownerrez.com](https://ownerrez.com)

Maxxton - [maxxton.com](https://maxxton.com)

Rentability - [rentability.gr](https://rentability.gr)  
Rentivo - [rentivo.com](https://rentivo.com)  
RNS - [rental-network.com](https://rental-network.com)  
Sibo - [sibo.io](https://sibo.io)  
Smily - [smily.com](https://smily.com)  
Smoobu - [smoobu.com](https://smoobu.com)  
Tokeet - [tokeet.com](https://tokeet.com)  
Travelnet - [tnsinc.com](https://tnsinc.com)  
Your Rentals - [try.your.rentals](https://try.your.rentals)  
Zeevou - [zeevou.com](https://zeevou.com)

## **OTAs**

Airbnb - [airbnb.com](https://airbnb.com)  
BestRateVillas - [bestratevillas.com](https://bestratevillas.com)  
Booking.com - [booking.com](https://booking.com)  
Bungalow - [bungalow.net](https://bungalow.net)  
DTravel - [dtravel.com](https://dtravel.com)  
Expedia - [expedia.com](https://expedia.com)  
FindRentals - [findrentals.com](https://findrentals.com)  
FlipKey - [flipkey.com](https://flipkey.com)  
HomeToGo - [hometogo.com](https://hometogo.com)  
Hopper - [hopper.com](https://hopper.com)  
Trip.com - [trip.com](https://trip.com)  
Travanto - [travanto.com](https://travanto.com)  
TUI - [tui.co.uk](https://tui.co.uk)  
Vrbo - [Vrbo.com](https://Vrbo.com)

## Service Optimization

AngelHost - [myangelhost.com](https://myangelhost.com)

Breezeway - [breezeway.io](https://breezeway.io)

Cleanster.com - [cleanster.com](https://cleanster.com)

Doinn - [doinn.co](https://doinn.co)

EZcare - [ezcare.io](https://ezcare.io)

Hospitable - [hospitable.com](https://hospitable.com)

HostGPO - [hostgpo.com](https://hostgpo.com)

HOUST - [houst.com](https://houst.com)

Inhaven - [inhaven.com](https://inhaven.com)

Keybee - [keybeehosting.com](https://keybeehosting.com)

KeyNinja - [keyninja.io](https://keyninja.io)

Lula.Cleaning - [lula.cleaning](https://lula.cleaning)

Operto - [operto.com](https://operto.com)

ParaSpot - [paraspot.ai](https://paraspot.ai)

Polaroo - [polaroo.com](https://polaroo.com)

Sweeply - [getsweeply.com](https://getsweeply.com)

RentalNinja - [try.rental-ninja.com](https://try.rental-ninja.com)

Tidy - [tidy.com](https://tidy.com)

Turnify - [turnify.com](https://turnify.com)

Turno - [turno.com](https://turno.com)

washbnb - [washbnb.com](https://washbnb.com)

Yaago - [yaago.com](https://yaago.com)

Zeevou - <https://zeevou.com>

## Access Control Automation

Alfred Smart - [alfredsmart.com](https://alfredsmart.com)

Astute Access - [astutesmartlocks.com](http://astutesmartlocks.com)

BeHome247 - [behome247.com](http://behome247.com)

Brivo - [brivo.com](http://brivo.com)

Homeit - [homeit.io](http://homeit.io)

Jervis - [jervis.systems](http://jervis.systems)

Kwikset - [kwikset.com](http://kwikset.com)

Klevio - [klevio.com](http://klevio.com)

Level - [levelaccess.com](http://levelaccess.com)

Lynx - [getlynx.co](http://getlynx.co)

Operto - [operto.com](http://operto.com)

PointCentral - [pointcentral.com](http://pointcentral.com)

RemoteLock - [remotelock.com](http://remotelock.com)

Rently - [use.rently.com](http://use.rently.com)

Seam - [seam.co](http://seam.co)

Tapkey - [tapkey.com](http://tapkey.com)

Vikey - [vikey.it](http://vikey.it)

Yonomi - [yonomi.com](http://yonomi.com)

## **Access Control Hardware**

Akiles - [akiles.com](http://akiles.com)

Assa Abloy - [assaabloy.com](http://assaabloy.com)

August - [august.com](http://august.com)

Danalock - [danalock.com](http://danalock.com)

Dormakaba - [dormakaba.com](http://dormakaba.com)

Goki - [gokitech.com](http://gokitech.com)

Hafele - [hafele.com](http://hafele.com)

Hotek - [hotek.nl](http://hotek.nl)

Igloohome - [igloohome.co](https://igloohome.co)

Keycafe - [keycafe.com](https://keycafe.com)

KeyNest - [keynest.com](https://keynest.com)

Nuki - [nuki.io](https://nuki.io)

Omnitec - [omnitecsystems.com](https://omnitecsystems.com)

Salto - [saltosystems.com](https://saltosystems.com)

Schlage - [commercial.schlage.com](https://commercial.schlage.com)

Tedee - [tedee.com](https://tedee.com)

TTLock - [ttlock.com](https://ttlock.com)

## **Digital Marketing / SEO**

15000Cubits - [15000cubits.com](https://15000cubits.com)

Aidaptive - [aidaptive.com](https://aidaptive.com)

Bizcor - [bizcor.com](https://bizcor.com)

Bluetent - [bluetent.com](https://bluetent.com)

BuildUp Bookings - [buildupbookings.com](https://buildupbookings.com)

Flying Cat - [flyingcatmarketing.com](https://flyingcatmarketing.com)



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brooke Pfautz is one of the industry's foremost experts in growing short-term vacation rental inventory. He is the author of two Amazon bestsellers, including his latest work *Vacation Rental Secrets: The Short-Term Rental Industry's Top Experts Disclose Their Biggest Mistakes and Share their Hard-Earned Wisdom*. In addition, he literally wrote the book on inventory growth, *From 0 to 500 Properties in 5 Years: A Playbook on How to Grow Your Short-Term Vacation Rental Inventory* which was a three-category Amazon bestseller.

Brooke got his start in the industry in 2007, when he founded Vantage Resort Realty in Ocean City, Maryland, and took an idea on a napkin to more than 500 properties in just five years. After a successful exit, he went on to grow inventory for other major vacation rental brands as Chief Business Development Officer in multiple destinations. Today, Brooke leads Vintory, the first and only Sales and Marketing Platform designed exclusively for Short-Term Vacation Rental Managers to grow their inventory. And, to date, Brooke and his team of over 50 growth experts have helped more than 800 companies grow their inventory and increase their bottom line.

In addition, Brooke recently launched Comparent, a pioneering venture in the vacation rental industry. Comparent is the world's first and only marketplace designed to bridge the gap between vacation rental homeowners and professional managers. At its inception, Comparent listed over 5,000 companies, making it the largest marketplace globally for facilitating these connections.

# THE ULTIMATE TECH STACK GUIDE

## The Tools and Software That Power the Top Professional Vacation Rental Managers

If you're a vacation rental manager, finding the right technology that fits your business needs at a price you can afford is tough. There are so many options and so many questions. Will this new technology work for my team's unique needs? Will it evolve as my business grows? Will the headache of change be worth the long-term payoff? If questions like these are swirling around in your head, this book will be your ultimate brainstorming guide and help you select which technology is right for you. In these pages, over fifty vacation rental managers share which tech stack works best for them. While you won't find every suggestion useful, you might discover two or three that dramatically improve your business.



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