

The Accommodation Provider: 'Once Upon a Tyne'.



Once Upon a Tyne, in South Shields, is North East England's first ever Coastal Sport Tourism Centre offering guests surfing, powerkiting, scuba diving, rock climbing and much more. In addition to taking accommodation bookings as part of the overall coastal sports holiday packages, they cater for business travellers and short-stay guests too.

Operating their hotel in the heart of South Shields, Paul Taylor, proprietor is finding Desti.ne Frontdesk a real business boon.

Q. Until now, what was your main avenue for booking?

A. Predominantly word of mouth from existing customers and networking with other accommodation providers in the region. We focused our marketing activity on free web listings such as Yell.com and links to website search engines. Desti.ne Frontdesk is effectively an extra portal to our website.

Q. What are the advantages to you of online booking?

A. It's easy and it's instant and you always get the right information. We can accept bookings 24/7 and our guests seem to prefer booking online too.

Q. Is it better not to have to handle money with guests?

A. Absolutely. Handling money is always one of the hardest things for us. It's hard to ask customers for payment up front, when they are laden with cases and especially as we don't have a formal reception area. It's less pressure on the guests and they also prefer a printed receipt rather than a hand-written one.

Q. What kind of things do you like best about Desti.ne Frontdesk in relation to business development? The system enables you to access specific reports such as statistical information, occupancy levels, profitability. Which of these reports do you find useful?

A. Frontdesk is a great, new, affordable system that increases our professionalism and helps with our online presence. It is probably too early to comment on the access and content of specific reports such as occupancy level, but we will certainly be reviewing the data in three months time to see what will be most useful for us.

Q. Do you have more time to devote to guests given the efficiency of the system and the time reduced on the phone taking down bookings?

A. Quite simply, yes. Telephone booking is very time consuming in explaining terms and conditions, cancellation fees etc. Desti.ne Frontdesk does all this for us.

Q. Are there any customers which came as a direct result of the online booking facility?

A. We had a couple from Australia who were travelling in London and found our details online and booked there and then. We simply would not have been able to reach them without the Desti.ne Frontdesk facility.

Q. How helpful have the eviivo support staff been? Have all your questions about the system been resolved?

A. Dealing with the office has been really straightforward with lots of information - they were very thorough and explained things in very simple terms.

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