

How to Build the Perfect VRBO Listing

Creating your vacation rental listing involves quite a few steps, so we've created a checklist to help ensure that you're building the best listing possible. While it may not be necessary to make sure you can check off every single one of these items, it is helpful to at least know if you're on the right track.

The Headline:

Because travelers perusing through VRBO can't see a thumbnail photo, your headline is the most important tool for reeling them in. Be sure to use that space wisely to get renters to click on your ad.

While it won't be possible to include all of these attributes, consider the following pointers for your property headline:

- Use characters available (62 max on VRBO)
- Describe location type (ex. lakeside, beachfront)
- Describe property type (ex. condo, townhome, villa, cabin)
- Feature availability or open dates (ex. Aug 16-23 open)
- Feature discounts or special offers (ex. free nights, reduced rates)
- Include non-repetitive location info (more specific than the city you're classified under)
- Use consistent capitalization and punctuation
- Show a competitive advantage
- Highlight the home's amenities (ex. pool, WiFi, views, hot tub)
- Incorporate descriptive adjectives
- Define the home's suitability (ex. pet friendly, perfect for families)
- List nearby attractions (ex. theme parks, golf courses, beaches)

The First Photo:

Your first photo might set the tone for your entire listing. Be sure you are selecting your best shot in order to give the most favorable first impression.

Your first photo should be:

- Colorful
- Well-Lit
- Clear
- Well-Maintained/Clutter-Free
- Showcase Feel of Home
- Showcase View, Location or Amenity

All Photos:

Travelers rely on photos to get a feel for the home that they could be potentially renting. VRBO allows up to 16 photos. You want to make sure the photos you select are showing the most important aspects of your home that are actually of interest to renters.

Your photos should include:

- View from your home
- Exterior of your home, building, or complex
- Living Area
- Kitchen
- Dining Area
- Master Bedroom
- Each Additional Bedroom
- Amenities (Pool, Patio, Game Room, etc.)

Besides including the "right" photos, you want to make sure the photos you feature are outstanding. The quality of your photos could reflect the quality of your home.

Try to take photos that exhibit the following qualities:

- Colorful
- Well-Lit
- Properly Staged
- Well-Framed
- Clear
- Sensible Order (bedroom photos grouped together, exterior photos grouped together, etc.)
- Recency (No Date Stamps)
- Showcases Feel of Home
- Size of the Space
- Ahh Factor (exceptional or impressive photos)

The Photo Captions:

Don't discount the importance of your photo captions. Your captions simply provide additional space for you to sell your home, answer some potential renter questions, and improve your search engine optimization.

Your photo captions should:

- Be completed for each photo
- Use the characters available (80 characters per caption on VRBO)
- Provide specific information (not just "bedroom" or "photo 1")
- Incorporate area keywords (ex. attractions, activities)
- Use consistent capitalization and punctuation

The Description:

Because VRBO allows so much space for your property description, we encourage you to take advantage of that space. Providing detailed information in an easy-to-read manner will help renters to determine if your property is right for them.

Consider the following factors when putting together your property description:

- Use of available space (2000 characters recommended, up to 6000 available)
- Top-loading of selling points (home's best features listed first)
- Property type (ex. condo, cottage, cabin, villa, townhome, apartment)
- Property size
- Bedroom info + bed setup (more specific than just "3 bedroom home")
- Amenity info
- Suitability info (ex. perfect for families, couples)
- Capitalization of keywords
- Use of headers or subtitles (creating sections within description)
- Use of bulleted lists (using asterisks)
- Use of numerals (drawing attention to certain features)
- Friendly tone
- Consistent spelling and punctuation
- Nearest mode of transportation
- Car necessity (will your renters need a car during their vacation?)
- Distance to nearby cities
- Distance to beach, mountain, lake, etc. (any main attraction in your area)
- Specific landmarks or attractions
- Area activities
- Events
- Clear sense of where the property is located

The Guest Comments:

Many travelers will seek out reviews from past renters to get a feel for the property. If your listing does not feature any past guest comments, some travelers might take that as a bad sign.

For your guest comments, try to:

- Seek out reviews from at least 3 past guests
- Encourage repeat renters to post guest comments

The Calendar:

Keeping an up-to-date calendar allows renters to get a feel for your availability before inquiring. Plus, you will receive a calendar icon for the search page within VRBO. Some travelers will not even click on an ad that does not feature an updated calendar.

To create a perfect listing, you should:

- Feature a calendar that shows accurate availability

The Amenities Table:

Some travelers prefer to peruse the amenities table rather than reading the full property description. Be sure you're making it simple for all potential renters to find the information they need.

When completing the amenities table:

- Fill out the complete table
- Include bedroom info
- Explain your home's suitability
- Use the "Other Amenities" section
- Use the "Other Activities" section

The Rental Rates:

Let's face it - after selecting a destination, the next most important factor for most travelers is price. VRBO allows you to enter free text for your rental rates, so it's important to be clear and thorough for prospective renters.

Your rental rates section should:

- Be organized
- Be clear
- Include specific dates
- Designate rates for at least 1 year from today
- Include nightly rates

- Include weekly rates
- Include monthly rates
- Define minimum stays
- Designate holiday pricing
- Promote any special offers
- Explain reservation/security deposit info
- Specify extra fees and taxes
- Advise payment methods accepted

The Contact Info:

While this might just be the easiest section of your vacation rental listing, you might be surprised to see how many owners leave out valuable information. Provide detailed contact information so potential renters can reach you easily.

Your contact info could include:

- A phone number
- An alternate phone number
- Time zone/times to call
- A link to a personal site
- A link to more pictures
- A link to a virtual tour

After going through this checklist you might find that you have a lot of work to do. But don't be discouraged - simply follow these pointers to build a complete, descriptive, professional and easy-to-read property listing.