

Customer Spotlight

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts & OTA Insight



OTA INSIGHT



“Reliable data and live updates make it possible for us to adapt to quickly changing market demand and stay a step ahead of our competition.”

Nikolaos Tsitsoulis, Director of Revenue, Fairmont Baku Flame Towers, Azerbaijan

Set in the heart of Baku, Azerbaijan, a city known for its many World Heritage Sites, tree-lined boardwalks and a thriving business district, the **Fairmont Baku Flame Towers** overlooks Baku Bay’s blue waters and is one of the city’s top luxury destinations.

With its 318 beautiful guest rooms, five food and beverage venues, the extensive wellness area and the more than 2,500 m2 of meeting space, the hotel provides world class facilities to business and leisure travellers from around the world.



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Our Challenge

With popular events like Formula 1 races and UEFA Championship games as well as many conventions taking place in Baku, the city is starting to stand out on the international stage and the hospitality industry is steadily getting busier and more competitive.

To understand how other hotels in the market were adapting to ever increasing demand, **we needed a reliable and precise rate shopping tool**. While the program we used before OTA Insight was better than combing through the various booking engines and competitor websites manually, the quality of the data was far from satisfactory.

Often, it was incomplete, inaccurate or downright wrong. Sometimes we found rates missing or the occupancy reported incorrectly; other times information was clearly outdated. Despite our regularly submitting tickets to our rate shopping provider, the quality and accuracy of data we received never improved, making it necessary to spend significant amounts of time every day verifying information before making pricing decisions based on it.

In addition to that, we were not able to get updates on changes in the market during the day. This, combined with the fact that our information only reflected the lowest rate for our basic room category, resulted in a highly inflexible and slow decision-making process.

To identify trends, respond to them and shape our revenue management strategy, we had to manually create custom Excel spreadsheets to organise our data in a usable layout. This cost a lot of time and made it necessary to ask a junior staff member from the reservations department to assist with compiling and organising the information. Since the reservations team had plenty of its own tasks to complete, sometimes the rate shopping files took a back seat.

This meant that important decisions regularly got delayed or other crucial tasks had to be put on hold, so we could verify our data first. Of course, this led to missed opportunities. By making choices based on wrong rates, not knowing what the competition was doing or how the market was behaving, we were unable to ever see the full picture. We basically felt half blind even though we had a tool to address our business intelligence gaps.

“By using Rate Insight, we always have one eye on the market. This is crucial to capitalise on all online channels, take advantage of last-minute opportunities and maximise revenues.”

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The Solution

Having faced similar challenges at a previous property, I had found out about OTA Insight and its Rate Insight tool. I did a one-month trial of **Rate Insight** but even after the first few days I was already convinced this was the revenue management tool which would change the game for my team and me.

This was because **the data is accurate and presented in an easy-to-read format**. On the dashboard, I can see what competitors are doing, follow market trends live and check for any disparity issues with a single click. The need to painstakingly create Excel sheets and consolidate information from different reports disappeared once we started using Rate Insight. And the best thing about it all: it's so easy to use!

When I joined Fairmont, I was required to use the company's previous rate shopping tool. Switching away from OTA Insight felt like a huge step back as I was once again required to check the accuracy of data and compile my own Excel sheets with relevant information.

However, after suggestions from myself and other revenue managers, we soon got the go-ahead from our regional office to start using Rate Insight. After all, who can afford to refuse a tool which provides better, more reliable data at a lower cost than other available solutions?

"Never have I seen a company in the travel industry which supports customers faster and better than OTA Insight. Their response time is extremely short and the few issues I've ever faced have been resolved very quickly, usually within a few hours."

Nikolaos Tsitsoulis, Director of Revenue, Fairmont Baku Flame Towers, Azerbaijan



Our Results

More efficiency, less frustration

First of all, learning how to use Rate Insight was quick and easy, both for line staff and management. After about 30 minutes of initial training and a few days of experimenting with the platform, the team knew the ins and outs. Being able to skip a lengthy training process was the first way OTA Insight helped us save time.

In day-to-day operations, it's a total game changer. Now, I spend about twenty minutes in the morning checking rates for various lengths of stay in the coming months and make the necessary revisions in a matter of minutes. Making these simple decisions and applying changes used to take between 45 minutes and an hour a day. While the amount of time saved is impressive, the frustration I am spared by using Rate Insight is another hugely important factor to consider.

The ability to simply **consult Rate Insight's dashboard to see parity issues** is another important point. Now, we no longer need to switch back and forth between tools and reports to find the glitch. By being able to test scenarios of varying lengths of stay for example, we can find and fix problems in a simple, straightforward way.

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An empowered decision-making process

With the incomplete and imprecise data we got from our previous tool, we felt half blind when making decisions. Thanks to Rate Insight we can now **access accurate data, updated live at the click of a button**. This empowers us to check our strategy and make necessary revisions, knowing all the factors which come into play. In short: Rate Insight puts all the information you need to make smart decisions at our fingertips.

Rate Insight also provided us with the data needed to position our property in the local market. At any time of day, we can use the tool to check the latest developments and see how our competition is responding to them. By getting this information live, we can fine-tune our strategy and make knowledgeable decisions based on solid competition data. Today, OTA Insight is the main tool we use to help us make smart online rate choices.

Rate Insight also integrates seamlessly with our RMS (revenue management system). This system offers us rate recommendations which we can accept or override based on data collected by Rate Insight, which once again opens our eyes to the market situation and lets us make an informed decision.

By using Rate Insight, we always have a close eye on the market. This is crucial to capitalise on all online channels, take advantage of last-minute opportunities and maximise revenues.



Outstanding customer support

From the beginning, **OTA Insight's customer support has blown me away**. Never have I seen a company in the travel industry which supports customers faster and better than OTA Insight. Their response time is extremely short and the few issues I've ever faced have been resolved very quickly, usually within a few hours. Apart from all its other advantages, this is another point which puts OTA Insight a big step ahead of its competitors.

OTA Insight became successful because it addresses a need which the market was not responding to previously. Its accurate data, live updates, easy-to-use interface and quick customer support are why I recommend this tool to every hotelier who relies on online channels to sell rooms and wants to drive ADR and RevPAR in a dynamic way.



Discover how Rate Insight can help you make smarter pricing decisions.
Click here for a free trial.

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