



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY FENWICK ISLANDER

How a seaside inn broke free of the OTAs with Guestfolio CRM

“

We're at 95-100% occupancy rate. It doesn't get any better than that.”

”

Tom Sites, General Manager and Owner

Everyone is family at Fenwick Islander, including the team running the place. “It's me, my wife, my mother, mother-in-law, 3 sons, daughter and my step-father,” says Tom Sites, Owner and General Manager. Sites, who's also the local high-school principal, operates the “quiet resort” with his friendly clan in serene Fenwick Island during tourist season. With 63 rooms and just over the bridge from Ocean City, MD, it's a small property with a big heart, tucked away from the noise of the boardwalk. Guests love the cheerful, family atmosphere, affordability and easy access to the beach.

### THE CHALLENGE:

As an independent hotel, Fenwick Islander needed to keep marketing and acquisition costs low with a tight grip. To get on travelers' radar, Fenwick Islander had previously depended on the OTAs, which took around 15-30% commission cuts on bookings. The property was looking to lessen that reliance and gain direct bookings through earned media and positive traveler reviews. They also wanted to streamline guest communications and gain a one-stop-shop for marketing campaigns, guest intelligence and survey insights.

### THE SOLUTION:

With Guestfolio CRM, Fenwick Islander moved away from the OTAs to a direct booking strategy that has resulted in 95-100% occupancy. By empowering Tom Sites and team with marketing, reputation management and nurturing tools, Guestfolio CRM helped them connect directly with guests and bypass costly third-party distribution channels. The platform's TripAdvisor survey integration dramatically increased their online presence, while the dashboard's insights illuminate their target customers, what's working and what needs TLC around the property.

## FAVORITE FEATURES:

### OTA INDEPENDENCE

"When I signed on with Guestfolio, one of the biggest reasons was to streamline my third-party vendors: Expedia, Trivago, Booking.com, etc. With this platform, I can capture their email addresses and make them my guests."

### ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

"What I really love about Guestfolio is that it gives me really good data. The reports help me look at what we're doing with our guests and marketing efforts, what we need to concentrate on and who to praise in the building"

### SUCCESS STATS:

- 95-100% occupancy rate
- No. 2 for hotels in Fenwick Island
- 70% of reviews rated as "Excellent" or "Very Good"

### EARNED MEDIA

"We get people all the time who say 'we saw your reviews online and that's why we booked.' Having all these positive reviews – I'm getting over 150 just for this season alone – translates to more guests looking at us and pulling the trigger."

### MARKETING AUTOMATION

"The automated emails are wonderful. It really streamlines the process and gives our communications a professional, branded look. It's really sharp. With the photos of the beach, it tells a story."

- 512% increase in TripAdvisor review volume
- 86% of TripAdvisor reviews attributed to Guestfolio
- 61% open rate on emails sent through Guestfolio

## BOTTOM LINE:

“ The relationship with Cendyn has been great. Guestfolio has really streamlined things across the board, from the direct booking side to how we communicate with guests to managing our reputation and even looking after the property. ”

Tom Sites, General Manager and Owner



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