

Listing a hotel on OYO: does the app keep its promises?

PRODUCT

OYO (PRISM): a two-sided hotel marketplace. Travellers book stays; property owners list hotels for OYO to fill.

TARGET USER

A hotel owner with 6+ rooms listing the property on OYO for the first time, on a phone.

Context that raises the stakes

₹994 cr

PRISM FY26 net profit; GBV ₹30,683 cr (YourStory, Aug 2026)

IPO-bound

Updated DRHP for a ₹6,650 cr issue filed June 2026

USER GOAL

Get the property listed with correct address, rooms, facilities, photos and ID, and know it was saved.

FLOW EVALUATED

Partner entry → sign-in (OTP) → address → rooms & facilities → photos → KYC → review → publish.

"30 min"

OYO's own promise for digital self-onboarding (OYO 360, 2021)

31%

of sites have no inline validation at all (Baymard)

METHOD

Manual walkthrough · all 10 Nielsen heuristics checked · NN/g 0–4 severity · Hick's, Fitts's, Jakob's laws and the Peak-End rule only where evidence supports them · labels: OBSERVED, INTERPRETATION, HYPOTHESIS, PROPOSED CONCEPT.

Evidence record

Mobile app: genuine screenshots, mostly Android; sign-in, partner page and chat on iOS. App version and capture dates not recorded. Personal names and numbers replaced. **Web:** not captured, so not evaluated (evidence gap). Test inputs such as "@", "GGHH" and "Doremon Mishra" were typed on purpose to probe validation.

CLICKABLE PROTOTYPE

[oyo-varun.netlify.app](#)

Redesigned owner flow + guest booking flow, sign-up to confirmation.

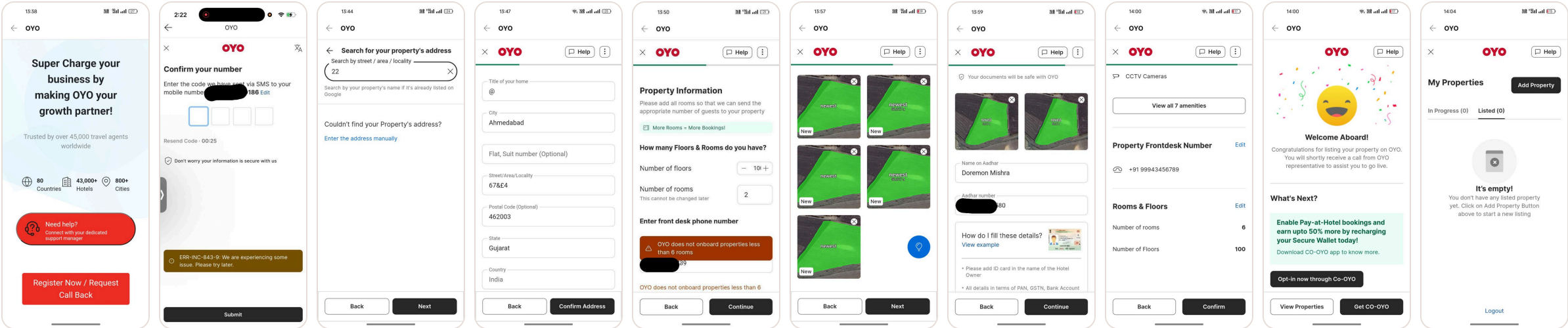
Why this flow

It is the longest, highest-effort journey in the app, and each completed listing adds supply OYO earns from. Friction here can lose a business partner, not just a booking.

JOURNEY EVALUATED



The flow today: polished screens that accept anything and then lose the listing



1. Partner entry
Two buttons, same form ⑥
2. Sign-in
Submit active, OTP empty ⑤
3. Location
"Yes" still manual ⑦
4. Address
Junk accepted ⑧
5. Rooms
6-room rule late ⑨
6. Photos
Duplicates pass ⑫
7. KYC
Fake ID passes ⑬
8. Review
"@ " address, floors 100 ⑭
9. Publish
"Welcome Aboard!" ⑮
10. My properties
"It's empty!" ⑮

What works

Clean, familiar layout · clear step titles · Back on every step · help entry on each screen · Apple sign-in offered on the login screen.

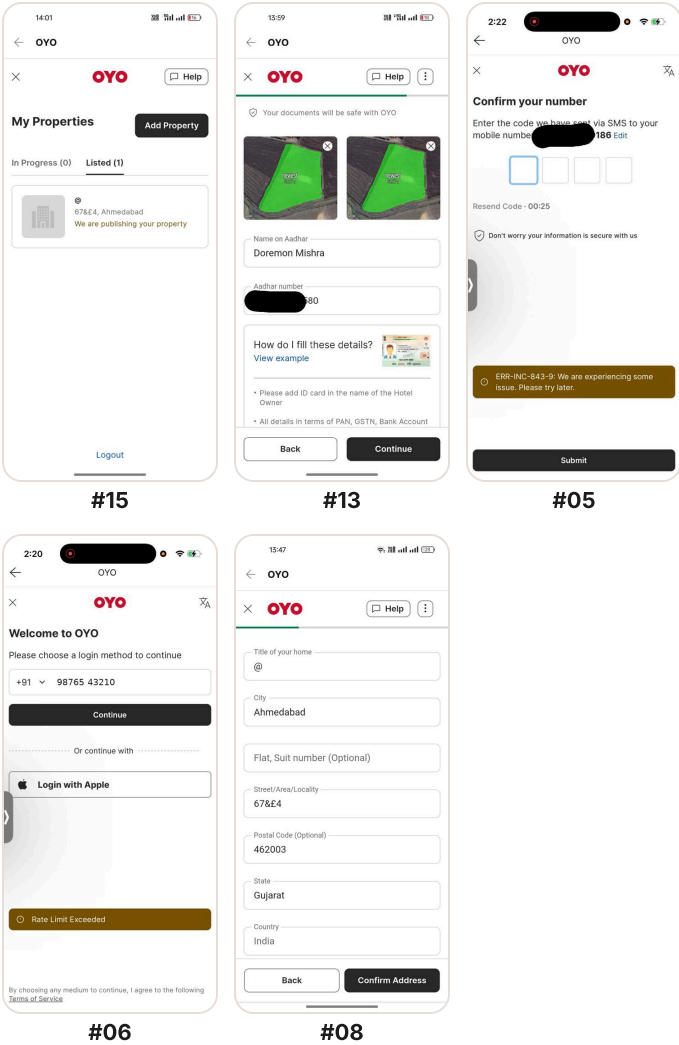
Pattern: confident interface, broken substance

Every step looks finished, but none checks input, key rules appear late, and the ending celebrates a listing that is never saved (observed: My Properties shows 0).

Evidence gaps

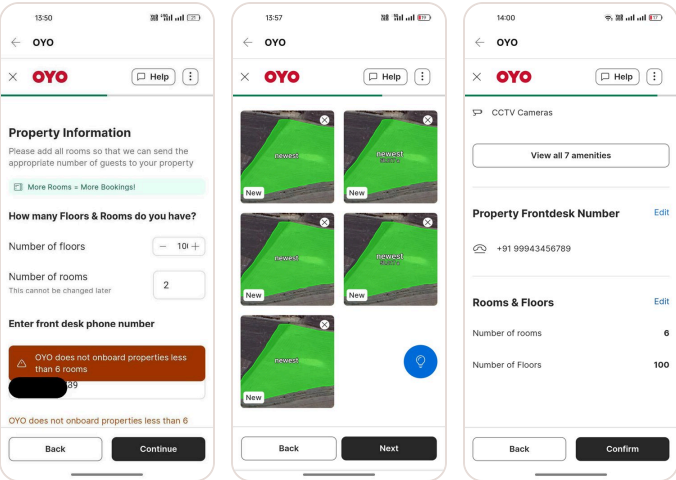
Web listing flow not captured · app versions and dates not recorded · one evaluator · the vanishing listing was seen once and needs reproducing on more devices.

The five issues that can lose the listing or block the owner

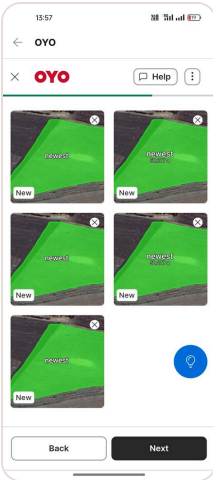


Issue · stage · severity	Which heuristic is violated · why it hurts	How to improve
#15 False “Welcome Aboard”, then the listing vanishes Review & publish · Android Sev 4 · Critical	Peak–End rule The most intense moment and the ending are a fake success followed by total loss of work.	Show success only after a confirmed save; keep the listing editable; on failure show an error with recovery.
#13 KYC accepts a fake name, invalid number and non-ID images Photos & KYC · Android Sev 4 · Critical	#5 Error prevention A legal identity step does no checking: a compliance, fraud and trust risk.	Check Aadhaar format and checksum, document type and name match before Continue.
#05 “Submit” is active with an empty OTP Sign-in · iOS Sev 3 · Major	#5 Error prevention A guaranteed failure is reachable, and the error is a code instead of guidance.	Disable Submit until 4 digits are entered; show plain errors (“That code is wrong or expired”).
#06 “Rate Limit Exceeded” with no retry time Sign-in · iOS Sev 3 · Major	#9 Recognise, diagnose & recover from errors The user is blocked and has to guess when, or whether, to try again.	“Too many attempts. Try again in 0:59” with a live countdown and another sign-in option.
#08 Address form accepts junk; nothing marked required Address & property · Android Sev 3 · Major	#5 Error prevention Bad data flows into a live listing, and owners can’t tell which fields matter.	Validate each field (letters, 6-digit PIN), mark required fields, keep the button off until valid.

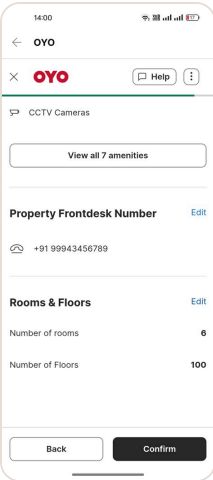
Rules arrive late, values hide, and the review shows bad data



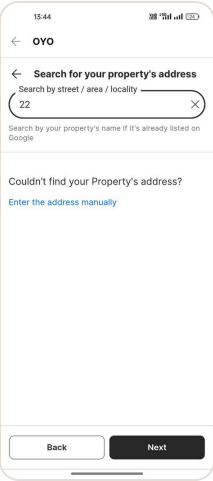
#10



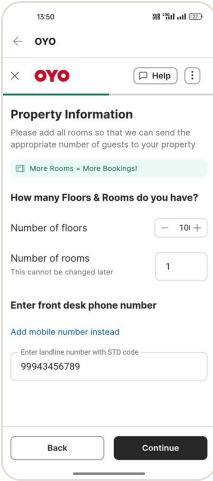
#12



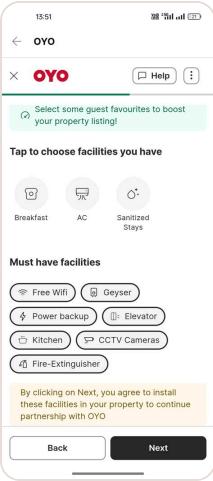
#14



#07



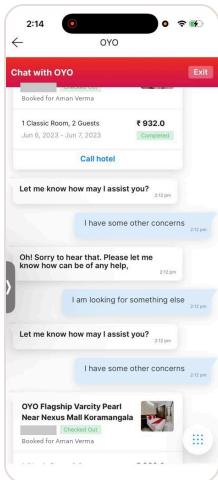
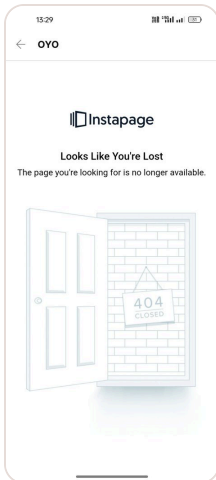
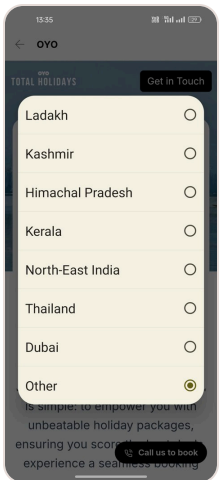
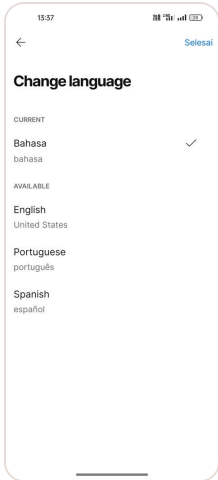
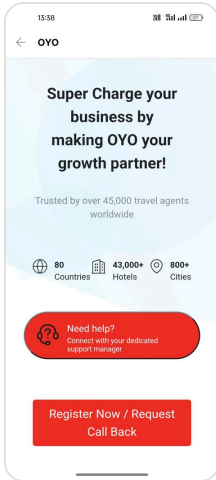
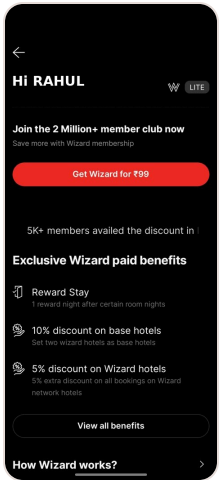
#09



#11

Issue · stage · severity	Which heuristic is violated · why it hurts	How to improve
#10 “Minimum 6 rooms” appears only after Continue Address & property · Android Sev 3 · Major	#10 Help & documentation Small owners learn they are ineligible only after spending effort.	State the 6-room rule at the start and beside the rooms field; offer the right alternative.
#12 Photo rules shown only after a rejected upload Photos & KYC · Android Sev 3 · Major	#10 Help & documentation Owners fail first and learn later, and junk images still pass.	Show a photo guide before upload; check orientation, duplicates and relevance as photos are added.
#14 Review shows broken data as a valid listing Review & publish · Android Sev 3 · Major	#1 Visibility of system status The screen meant to confirm reality shows bad data and a value the owner never chose.	Validate before review; never change a value silently; explain any cap.
#07 “Yes, I’m at my property” still means typing Address & property · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#2 Match between system & real world The question promises auto-detect; both answers end in typing, so the step feels misleading.	On “Yes”, use GPS to pre-fill the address for review; otherwise remove the branch.
#09 Number of floors is cut off and uncapped Address & property · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#1 Visibility of system status The owner can’t see the number they just set.	Widen the field so the full value shows; cap floors (e.g. 1–50) and say why.
#11 Facilities are a fixed list Address & property · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#7 Flexibility & efficiency of use Real properties can’t be described accurately; owners commit to items they may not have.	Yes / No per facility, “Add facility”, and no hidden commitment in a footnote.

On the way in, and when owners ask for help

Issue · stage · severity			Which heuristic is violated · why it hurts	How to improve	
			#17 Support chat loops without resolving Entry & support · iOS Sev 3 · Major	Hick's law Each turn repeats the same choices, so effort grows while the problem stays unsolved.	Add “Describe your issue” free text and a “Talk to an agent” handoff after one loop.
#17	#01	#02	#01 Dead menu link opens a 404 page Entry & support · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#9 Recognise, diagnose & recover from errors A live menu item leads nowhere and gives no way forward, so the user can't tell if they are still in OYO.	Remove retired links. On any error page keep OYO branding and offer Home, Retry and Search.
			#02 “Other” destination has no input Entry & support · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#7 Flexibility & efficiency of use The option promises any destination but gives no way to type one: a dead end for that user.	Reveal a free-text field on “Other”, or use an autocomplete destination search.
			#03 Language switches on one tap, no confirmation Entry & support · Android Sev 2 · Minor	#5 Error prevention One wrong tap can leave the user in a language they can't read, with no clear way back.	Confirm “Switch app language to X?” in both languages; keep an always-visible “Undo / English” option.
#03	#16	#04	#16 Two different buttons open the same form Entry & support · iOS Sev 1 · Cosmetic	Jakob's law Users expect differently labelled buttons to do different things; one is a false choice.	One primary action plus one clearly different help link, the same on both pages.
			#04 Wizard Lite breaks visual consistency Entry & support · Android Sev 1 · Cosmetic	#4 Consistency & standards The sudden shift can make users feel they left OYO, at the moment OYO asks them to pay for membership.	Keep Wizard inside the OYO design system; use one premium accent, not a new theme.

Severity: NN/g 0-4 from impact, frequency and recoverability. Frequency among real owners is **unknown**; ratings are evaluator estimates to confirm in testing. Each issue is counted once, under the principle it most clearly violates.

Observed issue → law → reasoning → change, and what to fix first

Hick’s law · #17 support loop (and the side menu)

Observed: the chat repeats the same canned options; the side menu lists 11 destinations with “Onboard as a partner” last. **Reasoning:** decision time grows with the number and repetition of choices; repeating choices never narrows to an answer. **Change:** free-text + agent handoff; a labelled partner card on home. More options are fine when they lead somewhere.

Fitts’s law · #09 floors stepper

Observed: the –/+ buttons are about 29×30 dp each (estimate from a 756 px screenshot, assuming a 360 dp screen), below the 48 dp Material target, and crowd the value. **Change:** 48 dp buttons, a wider value field. The photo-help bulb (#12) is ~56 dp, so its problem is labelling, not size.

Jakob’s law · #16 and #05

Observed: two differently labelled buttons open one form; Submit is active with an empty OTP. **Reasoning:** in other apps different labels do different things, and code entry stays disabled until complete. **Change:** one primary action + one distinct help link; disable Submit until 4 digits.

Peak–End rule · #15 false success

Observed: confetti, then the listing disappears. **Reasoning:** people judge an experience by its peak and its end; here both are the worst moment. **Change:** success only after a confirmed save, with a findable, editable listing.

Priority	Fix	Issues	Why (severity · benefit · effort* · confidence)
P1	Save before celebrating; keep listing editable	#15, #14	Sev 4 · stops total loss · medium effort · high confidence
P1	Validate KYC, address and OTP	#13, #08, #05, #06	Sev 3–4 · data integrity & compliance · medium · high
P2	Rules and guidance before effort	#10, #12, #07	Sev 2–3 · saves wasted effort · low · high
P2	Support that resolves; readable steppers; flexible facilities	#17, #09, #11	Sev 2–3 · recovery & accuracy · low–medium · medium
P3	Consistency and clean entry points	#01–#04, #16	Sev 1–2 · polish · low · high

*Effort is an evaluator assumption, to be confirmed with engineering.

Sign-in and data entry that prevent errors instead of accepting them

A · OTP: disabled until complete · #05 #06

2:22

OYO

Confirm your number

Enter the code we have sent via SMS to your mobile number 186 Edit

Resend Code - 00:25

Don't worry your information is secure with us

ERR-INC-843-9: We are experiencing some issue. Please try later.

Submit

9:41

Verify your number

Enter the 4-digit code sent to +91 98765 43210 Edit

That code is incorrect. Check the SMS and try again (2 attempts left).

Fill from SMS (demo)

Resend code in 0:25

Too many attempts? See what happens

Verify

BEFORE · OBSERVED

Verify stays off until 4 digits; wrong codes get plain words and attempts left; lockout shows a live “try again in 0:59”. **Trade-off:** none for users; needs error copy for each server state.

B · Address: required + validated · #08 #07

13:47

OYO

Title of your home

@

City

Ahmedabad

Flat, Suit number (Optional)

Street/Area/Locality

67&E4

Postal Code (Optional)

462003

State

Gujarat

Country

India

Back

Confirm Address

9:41

Property address

Step 2 of 7 - progress saves automatically

Fields marked * are required.

Property name *

@

Use at least 3 letters or numbers

Building / street *

Required

Area / locality *

Required

City *

H

Enter a valid city name

PIN code *

GGHH

PIN code is 6 digits, e.g. 122001

State *

Required

Some fields need fixing

Back

Fix the highlighted fields

BEFORE · OBSERVED

Required fields marked; “@”, “H” and “GGHH” rejected with a reason; “Yes, I’m here” really pre-fills via GPS. **A11y:** errors in text, not colour only.

C · Rooms rule upfront, readable stepper · #10 #09

13:50

OYO

Property Information

Please add all rooms so that we can send the appropriate number of guests to your property

More Rooms = More Bookings!

How many Floors & Rooms do you have?

Number of floors

10

Number of rooms

2

This cannot be changed later

Enter front desk phone number

OYO does not onboard properties less than 6 rooms

Back

Continue

9:41

Rooms & floors

Step 3 of 7 - progress saves automatically

Number of rooms for guests *

3

Min 6

At least 6 rooms are needed for this programme

Number of floors *

4

1 to 50

Looks good

Front-desk phone *

0124 456 7890

Guests and our team call this number

The number of rooms can be changed later from your partner app.

Back

Continue

BEFORE · OBSERVED

6-room rule shown inline and on the first screen; 48 dp steppers; floors capped 1–50 with a reason. **Trade-off:** small owners leave earlier, which is the honest outcome.

Real checks at KYC, and success only when the listing exists

D · KYC that actually verifies · #13

13:59

OYO

Help

Your documents will be safe with OYO

newest

newest

Name on Aadhar
Doremon Mishra

Aadhar number
[REDACTED]80

How do I fill these details?
[View example](#)

Please add ID card in the name of the Hotel Owner

All details in terms of PAN, GSTN, Bank Account

BackContinue

9:41

Owner KYC

Help

Step 6 of 7 · progress saves automatically

Required by law for property partners. Stored encrypted; never shown to guests.

AadhaarPAN

Name exactly as on the document *

Aman Verma

Aadhaar number *

1234 5678 9012

Aadhaar numbers don't start with 0 or 1

Fill a valid test number (demo)

Photo of the document (front) *

Upload ID photo

Upload a map screenshot (try a wrong file)

This doesn't look like an ID document. Upload a clear photo of the front of your Aadhaar card.

BackVerify and continue

BEFORE · OBSERVED

AFTER · PROPOSED

Aadhaar format + checksum, name match and document-type check before Continue; data stored encrypted (DPDP Rules 2025). **Dependency:** OCR / verification vendor.

E · Review shows exactly what was entered · #14

14:00

OYO

Help

CCTV Cameras

View all 7 amenities

Property Frontdesk Number

+91 99943456789

Rooms & Floors

Number of rooms6

Number of Floors100

BackConfirm

9:41

Review and submit

Help

Step 7 of 7 · progress saves automatically

All sections checked. This is exactly what you entered.

Property

Sunrise Residency · Hotel

Plot 21, Sunrise Towers, Sector 45, Gurugram 122003, Haryana

Rooms & floors

8 rooms · 4 floors · Front desk 0124 456 7890

Facilities

Wi-Fi · Geyser · Power backup · CCTV · Fire extinguisher · AC · Rooftop café

Not offered: Elevator, Kitchen, Breakfast

Photos

6 photos ready

KYC

Aadhaar · Aman Verma · **** 5209 · verified

I confirm these details are correct and I agree to the partner terms (sample).

Submit listing

BEFORE · OBSERVED

AFTER · PROPOSED

Validated summary with Edit per section; no silent changes; explicit declaration. **Trade-off:** one more tap, much more trust.

F · Honest ending · #15

14:04

OYO

Help

My Properties

Add Property

In Progress (0)Listed (0)

It's empty!

You don't have any listed property yet. Click on Add Property Button above to start a new listing

Logout

9:41

My properties

Help

Draft (0)In review (1)Live (0)

Sunrise Residency

Sector 45, Gurugram · 8 rooms

Under review · submitted today · PRT-73557

Edit detailsAsk a question

+ Add another property

BEFORE · OBSERVED

AFTER · PROPOSED

"Listing submitted · Under review" only after a confirmed save, then the listing is visible and editable in My properties. **Dependency:** backend save-then-confirm.

WEB · EVIDENCE GAP

The owner listing flow on web was not captured, so no web finding is claimed. The same patterns (inline validation, save-then-confirm) apply to a web form; capture it next. Try every screen in the prototype: oyo-varun.netlify.app

Test with owners before shipping; measure outcomes and guardrails

Usability study · 6–8 participants, Android + iOS, think-aloud

3–4 owners new to OYO and 3–4 existing OYO partners; current app vs prototype, counterbalanced, same test property data.

- **T1** “List your 8-room guest house using these photos and this test ID.”
- **T2** “You own a 4-room homestay. Can you list it here?”
- **T3** “Find your listing and change the number of rooms.”
- **T4** “You’re stuck on the photos step. Get help.”

Measure	Type
Task completion; listing found afterwards	Primary
Time on task; errors and backtracking	Primary
Owners correctly explain eligibility and status	Primary
Confidence the listing is saved (1–7)	Primary
Live: step funnel; submitted → visible in My properties	Live
Genuine owners blocked by validation (false rejects)	Guardrail
Drop-off at KYC; support contacts per listing	Guardrail

Expected benefits (hypotheses, not results)

- Fewer abandoned and lost listings once success follows a real save.
- Cleaner supply data: fewer invalid addresses and fake KYC.
- Less wasted effort for ineligible owners.
- Fewer “where is my listing?” support contacts.

Why it matters to OYO now

An IPO-bound company growing supply needs a self-onboarding flow that meets its own “30 minutes” promise and handles identity data safely under the DPDP Rules (notified Nov 2025).

Limits

One evaluator; app versions and dates unknown; web not evaluated; no OYO analytics; touch sizes estimated from screenshots; the vanishing listing seen once.

Recommendation

Fix the ending and the checks first: **save before success (#15)** and **real validation at KYC, address and OTP (#13, #08, #05)**. Then move rules upfront. Test with owners before rollout.