

One smooth OYO for the guest who *books* and the owner who *lists*

I followed three people through OYO's two most important flows: a first-time and a returning traveller booking a room, and an owner listing a hotel. I found 19 points of friction, traced them to one root cause, and redesigned both journeys around it.

3

people followed

19

friction points

4

UX laws

26

clickable screens

MY ANSWER IN THREE LINES

1

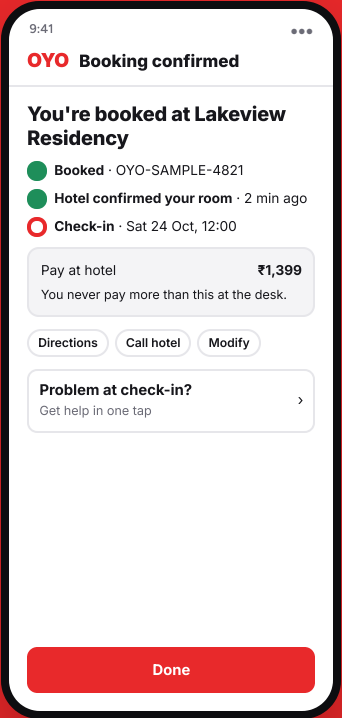
Make every status true
Hotel-confirmed bookings for guests. Saved, in-review and live listings for owners.

2

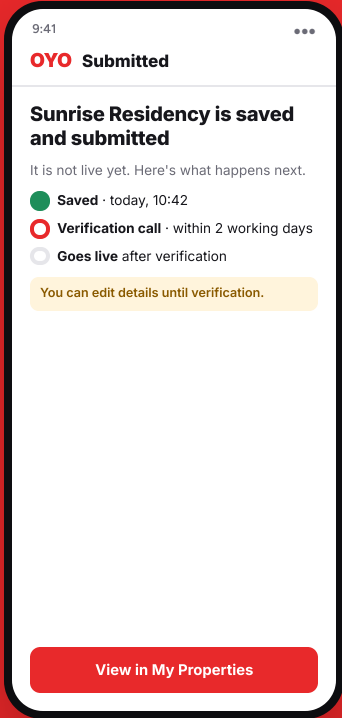
Show the real price and the real rules, early
One all-in total and the ID and couple rules before a guest pays. Eligibility and ID needs before an owner starts.

3

Check inputs and shorten the path
Inline validation, auto-read OTP, GPS address, one-tap rebooking and a refund tracker.



Guest · hotel-confirmed status



Owner · honest go-live tracker

UNDERSTAND

1

Start here

UNDERSTAND

2

Users & scope

UNDERSTAND

3

Journey map

DIAGNOSE

4

Current experience

DIAGNOSE

5

Traveller issues

DIAGNOSE

6

Owner issues

DIAGNOSE

7

UX laws

SOLVE

8

Solution: travellers

SOLVE

9

Solution: owners

PROVE

10

Priorities & proof

A two-sided marketplace runs on *trust*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *Who am I designing for, and why these two flows?*

Travellers book stays; independent owners list hotels for OYO to fill. Without listings there is nothing to book, and without trusted bookings owners get no guests. So I evaluated one critical flow on each side, through three people.

FT

First-time traveller

WHO

New to OYO. Booking a budget room in an unfamiliar city for a weekend, paying by UPI.

GOAL

Find a room they can trust, know the full price and the hotel's rules before paying, and check in without a fight.

WORRIES

Hidden charges, being turned away at the desk, unclear ID or couple rules.

JOURNEY

Open app → Search → Results → Hotel page → Verify phone → Review & pay → Confirmed → Check-in

RT

Returning traveller

WHO

Has booked OYO 3+ times. Travels for work twice a month and often stays at the same hotel.

GOAL

Rebook in under a minute, change or cancel without calling anyone, and see exactly when a refund lands.

WORRIES

Retrying everything, slow refunds, support that goes in circles.

JOURNEY

Open app → Book again → Confirmed → Manage booking → Cancel → Refund tracker → Rate stay

OW

Property owner

WHO

Independent hotel owner with 6–30 rooms, listing on OYO for the first time.

GOAL

Get the property listed correctly, once, and know when it goes live.

WORRIES

Wasted effort, rejected or vanished listings.

JOURNEY

Entry → Login & OTP → Location → Address → Property info → Facilities → Photos → KYC → Review → Publish

Flow 1 • Booking a room

From opening the app to checking in (first-time), and rebooking, cancelling and getting a refund (returning).

Why this flow: booking is where OYO earns trust or loses a customer. The first booking sets the habit; the returning guest decides whether to stay loyal.

Flow 2 • Listing a property

From “Onboard as a partner” through login, address, details, photos and KYC to publishing.

Why this flow: it is the longest, highest-stakes owner journey (ID, address, photos). A failed listing loses a supply partner.

How I evaluated

Owner: manual walkthrough of the live app with real and deliberately invalid input, 14 screenshots.

Traveller: 2 observed screens plus OYO reviews, complaint sites and published booking-UX research.

Lenses: Nielsen's 10 heuristics, four UX laws, NN/g severity 0–4, and best-in-class teardowns (Airbnb, Booking.com, Uber).

4 Catastrophe

3 Major

2 Minor

1 Cosmetic

OBSERVED

RESEARCH

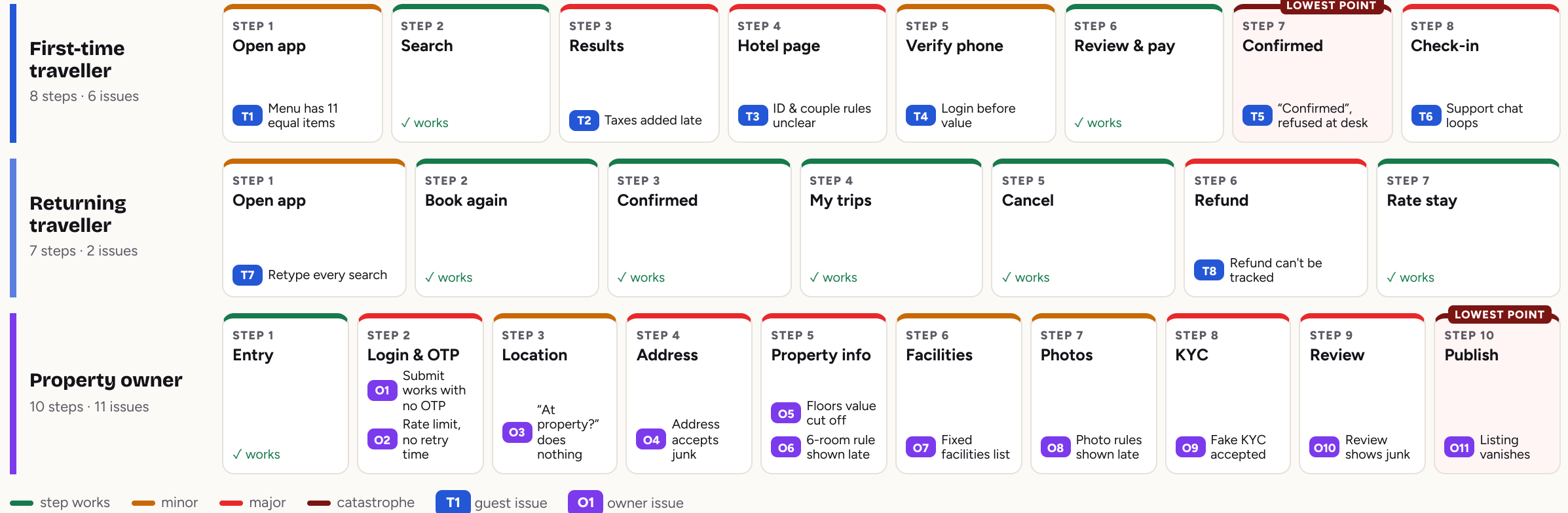
HYPOTHESIS

Varun Kumar · independent educational evaluation, not affiliated with OYO

▶ Live prototype: oyo-varun-v3.netlify.app Detailed report: p. 4 ⤵ Next: 3 · Journey map →

Every step in order, with the issue *found there*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *Where exactly does each person get stuck?*



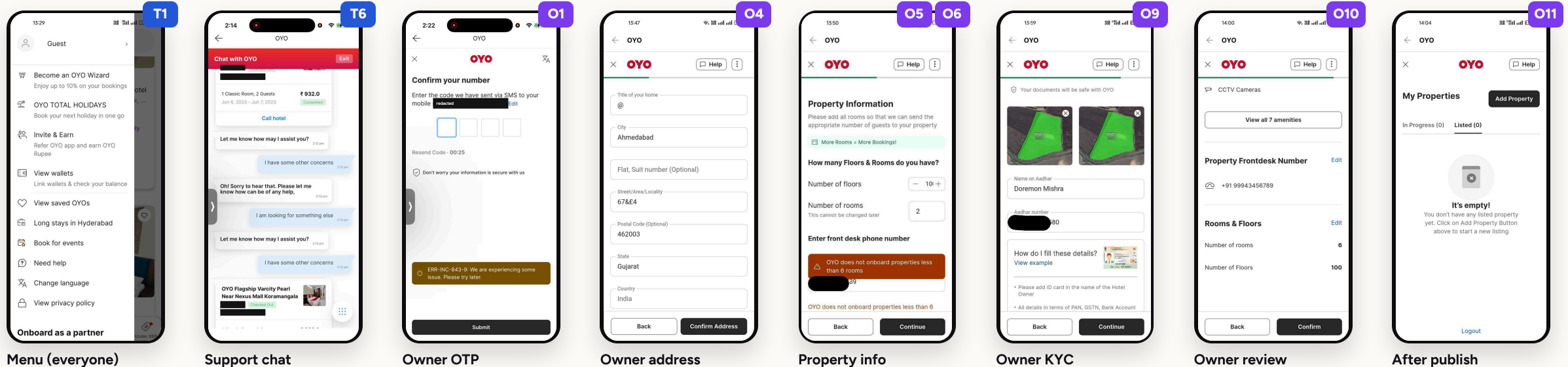
The pattern

On both sides the lowest point is the **end** of the journey: a booking refused at the desk (T5) and a listing that vanishes after "Welcome Aboard" (O11). That is exactly the moment people remember most.

What the app shows today, and what travellers *report*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS

What does the app really show today?



What travellers report RESEARCH

T2 T3 Taxes added late; ID and couple rules sit in FAQs

An industry pattern on booking sites (Travolution, Baymard). OYO leaves couples' check-in to each hotel.

T5 "Confirmed", then refused or charged again at the desk

Recurring in Trustpilot and App Store reviews of OYO.

T8 Refunds of "7 to 14 working days", chased for 30+ days

ConsumerComplaints.in and Trustpilot.

What already works: keep it

- Back and Next on every step
- Resend-code timer on the OTP screen
- Login with Apple as an alternative
- "How do I fill these details? View example" on KYC
- Edit links on each review section
- Full-width primary buttons at the bottom, in thumb reach

THE SHARED ROOT CAUSE

The app says things it can't back up. Owners see "Welcome Aboard" for a listing that then vanishes. Guests see "Confirmed" for a room the desk may refuse. Fix the truth of every status first; remove friction second.

Reviews are self-selected: patterns to test, not measured frequency. Personal data in screenshots is blacked out.

Guests can't see the full price, the rules or the *real status*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS

What goes wrong for guests, and what does best-in-class do?

#	ISSUE · STAGE · SEVERITY · EVIDENCE	HEURISTIC VIOLATED	HOW TO IMPROVE	WHAT 10/10 LOOKS LIKE
T1	Side menu offers 11 equal options Open app Sev 2 OBSERVED	#8 Aesthetic & minimalist design Hick's Law	- Group into Trips, Money, Help, Settings - Put My bookings and Help first	Airbnb, Booking.com A few bottom tabs, not a long menu
T2	Nightly price shown first; taxes and fees appear later Results & hotel page Sev 3 RESEARCH	#1 Visibility of system status	- Show the total for the stay, incl. taxes, on every card - Keep one price, from results to payment	Airbnb Total price with fees in search results
T3	ID and couple rules are decided by each hotel, and unclear before paying Hotel page Sev 3 RESEARCH	#10 Help & documentation	“Before you book” rules card on every hotel: ID, couples, local ID, check-in time - Show the same rules as tags in results	Airbnb, Booking.com House rules on the listing page, before booking
T4	Login asked before the guest sees value Verify phone Sev 2 HYPOTHESIS	#7 Flexibility & efficiency of use Jakob's Law	- Browse and see totals without login - Ask for the phone number only at booking	Airbnb Browse and compare first; sign in only to book
T5	“Confirmed” in the app, refused or charged again at the desk Confirmation & check-in Sev 4 RESEARCH	#1 Visibility of system status Peak–End Rule	- Show “Hotel confirmed” as its own status - One-tap Check-in help: OYO calls the hotel, moves the guest or refunds	Airbnb Pending vs confirmed; refund or rebook if the host cancels
T6	Support chat loops the same prompts, with no human handoff Support Sev 3 OBSERVED	#3 User control & freedom	- Free-text “Describe your issue” “Talk to an agent” after one loop	Amazon Chat that escalates to an agent or a callback
T7	Returning guests retype searches and details Open app Sev 2 RESEARCH	#6 Recognition rather than recall	“Book again” card for past stays - Recent searches inside the search box	Swiggy, Zomato “Reorder” in one tap; recent searches in search
T8	Refund timing is vague, with no way to track it Cancel & refund Sev 3 RESEARCH	#1 Visibility of system status	- Show refund amount and date before cancelling - Refund tracker with steps and a date	Amazon, Flipkart Refund timeline that shows a date

T1–T6 come from the first-time journey; T7–T8 from the returning journey. Severities are provisional because they rest on research and two observed screens. Full write-up of each issue: report pp. 8–11.

Owners can enter anything, and still *lose the listing*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS

What goes wrong for owners, and what does best-in-class do?

#	ISSUE · STEP · ALL OBSERVED	SEVERITY	HEURISTIC VIOLATED	FIRST FIX	WHAT 10/10 LOOKS LIKE
O1	Submit works before the OTP is entered · Login & OTP	Sev 2	#5 Error prevention Jakob's Law	Keep Submit disabled until all 4 digits are in	Banking and UPI apps OTP auto-read; button waits for 4 digits
O2	"Rate Limit Exceeded" with no retry time · Login & OTP	Sev 3	#9 Help users recover from errors	"Too many attempts. Try again in 15:00" with a countdown	Banking apps "Try again in 15:00" countdown
O3	"Yes, I'm at my property" still means typing the address · Location	Sev 2	#2 Match with the real world Hick's Law	If Yes and location is allowed, pre-fill the address from GPS	Food-delivery apps GPS pre-fills the address; edit after
O4	Address form accepts junk; required fields are unmarked · Address	Sev 3	#5 Error prevention	Validate each field inline; numeric 6-digit PIN	Checkout forms PIN lookup fills city and state; inline checks
O5	Floors value is cut off, uncapped and later changed · Property info	Sev 2	#1 Visibility of system status Fitts's Law	Show the full value; cap floors at a realistic maximum	Apple, Material guidance 44–48 px touch targets
O6	"Minimum 6 rooms" rule appears only after Continue · Property info	Sev 3	#10 Help & documentation	State eligibility on the first screen	Airbnb Sets expectations before setup begins
O7	Facilities are a fixed list; Next means agreeing to install them · Facilities	Sev 2	#7 Flexibility & efficiency of use	Mark each facility Available / Not available	NN/g #7 Say what is true: available or not
O8	Photo rules appear only after a rejected upload · Photos	Sev 2	#10 Help & documentation	Show photo rules and examples before upload	NN/g #10 Guidance and examples before the action
O9	KYC accepts a fake name, invalid number and non-ID images · KYC	Sev 3	#5 Error prevention	Check Aadhaar format and checksum	Uber, Booking.com Document verification; Know Your Partner form
O10	Review shows junk as valid; floors silently set to 100 · Review	Sev 3	#1 Visibility of system status	Validate before review; never reach review with invalid data	Principle Never reach review with invalid data
O11	"Welcome Aboard", then the listing vanishes · Publish	Sev 4	#1 Visibility of system status Peak–End Rule	Show success only after a confirmed save	Uber Onboarding statuses with a last-updated time

The same four laws explain friction *on both sides*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *Why do these problems happen?*

Hick's Law

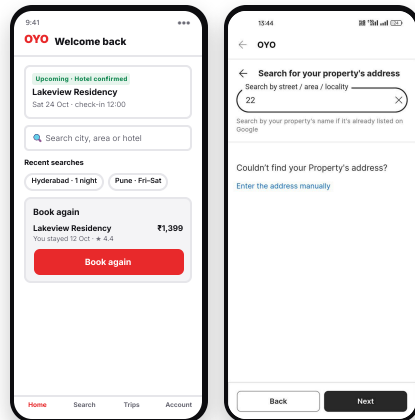
More, equal choices mean slower decisions.

GUEST

T1 11 equal menu items hide bookings and help.

OWNER

O3 "Are you at your property?" adds a decision that changes nothing.



My change: Group the menu; remove choices with no outcome.

Jakob's Law

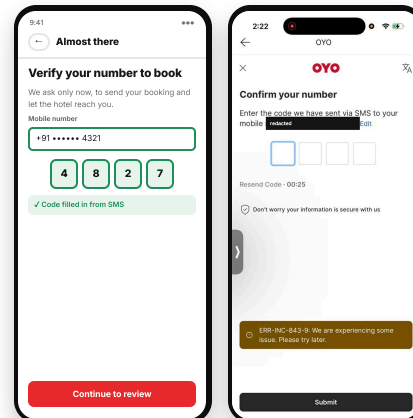
Users expect apps to work like the ones they already use.

GUEST

T4 Guests expect to browse freely and log in only to book.

OWNER

O1 Owners expect auto-filled OTPs and a session that carries over.



My change: Just-in-time login, auto-read OTP, reuse sessions.

Fitts's Law

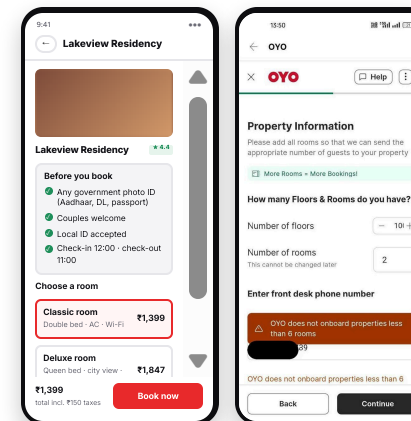
Big, close targets are faster and safer to hit.

GUEST

Sticky full-width Book and Pay buttons in thumb reach.

OWNER

O5 Tiny +/- buttons crowd the floors value.



My change: 44 pt targets; primary action pinned to the bottom.

Peak-End Rule

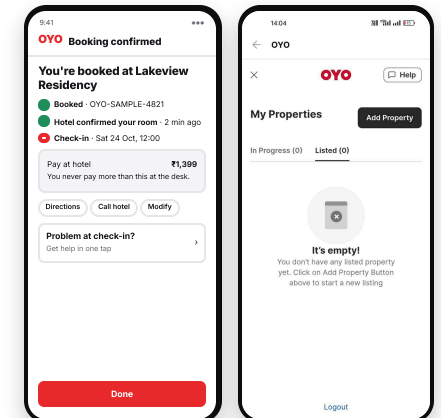
People judge an experience by its peak and its end.

GUEST

T5 A confirmed booking refused at the desk.

OWNER

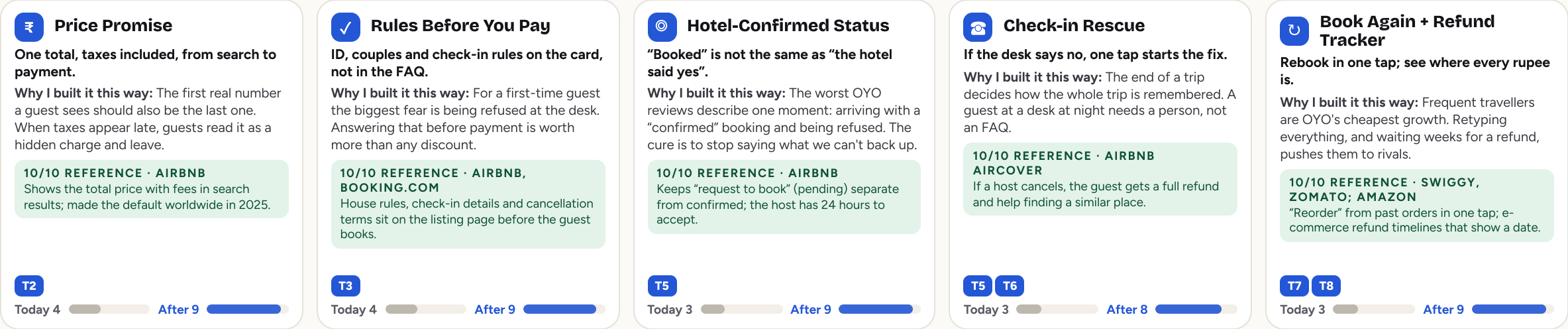
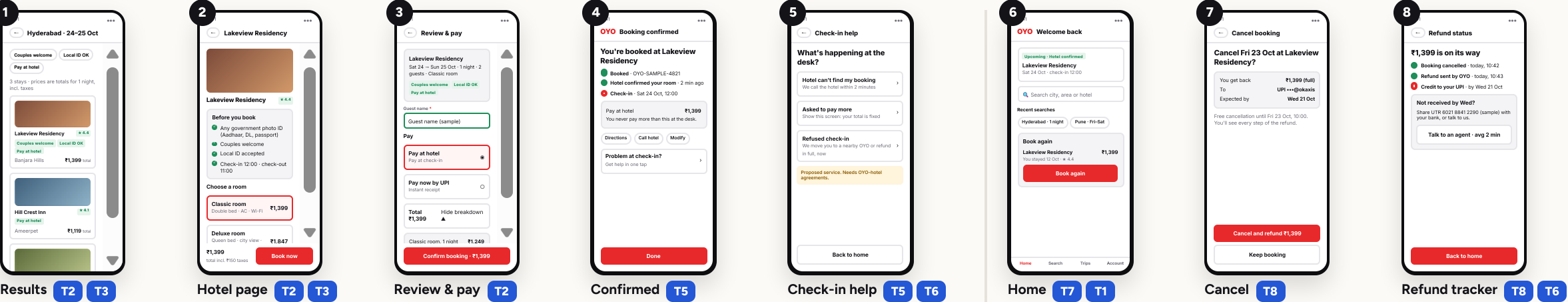
O11 Confetti, then the listing vanishes.



My change: Make the ending true: hotel-confirmed status, saved listing, honest status.

Book with the full price and rules in view; *rebook in one tap*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *How will the guest journey work now, and why did I design it this way?*



Also: Login only at booking (T4) · Four tabs, not eleven options (T1) · Support that resolves (T6). Screens 1–5 first-time, 6–8 returning; concepts with sample data. Scores: my rating, 10 = best pattern found.

List once, correctly, and know the *real status*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *How will the listing journey work now, and why did I design it this way?*

1

OYO List your property

Before you start

Check these so you don't lose time later.

- 6 or more rooms
Smaller properties can't be listed yet
- Owner ID: Aadhaar or PAN
- 6 landscape photos: rooms, lobby, outside
- About 10 minutes. Progress saves as you go

How many rooms?

✓ Eligible to list

Start listing

Before you start O6

2

OYO Confirm your number

Enter the 4-digit code

Sent by SMS to +91 ***** 1234 [Edit](#)

4

8

2

7

✓ Code filled in from SMS

Too many attempts? You'll see exactly when to retry, plus Login with Apple.

Verify

Login (auto OTP) O1 O2

3

OYO Address details

* Required

Property name *

Sunrise Residency

Street / area *

Plot 22, Sector 8

City *

Ahmedabad

PIN code *

380015

✓ Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Confirm address

Address (validated) O4

4

OYO Facilities

What does your property have?

Wi-Fi Available

Power backup Available

Geyser Available

Elevator Not available

CCTV Available

+ Add another facility

☒ I agree to install missing must-haves within 30 days

Continue

Facilities O7

5

OYO Photos

Photo tips

- Landscape (wide)
- 6 different spaces: room, bathroom, lobby, outside
- Daylight, no screenshots

2 photos look identical. Replace one to continue.

Continue

Photos O8

6

OYO Owner KYC

Required by law. Checked before you continue.

Aadhaar number *

***** 4821

✓ Valid format

ID photo *

aadhaar_front.jpg

✓ Looks like an ID card

Name on ID *

Ramesh Patel (sample)

✓ Matches the ID

Wrong document or number? You'll see why, and how to fix it.

Continue

KYC O9

7

OYO Review

Check before you submit

Address [Edit](#)

Plot 22, Sector 8, Ahmedabad 380015

Rooms & floors [Edit](#)

8 rooms - 3 floors (as entered)

Facilities [Edit](#)

4 available - 1 not available

Photos [Edit](#)

6 checked

KYC [Edit](#)

Verified

Submit for review

Review O10

8

OYO Submitted

Sunrise Residency is saved and submitted

It is not live yet. Here's what happens next.

- ✓ Saved - today, 10:42
- 🔴 Verification call - within 2 working days
- 🔴 Goes live after verification

You can edit details until verification.

View in My Properties

Honest status O11

✓

Know Before You Start

Eligibility and effort on screen one.

Why I built it this way: Today an owner can type for ten minutes before learning they can't list. Bad news is cheaper the earlier it comes.

10/10 REFERENCE · AIRBNB

Opens host onboarding with an earnings estimate and keeps a visible progress tracker through setup.

O6 O8

Today 3 After 9

📄

Fields That Can't Lie

Inline checks, required marks, GPS address.

Why I built it this way: Junk that enters a live listing costs OYO far more than the minute it saves. Catch it at the field, where fixing is cheapest.

10/10 REFERENCE · BANKING AND UP! APPS

OTP auto-read, inline validation and retry countdowns; 44-pt minimum touch targets in Apple's guidance.

O1 O2 O3 O4 O5

Today 2 After 9

ID

KYC That Checks

A legal step that actually verifies.

Why I built it this way: A mandatory legal step that accepts "Doremon Mishra" protects no one. This is a compliance risk before it is a UX problem.

10/10 REFERENCE · UBER; BOOKING.COM

Documents pass explicit verification before activation; Booking.com requires a Know Your Partner form to stay bookable.

O9

Today 2 After 9

🔴

True Go-Live Tracker

Saved, in review, live: each one real.

Why I built it this way: Confetti followed by an empty page is the worst ending the longest flow could have. A truthful "in review" beats a false "welcome aboard".

10/10 REFERENCE · UBER

Partner status model (onboarding, onboarded, active, waitlisted, rejected), each with a last-updated time.

O10 O11

Today 1 After 9

📄

Honest Facilities & Photos

Say what's missing; show the rules first.

Why I built it this way: Accurate listings prevent "not as described" complaints later, and an owner should never commit to installations by tapping Next.

10/10 REFERENCE · NN/G HEURISTICS

Show guidance before the action (#10) and let the user say what is true (#7).

O7 O8

Today 4 After 9

Make every status true first, *then remove friction*

THIS PAGE ANSWERS *What do we build first, and how will we know it worked?*

PRIORITY	THEME · WHY	FOR	ISSUES
P1	Make every status true Confirmed bookings refused at the desk; listings that vanish after success.	Both	T5 O10 O11
P1	Full price and rules before paying Surprise totals and rules at the desk break trust on the first booking.	Traveller	T2 T3
P1	Validate owner inputs Junk addresses and fake KYC reach live listings.	Owner	O1 O4 O9
P2	Track refunds; support that resolves Money in limbo and loops drive repeat contacts.	Traveller	T6 T8
P2	Shortcuts for returning users Rebooking should take one tap, not a full search.	Traveller	T4 T7
P2	Rules up front for owners Hidden eligibility wastes owners' effort.	Owner	O6 O8
P3	Simpler menu and controls Friction rather than failure.	Both	T1 O3 O5 O7

How I ranked: severity × people affected × risk to OYO (money, stays, listings, legal), weighed against effort. P1 loses money or trust outright; P3 is friction, not failure. **Release order:**

STEP 1
Truth
Save listings before success; hotel-confirmed status
T5 O11

STEP 2
Clarity
Totals and rules before paying; validate owner inputs
T2 T3 O4 O9

STEP 3
Recovery
Refund tracker; support with a human
T8 T6

STEP 4
Speed
Book again, login at booking, owner rules up front
T7 T4 O6

STEP 5
Polish
Menu and control fixes
T1 O5

Success metrics

- Search → booking conversion (first-time users)
- Check-in success: bookings honoured at the desk
- Repeat booking within 90 days
- Time to rebook (returning users)
- Listing completion: started → submitted
- Listings live within 7 days

GUARDRAILS

Cancellation rate · Support contacts per 100 bookings · Average booking value · KYC false-reject rate

Usability tests (moderated, think-aloud)

- **First-time travellers (5, never used OYO):** Book a couple-friendly room in Hyderabad for Saturday under ₹1,500 in total. Tell us the final price and the ID you need.
- **Returning travellers (5, booked OYO 3+ times):** Book the hotel you stayed at last time for this Friday. Then cancel it and tell us when the money comes back.
- **Property owners (5–6, first-time listers):** Find out if your 4-room guest house can be listed; list an 8-room hotel; say whether it is live.

Bottom line

Guests and owners lose trust at the same moment: when the app's status isn't true. Hotel-confirmed bookings, saved listings and honest totals fix the worst moments for both. Outcomes are hypotheses until tested.

Try it live ↗