



Global Host Report 2025

The Reality of Hosting:
Stories, Data & Insights from 1,400+
Global Vacation Rental Hosts



Table of Contents

Top 10 Takeaways: Global Host Report 2025	04
The New Host Reality	04
The OTA Platform Paradox	05
The Path Forward	06
<hr/>	
About the Survey	07
<hr/>	
A Note from Richie, Co-Founder of PriceLabs	09
<hr/>	
Partner Spotlight	
Annik Rauh —Championing the Voice of Hosts	11
Destination Asset — Bridging Data, Insight, and Host Experience	13
<hr/>	
2. Introduction: Hosting in 2025 – From Spare Room to Serious Business	15
2.1 It's Not Passive, But It's Not 9-5 Either	19
2.2 From Side Income to Entrepreneurial Energy	20
2.3 Planning Ahead: Where Hosts Are Investing Next	22
2.4 Summary	22
<hr/>	
3. The Devil You Know	23
3.1 A Platform-Powered World	23
3.2 A System That Feels One-Sided	24
3.3 Platforms at the Helm, but Hosts on the Hook	25
3.4 The Paradox: Airbnb Satisfaction Scores Are High	25
3.5 Summary	27

Table of Contents

4: Behind Every Booking, The Work No One Sees	28
4.1 What Really Takes Up Time in a Host's Day	28
4.2 The Most Time-Consuming Tasks	28
4.3 The Work That Can't Be Automated (Yet)	30
4.4 The Worries That Keep Hosts Up at Night	31
4.5 The Vetting Imbalance	32
4.6 Summary	33
<hr/>	
5: Embracing Artificial Intelligence, or Overwhelmed by It?	34
5.1 Hosts Are Split: Is AI a Time Saver or Another Job?	34
5.2 A Clear Divide on AI	34
5.3 AI Isn't Saving Time, Yet	35
5.4 Tech Companies Play a Role in Educating Hosts	36
5.5 Summary	37
<hr/>	
6: Proud, Resilient, and Optimistic	38
6.1 Hosts Love What They've Built	39
6.2 Hosts Are Optimistic	40
6.3 Summary	41
<hr/>	
7. The Reality of Hosting in 2025	42

Top 10 Takeaways: Global Host Report 2025

The New Host Reality

1. Hosting is not passive income; it's real work.

83% of Hosts work another job alongside hosting, making it less of a side hustle and more of a second shift. For most, hosting demands time, energy, and constant attention, with the added stress of feeling always “on call,” even if 71% of Hosts spend less than 10 hours a week on it.

2. Tech has removed some friction, but not the biggest headaches.

Tasks like calendar syncing are automated. But finding reliable cleaners and maintenance help remains a top concern, with many Hosts citing this as their most significant ongoing stressor. Yet only 10% plan to invest more in tech that helps manage practical support, showing that available tools aren't yet meeting the needs of all, or are perceived as too costly.

3. Challenges are felt globally, but the pain is sharper in some regions.

The top stressors are global, but are felt more acutely in some places. In Europe, for example, 70% of Hosts worry about OTA visibility (vs. 63% globally), and 55% are concerned about regulation (vs. 50% globally): perhaps due to the greater prevalence of Booking.com in Europe and increasing city regulations.



The OTA Platform Paradox

4. The relationship with OTAs is a paradox: they're vital for business but Hosts chafe at the lack of control

Many Hosts are frustrated by the lack of transparency in search ranking algorithms, inconsistent platform rules, and what they perceive as unfair review systems. This dependence on platforms, while vital for attracting guests, creates insecurity, with 63% of Hosts concerned about their OTA visibility and seeking clearer information on how rankings are determined.

5. Most important for Hosts, is more control over who stays.

Hosts want the ability to verify who's booking, do background checks, and filter out risky guests before problems happen. And they want this functionality without the current threat of being penalized in the OTAs' search rankings.

6. Airbnb delivers the bookings, and comes out on top

Airbnb consistently achieves the highest satisfaction scores (4.1/5), significantly surpassing Vrbo (3.3) and Booking.com (3.1). Hosts complain that Airbnb too-often sides with guests, but at the end of the day they are satisfied that Airbnb delivers financially.

7. Hosts are investing in independence, especially Direct Bookings.

90% of Hosts plan to invest the same or more in direct booking websites in the coming year, a clear signal of interest in reducing platform reliance. (Smart home tech is another area of growing investment).



8. AI divides opinion and hasn't saved time (yet).

AI is dividing Hosts: 14% are embracing AI, while 43% find it overwhelming. Yet both groups spend the same amount of time managing their listings. This is proof that AI hasn't quite delivered on its promise to save time. Where it shines is helping Hosts create more personalized guest experiences.

9. Hosting ignites real entrepreneurial ambition.

Hosting motivations are evolving. 56% of Hosts began with the goal of earning additional income. 49% are now looking to scale their operations, 22% intend to make hosting a full-time pursuit, and 56% are reinvesting earnings into their properties. These trends signal a shift from casual hosting toward business-building and long-term independence.

10. This is a proud, optimistic, and resilient community.

Hosting is personal. 69% of Hosts say that they're proud of what they've built and the positive impact they've made in their communities. Even with the long hours, stress, and occasional burnout, most remain deeply connected to the purpose of their work – creating experiences that matter.



As one Host, **David Roberts** shared: *"I always enjoy it when folks are enjoying the house. A lot of the time, they'll arrive and send a message saying the house is great. And that's just really cool."* That simple joy of sharing something meaningful echoes across Hosts and is what continues to define and unite the hosting community.

About the Survey

The Global Host Report 2025 draws on findings from a comprehensive survey by PriceLabs in 2025. **The goal:** to better understand the day-to-day realities, challenges, and attitudes of short-term rental Hosts.

- ✓ **1,400+ verified Hosts participated**
- ✓ **All respondents manage 1–4 vacation rental listings on Airbnb, Vrbo, Booking.com, direct or other booking websites**
- ✓ **The survey was distributed in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, and German to capture diverse global perspectives.**

This report reflects the voices of the people behind the listings: the Hosts who answer guest messages between meetings, clean properties after work, and keep the short-term rental ecosystem running.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who responded to the survey and to our data partners who helped gather responses for this survey, especially Annik Rauh of Fewo-Angels and Jacob at Destination Asset, for their generous support and collaboration.



A Note from Richie

Co-Founder of PriceLabs



When we started PriceLabs, our mission was simple: make short-term rental hosting smarter, simpler and more sustainable.

Over the years, we've built tools for pricing, recommendations, revenue estimations and market insights but more than anything, we've spent time listening.

We've listened to your wins. Your worries. Your workflows. Your celebrations.

The Global Host Report 2025 is a continuation of that effort. It's our way to spotlight the real work that goes into hosting today. We heard from over 1,400 Hosts across the world. And what we learned was both inspiring and humbling.

Most Hosts aren't running empires. Nearly 60% manage just one property. Many are working full-time jobs while cleaning, maintaining, and managing listings after hours. The work is real and often invisible.

At the same time, we saw an incredible entrepreneurial spirit. Hosts are building businesses, not side hustles.



**We've listened to your wins.
Your worries. Your workflows.
Your celebrations. The Global
Host Report 2025 is a
continuation of that effort.**

They're reinvesting in properties, watching their finances, and thinking like operators, even when the platforms don't always treat them that way.

It's clear that more help is needed. That's what we're committed to at PriceLabs: building solutions that work out of the box, scale with your business, and make the hard parts easier. Whether you're managing 1 listing or 100, we're here to help you do more with less stress.

To every Host who took the time to share their experience: thank you. This report is for you.

Richie Khandelwal
Co-founder, PriceLabs



Annik Rauh — Championing the Voice of Hosts



This report is built on thousands of Host voices — their stories, their challenges, their ideas for the future. Behind the scenes, people like **Annik Rauh, Founder of Fewo-Angels and Airbnb Host Advisor**, play an essential role in making that possible.

Based in Germany, Annik is more than a Host. She's an advocate for fairer treatment, better transparency, and stronger collaboration between Hosts and platforms. Through her work advising property managers and supporting independent operators, she's helped elevate the conversation around hosting — one that values both data and the human stories behind it.

What Annik Sees in the Data



1. Data tools must be simpler, not just smarter.

Even seasoned Hosts struggle to interpret complex dashboards and performance metrics.

As Annik put it, *“If I find it difficult to follow the statistics, imagine how a new Host feels.”*

She urged providers to make analytics more actionable — pairing numbers with plain-language insights, localized examples, and contextual training so that every Host, not just the data-savvy, can make confident decisions.

2. Local context defines Host stress.

Annik highlighted that European Hosts face a sharper version of global challenges — particularly around regulation and OTA visibility.

Her perspective aligned with the data: **70% of European Hosts** worry about search-ranking transparency, compared to **63%** worldwide. Local rules and platform dependencies, she explained, amplify operational uncertainty.

3. Hosts need dialogue, not just data.

Annik believes the next step is inclusion: building regular feedback loops between Hosts and the platforms that shape their livelihoods. Rather than designing in isolation, she advocates for everyday Hosts to test new tools before launch — ensuring that product innovation reflects lived experience, not theoretical assumptions.

**“Hosting is emotional work. Every change—
an algorithm tweak, a missing cleaner—
affects someone’s livelihood. The more
platforms listen, the better tools they’ll build.”**

**Annik Rauh Founder,
Fewo-Angels**

Destination Asset — Bridging Data, Insight, and Host Experience



Jacob Murphy runs PriceLabs for Hosts and PMs so their listings consistently outperform the market with intentional, repeatable pricing strategy. As a revenue manager, he manages portfolios ranging from single units to 100+ listings across a dozen countries, exclusively using PriceLabs at scale. He's been brought in by industry leaders to teach advanced dynamic pricing and regularly provides data-driven feedback that helps shape upcoming PriceLabs features. Learn more at DestinationAsset.com

What Jacob Sees in the Data



1. Hosting isn't passive — it's a business built on systems and mindset.

Jacob challenges the idea of hosting as effortless income. The Hosts who grow, he says, are those who track their numbers consistently and treat hosting like a professional operation.

As he put it, *"If ten hours feels like forty, something in your setup isn't right."*

2. The right tools depend on the Host's stage of growth.

For Jacob, technology is only effective when it matches a Host's scale. Tools that work for five listings won't work for fifty — and small inconsistencies, like mismatched property names across platforms, can slow down entire teams.

3. Platforms are powerful — and Hosts need to understand how they work.

Jacob sees OTAs as essential but imperfect. Success, he says, comes from learning each platform's "rules of the game" — from pricing levers to review categories — and using data to stay visible and competitive.

4. Direct bookings require more than enthusiasm.

While many Hosts want independence, Jacob notes that direct bookings demand real infrastructure: guest screening, payments, marketing, and communication. Smaller Hosts often underestimate the lift required to run this themselves.

5. AI is a multiplier — not a shortcut.

Jacob believes AI won't remove the work of hosting, but it can make every hour more effective. Tools like PriceLabs help Hosts focus on higher-impact decisions, not manual calculations.

“AI doesn't replace the work — it amplifies what Hosts can achieve.”

**Jacob Murphy, Founder,
Destination Asset**



Introduction: Hosting in 2025 – From Spare Room to Serious Business

Hosting a vacation rental in 2025 is both simpler and more complex than ever before.

Technology now makes it easy to sync calendars, adjust bookings, and respond to guests. But the real work – finding cleaners, managing maintenance, filing taxes – still falls squarely on Hosts. What began as a side hustle or a way to monetise a spare room has evolved into a serious business and, for many, a path to independence.

To understand what hosting really looks like today, PriceLabs has surveyed more than 1,400 Hosts worldwide. These are everyday people managing 1-4 listings across [Airbnb](#), [Vrbo](#), and [Booking.com](#), balancing full-time jobs with the demands of hospitality.

We found a community that is proud and entrepreneurial but also stretched and seeking balance. Many started hosting to earn extra income; now nearly half are expanding, reinvesting, and thinking like business owners.

As **Heather D’Angelo from California, United States**, shared, they started hosting to *“Leave an asset and income stream to my kids.”*

This report captures their stories: what’s working, what’s overwhelming, and what’s next. Because hosting today isn’t just about bookings or trends – it is about people, purpose, and the evolving craft of making guests feel at home.





This isn't a report about trends, it's a report about people. Real Hosts. Real stories. Real insight into what it takes to make short-term rentals work in 2025.



More Than a Side Hustle

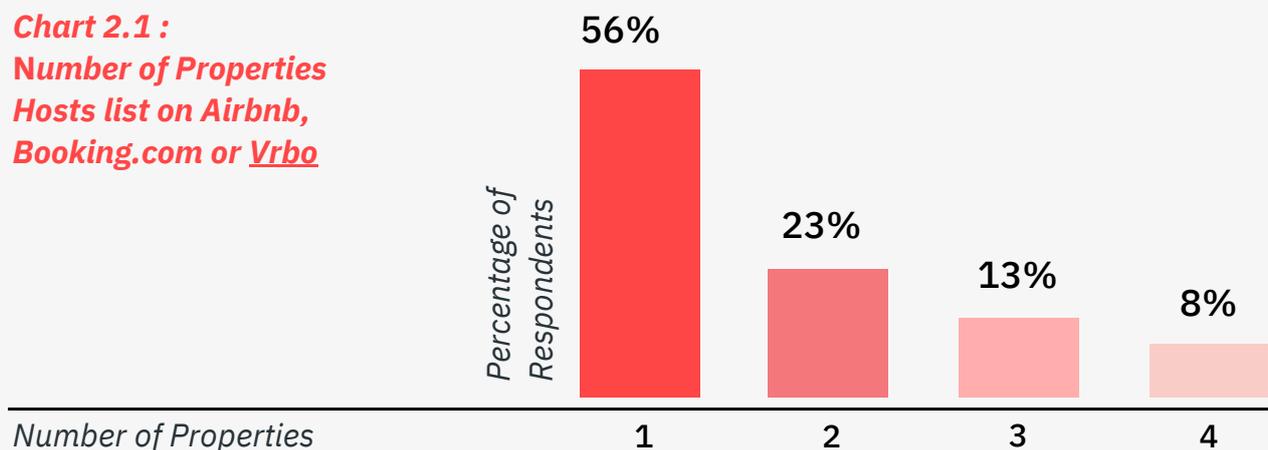
Short-term rental hosting is often marketed as effortless income: list a property, collect bookings, and watch the money roll in. Our survey of 1,400+ Hosts reveals a more nuanced truth: hosting may be flexible, but it is far from hands-off.

While most Hosts don't clock 40-hour weeks, the work demands constant attention, unpredictable guest needs, and the emotional load of managing a home that also functions as a business.

2.1 Its Not Passive, But Its Not 9-5 Either

Despite frequent focus on large property managers, the majority of Hosts remain independent and highly personal in scale. **56% of Hosts manage a single listing, and another 23% manage two.**

Chart 2.1 :
Number of Properties
Hosts list on Airbnb,
Booking.com or Vrbo



Key insight:

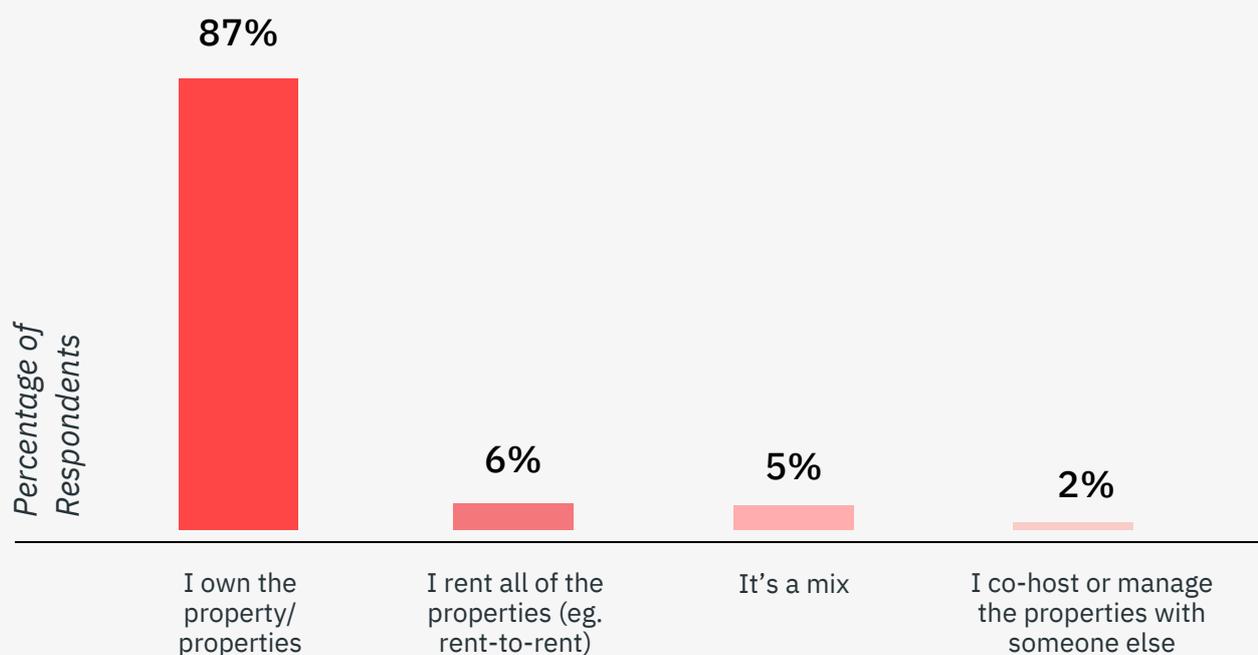
56% of Hosts manage one short-term rental (STR) property

Most Hosts own the homes they list – **87% are homeowners**. Hosting, for them, is deeply personal, tied to spaces filled with emotional and financial significance.

“My husband works full-time, and I’m a stay-at-home mom with three kids. I do this because I like it and enjoy it. The extra income goes straight to savings; we don’t spend it. We aren’t doing it as a huge money-making opportunity but because it is a beautiful, unique spot, and it gives me purpose and enjoyment to share it with guests,” says **an Anonymous Host from Arkansas, United States**

These are not corporate portfolios: they’re spare rooms, second homes, guest cottages, or inherited properties managed by individuals and families.

Chart 2.1.1 : Ownership of Properties



Key insight:

87% of Hosts rent out homes they personally own

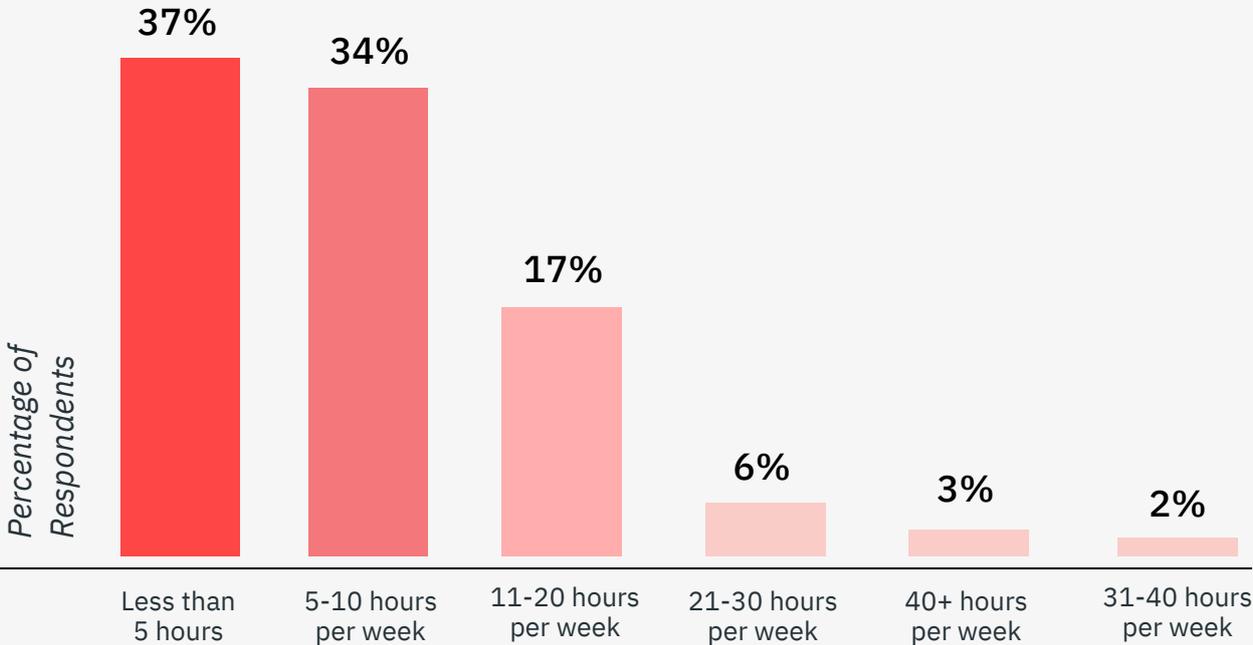
The time commitment that Hosts put in, while modest on paper, adds up when layered on top of other responsibilities.

37% of Hosts said they spend fewer than 5 hours per week on hosting

71% reported spending 10 hours or less

Only 6% report working 30+ hours

Chart 2.1.2 Number of Hours Spent Hosting Per Week



Key insight:

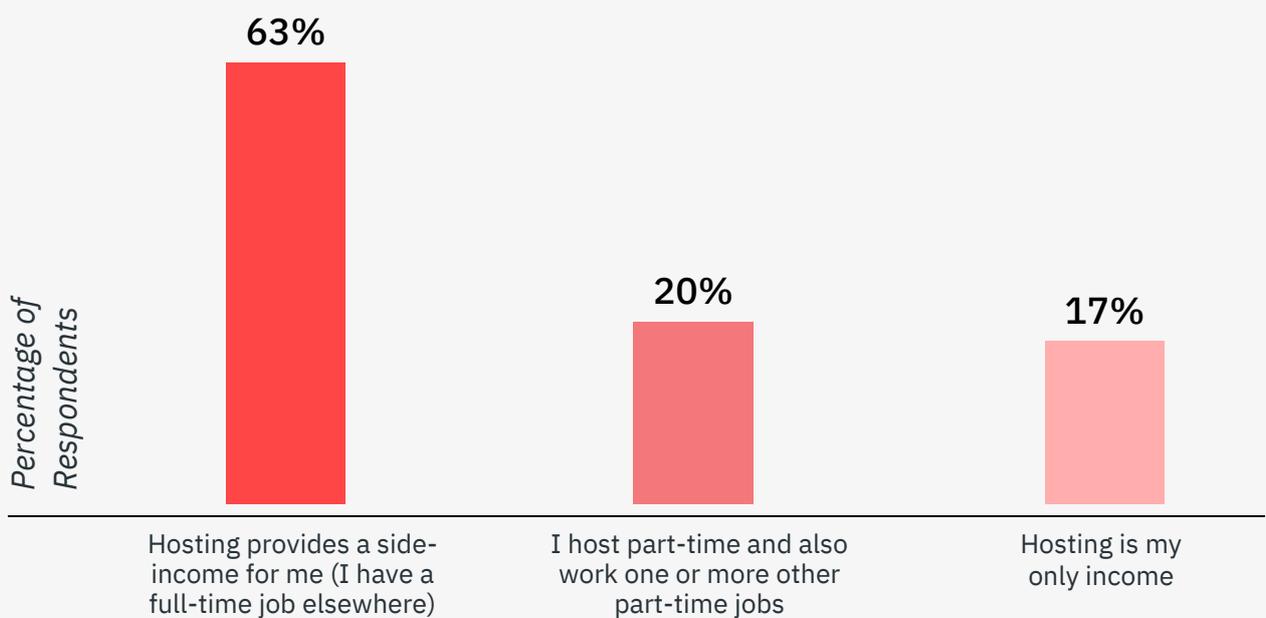
71% of Hosts spend less than 10 hours a week on hosting tasks (on average).

83% of Hosts hold either full- or part-time jobs in addition to hosting, meaning that Hosting work is often squeezed into evenings, weekends, and whatever time remains after other commitments.

As Luke Fore from North Carolina, United States, says they're hosting to:

“Cover the costs of the property and build equity in the long run. I'm just hoping to break even.”

Chart 2.1.3 Breakdown of Hosts by full-time and part-time work



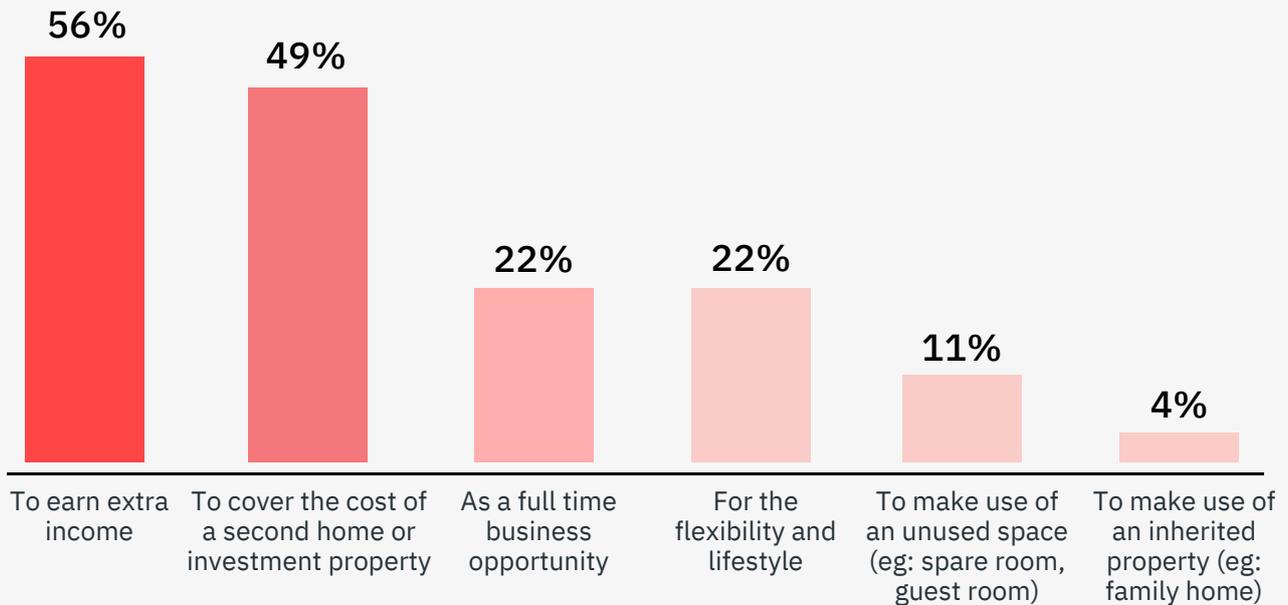
Key insight:

83% of Hosts are balancing hosting with another job

2.2 From Side Income to Entrepreneurial Energy

With full-time jobs, many Hosts enter the short-term rental world for a simple reason: to make extra income — 56% say that’s what drew them in.

Chart 2.2
Motivations for Getting Started in Hosting



Key insight:

Over half of Hosts (56%) started hosting to earn extra income.

What started as a financial cushion turned into something far more powerful — the moment many Hosts realised they weren’t just renting out space; they were building something of their own:

22% would like to take their hosting full-time

49% say they’re inspired to grow their business

56% plan to reinvest their earnings back into their property or operations



For many, hosting becomes a craft—a long-term project built with care, pride, and purpose. Some dream of passing it down to their children; others simply take satisfaction in creating something self-sustaining from the ground up.

“No ultimate goal for money - goal is to keep house in the family for grandkids.. just cover expenses.”

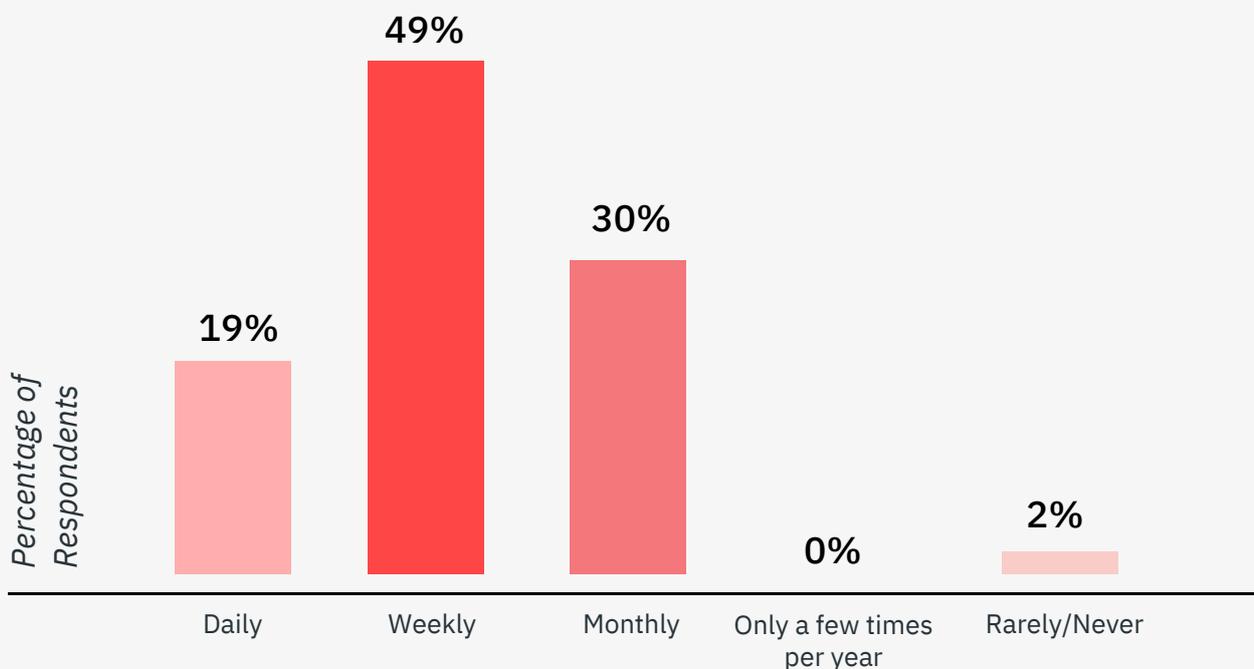
Rebecca

California, United States

They track their numbers closely, manage every detail, and treat each booking as a building block of something lasting.

Chart 2.2.1

Frequency with which Hosts are checking their financial performance



Key insight:

Over two-thirds of Hosts monitor financials weekly or more often

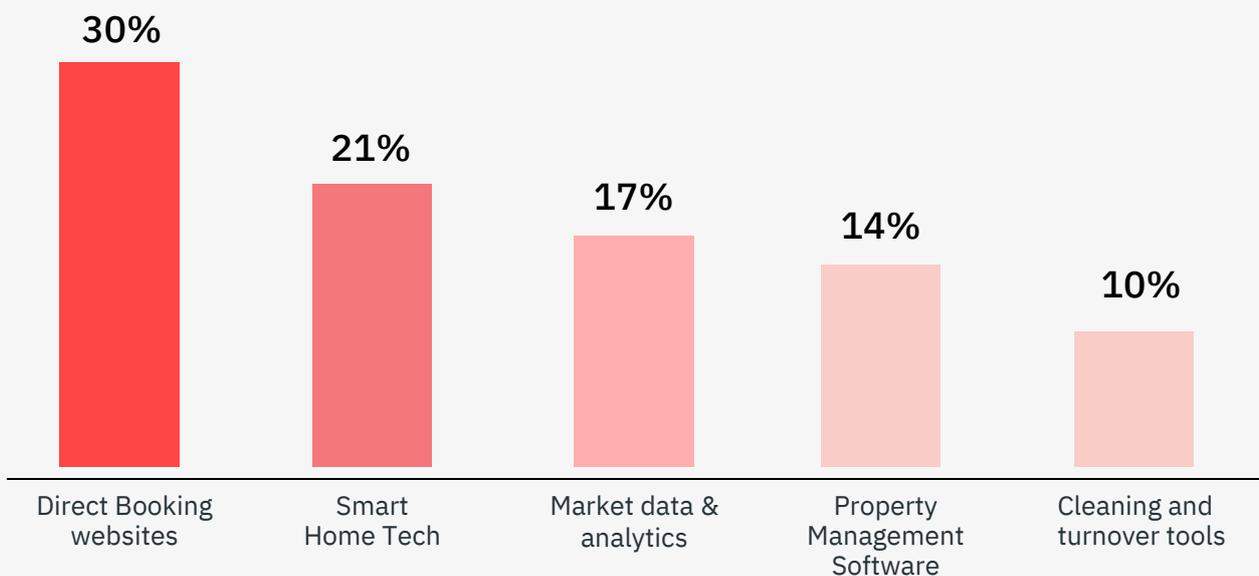
2.3 Planning Ahead: Where Hosts Are Investing Next

When asked where they planned to invest in the coming year, Hosts showed caution but also clarity.

They're selective about the tools they adopt, but several areas stood out as priorities for 2025:

Chart 2.3.1

Top 5 tools Hosts are looking to invest more in in the coming year:



As **Sara from Maine, United States**, shared that in 2026 they're investing in, *"Having more direct bookings and not being at the mercy of OTAs...I want my business to be my own."*

These are not the choices of hobbyists, they are strategic business decisions. Hosts are choosing tools that improve efficiency, reduce reliance on platforms, and build long-term value.

2.4 Summary

Hosting is defined by a balance between flexibility and responsibility, independence and hard work. It is a flexible job with real trade-offs. A business with heart, hustle, and high expectations. And behind the listings, the spreadsheets, and the cleaning schedules, there's an emerging class of entrepreneurs: building something real, one booking at a time.

The Devil You Know

3.1 A Platform Powered World

Short-term rental Hosts rely heavily on platforms like [Airbnb](#), [Vrbo](#), and [Booking.com](#) for visibility, bookings, and guest communication. But for many, that reliance comes at a cost—emotional, financial, and operational.

In our survey responses, Hosts described feeling undervalued, powerless, and increasingly frustrated by shifting rules and guest-centric policies.

3.2 A System That Feels One-Sided

Hosts' top frustration centres on control. Many feel that OTAs prioritise guests and offer inconsistent support, creating an ongoing sense of imbalance between platforms and the people who power them.



Hosts told us:

“Cancellations aren’t fun, but I feel like we are tied to the flexible cancellation for Airbnb to show up higher in the algorithm. Sluggish bookings are also a worry.”

- **Danielle Kuck**, from Oregon, United States



“I am very concerned about Airbnb’s current trajectory. They are moving in an anti-Host direction and are forgetting what made their platform great. Services and Experiences are just another fad and are not thought out well enough to protect Hosts or guests.”

- **James Hinote**, from Virginia, United States



“Frustrated with Airbnb’s treatment of Hosts and yet they are the 100 lb gorilla in the market.”

- **Virginia**, from North Carolina United States

These weren’t just a few isolated responses; it was a dominant emotional theme. Hosts described feeling like they work for a platform that can change the rules, remove a listing, or side with a guest, with little recourse.



“My biggest challenge is all the reading I do on social media about Airbnb, booking, and Vrbo. I don’t really want to add another platform because I have one unit, and there are complexities on the others. But Airbnb has a constant barrage of conversations about a lack of Host support, scamming guests, being taken off the platform for inaccurate reasons, etc. From all the discussion about this, it feels I’m always 1-3 bad guests away from ending my STR use - have not yet had a bad guest, though,”

- **Joyce McCaslin**, from Maine, United States

3.2 Algorithm Anxiety

Hosts also described deep uncertainty around Airbnb’s search algorithm and visibility rules. Changes to listing placement or unexplained drops in search views often caused panic, especially among full-time Hosts who rely on Airbnb as their main income stream.

63% of Hosts said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *“I worry about how to market my property, and whether my property is ranking high enough on Airbnb (and other platforms)”*.



Hosts told us:



“I also struggle with understanding how the Airbnb algorithm works, but generally, these are struggles with the lack of transparency from Airbnb about the process.”

- **Christopher Bulka**, a host from Columbia, United States



“Know which platforms are best to list on. I am not a fan of Airbnb as I think they are not host-friendly and the review system is awful. But most of my leads come from there. I struggle with marketing my direct booking site.”

- **Lorie Thomas** from Washington, United States

3.3 Platforms at the Helm, but Hosts on the Hook

71% of Hosts agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *“I worry that guests will complain or leave a poor rating”*. This was the top-rated concern.

Furthermore, across all open-text responses, one pattern stood out: Hosts take on nearly all the risk, while platforms control the guest relationship, the payout process, and the outcome of disputes.



“I had great reviews. One review came out of nowhere and made no sense. I could not get it removed even though if anyone actually looked at it they would see that the review did not make sense based on other reviews. But dealing with Airbnb phone operators is impossible. Either their hands are tied, their English skills are lacking, or common sense is lacking, but it makes it very hard and makes me want to give up. Feels like you can’t win. You should be able to remove like 1 bad review a year.”

- **Kristina Steffen**

The emotional weight of hosting comes not just from the work itself, but from feeling unsupported when things go wrong.

3.4 The Paradox: Airbnb Satisfaction Scores Are High

Despite the frustrations, 98% of respondents use Airbnb, far ahead of Booking.com (39%) and Vrbo (58%). Even more surprising: Airbnb also received the highest average satisfaction score of 4.1, compared to 3.3 for Booking.com and 3.1 for Vrbo.

Chart 3.6
Platform Use vs. Satisfaction

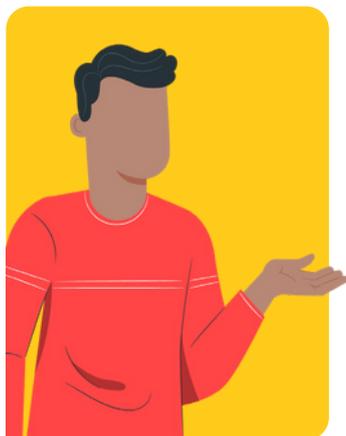
Platform	% of Hosts Using	Avg. Satisfaction (1-5)
Airbnb	98%	4.1
Booking.com	39%	3.3
Vrbo	58%	3.1



Key insight:

Airbnb remains the dominant OTA in the vacation rental space, and despite complaints, Hosts continue to rate it highly

This reveals a core tension: Hosts might not love Airbnb, but they love the results.



Why Do Hosts Complain, Yet Remain Satisfied With Airbnb?

Hosts may complain about Airbnb, but they consistently rated it highest in satisfaction.

- Because they're often rating performance, not policy.
- Airbnb delivers more bookings, and for many, that outweighs everything else.

“Airbnb is changing into more of an Amazon model where the guest is clearly the customer and Hosts are just a dime-a-dozen COG. There is less and less concern for Hosts, which will probably force me to create a direct booking site, drive direct bookings, and advertise via Meta/Google. It's tough to find a platform that feels like a partner, that has enough traffic.”

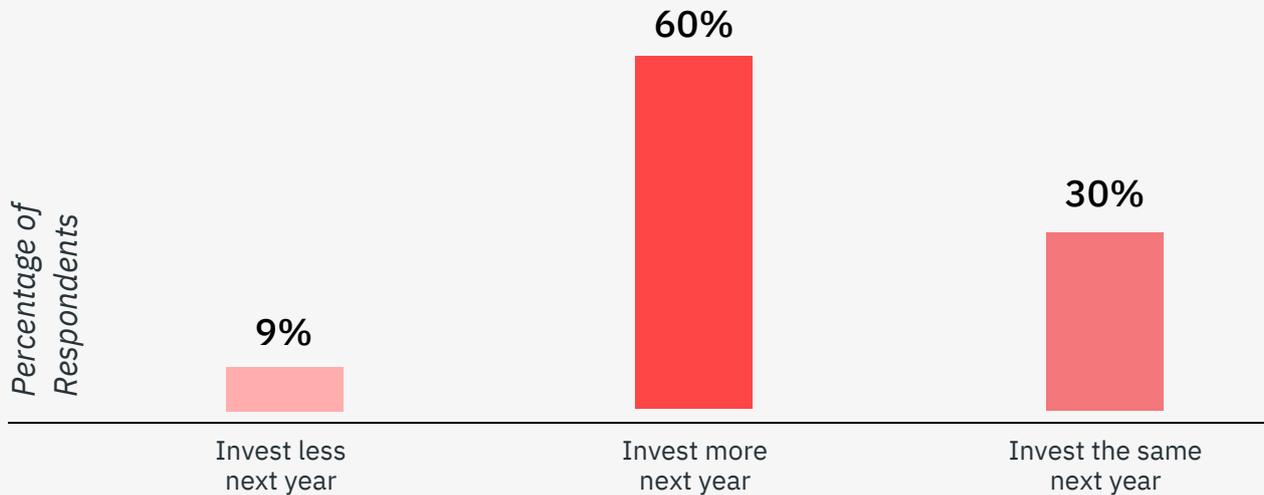
- An Anonymous Host



30% of Hosts told us that they would invest more in a direct booking website next year. The one tech investment that more Hosts were looking to make.

Chart 3.5

Percentage of Hosts looking to invest more in Direct Booking websites next year



Key insight:

30% of Hosts want to invest more next year in their own Direct Booking website



As James Barrett told us:



“I’m having guests come back year after year. These guests write directly to me, and I’d love for them to have an easier way to book again”

3.6 Summary

Hosts feel increasingly dependent on platforms that control visibility, policies, and guest relations. Despite high frustration, Airbnb’s strong performance keeps most Hosts loyal – for now.

Yet beneath loyalty lies a clear shift: growing ambition to regain control through direct bookings and greater independence.



Behind Every Booking, The Work No One Sees

4.1 What Really Takes Up Time in a Host's Day

Hosts told us the hours disappear not into dashboards or price adjustments, but into the messy, human side of the job – cleaning between stays, coordinating maintenance, chasing invoices, and solving last-minute guest problems.

The real work of hosting isn't on Instagram with the stunning interiors, smiling guests, and five-star reviews. It is everything that keeps the home running when no one's watching.

4.2 The Most Time-Consuming Tasks

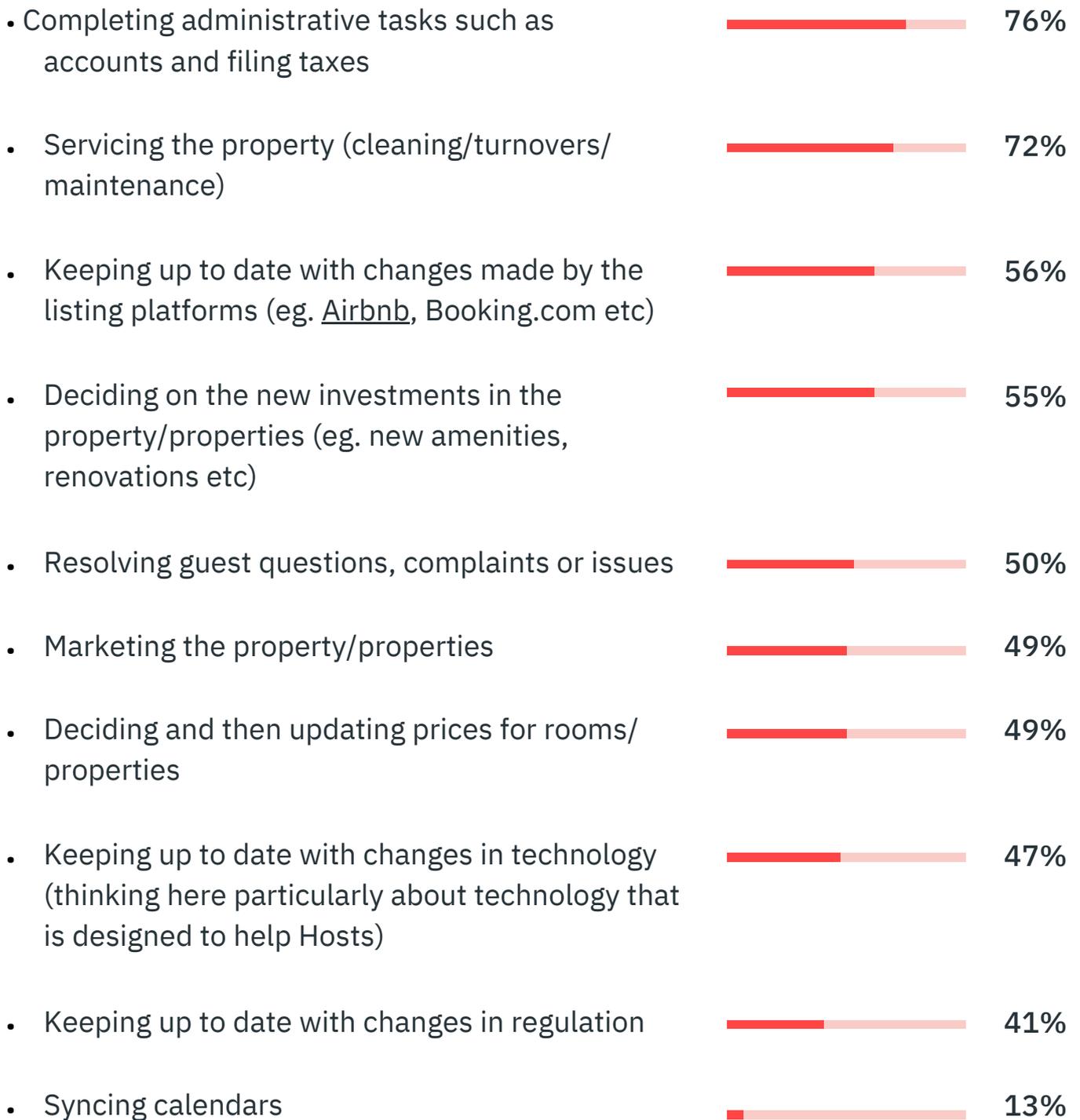
According to [Hosts](#), the top three tasks that demand the most time and energy are:

- ✓ **Administrative work:** like managing accounts, tracking expenses, and filing taxes
- ✓ **Cleaning and maintenance:** whether done by the Host or coordinated with third parties
- ✓ **Keeping up with platform changes:** adapting to OTA rules, policy shifts, and new feature rollouts

Across the entire report, the words “cleaners” and “cleaning” appeared 186 times, revealing just how central this issue is, with roughly 14% of all responses referencing cleaning or maintenance as an ongoing challenge.

Chart 4.2

Tasks Host Say That Required The Most Effort



Key insight:

Technology has removed mundane tasks like syncing calendars, but the practical realities of property upkeep still dominate the Host workload

Automation is solving some problems, but not the ones that require hands, judgment, or local relationships. The day-to-day of running a vacation rental still relies on human effort.



When asked what is the one change that would make hosting easier for them, Hosts say:

“Better help as check-in experience, cleaning, and maintenance.”

- Joao Carvalho



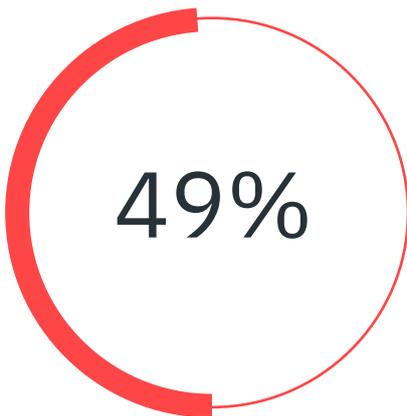
“Being able to find a reliable handyman for each property.”

- Andrew W Palmer, from Colorado, United States

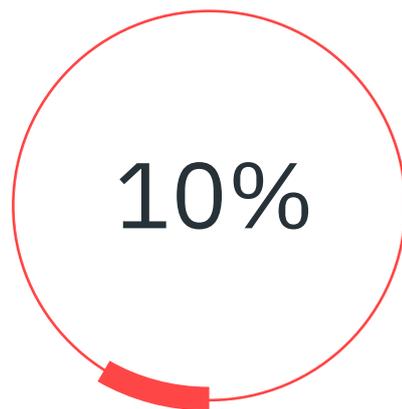
4.3 The Work That Can't Be Automated (Yet)

There's a noticeable gap between what can be automated and what actually consumes the most energy.

Hosts aren't burning out over syncing calendars; they're struggling because they can't find a reliable cleaner before the next check-in.



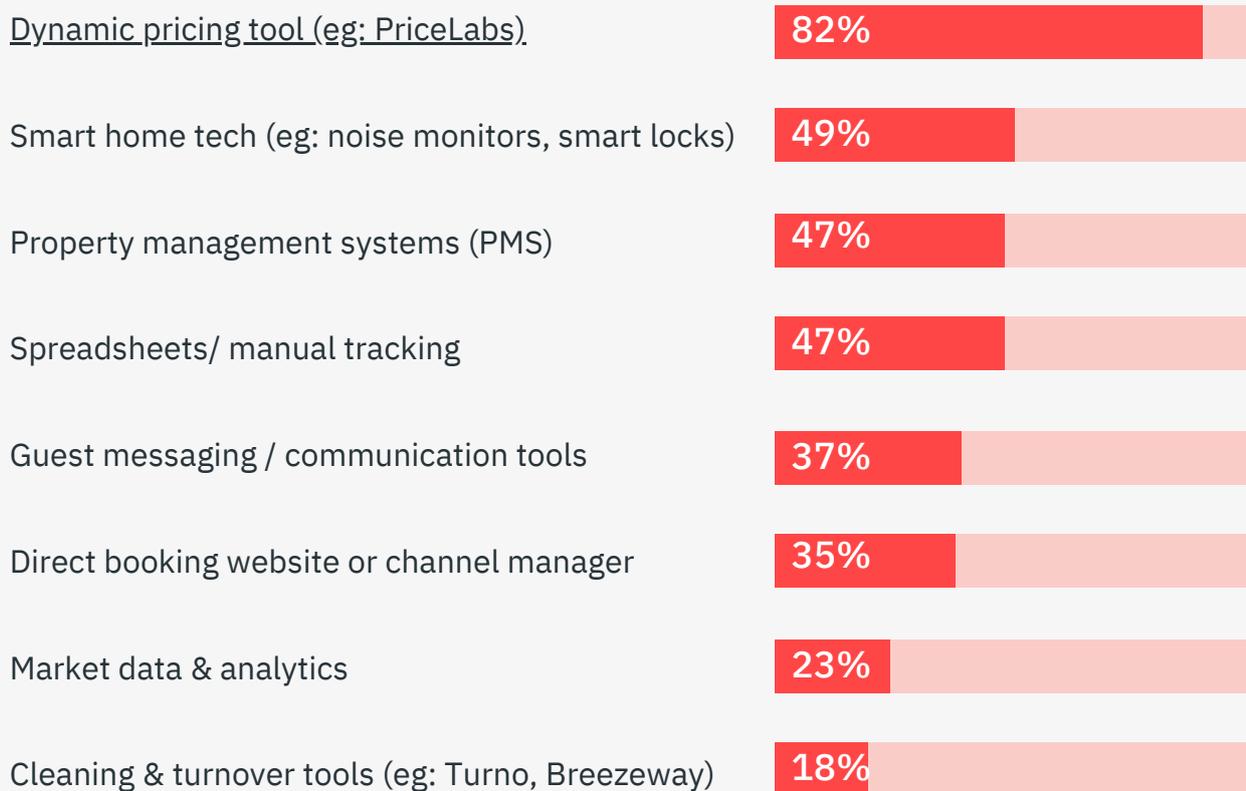
49% of Hosts said they struggle to find reliable cleaners and maintenance people, and yet



Only 10% say they plan to invest more in tools to help with turnover and cleaning.



Chart 4.3 Take-up of Hosting tech



Key insight:

Despite being a top source of concern, investment in clearing and turnover tools remains low. Not because Hosts aren't willing to use these tools, but because the current tech solutions don't fully solve the problem for many Hosts yet.

4.4 The Worries That Keep Hosts Up at Night

Hosting isn't just a job; it's an "always-on" performance, where every review and ranking can affect future income. The pressure rarely lets up.

When asked about their biggest concerns, Hosts pointed to the same underlying theme: anxiety over factors they can't control.

Chart 4.4 Top 5 Host Concerns

(Percentage of Hosts who agree or strongly agree)

71%	worry that guests will complain or leave a poor rating.
63%	worry about how to market their property and whether it's ranking high enough on booking platforms.
55%	worry that they might not earn as much as they need or expect this year.
49%	struggle to find reliable cleaners and maintenance people.
48%	worry that short-term rental regulations will negatively impact their revenue.

This undercurrent of anxiety leads to a crucial point. When we asked Hosts one simple question—“What’s one thing that would make hosting easier for you?”—the most common answer by far was a plea for protection:

“Better vetting against tenants”

- **Ryan Shrum**, from South Carolina, United States

4.5 The Vetting Imbalance

This request stems from a perceived imbalance of power. Guests can browse countless reviews, compare listings, and leave public ratings with lasting impact. Hosts, meanwhile, feel pressured to use “Instant Book” features, fearing that requiring pre-approvals could push them lower in search rankings.

Hosts say this isn’t about wanting total control – **it is about parity**. A desire to feel safer, more informed, and empowered in the process.

Yet the request sits at the heart of one of the industry’s toughest questions: How can platforms give Hosts more transparency without enabling bias?

The risks are real. Unchecked visibility can lead to discriminatory screening, stereotyping, and exclusion. This is a delicate balance: Hosts want to feel secure in their own properties, but the system must remain fair, inclusive, and free of discrimination. Transparency cannot come at the cost of equity.



“When they are booking, a quick form they fill out with helpful information (why they are coming to town, how many cars they are bringing, etc), and then a screen that shows the the house rules and they have to check a box that acknowledges that they’ve read them and agree to follow.”

- Patricia Urcuyo

4.6 Summary

The daily work of hosting is far more than it appears from the outside. Behind every clean listing and five-star review is a Host juggling dozens of moving parts—from market anxieties and financial pressures to the physical load of maintenance.

While technology has streamlined logistics, it has not addressed the deep-seated emotional burden and anxieties about risk and control. The path forward for the industry requires a new equilibrium, one that aligns protection with hospitality, ensuring the entire community feels secure and welcome.

Embracing Artificial Intelligence, or Overwhelmed by It?

5.1 Hosts Are Split: Is AI a Time Saver or Another Job?

The short-term rental industry offers an expanding range of tools designed to simplify operations, automate tasks, and provide valuable insights. But in reality, Hosts are divided on whether AI is truly helping or simply adding new layers of complexity to their already busy workloads.

We asked Hosts how they feel about AI tools, whether those tools are saving them time, and how their day-to-day experience has changed. The answers reveal a group that is curious, pragmatic, and open, but also cautious, and in many cases, overwhelmed.

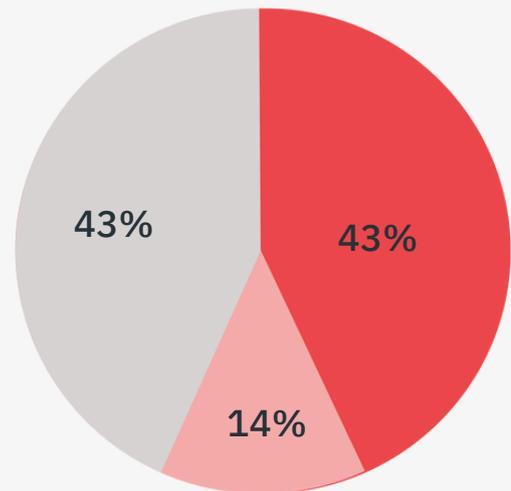
5.2 A Clear Divide on AI

When asked how they feel about AI in Hosting, 43% of Hosts said they find it overwhelming, while 14% say they're actively embracing it. The rest sit somewhere in between, interested, 43% but not yet convinced.



Chart 5.1
How Hosts Feel About AI And Hosting Tech

- It's overwhelming
- I'm embracing it
- I'm ignoring it



Key insight:

AI is marketed as a breakthrough but nearly half of Hosts say it adds to their mental load.

This emotional divide is one of the clearest tensions in modern hosting: AI is marketed as a solution, but many Hosts see it as yet another thing to manage.

“Knowing the tools I have and if I’m using them correctly... or even at all since so many keep getting added!!”

- **an Anonymous Host** from the US



“Getting someone to set-up PMS and Direct Booking website + related tools for me”

- **Yvonne Van Der Aalst**, from South Carolina, United States

5.3 AI Isn't Saving Time, Yet

Is AI actually making hosting more efficient?

We broke down weekly time spent on hosting based on the Hosts' attitudes toward tech. The result: those who embrace AI and those who are wary of it spend almost exactly the same amount of time hosting.



Chart 5.3
Average Weekly Time Spent Hosting By Tech Attitude



Key insight:

AI enthusiasm doesn't yet correlate with fewer hours spent. It's not saving time, at least, not for now

This suggests that Hosts might still be climbing the learning curve with AI, and it's possible that AI is increasing capabilities, although not reducing workload.

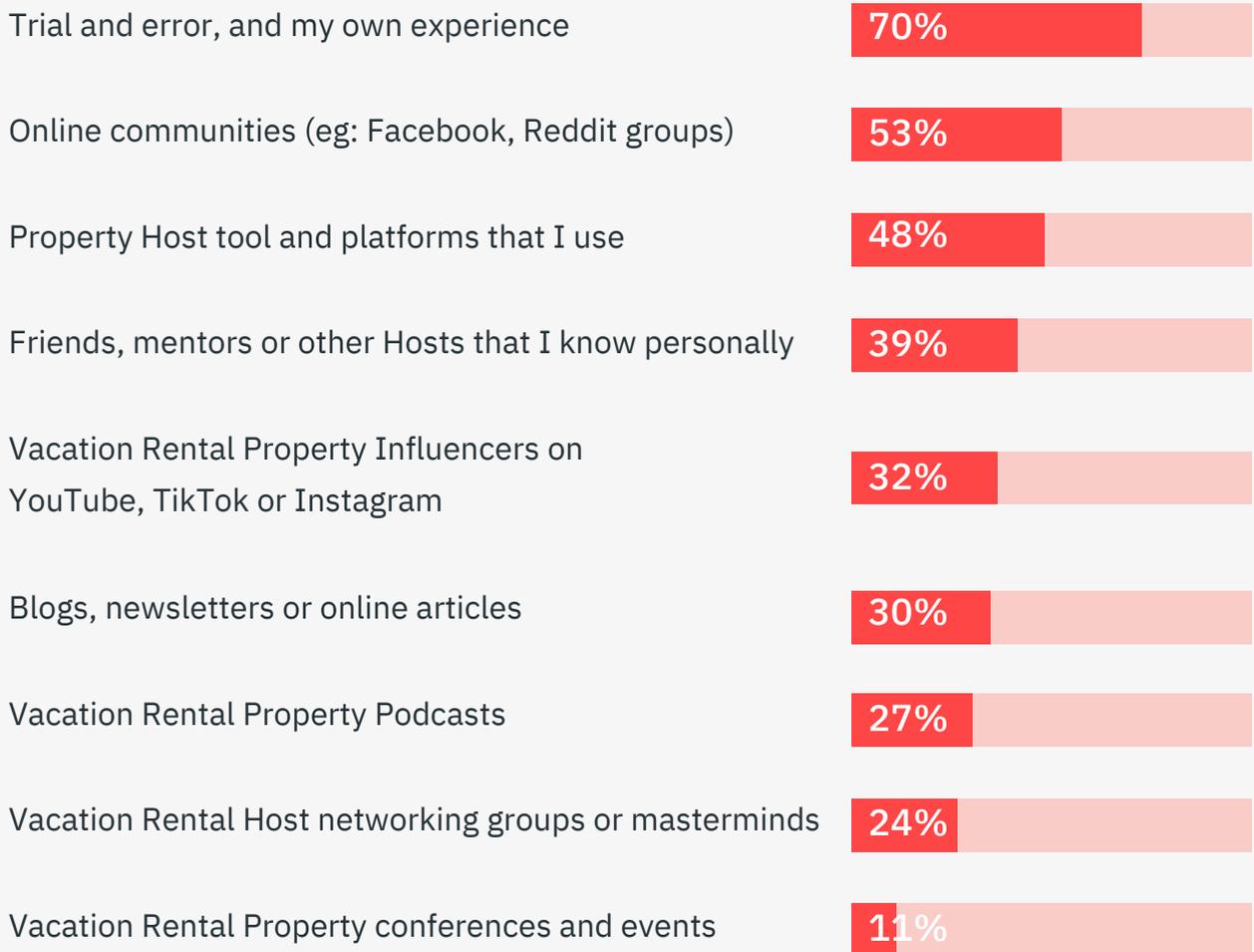
5.4 Tech Companies Play a Role in Educating Hosts

When asked how they learn new skills or improve their hosting approach, the top response wasn't courses, webinars, or blogs. It was trial and error.

But importantly, 48% said they look to technology platforms for education and guidance, making Hosting-tech companies the third-most-trusted source of learning, well ahead of peers, influencers, and online communities.

This underscores a crucial point: Technology works best when it informs and educates rather than being just a tool. Hosts aren't looking for AI to take over their job; they're looking for smart systems that guide them, inform them, and keep them in control. Technology that works for them, not the other way around.

Chart 5.4
How Hosts Learn and Improve Their Hosting



Key insight:

Hosts like to try new things out for themselves, but the technology companies behind the leading Host tools play a role in their education

5.5 Summary

AI and automation may define the future of short-term rentals, but for now, Hosts are in a transitional moment. They're curious, open, and willing to learn, but they're also busy, tired, and wary of shiny new tools that don't deliver immediate value.

The opportunity for tech companies isn't just to build more features. It's to be a partner delivering education, confidence, and control.



Proud, Resilient, and Optimistic

6.1 Hosts Love What They've Built

If there's one emotion that shone through across hundreds of survey responses, it wasn't frustration, fatigue, or even ambition: it was pride.

Despite all the challenges, including changing platform rules, price increases, and late-night turnovers, 69% of Hosts are proud of what they've built. And that pride matters. It keeps them motivated when bookings slow, when guests leave harsh reviews, or when the local handyman ghosts them before a check-in.



It gives me a purpose in life!

- **Daphne Alfaro**, a Host from Florida, United States

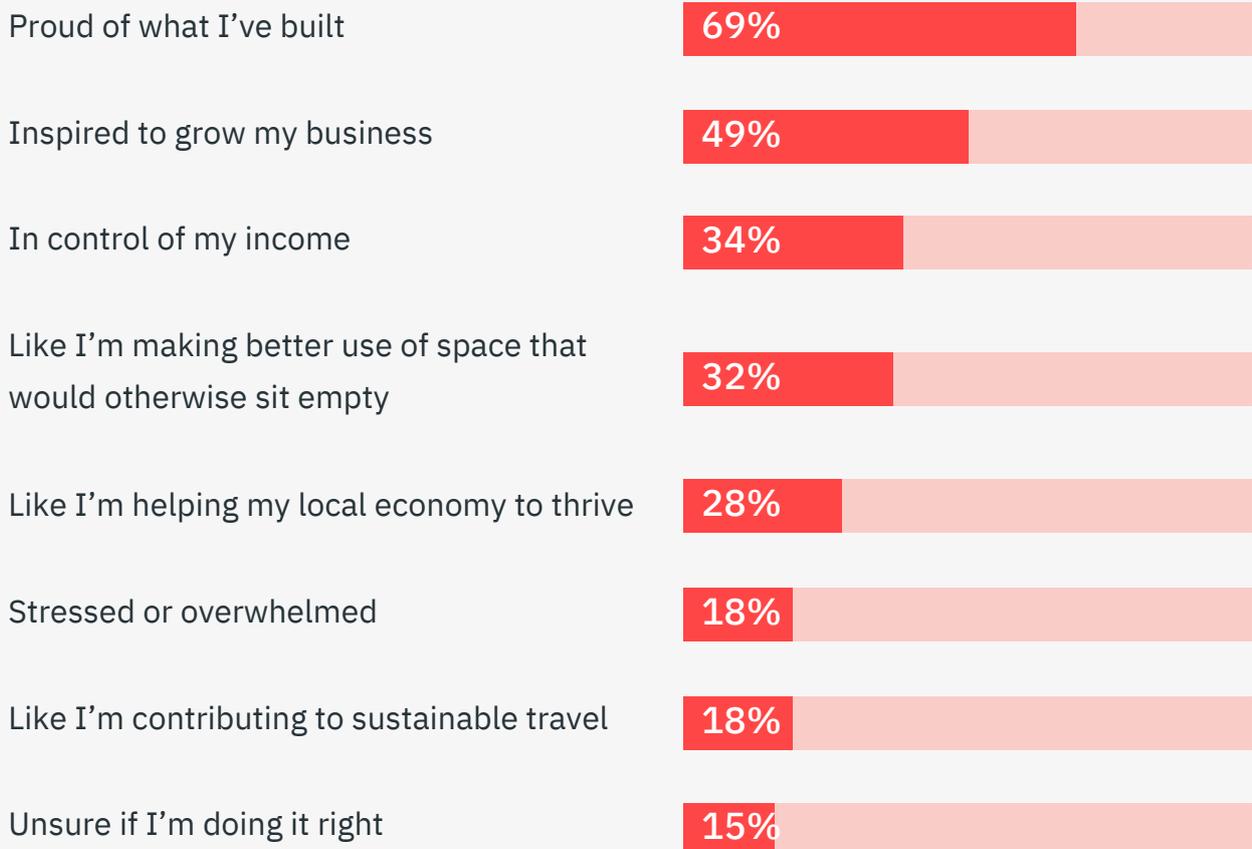
“Fulfilling to read through the reviews of my guests knowing that I was able to provide a great place to stay for their vacation.”

Jon Roberts

from Branson, United States



Chart 6.1
How Hosts Feel About Hosting



Key insight:

69% of Hosts are proud of what they've built. Not just for themselves, but also to their communities, local economies, and guest experiences.

While over half remain optimistic, a sizable number reported feeling tired, stressed, or burned out.

"Between what the hell am I doing this for and should I get another 1 or 2. Depending on the day"

- **James Waggoner**, from Tacoma, Washington

These are Hosts who care deeply but feel stretched emotionally, physically, and financially. Perhaps because this isn't just a job, it's something they care deeply about. Hosting is personal.

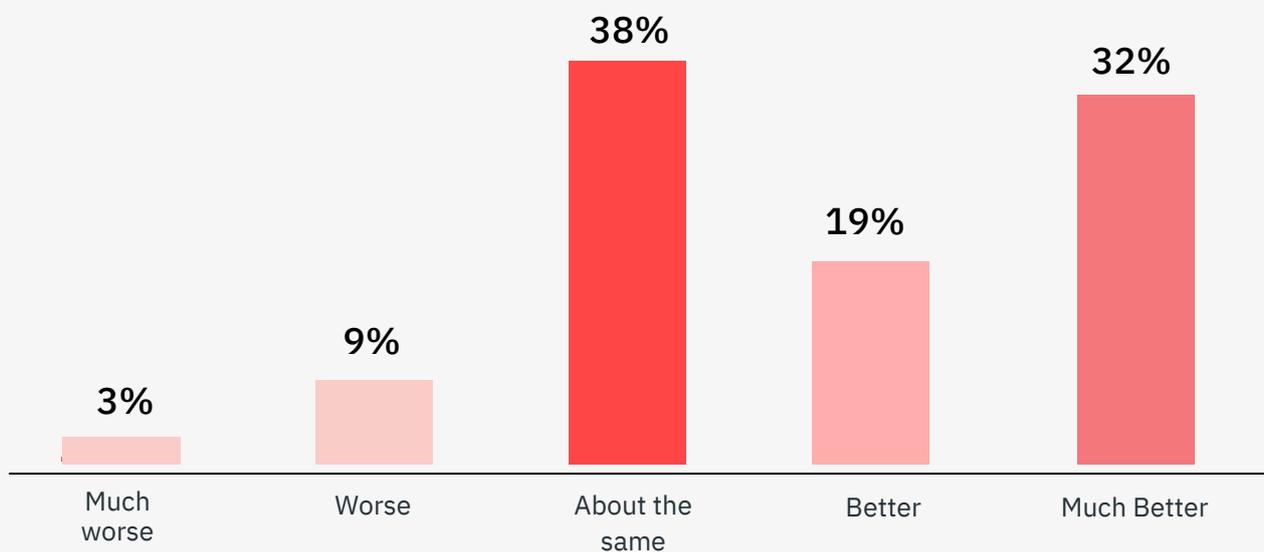


6.2 Hosts Are Optimistic

Even with all the challenges – from unreliable cleaners to demanding guests and shifting platform policies – Hosts remain remarkably optimistic about the future.

Over half (51%) described their outlook as optimistic, and many expressed excitement about growing their business, improving their spaces, or simply becoming better at what they do.

Chart 6.2
Outlook for 2025



Key insight:

41% of Hosts expect this year to end better than last year

And if 2025 was good, many expect 2026 to be even better. A sizeable number of Hosts are looking to grow in the coming year:

32%

said they plan to expand their portfolio in 2026

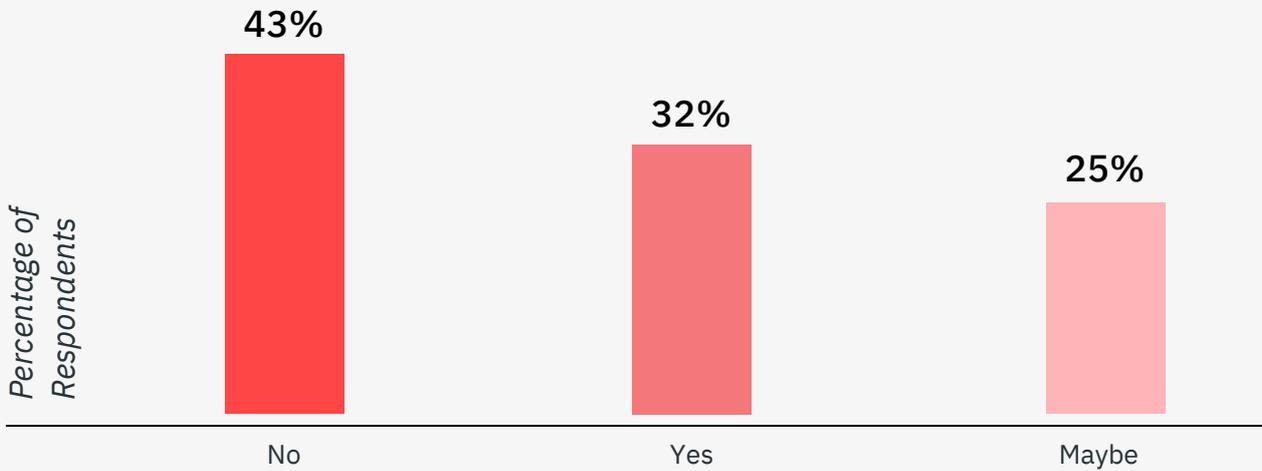
25%

said they're considering it



That's more than half of Hosts thinking about the future, not just with hope but with ambition.

Chart 6.2.1
Percentage of Hosts planning to Expand in 2026



Key insight:

Almost a third (32%) of Hosts are looking to expand their portfolios in the coming year

It's not blind optimism; it's the confidence that comes from having already overcome so many hurdles.

For most Hosts, the journey hasn't been smooth, but it's been meaningful. And they believe the best is still ahead.

6.3 Summary

Hosts stand out for their grit and perspective. They've faced shifting rules, long hours, and unpredictable challenges, yet continue to approach their work with pride and purpose. Their sense of ownership runs deeper than profit — it's about creating experiences that reflect who they are.

Even after demanding seasons, many look ahead with quiet determination. They see room to grow, improve, and adapt, viewing each challenge as part of the craft. Hosting, for them, remains less about stability and more about possibility.

The Reality of Hosting in 2025

Insights from 1,400+ global short-term rental Hosts

Hosting is real work

83% of Hosts work another job alongside hosting — turning it into a second shift rather than a side hustle.

Tech helps, but can't replace hands-on work

Top time-consuming tasks:

- Cleaning & maintenance
- Admin (taxes, accounting)
- Keeping up with platform updates

Yet only, **10%** plan to invest more in cleaning or turnover tools.

Platform Anxiety

63% of Hosts worry about visibility on OTAs.

69% worry about getting a poor review.

AI Divide

43% find AI overwhelming

14% are embracing it

Both groups spend roughly the same time (8.3 hrs/week) managing their listings.

Host Motivation

56% started hosting to earn extra income

49% now aim to scale their operations

22% Hosting is evolving from a hobby to a business.

Pride & Optimism

69% of Hosts are proud of what they've built.

41% expect 2025 to end better than 2024.

32% plan to expand their portfolio next year.

