

Launching a Gen AI powered travel companion: A case for tiger teams

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Booking.com

Make it **easier** for **everyone** to
experience the world

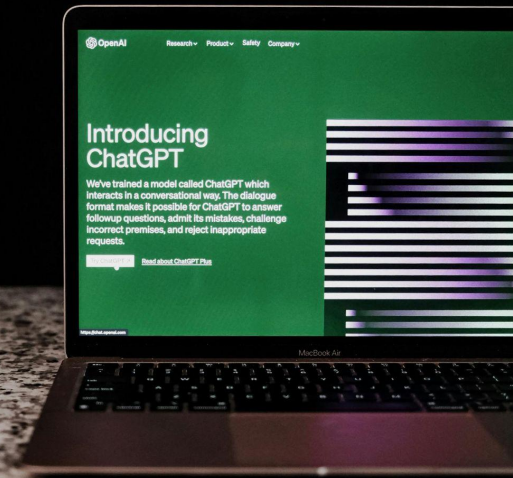
Booking.com

In order to achieve the easier and more personalized experience of the **Connected Trip**, we have always envisioned **AI technology playing a central role**.

-Glenn Fogel, CEO Booking.com, Q4 2023 Earnings Call

Booking.com

Let's go back in time



[Photo by Airam Dato-on](#)

Priority: Launch a conversational UI companion in the Booking.com apps



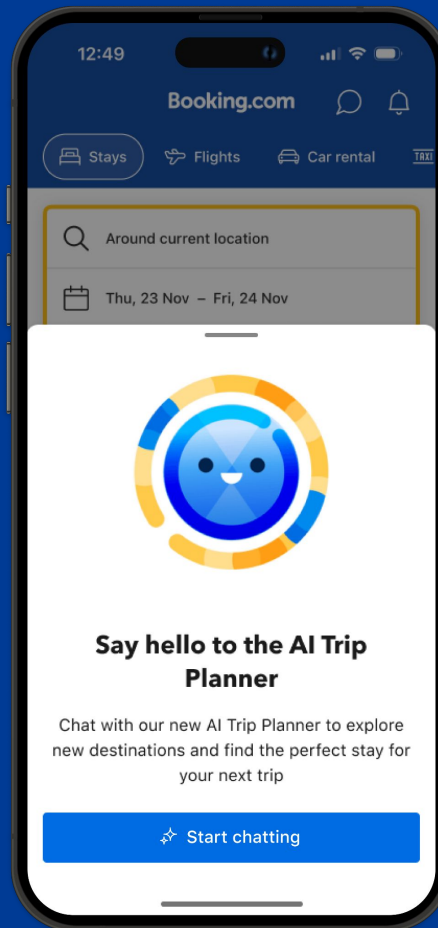
Spoiler alert - AI Trip Planner

Booking's flagship Generative AI product

From **0** to **1** in 8 weeks

The AI Trip Planner was **launched on mobile apps in the US** in Q3 2023

The launch involved collaboration across **multiple Business Units** within Booking.com



How did we pull it off?

Booking.com



Enter, the tiger team



[Photo by Anirudh Vidyabhushan](#)

What is a tiger team?

A team of **specialists** assembled to work on a **specific goal**

Disruptive approach to achieve a **business critical goal**

Houston, we have a problem



Gen AI Tiger Team

Machine Learning

Product & Engineering

Legal

Marketing

Tiger team process overview

Assembly

Delivery

Disassembly

Assembly

Delivery

Disassembly

Assembling a tiger team



Small team of experts



Set expectations with the team members



Align with their managers

Gen AI Engineering tiger team



iOS Expert
Server Driven UI



Android Expert
Native



iOS Expert
Native



Backend Expert
Mobile backend



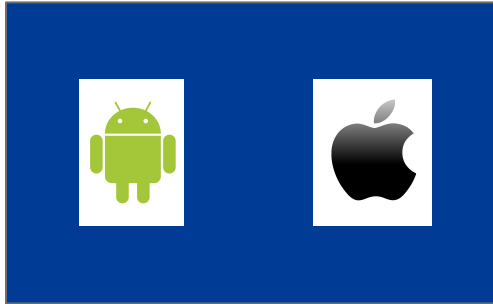
Backend Expert
Backend enrichments

Gen AI Engineering tiger team

Potential long term owners



iOS Expert
Server Driven UI



Android Expert
Native

iOS Expert
Native



Backend Expert
Mobile backend

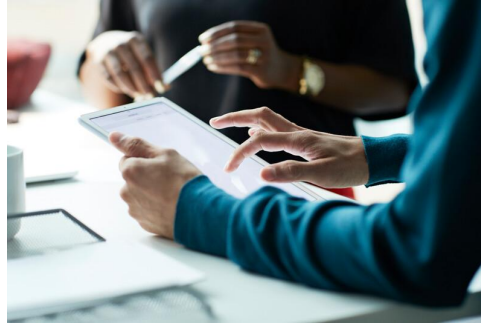


Backend Expert
Backend enrichments

Setting up the team for success



Agreements with key dependencies



Setup lightweight processes and documentation



Influence requirements

Assembly

Delivery

Disassembly



Adapt quickly

Assembly | **Delivery** | Disassembly





Keep the core team focused

Assembly | **Delivery** | Disassembly



Tiger team ++



Backend backup



Backend backup



Android backup



iOS backup

Watch out

- No blame culture
- Handle conflicts
- Keep yourself sane



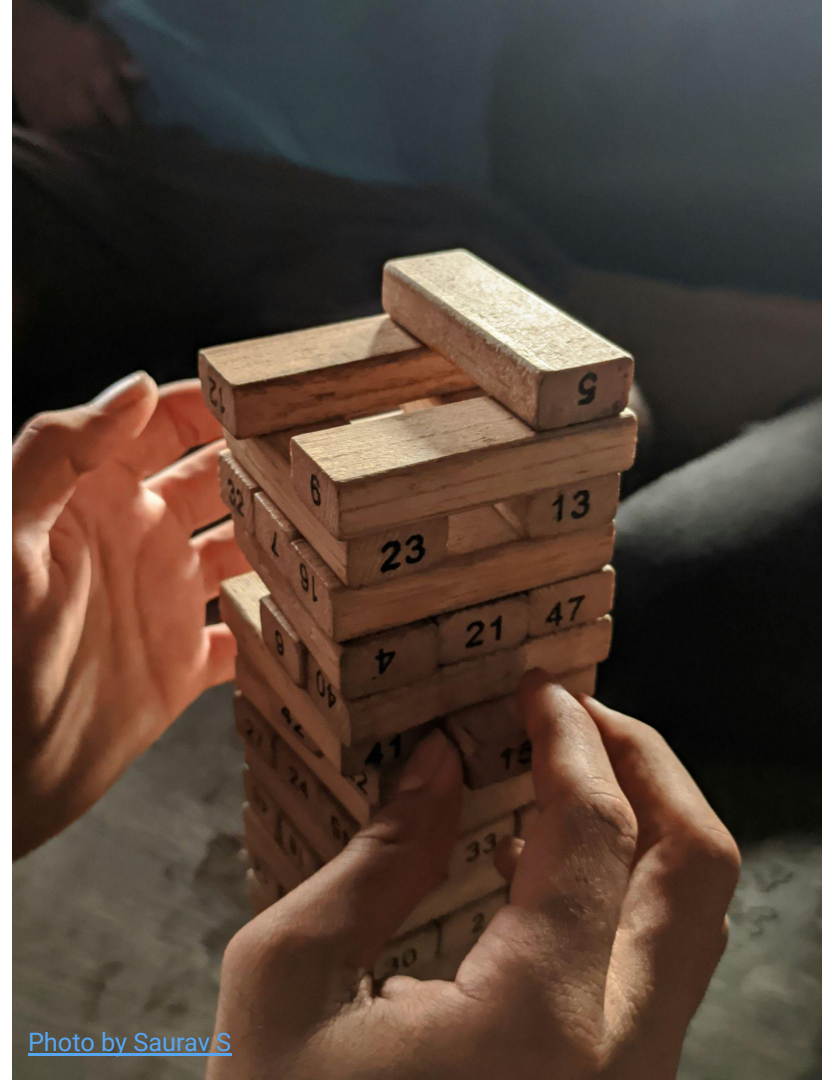
Assembly

Delivery

Disassembly

Disassembling a tiger team

- Transition members out in phases
- Permanent owners onboard new team members
- Establish support agreements with phased out members



Celebrate



Outcome

Booking.com

Takeaways

Booking.com

Takeaways

The tiger team approach can solve problems quickly by **blurring the organizational lines**. However, the approach is **disruptive** and must be used with caution.

The learnings from a tiger team set up are applicable to regular team management.



Accelerate product development



Blur the organizational boundaries



Learnings are applicable to regular team management



Can you identify a problem that a tiger team can solve for you?

Discuss in your next team meeting.



Thank you!

Chat with our AI Trip Planner

Discover new trip destinations and find your perfect stay



Try it out