

KLP DESIGN SOLUTIONS

KIT POWELL · UX & BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTANT

DOCUMENT 1 OF 2 · BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Behavioural Psychology Audit Report

A review of the motivational, cognitive and trust mechanics of the Harbourly booking application, prepared for the product lead and strategy team.

CLIENT

Harbourly Ltd

PROJECT

Harbourly Mobile & Web Redesign

FOCUS

Motivation, trust and cognitive load

DATE OF ISSUE

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PREPARED BY

Kit Powell

VERSION

1.0 — Final

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This document is designed to be read on its own. Companion documents in this engagement: Executive Summary.

Sample report. "Harbourly" is a fictional product created to illustrate the format, structure and depth of a KLP Design Solutions audit. All findings are invented and client screenshots are omitted.

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What a behavioural psychology audit examines

A UI audit asks whether the product looks right. A UX audit asks whether people can use it. This report asks a third question: **what is the product doing to the person using it, and why do they behave the way they do inside it?** It covers the motivational mechanics that determine whether someone returns, the cognitive costs that determine whether they finish, and the trust signals that determine whether they commit money.

Where this report names an established principle — loss aversion, the endowment effect, self-determination theory — it does so because naming the mechanism makes the recommendation testable rather than a matter of taste. Every principle referenced is defined in plain terms at the point of use.

How findings are prioritised

LABEL	MEANING	EXPECTED RESPONSE
● CRITICAL	Frequently encountered and severely damaging. Erodes trust, exploits the user, or creates regulatory exposure.	Fix before launch or next release.
● HIGH PRIORITY	Very frequent with moderate harm, or occasional with serious harm.	Fix within the current cycle.
● MEDIUM PRIORITY	A meaningful missed opportunity or a mild motivational misalignment.	Schedule into the next two cycles.
● NICE TO HAVE	Refinement that would strengthen an already sound mechanic.	Backlog.

A NOTE ON TONE

Nothing in this report assumes bad intent. Almost every pattern identified here is the accumulated result of individually reasonable decisions — a growth experiment that worked, a metric that needed moving, a pattern copied from a larger competitor. The purpose is to make visible what those decisions add up to from the user's side.

01

Scope, method and what this report is for

This audit reviews the Harbourly iOS and web applications (build 4.2.1) as experienced by a first-time guest and by a returning guest, walked between 28 July and 8 August 2026. Attention was directed at the points where the product asks something of the user: registration, payment, notification consent, cancellation, and re-engagement.

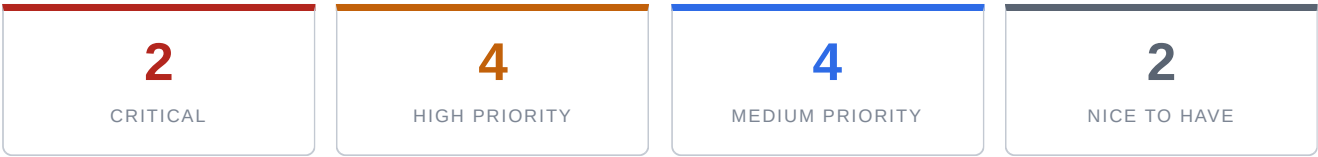
The method is structured expert review against established behavioural science: self-determination theory for motivation, cognitive load theory for effort, the documented dark pattern taxonomy for coercive mechanics, and the trust literature for confidence signals. Claims about likely user behaviour are expert inference from established findings, not measurements of your users. Where a recommendation would benefit from validation, that is stated.

OUT OF SCOPE

Host-side experience, pricing strategy itself (as opposed to how price is presented), and email or push content beyond the transactional messages encountered in the reviewed flows.

02

Findings at a glance



The product's psychological problem is not that it manipulates users; it is that it spends its trust before it has earned any. Two coercive patterns — manufactured scarcity messaging and asymmetric cancellation friction — sit at the two moments where a guest is deciding whether this company can be relied upon with several hundred pounds and a fortnight of their year. Meanwhile the genuine sources of intrinsic motivation in holiday rental — anticipation, planning, the pleasure of imagining the trip — are almost entirely unused. The product treats booking as a transaction to be closed rather than a decision to be supported, and that framing costs it both conversion and repeat custom.

03

Dark pattern review

Manufactured urgency, hidden friction, coercive mechanics and trust erosion — patterns that move a metric in the short term by working against the user's interest.

PATTERN	PRESENT	WHERE AND HOW
Manufactured urgency	YES	"3 people are looking at this right now" is displayed on every property regardless of actual concurrent viewers.
False scarcity	PARTIAL	"Only 2 left at this price" appears where price is not in fact tiered.
Hidden costs (drip pricing)	YES	Cleaning and service fees revealed at step 6 of 7.
Roach motel (easy in, hard out)	YES	Booking takes three taps; cancelling takes five screens and is unlabelled.
Confirmshaming	PARTIAL	Notification opt-out reads "No thanks, I'll risk missing out".
Forced continuity	NO	No subscription mechanics present.
Preselection	PARTIAL	Marketing consent is pre-ticked at account creation.
Disguised advertising	NO	Promoted listings are labelled clearly.
Nagging	NO	Prompts are not repeated after dismissal.

BP-01

Urgency messaging is manufactured rather than real

● CRITICAL

Severity: High

Effort: Low

Frequency: Every property view

Section: Dark patterns

ISSUE

"3 people are looking at this right now" appears on every property, including those with no recorded views in the preceding hour. "Only 2 left at this price" appears where pricing has no tiers. Neither statement is derived from live data.

Principle — loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky). Losses are felt roughly twice as strongly as equivalent gains. Scarcity messaging works by reframing "you could gain a holiday" as "you could lose this one", which is powerful precisely because it bypasses deliberation.

Principle — trust asymmetry. Trust accumulates slowly through consistent small confirmations and collapses instantly on a single disconfirmation. A user who catches one fabricated claim retrospectively re-evaluates every other claim the product has made.

EVIDENCE

1

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

2

Client screens are omitted from this sample

1 Identical viewer count on a property with no recent activity.

2 "Only 2 left at this price" where only one price exists.

Figure BP-01. Property pages captured 40 minutes apart showing identical urgency claims.

WHY IT MATTERS

This works, which is why it is difficult to remove. But the mechanism it relies on is the same one that makes its discovery so costly: a user who realises the pressure was fabricated does not simply discount that message, they revise their model of the company. In holiday rental, where the purchase is high-value, infrequent and heavily reviewed by peers, that revision is shared. There is also live regulatory exposure — the CMA has taken enforcement action against exactly this practice in the online booking sector, and the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act strengthens those powers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Replace fabricated urgency with true urgency, which is abundant in this domain and considerably more persuasive because it survives scrutiny: real concurrent viewer counts where they exist, genuine remaining availability for the selected dates, and honest seasonal demand ("this property was booked for 26 of the last 30 August weekends"). Where no true urgency exists, show none. Expect a small short-term dip in conversion and a durable improvement in completion and repeat booking.

BP-02

Asymmetric friction — three taps to book, five screens to cancel

● CRITICAL

Severity: High

Effort: Low

Frequency: Every cancellation

Section: Dark patterns

ISSUE

Committing money is optimised to three taps. Reversing that commitment requires navigating an unlabelled path five screens deep, and the refund amount is never stated before confirmation.

Principle — the roach motel pattern. Deliberate asymmetry between the effort required to enter a commitment and the effort required to leave it. Recognised in consumer protection guidance as a manipulative design practice.

EVIDENCE

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

Client screens are omitted from this sample

Figure BP-02. Tap count comparison: entry versus exit.

WHY IT MATTERS

Difficult cancellation does not prevent cancellation; it converts self-service into a support call, and it converts a neutral event into a grievance. In a category where the decision to book again is made almost entirely on remembered feeling, the cancellation experience is disproportionately influential — it is often the last interaction before the next purchase decision. The users most affected are those whose plans changed for reasons the product cannot control, which is to say, the ones with least patience for obstruction.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Place "Manage or cancel this booking" on the confirmation screen and in the confirmation email. State the exact refund and its timing before the confirm step. Products that make cancellation easy generally see cancellation rates hold steady and repeat purchase rise, because the perceived risk of booking in the first place falls.

BEFORE / AFTER

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
CURRENT CANCELLATION PATH Screenshot omitted from sample - Five screens, no entry point on confirmation - Refund amount never shown	PROPOSED CANCELLATION PATH Screenshot omitted from sample - Two taps from confirmation or email "You'll be refunded £482.00 within 5 working days"

BP-03

Confirmshaming on the notification opt-out

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Severity: Medium Effort: Low Frequency: Every new user Section: Dark patterns

ISSUE

The decline option on the notification prompt reads "No thanks, I'll risk missing out." The accept option is a full-width primary button; the decline is grey text beneath it.

Principle — reactance (Brehm). When people perceive their freedom of choice being constrained or their decision being editorialised, they push back — often by making the opposite choice more firmly than they otherwise would, and by liking the source less.

WHY IT MATTERS

Confirmshaming buys a modest lift in opt-in rate at the cost of a small, permanent debit to how the product is regarded. It is also self-defeating: users pressured into notifications disable them at the OS level within days, which is worse than never having asked, because it removes the channel permanently.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Use neutral labels ("Not now" / "Turn on notifications") with equal visual weight, and say specifically what the notifications are for: "We'll tell you if the price drops on a property you've saved." A concrete, self-interested reason outperforms pressure and does not carry the reactance cost.

Intrinsic motivation assessment

Whether engagement is autonomous — the user wants to be here — or manufactured through pressure, obligation and interruption. Assessed against self-determination theory.

NEED	HOW WELL IT IS SERVED	OBSERVATION
Autonomy Feeling in control of one's choices	2/5	Undermined by manufactured urgency, forced registration, pre-ticked consent and a countdown timer. The product repeatedly narrows choice rather than supporting it.
Competence Feeling capable and effective	3/5	Search and filtering make users feel effective. Error handling undoes some of that by making failures feel like the user's fault.
Relatedness Feeling connected to others	2/5	Hosts are almost invisible. Reviews are aggregate scores rather than people. The strongest relational asset in the category is unused.

BP-04

Engagement is driven by pressure rather than by anticipation

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High

Effort: High

Frequency: Throughout

Section: Intrinsic motivation

ISSUE

Every mechanism the product uses to move users forward is a pressure mechanism: countdown timers, viewer counts, scarcity claims, and a checkout that discourages going back. None of the mechanisms draw on why people actually engage with holiday rental — the pleasure of planning, imagining and anticipating a trip.

Principle — self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan). Intrinsic motivation depends on autonomy, competence and relatedness. Extrinsic pressure produces compliance in the moment but reliably reduces the underlying motivation over time — people come to experience the activity as something done under duress rather than by choice.

Principle — anticipatory utility (Loewenstein). People derive substantial real pleasure from looking forward to an experience — often comparable to the pleasure of the experience itself. Holiday planning is one of the clearest cases of this in consumer behaviour, and a booking product that shortens the anticipation phase destroys value it could have captured.

WHY IT MATTERS

A pressure-driven product must apply pressure on every visit, because it has built no reason for the user to return voluntarily. That makes acquisition cost permanent rather than amortised. The competitive risk is specific: the moment a rival makes browsing enjoyable rather than stressful, browsing moves there, and booking follows browsing.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Treat the saved-properties list as a planning space rather than a bookmark folder: allow notes, comparison, and sharing with the people the user is travelling with. Introduce the host as a person before payment rather than after. Give the confirmation screen a forward-looking frame ("41 days until your stay") instead of a transactional one. None of this replaces the urgency mechanics commercially in the first month; all of it compounds, whereas urgency does not.

Reward and feedback loop analysis

Which loops exist, which direction they run, whether variable reward mechanics are used, and whether their use is appropriate to the category.

LOOP	DIRECTION	REWARD TYPE	ASSESSMENT
Search → results → refine	● POSITIVE	Immediate, fixed	Works well. Fast feedback, clear cause and effect, user feels competent.
Save → return to saved list	● NEUTRAL	None	Saving produces no reward beyond storage. The list is inert; there is no reason to come back to it.
Book → confirmation	● NEUTRAL	Muted	The emotional peak of the journey is met with "Transaction complete." Nothing is celebrated.
Notification → open	● NEGATIVE	Variable	Price-drop alerts fire on properties the user did not save, training users to ignore them.
Stay → review request	● NEUTRAL	None	Requested once by email, with no acknowledgement when given. A one-way extraction.
Complete stay → rebook	● NEGATIVE	None	No loop exists. Returning guests start from an empty search each time.

BP-05

The emotional peak of the journey is met with a transactional acknowledgement

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: Medium

Effort: Low

Frequency: Every booking

Section: Reward loops

ISSUE

The confirmation screen reads "Transaction complete" above a reference number. There is no image of the property, no dates in natural language, no acknowledgement that the user has just arranged something they were looking forward to.

Principle — the peak–end rule (Kahneman). People judge an experience overwhelmingly by its most intense moment and its ending, not by the average of the whole. Booking confirmation is both the peak and the end of this journey, which makes it the single highest-leverage screen in the product for how the whole experience is remembered.

EVIDENCE

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

Client screens are omitted from this sample

Figure BP-05. Confirmation screen as currently presented.

WHY IT MATTERS

Whatever a guest feels on this screen is what they will recall weeks later when deciding where to book next, and what they will describe to the friend who asks how they found the place. Spending nothing here is spending nothing at the one moment the user is maximally receptive — and it is free to fix, requiring copy and layout rather than engineering.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Rebuild the confirmation around the stay rather than the payment: the property image, "You're booked — Seaview Cottage, 12–16 September", a countdown, the host's name and photograph, and one genuinely useful next action such as adding it to a calendar or sharing with fellow travellers. Keep the reference number, but not as the headline.

BEFORE / AFTER

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
CURRENT CONFIRMATION Screenshot omitted from sample "Transaction complete" plus reference number - Peak moment left empty	PROPOSED CONFIRMATION Screenshot omitted from sample - Property, dates, host, countdown - Share and calendar actions

BP-06

Price-drop notifications fire on properties the user never saved

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Severity: Medium Effort: Medium Frequency: Weekly Section: Reward loops

ISSUE

Notifications described as price-drop alerts are sent for properties matching a broad search history rather than for saved properties. The user consented to one thing and receives another.

Principle — variable reward and extinction (Skinner). Unpredictable rewards sustain attention only while the reward remains genuine. When the ratio of relevant to irrelevant signals falls below a threshold, the behaviour extinguishes rapidly and does not recover — the user stops opening notifications altogether.

WHY IT MATTERS

Notification permission is a one-off, non-renewable asset. Spending it on low-relevance messages does not merely waste those messages; it closes the channel for the genuinely valuable ones, such as a real price drop on the property the guest has been considering for a fortnight.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Restrict price-drop notifications to explicitly saved properties. Move broader recommendations to a separate, separately-consented, lower-frequency channel. Measure the open rate of each stream independently rather than in aggregate.

Cognitive load audit

Where the product requires mental effort that does not serve the user's goal, and where that effort creates abandonment risk.

POINT IN JOURNEY	LOAD	TYPE	WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE USER
Search results	LOW	Germane	Comparing properties — this is the work the user came to do.
Filter selection	MEDIUM	Extraneous	Remembering which filters are active, because they are not displayed on results.
Property page	MEDIUM	Extraneous	Resolving nine competing badges to find the three facts that matter.
Account creation	HIGH	Extraneous	Deciding which of eleven fields are genuinely required.
Price reveal	HIGH	Extraneous	Re-evaluating the entire decision when the total changes by 18% at step 6.
Payment	MEDIUM	Extraneous	Holding the countdown timer in mind while entering card details.
Confirmation	LOW	—	Nothing required. Also nothing offered.

BP-07

Late price change forces the entire decision to be re-made under time pressure

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High

Effort: Medium

Frequency: Every booking

Section: Cognitive load

ISSUE

At step 6 of 7 the total rises by roughly 18%. The user has by this point compared properties, chosen dates and entered personal details on the basis of a figure that turns out not to be the price. All of that comparison is invalidated at once, while a countdown timer runs.

Principle — anchoring (Tversky & Kahneman). The first figure encountered becomes the reference point against which all later figures are judged. A late increase is therefore not experienced as information but as a loss relative to the anchor the product itself set.

Principle — cognitive load under time pressure. Working memory is limited and degrades under stress. Requiring a full re-evaluation of a complex decision while a timer runs produces one of two responses: abandonment, or an unexamined commitment that is regretted afterwards. Both are bad outcomes, and the second is worse for retention.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the point where two separate problems compound. Drip pricing (BP-01) creates the loss; the countdown timer removes the user's ability to process it calmly. Either alone would be a finding. Together they produce the highest-abandonment-risk moment in the product — and the users who push through anyway arrive at the confirmation screen feeling caught out rather than pleased, which then interacts with the peak-end problem in BP-05.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Show the all-in price from search onward so no re-evaluation is required, and pause or remove the timer during payment entry. If the timer is genuinely protecting inventory, say so plainly and allow extension — a hold the user understands is reassuring; a hold they do not understand is coercive.

07

Trust signal review

Where confidence is built and where it is eroded, with attention to payment, onboarding and error states.

MOMENT	NET EFFECT	WHAT THE USER IS IMPLICITLY ASKING, AND WHAT THEY GET
First impression	 BUILDS	"Is this a real company?" — Professional presentation, credible photography. Answered well.
Property page	 MIXED	"Is this listing honest?" — Good photography and review volume, undermined by fabricated urgency.
Account creation	 ERODES	"Why do you need all this?" — Eleven fields, pre-ticked marketing consent, no explanation.
Price reveal	 ERODES	"Were you straight with me?" — An 18% rise at the last step answers no.
Payment entry	 MIXED	"Is my card safe?" — Encryption is not mentioned, no card scheme marks, no reassurance.
Payment error	 ERODES	"Have you taken my money?" — "Error 4021" leaves the most frightening question in a payment flow unanswered.
Confirmation	 MIXED	"Is this definitely happening?" — Confirmed, but coldly.
Cancellation	 ERODES	"Can I get out of this?" — Hidden path, refund amount not stated.

BP-08

Payment errors leave the user unsure whether they have been charged

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High

Effort: Low

Frequency: Every failed payment

Section: Trust signals

ISSUE

A failed payment returns "Error 4021. Please try again." The message does not say what went wrong, what to do, or — most importantly — whether money has left the user's account.

Principle — uncertainty aversion. Ambiguity about an outcome is experienced as more aversive than a known bad outcome. A user who knows the payment failed can act; a user who does not know whether it failed cannot, and will assume the worse of the two possibilities.

EVIDENCE

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

Client screens are omitted from this sample

Figure BP-08. Payment failure message as currently shown.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the single most trust-destructive screen in the product. A user in this state either retries — risking, as far as they know, a double charge — or abandons and contacts their bank. Both outcomes cost more than the booking. And unlike most findings here, this one is resolved by writing better sentences.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Always state the money position first and explicitly: "No payment has been taken." Then the cause in plain language, then the next action. Map each payment gateway code to a specific human message rather than falling back to a generic string.

BP-09

No reassurance signals at the point of payment

● MEDIUM PRIORITY

Severity: Medium

Effort: Low

Frequency: Every booking

Section: Trust signals

ISSUE

The payment screen carries no security statement, no card scheme marks, no mention of encryption, and no restatement of the cancellation terms — at the moment the user is handing over several hundred pounds to a company they may have met twenty minutes ago.

WHY IT MATTERS

Trust signals do not need to be believed in detail to work; they need to be present. Their absence at a payment step is itself a signal, and users read it. This is particularly costly for a first-time customer with no prior relationship — precisely the user the product is most trying to win.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Add a brief security statement, card scheme marks, and a one-line restatement of the cancellation policy directly above the pay button. Say what happens immediately after payment, so the user knows what to expect before they commit.

Missed opportunity identification

Where established psychological principles, applied honestly, would improve retention, conversion or satisfaction. These are additions rather than corrections.

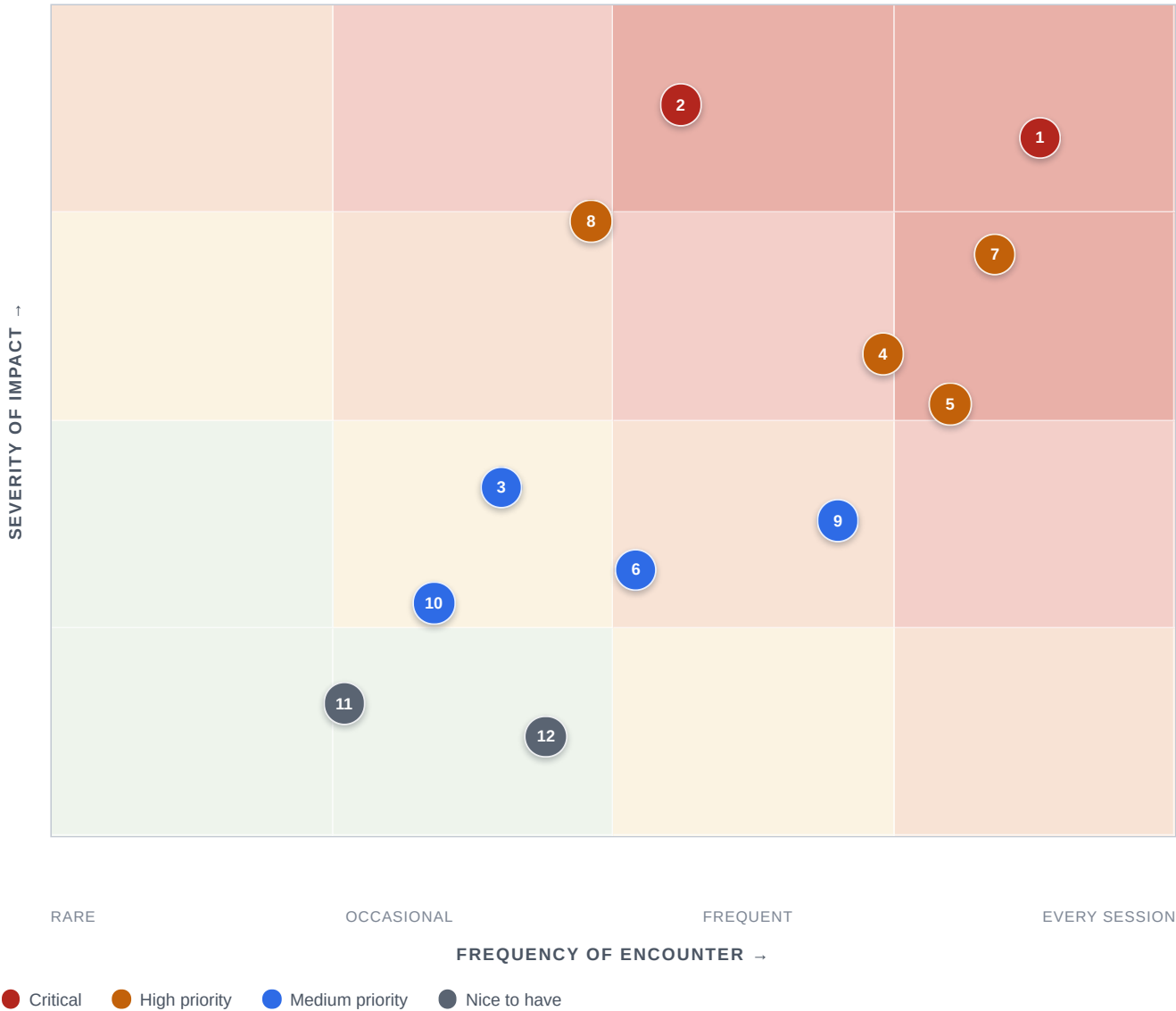
PRINCIPLE	WHERE IT APPLIES	OPPORTUNITY
Endowment effect People value what feels theirs	Saved properties	Allow naming a trip, adding notes and inviting fellow travellers. A saved list that feels like "our trip" is far harder to abandon than a bookmark folder.
Goal gradient Effort increases near a goal	Checkout progress	"Step 3 of 7" is honest but discouraging. Showing progress as a filling bar with the remaining steps named produces the same honesty with the opposite emotional effect.
Social proof Behaviour of similar others guides choice	Property page	Reviews exist but are reduced to an average. Surfacing reviews from guests in a similar situation — families, couples, groups — is genuine social proof rather than a number.
Anticipatory utility Looking forward is part of the value	Post-booking	Nothing happens between booking and arrival. A countdown, local suggestions, or a note from the host would extend the value of the purchase across weeks at almost no cost.
Reciprocity Giving first creates willingness to give back	Review requests	Reviews are currently requested with nothing offered. Giving something small first — a local guide, early access to next season's dates — raises response rates markedly and does not feel like a transaction.
Fresh start effect Temporal landmarks prompt new behaviour	Re-engagement	Contacting past guests at meaningful moments — the anniversary of their stay, the start of a season — outperforms generic campaigns because the timing itself carries meaning.
Choice architecture How options are arranged shapes selection	Search results	Results are ranked but not framed. Light structure — "best for families", "closest to the coast" — reduces the cost of comparison without removing any option.

THE PATTERN ACROSS THESE OPPORTUNITIES

Every item above works by giving the user something rather than by pressing them. That is not a moral point but a structural one: pressure has to be reapplied on every visit and decays as users habituate, whereas value given compounds and is remembered. The product currently spends its psychological budget almost entirely on pressure, and holds none in reserve for the moments — confirmation, the wait before the stay, the return visit — where an investment would pay repeatedly.

NASA criticality matrix

Every psychological finding plotted by how often a user encounters it against how severely it affects them.



PLOT KEY

- BP-01** Manufactured urgency messaging

BP-02 Asymmetric booking / cancellation friction

BP-03 Confirmshaming on notification opt-out

BP-04 Engagement driven by pressure, not anticipation

BP-05 Emotional peak met transactionally

BP-06 Price-drop alerts on unsaved properties
- BP-07** Late price change under time pressure

BP-08 Payment errors leave charge status unclear

BP-09 No reassurance signals at payment

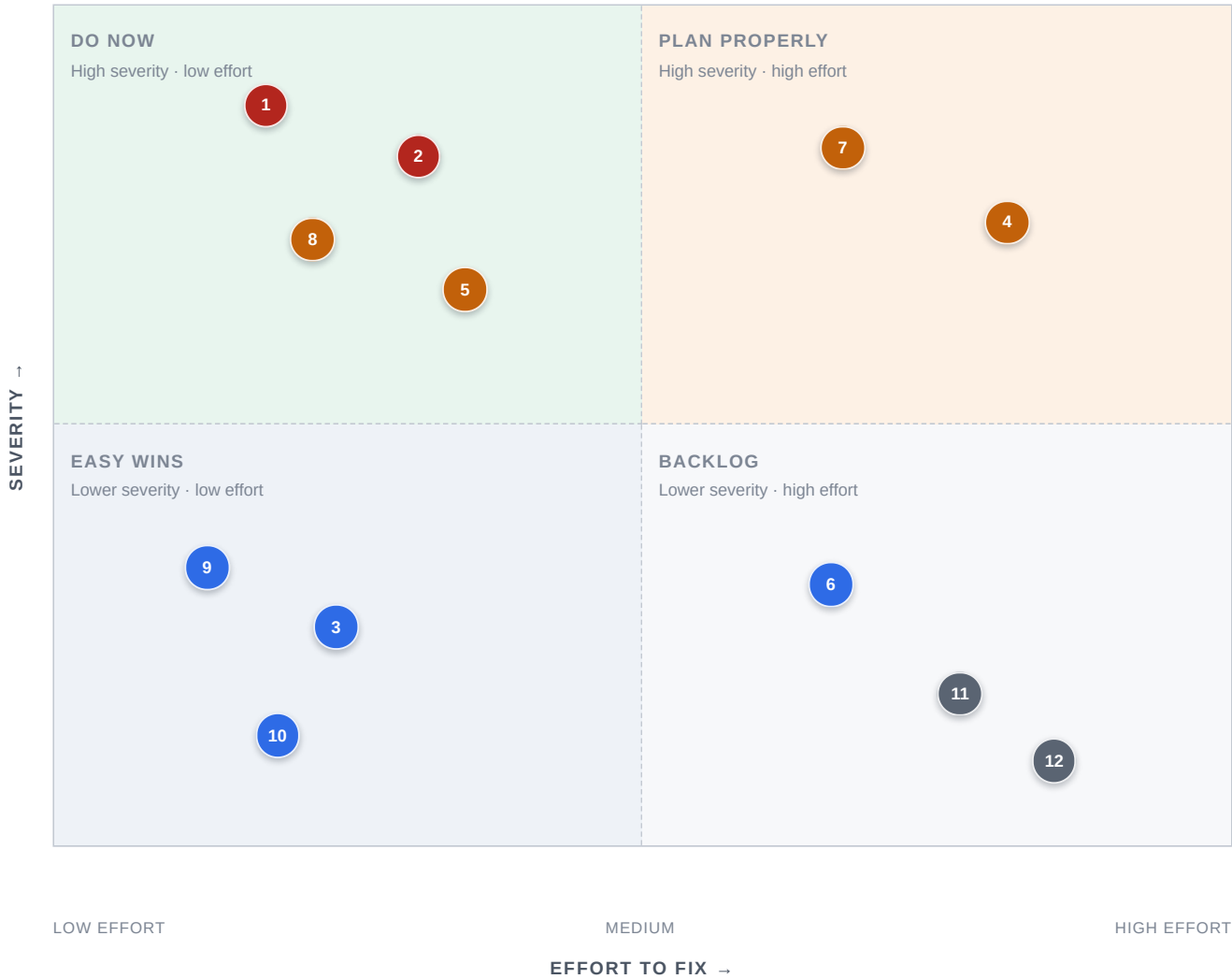
BP-10 Pre-ticked marketing consent

BP-11 Saved list has no reason to be revisited

BP-12 No post-booking anticipation phase

Severity vs effort matrix

The same findings plotted against how hard each is to fix.



WHAT THIS SAYS ABOUT SEQUENCING

Unusually, both Critical findings sit in the "do now" quadrant. Removing fabricated urgency is a deletion, and surfacing cancellation is a link in two places. The most valuable psychological changes available here are among the cheapest — the obstacle is commercial nerve rather than engineering capacity, which is why the recommendation is to measure completion and repeat booking rather than click-through when assessing the effect.

Before / after comparison panels

Current state against recommended improvement for the changes with the largest psychological effect.

BP-01 · Real urgency in place of manufactured urgency

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample • "3 people are looking at this right now" — not derived from data • Collapses on discovery	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample • "Booked for 26 of the last 30 August weekends" — verifiable • Strengthens under scrutiny

BP-05 · Confirmation as the peak of the journey

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample • "Transaction complete" plus reference number • Peak–end moment spent on nothing	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample • Property, dates, host, countdown to the stay • Share and calendar actions

BP-08 · Payment failure that answers the frightening question first

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample "Error 4021. Please try again." - Charge status unknown to the user	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample "No payment has been taken" stated first - Cause named, next step offered

Prioritised findings list

Every finding in this report, ordered by priority.

ID	FINDING	PRIORITY	EFFORT	SECTION
BP-01	Urgency messaging is manufactured rather than real	● CRITICAL	Low	Dark patterns
BP-02	Asymmetric friction between booking and cancelling	● CRITICAL	Low	Dark patterns
BP-07	Late price change forces re-decision under time pressure	● HIGH PRIORITY	Medium	Cognitive load
BP-08	Payment errors leave charge status unclear	● HIGH PRIORITY	Low	Trust signals
BP-04	Engagement driven by pressure rather than anticipation	● HIGH PRIORITY	High	Intrinsic motivation
BP-05	Emotional peak met with a transactional acknowledgement	● HIGH PRIORITY	Low	Reward loops
BP-09	No reassurance signals at the point of payment	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Trust signals
BP-03	Confirmshaming on the notification opt-out	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Dark patterns
BP-06	Price-drop alerts sent for unsaved properties	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Medium	Reward loops
BP-10	Marketing consent pre-ticked at account creation	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Dark patterns
BP-11	Saved list offers no reason to be revisited	● NICE TO HAVE	High	Missed opportunities
BP-12	No anticipation phase between booking and stay	● NICE TO HAVE	High	Missed opportunities

13

Quick wins

Highest impact for least effort. Three of these are deletions or rewrites rather than new features.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| 01 | Remove fabricated urgency messaging — BP-01
A deletion, not a build. Removes the product's largest trust liability and its clearest regulatory exposure. Replace with true scarcity where it exists. | ~half day
Critical |
| 02 | Make cancellation visible and state the refund — BP-02
One link on the confirmation screen and in the email, plus the refund amount before the confirm step. | ~half day
Critical |
| 03 | Rewrite payment failure messages — BP-08
State the money position first. Copy change only; resolves the most trust-destructive moment in the product. | ~half day
High |
| 04 | Rebuild the confirmation screen around the stay — BP-05
Property, dates, host and countdown instead of a reference number. Layout and copy; no new data required. | ~1–2 days
High |
| 05 | Add reassurance to the payment screen — BP-09
Security statement, card marks, and a one-line cancellation restatement above the pay button. | ~2 hours
Medium |
| 06 | Neutralise the notification prompt and untick consent — BP-03, BP-10
Equal-weight buttons, a concrete reason, and consent unticked by default. Also removes a GDPR exposure. | ~2 hours
Medium |

HOW TO JUDGE WHETHER THIS WORKED

Removing urgency mechanics will probably reduce click-through from search to property. That is the expected result and not the measure of success. Track booking completion rate, cancellation-to-support-contact ratio, repeat booking within twelve months, and review sentiment. If those four move in the right direction, the change has worked regardless of what click-through does.

Prepared by Kit Powell · KLP Design Solutions · kitpowell.com
Companion documents in this engagement: Executive Summary.