Lodgit Desk and SiteMinder – Setting up the Channel Manager Interface

With the Channel Manager Interface of Lodgit Desk you can automatically send your availabilities and prices directly to the Channel Manager and, because this is a two-way interface, import bookings from internet booking engines like booking.com directly into Lodgit Desk.

In this PDF you will find information about:

- ✔ the conditions for using SiteMinder with Lodgit Desk's Channel Manager Interface,

- ✔ how to set up the connections between the units and/or categories and synchro-nize data with SiteMinder.

SiteMinder Channel Manager

With their channel manager, SiteMinder lets you connect your rentable units to more than 100 internet booking engines and global distribution systems. You can find the full list of channels on their website: http://www.siteminder.com/channel-manager/.

Lodgit Desk is a certified partner of SiteMinder: With our hotel software, you cannot only send your availabilities and prices, but also connect your Lodgit Desk extra items and services to those SiteMinder can offer. For incoming bookings, the correct extra items from your Extras Management will then already be added to the booking.

The Requirements

In order to use the SiteMinder channel manager with Lodgit Desk, you'll need:

- ✓ **the module "Channel Manager Interface" from Lodgit**, which you can order in our online shop at www.lodgit.com/shop

- ✓ **an agreement with the channel manager from SiteMinder**. You can do this by signing up for an account with them on their website at http://www.siteminder.com/channel-manager/.

- ✓ **contracts and/or agreements with the internet booking channels** that you can get on their respective websites.

Got everything? Then we can get started!

Please note: It is not recommended to put all your units online if you connect several units to one channel manager category (e.g. single bedrooms in Lodgit to category "Single" in channel manager). Leave at least 1 unit online, so you'll have some breathing room in the event of overbookings.

Connecting the Channel Manager to the Hotel Software

1. Setting up your SiteMinder account

First, you'll have to set up the units or categories you want to offer in the OTAs in SiteMinder. For any questions about this process, the SiteMinder team will be happy to help.

Once that's done, the SiteMinder team will **send you a file** that lists **your HotelCode, your categories and the respective RoomCodes**.

2. Activating units for synchronization in Lodgit Desk

Open your Lodgit Desk installation and go to *Administration > Synchronization and Online Modules*. A new window will open and show you the general settings for the synchronization. Go to the tab *Synchronize*:
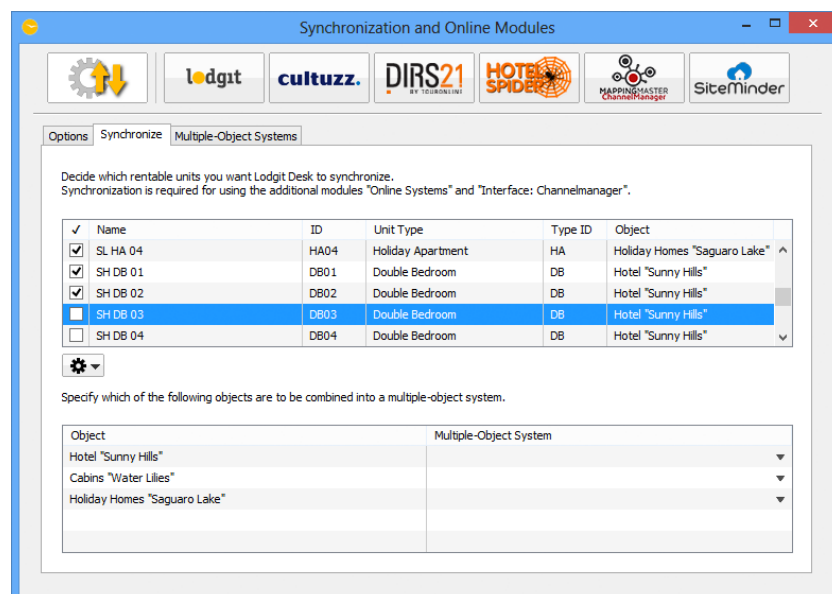
Make sure that all units you want to synchronize have a checkmark in the first column. **You don't have to synchronize all units** (e.g. you may want to keep some reserved for phone reservations). Only the units that are checked will be synchronized.

Important: Whenever you add a new unit, synchronization for it is turned OFF by default. This is to ensure that you don't accidentally exceed your allotment whenever you create a new unit later on.

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3. Multi-Object Systems (optional)

In Lodgit Desk you can sort your units into several objects. This will keep them separate in the Statistics so that it's easier for you to distinguish between different houses or unit types. The channel manager, however, can only be connected to one object per ID. With the **multi-object system** you'll be able to **connect more than one object in Lodgit Desk to the same channel manager account ID**.

If you want to create one or more multi-object systems, go to *Administration > Synchronization and Online Modules* and click the tab *Multi-Object Systems*:
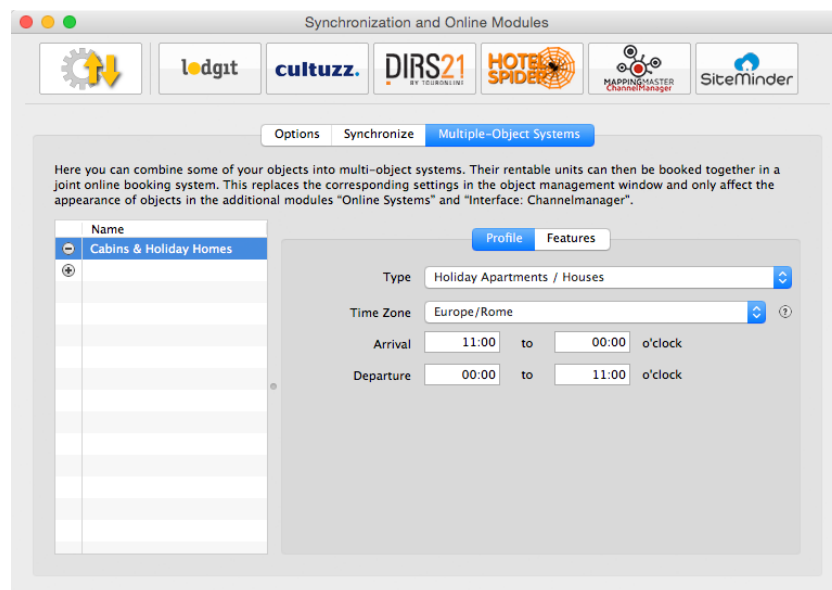
Use the plus button in the list on the left to create a new multi-object system. You will have to enter some of the profile information: accommodation type, time zone, arrival and departure times as well as the features of the object.

After you have finished setting this up, you can go back to the tab *Synchronize* and take a look at the lower table. In the right column, you can select if an object you created belongs to a multi-object system:
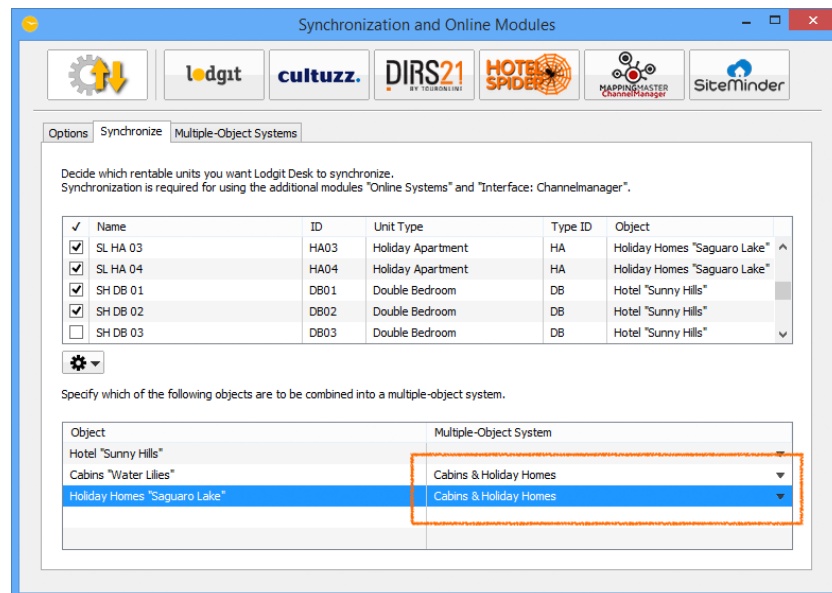
If you don't select anything in the right column here, the object will be treated the same way as you've originally set it up in the Object Management.

4. Assign units in Lodgit Desk

After you have added the categories or units in SiteMinder, you can now assign them to the appropriate units in Lodgit Desk.

1. Open your Lodgit Desk installation and go to *Administration > Synchronization and Online Modules > SiteMinder*. Select the object you want to connect to the channel manager:
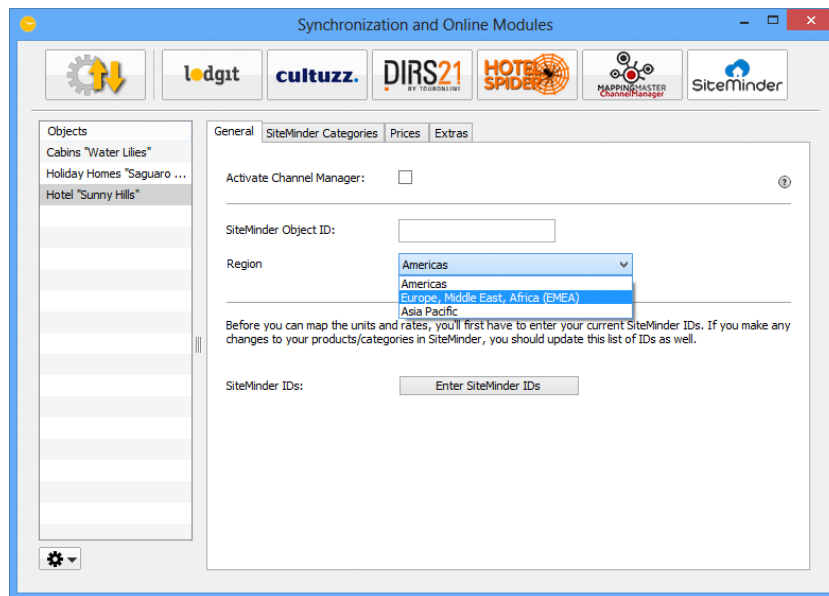
2. Enter your HotelCode from SiteMinder into the field *Object ID*, select your region from the drop down menu and then press the button *Enter SiteMinder IDs*.


3. Now enter the category names (*Name*) with their corresponding RoomCodes (*Siteminder Category ID*) and the default occupancy (*Beds*). You have received this information in a file from the SiteMinder support team.
   After finishing, you can close this window and switch to *SiteMinder Categories*.
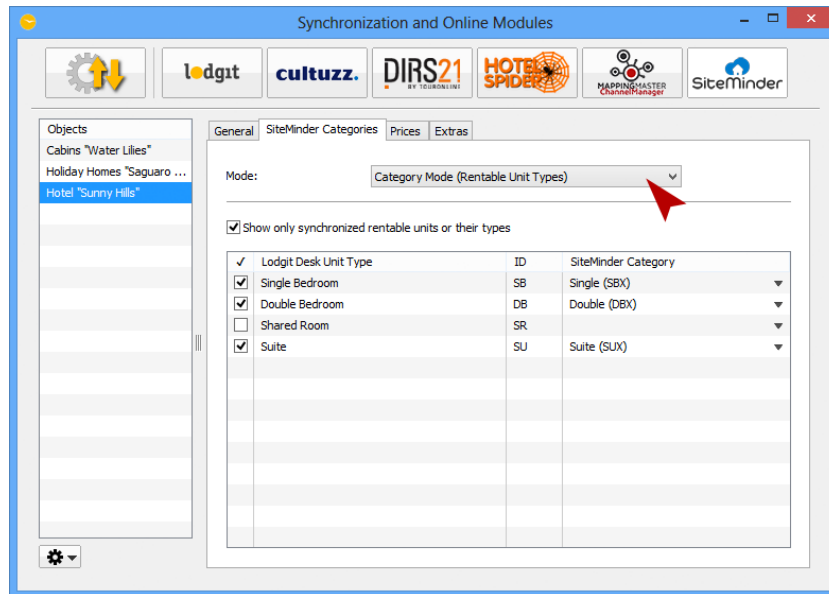
4. First, select the *Mode* (see red arrow). The *Category Mode* is suited best for accommodations with a lot of similar units, like a hotel or guesthouse. The *Unit Mode* is best suited for accommodations with very individual units, like a vacation home rental.

5. In the *left column* you'll find your units or unit categories, depending on which mode you've selected. In the *right column* you can choose which SiteMinder category corresponds to which by using the grey arrow.

   Please note: Categories or units you don't want to synchronize with the channel manager can simply be deselected in the first column. You can use this feature to offer units in your Lodgit Online Booking System but not publish them in the channels through your channel manager.

6. With that, you've already finished the basic setup of the units. Return to the tab *General.* Check the box that says *Activate Channel Manager*:
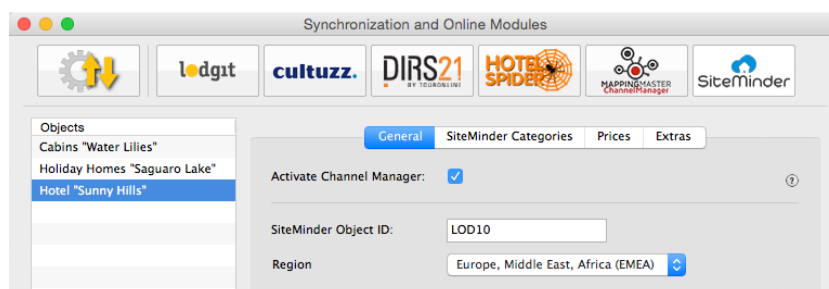
7. Test the connection by going to *File > Synchronize*. This will send your current availabilities of all selected units to SiteMinder and you can make sure the availabilities are listed correctly in the backend of the channel manager.
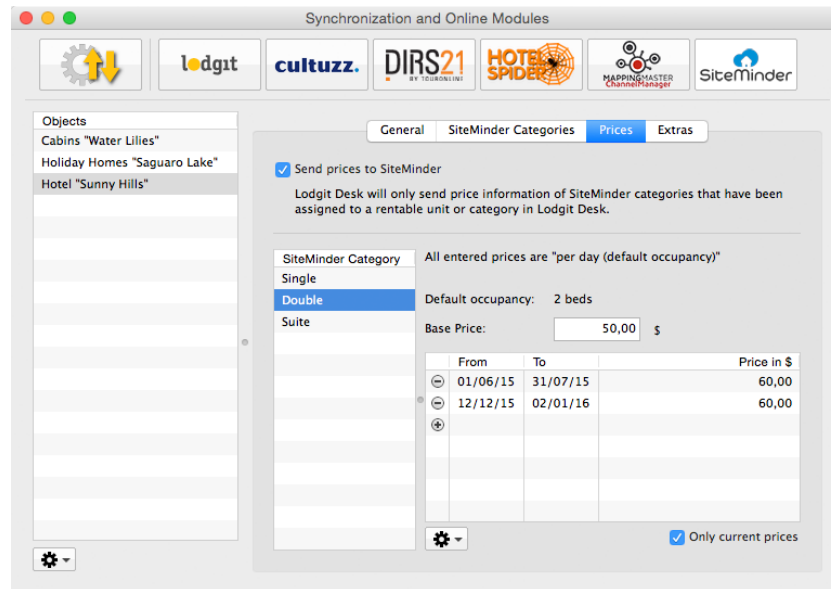
   Please note: Due to server sync schedules, it may take a few minutes before the changes are displayed in SiteMinder.

8. You can now continue with setting up the prices as well the mapping of the extra items. Both of these are optional, so if you don't want to send prices or map your extra services, you can skip to Point 6: Turn on automated synchronization.

5. Manage prices from within Lodgit (optional)

Lodgit can also send prices to SiteMinder in the form of **Master Rates**. This means that within Lodgit Desk, you set up one rate per category (seasonal rates are possible) and within SiteMinder you can then define additions or reductions based on occupancy or channel. It is not possible to add Rate Codes in Lodgit Desk.

1. Select your object in the window *Synchronization and Online Modules > SiteMinder* and go to the *Prices* area. Check the field *Send prices to SiteMinder*.

2. Select a SiteMinder category in the list and enter the base price. The base price is listed "per night" and default occupancy. It will always be used unless you've defined special prices for a time frame.

3. In the list underneath the base price, you can define time frames with different prices (e.g. seasonal prices). With the Actions menu you can import those price settings from your Price Management in Lodgit Desk.

4. **You must add at least a base price for all categories!** Test the connection by going to *File > Synchronize*. This will send your current prices of all selected units to SiteMinder and you can make sure the availabilities are listed correctly in the backend of the channel manager.

   Please note: Due to server sync schedules, it may take a few minutes before the changes are displayed in SiteMinder.

6. Link SiteMinder extras to Lodgit extras (optional)

SiteMinder offers a certain list of extra services that you can link to the extras you have in Lodgit Desk. Whenever a booking is imported, the extras will then be selected and added to the booking correctly. That way, the bookings from SiteMinder will fit seamlessly into your analysis for extra items and services.

1. Select your object in the window *Synchronization and Online Modules > SiteMinder* and go to the *Extras* area. There you'll find a table listing all of SiteMinders extras in the left column.

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2. In the column to the right, select the Lodgit extras you want to link to the SiteMinder extra item. Check the items that are going to be listed as 'inklusive' in the booking:
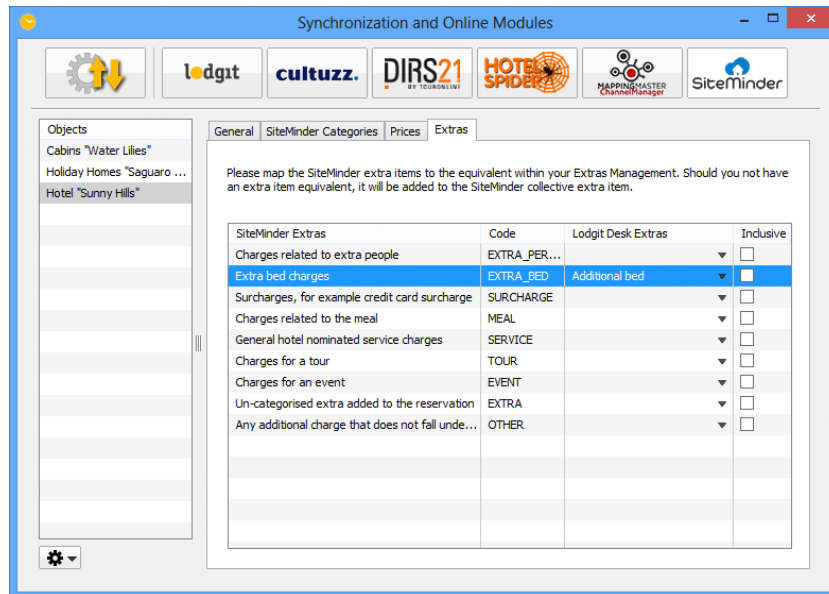
Important: *If you don't have any corresponding extra items in Lodgit Desk and don't want to create any for them, any of those extras in bookings will simply be added into a collective extra item.*

3. Test the connection by going to *File > Synchronize*. This will send your current extras to SiteMinder and you can make sure everything is listed correctly in the backend of the channel manager.

Please note: Due to server sync schedules, it may take a few minutes before the changes are displayed in SiteMinder.

7. Settings for the synchronization

After you have successfully assigned all units, go back to the *General* tab of the *Synchronization and Online Modules* window. There, you'll find the settings for the synchronization:
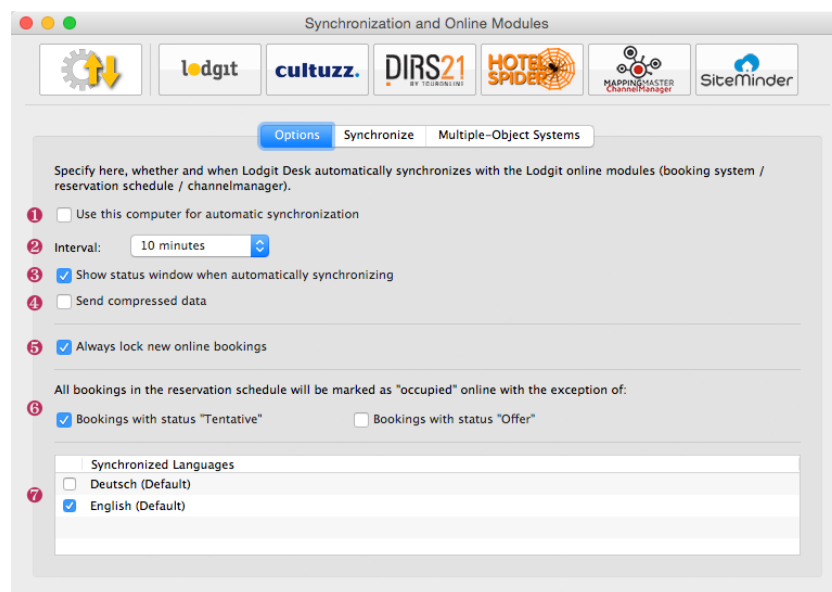
Here you can decide:

1. ... whether the computer should **synchronize automatically**. If you're using the database server you can do this separately for each computer so you may select the computer with the best internet connection for the synchronization process.

2. ... in which **interval you want to synchronize**. You can choose between every 10 minutes up until once per day.

   Important: A small interval will keep the risk of overbookings low. However, when using a very slow internet connection, the small interval can cause performance issues for the system. It may then be better to use a higher synchronization interval.

3. ... whether during the synchronization **a status window is displayed**. If you synchronize often, this window may annoy you and can be disabled here.

4. ... whether the **data should be sent compressed**.

5. ... whether **new online bookings are automatically locked**. This is a safety measure to prevent you from accidentally moving the booking around. You can always unlock a booking in the upper left corner of the respective booking window (double-click on the booking). If you don't want the bookings to be automatically locked, you can turn that feature off here.

6. ... whether some **booking statuses are shown online as 'vacant'**. Units with bookings 'Tentative' and/or 'Offer' can still be booked online if you check the boxes in this area.

7. ... what **languages** you want to synchronize. You always have to synchronize at least one language; but you may synchronize all of the ones you added as well. This is important mainly for the Lodgit Online Booking System.

What you should also know…

Even with the easy linking process and the 2-way interface, there are still some things you should be aware of to avoid problems.

Cancellations

Information about cancellations are only sent from SiteMinder to Lodgit Desk. The bookings will not be deleted automatically, but you will receive a notification about it in the *Error Log*. If you cancel bookings within Lodgit Desk (i.e. delete them from the reservation schedule), only the changed capacity will be sent to SiteMinder. There is no direct cancellation information regarding that specific booking.

Overbookings

The risk for overbookings is very low because of the frequent synchronisation processes between SiteMinder and Lodgit Desk. Still, in the event that a booking comes in from SiteMinder and Lodgit Desk does not have any free capacities, the booking information will be listed in the *Error Log*. You can then add the booking manually in a different category or handle it otherwise.

Incorrect Assignments

In the event that incoming bookings cannot be assigned to a certain unit, the booking information will be listed in the *Error Log*. You can then add the booking manually. Also make sure to check the assignments of the units or categories to see if the system is set up correctly.

Automatically locked bookings

New online bookings are 'locked' automatically by default as soon as they're imported into the reservation schedule. That is a feature meant to keep you from accidentally moving, shortening or extending the booking before you've created a confirmation for it. You can always unlock a booking through its booking window:

Uncheck the box that says *Lock* and then you can move, shorten and lengthen the booking as usual. You can also decide that online bookings shouldn't be automatically locked, see the Settings for the Synchronization.

Still got questions?

✔ You couldn't find all the information you were looking for?

✔ You still have lingering questions about setting up the channel manager in Lodgit?

✔ You have a problem using the channel manager that you couldn't find a solution for?

We're happy to answer your questions through our *email ticket system*, through Skype via *lodgit* or on the phone under *+49 341 4206944*!

Your Lodgit Team

PS: If you have questions about adding units, rates and/or rate variations within SiteMinder, please contact the SiteMinder service team first.