

A closer look at technology in hotels

26 MAY 2014 , *SERGE CHAMELIAN*

[Insights, Information Technology]

(http://ehotelier.com/images/default-source/Generic/technology-icons_sq.jpg?sfvrsn=1) **Consumers are becoming very sophisticated about technology in their professional and personal lives and this in turn raises their technology expectations from hotels. Indeed, the technology a hotel offers is now a very important consideration guests factor in when choosing a hotel.**



Savvy hotels are increasing their tech spending to meet customers' expectations by adapting their guest rooms, banquets, restaurants and front desks to today's technology advances. Let's take a closer look at the current trends and some specific implementations.

Technologies at the front desk/concierge

B Hotels & Resorts (<http://www.bhotelsandresorts.com/>) have a custom-designed concierge service for each property aiming at providing their customers with a more comfortable and customizable travel experience. B Hotels & Resorts partnered with Monscierge (<https://www.monscierge.com/>) to provide instant access to information about everything from hotel amenities to weather forecasts, flight updates, local tips and more. It updates automatically to provide real-time information to guests staying at the hotels or remotely through their devices. This

touchscreen concierge technology has the capability of providing complete interactive applications and all related content in 12 languages, making it attractive as the company grows, both nationally and globally. B Hotels & Resorts plans to roll out more features of the app that will showcase an interactive communication between team members and customers and allows the latter to order room service, call valet, request housekeeping services or extra pillows, and more.

For other properties, a concierge service may be defined differently. e-concierge, Hyatt's high-tech concierge service, is Twitter-based. In all Hyatt hotels, this service allows guests send requests to HyattConcierge (<http://twitter.com/>) and employees at Hyatt must respond to messages within 15 minutes. Other chain hotels like Intercontinental hotels are using iPads in hotel lobbies.

Check-in kiosks seems to be an idea from the past, but YOTEL (<http://www.yotel.com/>) has embraced innovation with their new hotel feature called YOBOT – the world's first robotic luggage concierge. For example, at the New York City property, the guest check-in process begins with an easy-to-operate, airline style check-in kiosk. The Worldline Self-Service kiosks from Atos are accessible 24/7 and check-in can be completed in three quick steps. After checking in, guests are immediately greeted by Mission Control, YOTEL New York's futuristic version of a traditional hotel concierge/front desk. This fully-equipped station is manned 24 hours, seven days a week, and is the gateway for future hotel bookings, Internet stations with free printing, getting tips on local services, events and neighbourhood must-see and-dos. The revolutionary YOBOT – a towering robotic arm located in the hotel's lobby – takes guests' bags and stores them in bins. Using a touch screen, guests enter the number and sizes of their bags, and YOBOT brings a container to the drop off area. To collect luggage, a simple bar code ticket is scanned and YOBOT will retrieve the bags.

h-enigma is a product of h-hotelier which simplifies the concept of business intelligence. It consists of an enhanced reporting tool with a yield and CRM module incorporated in it. h-enigma aims at assisting managers in their daily decisions to achieve growth and improve the business bottom line performance by providing them with a customized product/service. The reports and recommendations extracted can be customised to the request of the client and even sent by email or as an alerter to any mobile device.

In-room technologies

Customers also want friendly technology which enables them to personalize their hotel stay exactly the way they want it. That extends from personalized check-in to lighting, temperature and curtain control, wireless internet access and a flat-screen entertainment center – all accessible through an intuitive controller. This affordable luxury caters for a new generation of travellers: the ‘Citizen Mobile.’

Several hotels have joined forces to replace hotel room keys with NFC-enabled mobile phones. The technology makes it possible for hotel guests to check-in and out using their mobile phones. The first pilot is already underway at the Clarion Hotel Stockholm (<http://www.clarionstockholm.com/>) in Sweden.

International lighting specialist Philips and carpet manufacturer Desso have teamed up to create a range of new light emitting carpets designed to enhance information, direction and safety in hotels. The lighting de-clutters spaces by making important information visible only when needed, and also enhances ambience and atmosphere. This lighting solution, currently being piloted, has been designed for high traffic areas and will be available in a range of different colours, shapes and sizes.

LG Electronics USA is helping hotel operators transform the in-room guest experience with the next generation of interactive TVs that interface seamlessly with guests’ smartphones and tablets for a personalized big-screen viewing experience. Capitalizing on the emerging trend of leisure and business travelers viewing content on their own devices in hotel rooms, LP870H televisions are designed for “second screen” support and include technologies which are used to pair with guests’ mobile devices. This enables guests to view their own content on the large LED screen – directly with the TV or via an imbedded application from a system integrator partner. The flagship of LG’s hospitality TV line, the LP870H series is built around the enhanced Pro:Centric platform with support for Java, Flash and HTML software to deliver one of the widest ranges of partner interactive applications available in the hospitality market.

About the author



Serge Chamelian is the Managing Partner at h-hotelier (<http://www.h-hotelier.com/>), a hospitality services firm that offers a holistic approach to business intelligence solutions, revenue management consultancy, and training and development programs.

Its product h-enigma simplifies the concept of business

intelligence, making it affordable and very easy to use and understand, while at the same time keeping its rich aspect as one of its main strong point. h-enigma consist of a reporting tool with a yield, CRM and shopping module incorporated in it.

Source: h-hotelier (www.h-hotelier.com)