PMS TOP TRENDS

Data analysis is helping the hospitality industry to add a personal touch to the total guest experience, and next-generation PMS tells the total guest story, says *Trisha Littlejohn*, director property management solutions, Agilysys.com

Advancements in technology have brought us unlimited convenience, forever changing the way we interact with hotel brands and guests.

This change is what drives guests to expect different and unique experiences from the hospitality industry.

Every technology touchpoint could be a make-or-break experience - an opportunity to win or lose guest satisfaction.

In response, hotels are investing in a range of technologies that extend their Property Management System (PMS) to enable more immediate and personal engagement.

SELF-SERVICE

Hotels are looking at kiosk options to create simplicity for both the guest and hotel staff. Kiosks used for check-in, check-out, room service, market pantries and other areas serve the nearly 40 per cent of guests who desire this method of interaction at some point during their stay.

Many face-to-face interactions can be supplemented with kiosks for guests who want immediate service. Hotels who have implemented kiosks are seeing greater accuracy, not to mention convenience. Still, hotels should ensure their kiosks are not only secure, but also attuned to the guest segments they serve - whether the demographic is Baby Boomers or Millennials.

MOBILITY

Hoteliers should be looking for a PMS that allows them flexibility according to guest needs. Hotels that are leveraging mobile bookings are able to extend their reach to more guests via social sites. Hotels that use PMS tablets are operating in more areas on property and decreasing the check-in wait time.

A truly interactive reservations system goes beyond allowing guests the opportunity to make a reservation.

Guests want to select their preferred

Guests want their preferences acknowledged

room and even preferred floor and location on the floor, and they want to make all these selections at the time of booking.

Automated communication via text messages serves to confirm reservations and even notifies the guest once their room is ready. An integrated PMS allows operators to leverage the guest profile data in ways that have only been used in restaurants before.

Hotels are able to satisfy the demands of their eager guests with mobile POS technology, extending service offerings to more guests, whether at a crowded pool, on the links or at the convention hall. This increased attention to guests is already resulting in greater guest satisfaction and an increase in revenue for those properties who have implemented mobile POS.

ANALYTICS

A next-generation PMS provides important data that tells the total guest story. A PMS that automatically deploys guest surveys - triggered by a defined event - allows the hotelier to get to know the guest and to act on their responses in a timely fashion; ultimately encouraging a repeat visit or additional spending.

Every time a guest makes a choice, whether they typically purchase something from the mini-bar, request extra towels or prefer late check-outs, this data is captured.

Leveraging this data via analytics, hotels are ensuring guest rooms are equipped with the special touches that guests will ask for anyway. Data analysis is helping hotels and resorts add a personal touch to the total stay experience.

Every technology touchpoint is an opportunity for success. Hoteliers should look to extend their next-generation PMS with self-service, mobility and analytics technologies to more deeply appreciate guest expectations.

Guests want special treatment and the ability to provide such unique experiences is a strong competitive differentiator. AHCT

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Trisha Littlejohn is the director of property management solutions at Agilysys, a leading technology company providing advanced software and services for property management, point of sale, kiosk, analytics, payment gateway and mobile solutions to the hospitality industry. Littlejohn leads the Implementation and Solutions teams, specialising in property management solutions on multiple platforms, including the company's LMS, Visual One and Guest Stay products. With more than 15 years' hospitality industry experience, ranging from hotel accounting to software implementations, Littlejohn understands the unique needs of Agilysys customers. She is a graduate of University of Las Vegas, Nevada with a degree in Marketing and serves as a volunteer Board Member for the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism with Valley High School located in Las Vegas.

A truly interactive reservations system goes beyond reservations