

THE OVERVIEW

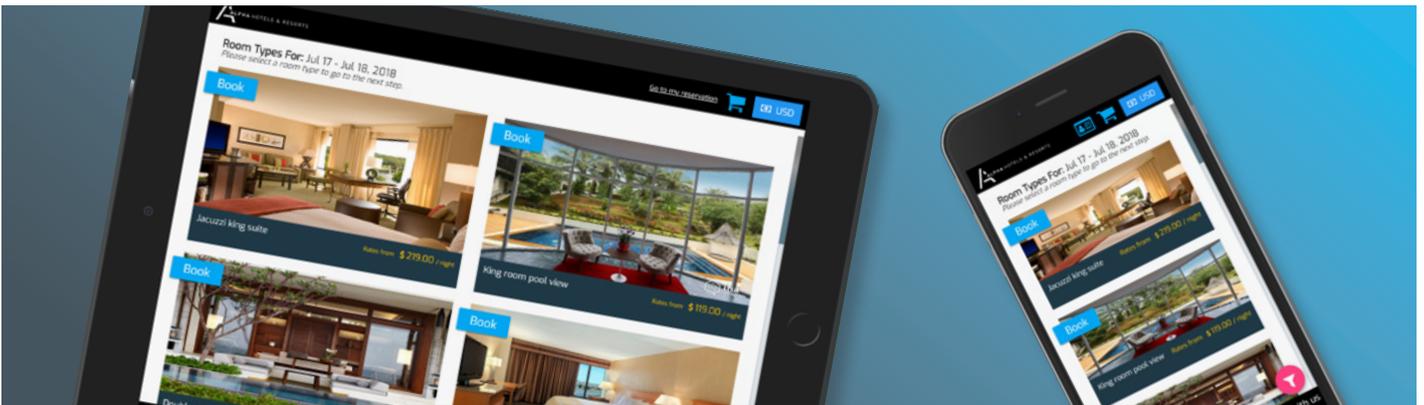
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Leader of the pack - catering to group travel



Ich bin ein Berliner - IHIF
Remembering Paul Dukes

Reducing Costs & Driving Revenue



The Importance of a PMS System by James Slatter, Managing Director, Agilysys EMEA

For many years, hotel Property Management Systems (PMS) tended to be regarded as a front desk support function and little else. Now they're able to contribute to an incredibly broad mix within the day-to-day workings of a hotel. They are considered an integral part of any hotel that has designs on reducing costs and driving revenue while delivering a seamless guest experience.

As guest expectations have evolved, so too have PMS capabilities. Providers have been quick to embrace technological developments that enhance their offerings, and this is something that hoteliers are eager to take advantage of. Technology has progressed to such an extent that PMS systems are now seen as the command centre of hotel and resort operations; pulling together all departments and workflows, from back office functions, to guest room interactions, room cleaning and concierge services.

Today, PMS helps automate daily operations and administrative tasks. With it, guest information and activities are logged, and advanced reporting enables senior staff to oversee daily business requirements. This central viewpoint afforded by a PMS helps improve operational efficiency, thus reducing overall costs.

An essential aspect of the latest in a PMS is that it allows hoteliers to enhance and expand on their amenities and other offerings to more guests without disrupting either staff workflow or the guest experience. This can be applied during booking, at check-in and during the guest's stay. Taking the reservation stage as an example, many systems integrate with booking engines, which gives hotel operators the power to reduce their reliance on OTAs. Looking at some of the very latest in online reservations, hotels are moving toward commission-free alternatives that enable guests to view options and availability before selecting their exact room without having to call the hotel directly. The benefits of which are manifold.

Firstly, it allows the hotel to bypass OTA commissions, as guests booking directly removes any associated fees. Secondly, direct reservations improve overall booking rates - a more than threefold increase in some instances - as prospective guests are more inclined to book right online, instantly. Finally, guest data is added directly to the hotel's PMS system from the online reservations so that when the guest arrives on property, their profile data is already at hand. Indeed, this information can be utilised in advance for any pre-arrival information or for potential marketing opportunities after the guest departs. Not only does it reduce OTA commission fees, it also increases booking rates and drives revenue while adding to an overall seamless guest experience.

By transferring guest data automatically, the PMS can minimise the need for laborious input by hotel staff, which improves staff productivity. This in turn prevents the guest from waiting for the front desk staff and speeds up the arrival and check-in procedure. What's more is that the automated data processing reduces the risk of manual entry errors. This also translates to fewer misspelt surnames negatively impacting a guest's impression of the hotel and increases the likelihood of creating that personal touch.

Personalisation is an ever-increasing expectation from guests and a PMS is a great help in delivering such customised service. The seamless integration of guest information and preference at every point of their stay. From a personal welcome greeting, to recognition of a repeat visit, the opportunity to flag up that a guest is not only remembered but valued is of significant importance and supported by the PMS technology. There's no need to rely on staff to remember all of these things - the system takes care of it.

It's not just for personalisation and data purposes either. The integration capabilities afforded by a PMS means hoteliers can improve their service levels, perhaps with the introduction of mobile check-in and mobile room keys - technologies that speed up the arrival process, with guests no longer having to queue up to be waited on by reception staff. They simply check themselves in, with their details already on their mobile, and a guest room already allocated.

Cloud-based PMS solutions can further aid productivity; another key area for reducing costs. Without the IT hardware and related costs, the cloud enables remote access to the PMS and its database, meaning a hotel owner or GM can manage rates or arrange housekeeping schedules from anywhere on property or off premises. This remote access also allows operators the flexibility of managing reports and maintaining business operations without missing a beat.

The benefits of a PMS system are many - indeed, too many to list here. Hoteliers should be taking full advantage of what their PMS brings to the business and to the guest experience or run the risk of falling behind competitors. Those who embrace a central PMS technology in the ways outlined here will undoubtedly be able to offer seamless guest service while enjoying reduced costs and driving additional revenue opportunities.