



**Hoteliers are increasingly using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool to increase efficiency and enhance customer service.**

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

The hotel business is always developing, and technology plays an important part in keeping it competitive. Information technology has improved the way hospitality organisations handle inventories, bookings, reservations, and customer data.

**IT IMPETUS**

Information technology is crucial to the success of any hospitality business, offering tools that allow hotels, restaurants, and other enterprises to simplify operations and deliver improved customer service. Companies may track client data, manage inventory levels, process payments, and handle bookings by deploying systems such as POS systems, property management systems, and CRM solutions. This helps cut expenses, enhance efficiency, and provide better customer service. Businesses may now go beyond the physical borders of their premises, thanks to advances in information technology. Today, empowered by technology, guests can



Aditya Sanghi, Co-founder & CEO, Hotelogix

compare hotel rates and research the hotel's amenities by looking at guest feedback before making the final bookings. They can visit the hotel website, look for availability as per their itinerary and book their rooms. They can also book their rooms via OTAs and metasearch engines.

"The best part is that it allows guests to make reservations 24/7, and at the same time, hotels don't have to deploy dedicated staff to manage those bookings. Moreover, hotels can also offer mobile booking facilities to their guests, allowing hotel reservations on the go. Under-

standing guests' requirements is critical to offer them suitable services, and a Cloud-based Hotel PMS plays a significant role in this. It stores all guest data, their past visits, room, food and beverage preferences, special requests, and more. With such a goldmine of data, hotels can offer personalized services to their guests before they ask for it," says Aditya Sanghi, Co-founder & CEO, Hotelogix.

**CUSTOMER CUES**

As technology in the hospitality sector has advanced, so have client expectations. It is no longer sufficient to reward club members and returning visitors with loyalty points or special facilities. People in-



Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels and Resorts



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creasingly anticipate both personalised and customised considerations during their stay. According to recent research, 78% of travellers are more likely to book with hotels that provide personalised experiences, to support an individualised stay.

Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels and Resorts, says, "Hotels may give optimised, personalised experiences to guests through a variety of means, in addition to offering customised packages or special room prices depending on visitor demands or requested amenities. Some of the most effective ways to promote personalized and customized services to guests include thanking them for their loyalty and acknowledging their position as a returning visitor by leaving a personalised message or a welcome goodie in their room, assigning a concierge to assist with any needs they may have throughout their stay and offering personalised treatment choices, such as room service dishes customised to dietary restrictions or likes."

**STREAMLINING PROCESSES**

The advancement of information technology has had a significant influence on the hotel business.



Guests can book their rooms via OTAs and metasearch engines

Restaurants have developed automatic payment systems, allowing consumers to check out swiftly and pay without interacting with a human. Hotels have implemented digital booking services that enable visitors to simply book rooms online in a safe atmosphere. Hotel employees may now utilise mobile devices to monitor room occupancy rates, modify pricing, and give real-time help to visitors. A Hotel PMS and Channel Manager solution can ensure the real-time update of rooms and rates across OTAs and other online sales channels. This eliminates overbookings and helps hotels minimize the loss of business opportunities. Most importantly, it improves the hotel's online visibility and thus generates more sales.

"Technology streamlines everything at a hotel across departments. The front office staff can see room availability and allot/cancel/ upgrade rooms based on guest requests in just a few clicks. This automation speeds up the check-in and check-out process, thus reducing errors and guest wait time. A hotel group can manage reservations across all its member properties with a Central Reservation Office (CRO) tool. It can keep track of availability across the group and enables the hotel's central office staff to process the booking as per the guest's requirement. It also empowers the hotel to manage bookings from travel agents and corporate clients," explains Sanghi.

**DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYTICS**

Data must be organised, filtered, and cleaned before it can be used. Thorough data analysis may give hotels critical business insight that can assist them in making better decisions for their resort. Organisations may use data analytics to acquire customer



Umesh Ramesh Nehul, Assistant Manager, IT, Fort Jadhavgad Pune



Manoj Prajapati, IT Executive, Hotel Ambassador, Mumbai



Hotels are now investing in robust cybersecurity measures which ensure that the sensitive information of their guests remains protected.

experience data from sources such as social media, travel websites, surveys, and even handwritten notes. "When this data is compared across brands and geographic regions, it gives insights into areas of success and development, allowing

businesses to fulfil expectations and create consistent experiences. Signum Hotels & Resorts, for example, employs data analytics to personalise visitor experiences, with its loyalty programme serving as a primary source of data. They utilise this information to better understand their visitors' tastes and conduct, and to provide personalised suggestions and promotions," says Sharma.

Umesh Ramesh Nehul, Assistant Manager, IT, Fort Jadhavgad Pune, adds, "Information technology facilitates effective communication, streamlines tasks, automates manual processes, and provides better access to information. It contributes to improved accuracy in data management and analytics through enhanced organizational consistency, increased productivity, and better collaboration and communication. By leveraging ICT tools, businesses can make more accurate data-driven decisions and forecasts, leading to improved operations and customer service.

**COMMUNICATION MATTERS**

Data consolidation helps organisations in the hotel sector to handle data more strategically and democratise the analytics process as they acquire, combine, and convert enormous data sets. According to a Hospitality Technology survey, 86% of hotels feel data analytics may help them raise revenue and 77% believe it can help them enhance visitor happiness.

"Technology has empowered customers with the freedom to choose how they interact with businesses at various touchpoints, leaving a positive impact on their satisfaction as they appreciate the flexibility and decision-making power. Digital transformation has further enhanced customer service by leveraging advanced technologies like AI-powered customer service tools and chatbots. This transformation enables businesses to offer 24/7 customer support, faster query resolution, and improved accessibility to cater to customer needs. The integration of digital technology into various business aspects and prioritizing customer-centric approaches has enabled companies to better engage with customers, provide personalized experiences, and drive business growth," says Manoj Prajapati, IT Executive, Hotel

Ambassador, Mumbai. In the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector, Point of Sale (POS) technology is widely used in restaurants, bars, and other establishments. "POS systems and software enable various order-taking methods, including through tablets, mobile devices, and online platforms. This allows guests to place online orders directly for delivery and track their order status until completion. Effective communication between managers and employees enhances overall productivity as managers can understand each employee's strengths and skills, thereby assigning suitable tasks and expediting project completion. POS systems streamline F&B operations and facilitate efficient communication for better customer service and business management," adds Prajapati.

**EYE ON INTEGRATION**

IT solutions also enhance the security of guest data and financial transactions. Hotels that invest in robust cybersecurity measures build trust with their guests, ensuring that sensitive information remains protected.

"With IT-based systems for resource management, hotels can optimize the use of staff, energy, and other resources. For example, smart energy management can help reduce utility costs, while staff management software ensures the right number of employees are scheduled based on occupancy levels. Access to market data and competitor insights empowers hotels to adjust their pricing strategies in real-time, ensuring they remain competitive without compromising revenue potential," says Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel, New Delhi.

By embracing information technology, hotels can optimize their operations, deliver exceptional customer experiences, and adapt to evolving market trends. This not only helps in staying competitive but also positions them as industry leaders in providing top-notch hospitality services.



Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel, New Delhi



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