

TOP 10 TECH TRENDS

What will rule the technology scene of hospitality in 2023?

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From Big Data to Cloud, Artificial Intelligence to Touchless Technology, the hospitality industry is increasingly dependent on technology to deliver a superlative experience to guests. Experts weigh in on what will make waves in 2023.

1. ADVANCED PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)

Today, it is very important to manage working capital and key performance indicators (KPIs) on time.

"New age PMS makes it easy to monitor inventory levels, and manage budgets, debtors and creditor payments, response times to enquiries received and acted upon actively not retrospectively after the guest has checked out and not while the guest stays at



Abhilash K Ramesh, Executive Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group

the property. The automation of such features puts a lot less workload on the current staff and monitoring of such processes has become very simple for management," says Abhilash K Ramesh, Executive Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group.

2. INCREASING USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way hospitality companies operate by expanding the op-



New age PMS makes it easy to monitor inventory levels, manage budgets, creditor payments & response times to enquiries received right after the guest has checked out and not while the guest stays at the property.

tions for delivering seamless hotel experiences while also driving growth and optimizing revenue.

Vibhas Prasad, Director, Leisure Hotels Group, says, "AI has the potential to improve the customer experience and boost guest satisfaction. Interpreting important data more accurately and efficiently and automating everyday tasks helps the hotel team to focus on giving the best service possible, and improving the overall guest experience. It can reduce human intervention in everyday tasks that go into running a hotel, which then will lead to less human error, save money, and allow the delivery of top-notch services. AI can improve in upselling and cross-selling by improving visitor profiles based on their history, value, preferences, and satisfaction. It can also assist in providing multilingual services to guests from different nations who speak a range of languages. The usage of chatbot messaging services is the most basic way in which AI has improved the guest experience. By having a chatbot answer inquiries and solve problems that guests may have at any time of day, businesses can save time."



Vibhas Prasad, Director, Leisure Hotels Group

crafted menus, discounts, new items, and other promotions. The benefits of this technology will be keeping already confirmed guests engaged without being intrusive. The technology is already available and will not require a higher cost of development. In future, AI can be infused to mind guest preferences from past visits and push personalised and contextual notifications."

3. CUSTOMISED SOLUTIONS FOR PUSHING POINT OF SALES

Food & Beverage is a dynamic industry and post COVID, technology has played an important role in pushing the sales for hotels, Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) and standalone restaurants.

Sandeep Maitraya, Co-Founder & Director, Crimson Hotels, says, "This is the time hotels and restaurants should think of innovative ways to increase the sales without interfering in the dining experience of the guests. When we say 'Customised solutions for pushing point of sales', it means creating a network within the dining space using the Push Notification Technology to suggest menus, promotions and discounts to the diners. The technology can be used to ask the guest to connect to a local hotspot, scan the QR Code and check-in using social media. Upon receiving the information on the server, the restaurant software can use the push technology (Wi-Fi/ Bluetooth/ NFC/ RF) to send the specially



Sandeep Maitraya, Co Founder & Director, Crimson Hotels

4. AUTOMATION WITH HELP OF ROBOTS IN AREAS OF HOUSEKEEPING

The robotics market in India is growing rapidly and going by the trend in the hotel industry, housekeeping can be the most fruitful department with the usage of robots.

Guests at hotels expect a hospitable and hygienic ambience during their travels. Jaidev Dutta, General Manager, Holiday Inn Bengaluru Racecourse, says, "Post pandemic, all the hotels started taking extensive measures to ensure guests' sanitary needs. We need to understand that not only guests are at risk but also the many hotel personnel who perform the cleaning and room preparations. The robots are designed to do supplemental housekeeping work alongside a human housekeeper allowing our housekeepers to focus on



Jaidev Dutta, General Manager, Holiday Inn Bengaluru Racecourse

better and innovative aspects of their jobs. With our IHG Clean Promise, guests are reassured that good isn't good enough. We are committed to high levels of cleanliness. A new wave of robotic automation has been introduced in the hospitality industry and I hope India will and shall quickly gain the momentum and have an extensive usage in our industry."

5 TECHNOLOGY TO ENABLE AND FURTHER TRAINING AND HR

The entire scope of the Human Resources department is one area that can benefit immensely from the use of technology.

"We can simplify the day-to-day interactions with our team members, make them seamless and personalised to an individual's needs. The journey starts when we are evaluating a candidate for a role; the entire process of the evaluation, assessments and pre-joining formalities can be made digital, thereby reducing paper and time spent on collating responses. Once the employee has joined, technology plays an even greater role. Payroll, leave approvals, training, development plans, on-the-job feedback can all be addressed using technology. This is true not just for on premise employees but also those working remotely in off-site locations, regional offices, other cities, or even other countries. By doing this, we can significantly reduce the time spent and the need to



➤ Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts



➤ Sonica Malhotra, Joint Managing Director, MBD Group

physically travel for training and assessment. Career development is another area where there is huge potential to leverage technology. I see individual development plans being prepared, discussed, reviewed, and approved seamlessly," says Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts.

6 PICTORIAL DIGITAL MENUS

A menu serves as a bridge between a dining outlet and its patrons and it may be greatly enhanced by including appetizing visuals. The pandemic proved and forced hoteliers to think out-of-the-box and align with technological advancements, which was the need of the hour while they continue to innovate and differentiate their services in the competitive market.

"The digital menus, which serve as a model for experiential marketing, is



➤ Employing digital menus has the advantages of eliminating printing expenses, allowing for remote pricing updates, and assisting in rapid situational adaptations.

one of these advances. Many online food aggregators and distributors have also adapted to a similar technology to induce a visual appeal to the food menus in the offering. We believe this trend will continue in 2023 as it has become an inherent need for the customer's decision-making. Customers today prefer to have tangible evidence of their delight before parting their payment. Therefore, including food images for each item on the menu aids customers in making an efficient and well-informed decision. They are certain of their order and eagerly anticipate savouring the same as the visual references inspire much more interest and participation than the ingredients' list does. Digital photographic menus are here to stay and shall evolve to provide for a video along with still photography of the menu at hand," says Sonica Malhotra, Joint Managing Director, MBD Group.

Additionally, employing digital menus has the advantages of eliminating printing expenses, allowing for remote pricing updates, and assisting in rapid situational adaptations.

7 CHATBOT

The hotel's chatbot is a game-changer for guests looking for an easy and convenient way to plan their stay. With its interactive interface, guests can quickly and easily access food recommendations, as well as suggestions for activities and services.

"This chatbot is an example of the rising trend of chatbots in the hotel industry, which are becoming increasingly popular as a way for hotels to enhance the guest experience. The ease of use of the chatbot makes it a valuable resource for guests looking for a stress-free and seamless stay. Whether you're looking for a quick bite or a romantic dinner, the chatbot has got you covered," says Lakshmi Sridhar, Head of Operations, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach & The Bheemili Resorts Varun Beach.

8 BIG DATA

Big Data is a trend that is becoming increasingly important in the hospitality sector. It involves the collection and analysis of large amounts of data from various sources, such as past occupancy rates, current bookings, and customer feedback.

"This data can be used for a variety of purposes, such as revenue management, targeted marketing, improving the customer experience, and identifying new services to introduce. One of the key benefits of big data is that it allows hotel owners to anticipate levels of demand more accurately for hotel rooms, which can help them to optimise room rates and maximize revenue and profit. It also allows them to target specific demographics more effectively through online advertising. Additionally, big data can be used to understand customer opinions and to identify areas for improvement in terms of customer service. Furthermore, big data can be used to gain a clearer understanding of competitors and to identify their strengths and weaknesses," says Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & MD, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts.

9 DIGITAL KEYS

As the first hotel brand to partner with Apple to offer room keys in Apple Wallet on your iPhone and Apple Watch, this new feature complements the Hyatt digital check-in experience.

"Room key in Apple Wallet builds on the digital key experience to provide a faster, more efficient check-in, eliminating the need for a guest to unlock their device to use their digital key and gain



➤ Lakshmi Sridhar, Head of Operations, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach



➤ Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & MD, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts



➤ Mahesh Pillai, Information System Manager, Grand Hyatt Mumbai



➤ Chander K. Baljee, Chairman & Managing Director, Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels

access to their room. What once was a six-step process to use a digital key, happens faster than checking a text. This wallet has an express mode that allows a guest to use their phone as a key from a locked screen. It also has a power save option, which allows guests to use their device, even after powering down the device for five hours. The use of Near Field Communication (NFC) eliminates the need for Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or cellular signal to use a digital key. Your one key per property in Apple Wallet will work on multiple rooms you have reserved, and over multiple stays you have booked," says Mahesh Pillai, Information System Manager, Grand Hyatt Mumbai.

10 CLOUD STORAGE

Cloud computing in the hospitality industry is transforming the customer experience at all levels of the value chain. From a welcoming, no-surprises arrival to a speedy and efficient departure, hotel analytics can create a 'frictionless experience' for visitors and deliver greater insights to hospitality organizations.

Chander K Baljee, Chairman & Managing Director, Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels, says, "The pandemic taught every industry that reliability, adoption and deployment of advancing technologies are the key to survival. Adopting Cloud technology is not a new concept but for hospitality, it is essential. The hospitality industry deals with huge data thus adopting the right Cloud storage application and choosing the right cloud-based platform can leverage hoteliers and their staff critical insights to work on pertaining to guests' right from check-in until check-out. Furthermore, every industry is operating in a new world order and hospitality is no different. Today, empowered guests make individualized demands and expect quick fulfilment. There is a premium placed on improved productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. Adopting the right Cloud storage technology lowers costs by allowing hotels to centralize the hardware and software for hotels." ■