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INNOVATIONS IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

Today, hotels are the most significant and widely recognized form of overnight accommodation for tourists. They also form one of the key elements of most package holidays.

The hotel product is made up of five characteristics:

- location
- mix of facilities (which will include bedrooms, restaurants, other public rooms, functions rooms and leisure facilities)
- image
- services it provides (including such indefinable features as the level of formality, personal attention, speed and efficiency of its staff)
- price it charges.

So, a hotel is a complex operation. It includes places for people to sleep, to eat, to shop; there are often recreational facilities and areas for public gatherings. Because of its complexity, it is not possible to speak of a single career in the hotel industry, there is instead a wide variety of different careers [1].

Regardless of the numbers of workers, hotel employment itself falls into two broad categories that are traditionally referred to as front of the house and back of the house. Jobs in the front of the house include management, the various jobs at the check-in desk (the front desk), accounting, sales and promotion, baggage handling, car attendants and special services. Jobs in the back of the house include food and beverage preparation and service, housekeeping, laundry and valet service, engineering, and maintenance. Some of the employees in this group – restaurant or room-service waiters and chambermaids, for example – have frequent, although rather limited, contact with guests [1].

There are 10 Tech-Savvy Hotel Innovations [4]:

1. CHECK IN EASIER

In addition to the traditional front desk experience, the Hyatt Regency Chicago offers check-in via a lobby ambassador holding a special iPad. Guests can also use a nearby kiosk to select a room, inquire about an upgrade, and obtain an RFID key.

What to do if you're ready, but your room isn't? ARIA Las Vegas will take your cell number, give you your key, and text you the room number when it's all set. That way you're not tied down to waiting around and can head right to it without having to wait in another line.

2. CONNECT AND CHARGE YOUR GADGETS

Building on the work of whatever genius thought to place an electrical outlet in the base of a lamp, all ARIA rooms feature a desk-side panel with a multitude of multimedia connections. It starts with two adapter-friendly

electrical outlets plus two USB ports, to flexibly power your devices. Then you've got HDMI, VGA, RCA, and S-Video ports, so you can view images from a computer, camcorder, or any other video device through your room's TV. Likewise, you can pipe audio in through a standard 3.5 mm jack or a docked iPod/iPhone connection.

3. REMOTELY CONTROL EVERYTHING IN YOUR ROOM

One of the best features of the LodgeNet service (that powers the TV menu in your room) is that you can use its free companion app (available for both Android and iOS). With it loaded, you can use your own phone or tablet to power the TV on/off, change the channel and control in-room movies.

4. BE YOUR OWN CONCIERGE

The new Radisson iConcierge app allows guests to access a wide variety of services including the ability to order room service, book a spa appointment, set a wake-up call, get your luggage picked up, and grab a taxi.

Boston's Revere Hotel features a couple of iPads preloaded with the iKnow Concierge. In six different languages, the tablets help guests to access a wide variety of services, from finding a tailor to snagging tickets at a concert. Whether you're into finding food, spa, or sports, these devices can help you self-serve.

5. HAVE PEACE OF MIND

The Hyatt Regency Chicago is blanketed with a network of high-megapixel cameras. The security team can monitor all the property's public areas either from their base station or their mobile devices.

Atlanta's Ellis Hotel is a posh haven for female travelers, offering a women-only floor with keyed access. Just hook it up to your laptop, follow the on-screen instructions, and you're virtually face-to-face with your loved ones.

6. STAY ONLINE EVERYWHERE ON PROPERTY

Long gone are the days of «free Wi-Fi» meaning single-bar coverage only on that one special cushion of the couch in the lobby. The Hyatt Regency Chicago has planted over 800 wireless access points around the hotel.

7. FIND YOUR WAY

In fact, Bellagio has so many Internet hotspots, their app (about to upgrade to version two, with all sorts of new bells and whistles) can triangulate your exact indoor location and give you step-by-step directions to whatever fun, trendy hotspots you choose to visit within and around the upscale casino/resort.

Over 100 interactive plasma displays make navigating the spacious Hyatt Regency Chicago easy. And additional touchscreens with Google Maps allows guests to precisely locate meeting spaces and also find their way around the city.

Eight of Hotel Indigo's locations around the US have been testing Interactive Media Displays, with nearly a quarter million guest interactions to date. More than 7,000 photos have been taken at the displays, which can upload pics right to Facebook.

8. BORROW SPARE GADGETS

If you forget toiletries, many hotels offer a kit. But what about if you

leave a gadget at home? The «Business Bar» at Event in New York can help pick up the tech slack. Grab, laptop, e-reader, video camera, headphones, other digital lifesavers for business or leisure. Honestly, with all that goodness, you can afford to pack less or at least not stress about having every single device on hand.

9. DO YOUR BUSINESS IN STYLE

A perfect blend of fun and practical, the uber-luxurious Aria Sky Suites feature Washlets, fancy toilets with heated temperature-control seats that automatically raise as you approach; gentle aerated warm water bidet with warm air dryer; and automatic self-cleansing dual-action spray and air deodorizer. It's just one amongst many technological advances in the suites, but definitely a crowd pleaser.

10. TAKE OFF

The ARIA also pulls a direct feed from nearby McCarran International Airport and displays it right on the TV in your room. So you can confirm the timing of your flight. Especially helpful, so you don't preemptively leave the comforts of your room before you have to.

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