

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TRENDS: TECHNOLOGY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

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Technology is advancing at an alarming rate, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry. Customer-facing interactions are quickly being replaced with self-scan, self-check transactions, which have enabled the customer to become more self-sufficient. A study at the University of Oxford has even revealed that by the year 2033, as many as 47% of modern day job roles could be claimed by automation.

Geo-technology is what is at use when Snapchat provides you with a filter based on your location, or any iPhone tells you your current location. GPS is not new on the tech scene, but when applied to marketing strategy, geo-tech can help get messages to the people close by and therefore are more likely to take action. Even online, adverts using 'geo' technology drive significantly more traffic back to their websites. This is because the marketing is relevant to the individual.

Similarly, Beacons are masts – often using Bluetooth – engineered to communicate with IOS and Android operating systems to pass messages between a company and their consumers. A bit like a metal detector, when you are within distance of an active beacon, they can interact with smart devices and even send push notifications.

Since 94% of retail spending is still done in store, this geo-technology provides the perfect opportunity to secure prospective sales. For hotels, bars and restaurants, it provides the potential to reach out to guests during happy hour when they are near the bar, to link that guest to a menu PDF if near to the dining area or even to greet guests as they step on site.

Virtual reality is another way of improving user experience that is already finding its way into the entertainment and hospitality industries. We are seeing a rise in three-dimensional tours using VR. Large venues no longer need to print maps or provide concierges – they can instead give fully immersive tours using virtual reality.

The Marriott Hotels are in fact in the early stages of testing a new amenity known as 'VRoom Service'. This allows guests to order VR headsets to their room and enjoy a selection of especially loaded virtual reality experiences for a spot of travel inspiration.

Voice activation is also coming along in leaps and bounds with the introduction of Apple's Siri, Amazon's Echo and Microsoft's Cortana. Voice controlled software is in fact now reaching a level of comprehension as high as 95%. We might perhaps see restaurants install speech recognition at their tables, meaning you can place your order from your seat. The potential and scope are quite remarkable, but presumably, only the tip of the iceberg.

Creativity in social media has caused lots of fans, likes and followers but quantitative success does not always transfer to tangible ROI. Data and analytics must be mined to measure successes and look for new ways to improve our guest experience or market toward a specific demographic.

Over the past year, social media has gone one-step further with live video streaming that enables businesses to see how effective their marketing is in real time. Using the

engagement rates from live video on social media, smart hospitality companies will prosper from the ability to alpha and beta test new products, lines and events.

To keep up with these trends in hospitality technology, hospitality managers also need to be “upgraded” from time to time to keep their skills current and relevant in the industry. In addition, what better way to develop skills for the digital age than by taking online courses? Online education allows rising professionals in the world of hospitality to take their career to the next level – without interrupting its trajectory.

Different Institutions of Higher Education offers online executive education programs, including online MBA in hospitality management. These programs allow professionals to develop targeted skill sets in hospitality marketing, finance, and leadership with a curriculum that blends applied research and project work in a virtual classroom that allows students to share ideas and best practices with other experienced hospitality professionals working with the latest industry trends worldwide.

Conclusion. Consequently, the use of modern information and communication technologies is extremely important in the hospitality industry, as it improves efficiency in all areas of activity. Using the most advanced devices and applications will increase revenue and competitiveness. Therefore, the introduction of new technologies is an integral part in this field.

References

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