

What are the best examples of innovations in the hospitality business?

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Introduction. In the heavily competitive hospitality industry, it is absolutely necessary to constantly innovate in order to stay ahead of the competition and keep customers coming back. Guests quickly learn to expect what was once novel, and because of this there must be a never ending search for the next new idea in service innovation.

Materials and methods. The first way hospitality entities have been exceeding their guest's expectations is through social media interaction. Firms are now able to interact directly with guests who mention them in tweets, or post on their Facebook pages, allowing them to answer questions and respond to and manage complaints. One prime example of a company who has utilized social media well is Hyatt Hotels who launched its Twitter Concierge service in 2009. This service answers specific customer questions such as helping customers find nearby attractions, or allowing them to make dinner reservations. In a poll conducted by Forrester Consulting, 68% of guests said when comparing two properties online, the presence of management responses to reviews would sway them in that properties favor. By being active on social media and involving themselves in genuine interaction with customers, companies are able to keep their guests happy and build loyalty.

Results. Another way in which companies are amazing their customers is through personalized service. With the accessibility of personal information now available through social media and loyalty programs, hotels are able to personalize the experience of their customers when they arrive. The interpretation of this personalization varies and ranges from having the guest's favorite snack waiting for them, to providing monogrammed pillowcases for guests who visit frequently. Personalizing the experience of the guest allows hotels to make the customer feel at home, and keep them coming back. The Waldorf Astoria Hotels have led the industry in personalized service through their personal concierge service that begins weeks before you check-in.

While there has been much innovation on the front end side of the hospitality industry, a lot has changed as well behind the scenes. Cloud Computing has revolutionized the way hotels are able to operate, and allowed greater Mobility for employees to interact with guests.

Here are a few ways Cloud Computing is benefiting Hotels:

Saves Money - No longer need for investing in, and building servers.

Web Services - Managers are able to log into their management system from anywhere in the world.

Flexibility - With cloud computing, the hotel staff can access information on demand at any time, allowing them to greet customers in a more personal manner, getting rid of the traditional front desk experience. Hyatt Hotels, has implemented a service based with the iPad which allows associates to greet guests as soon as they enter the lobby, or even upon arrival at the airport, getting rid of unnecessary check-in lines. Hyatt reported a 20% increase in guest satisfaction surveys from those customers who interacted with iPad devices.

Conclusion. By offering better service on the front end, and increasing efficiency on the back end, hotels will stay ahead of the competition and create the best experience possible for their guests.