

HY3824

Technology Edition
Entering The
Everything-Data Decade



The Hotel Yearbook
Foresight and innovation in the global hotel industry



The HOTEL Yearbook Technology 2024 delves into the transformative power of data in the hospitality industry, exploring how the “everything-data decade” is reshaping the landscape. This year’s edition emphasizes the surge of data-focused innovations and products with open architectures for seamless data exchange and micro-applications embedded in diverse tech stacks. As data, often dubbed “the new oil”, becomes pivotal for hotels to refine brand identities and the struggle to offer hyper-personalized services, it also plays a critical role in managing labor and energy resources efficiently. The publication provides essential insights and recommendations into harnessing data for superior service delivery, agile resource optimization, robust data security, and crafting extraordinary guest experiences.

Colophon

The Hotel Yearbook
TECHNOLOGY EDITION 2024
www.hotelyearbook.com
© The HOTEL Yearbook

Guest Editor
Terence Ronson
terence@pertlink.net
www.pertlink.net

Publisher
Hospitality Net
Maastricht, The Netherlands
www.hospitalitynet.org

Orders
For information on ordering this
publication online,
visit: buy.hotelyearbook.com

For companies and educational
institutions, inexpensive multi-
user licenses are available to allow
everyone in your organization to
receive a personal copy of this
publication.

For more information please contact :
info@hotelyearbook.com.

Reproduction
Reproduction of excerpts from this
publication is permitted under the
condition that both the author's
name and the title of this publication
are cited.

The views and opinions expressed
in this publication are those of
the individual authors and not
necessarily those of the publisher or
publisher partners.

Introduction

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2024 Technology Edition of The HOTEL Yearbook (HYB), heralding the dawn of the Everything-Data Decade in the hospitality industry. This era promises transformative technological advancements that will reshape how hoteliers operate today and in the future.

At the heart of the data & AI revolution are data-centric innovations and open architectures, enabling seamless data exchange across various technology platforms. Effective data management is now essential for every aspect of the hotel business. No hotelier can escape the data revolution. Resistance is futile - but highly inefficient.

This upcoming decade presents significant challenges and opportunities for suppliers of hotel IT solutions. The challenge lies in developing and integrating sophisticated AI-driven systems that are secure, scalable, and easy to implement. By providing innovative solutions that enhance operational efficiency, enrich guest experiences, and enable data-driven decision-making, suppliers can establish themselves as indispensable partners in the hospitality industry's transformation.

These are thrilling times, and the 2024 HYB captures this dynamic landscape with topics ranging from IT investment and data management to revenue generation, hotel operations, security, and property management systems. Contributions from diverse thought leaders, practitioners, and academics offer valuable, actionable insights. Our popular DOs and DON'Ts sections provide practical guides and training aids on numerous topics, enhancing the utility of this edition.

On a personal note, as we embark on this exciting journey into the Everything-Data Decade, let's remember that at the core of all these advancements lies our commitment to creating unforgettable experiences for our guests. Here's to a future where technology and hospitality walk hand in hand, elevating the industry to new heights.































Welcome to the Everything-Data Decade!



Terence Ronson
2024 Guest Editor



Henri Roelings
HYB Publisher

	Floor Bleeker Chief Technology Officer, Accor	A New Age of Hospitality- Tech:Investment Booms and Maturing Technologies	Investment	7		Matt Schwartz Chief Technology Officer Sage Hospitality Group	Pillars of Continuity: A CTO's Strategy for Navigating Tech Trends in Hospitality IT	Operations	72
	Henri Roelings Founder & CEO, Hospitality Net	Survey Reveals Surge in Hotel Tech Investments Activity geared around Data-Driven Solutions	Investment	10		Adam Mogelonsky Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.	Reviewing the Welltech Available to Grow Your Brand	Viewpoint	75
	Fabian Bartnick Founder at Infinito	The Future of Revenue Managers in the Age of AI Co-Pilots: Evolution, Revolution or Goodbye Revenue Managers?	Viewpoint	14		Danica Smith Director of Product Engagement & Strategy, Shiji ReviewPro	Do's and Don'ts when Selecting and Managing Online Reputation Solutions	Operations	77
	Frank Wolfe Chief Executive Officer (CEO), HFTP	It's Never Been Better for Investment in the Hotel Technology Industry	Investment	20		Stephan Wiesener Founder , Apaleo	Leading With Generative Ai: From Enablement To Empowerment	Data & AI	80
	Linda Girrbaach Co-Founder & Head of Hospitality Consulting, RobosizeMe	Do's and Don'ts for Successful Process Automation in Hotels	Data & AI	22		Mike Rawson CTO , citizenM			
	Adam Mogelonsky Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.	Near-Term Machine Learning Use Cases for Hospitality	Viewpoint	26		James Bishop VP Ecosystem and Strategic Partnerships at SiteMinder	Why Siloed Hotel Tech Categories Should Be Removed From Our Vocabulary	Revenue + Marketing	82
	Ivo Minjauw Chief Product Officer, Lighthouse	Do's and Don'ts in Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Data & AI	32		Richard Valtr Founder, Mews	Do's and Don'ts of An Open API PM	PMS	87
	Karen Stephens Chief Marketing Officer, Revinatate	Evolving from CRM to CDP: What got us here won't get us there	Data & AI	36		Pedro Torres CEO and Co-Founder, Youverse	eIDAS 2.0: A New Regulation That Will Change Guest Data Privacy And Security	Security	91
	Frank Dierberger CEO, FutureLog	Do's and Don'ts in Hospitality Procurement	Operations	40		Tristan Gadsby Co-Founder and CEO, Alliants	Personal vs <i>Personalization</i> : Why Your Future Starts With Learning From Concierges	Operations	93
	Lennert De Jong President Hospitality, Planet	Do's and Don'ts in Digital Payments	Operations	44		Joe Vargas SVP & General Manager, INFOR	Harnessing Data Lakes to Transform Guest Experiences and Drive Business Growth	Data & AI	96
	David Christiansen Chief Information Officer, VENZA	Do's and Don'ts of Hotel Data Security Awareness Training	Security	48		Terence Ronson Founder and Managing Director, Pertlink	Do's and Don'ts in Aligning Deliverables Versus Guest Expectations	Data & AI	98
	Wolfgang Emperger SVP & GM For Europe, Africa, And UK & Ireland, SHIJ	Do's and Don'ts in Selecting and Implementing an Enterprise PMS	PMS	53		Simone Puerto Founder CEO Futurist	The Rise of the Post-Search Era: How AI is Transforming Digital Interaction	Data & AI	100
	Tina Markowitz VP, Global Strategy, Cendyn	Do's and Don'ts in Digital Marketing	Revenue + Marketing	59		Basak Denizci Guillet Professor, Griffith University	Do's and Don'ts in Revenue Management	Revenue + Marketing	103
	Bill Daviau VP of Strategic Accounts & Partnerships, Lighthouse	Do's and Don'ts in Evaluating an Effective Business Intelligence Solution	Data & AI	64		Ibrahim Mohammed Research Assistant Professor, Hong Kong PolyU			
	Max Starkov Hospitality & Online Travel Tech Consultant	How Data Science Can Transform Conventional Hotel Hierarchies	Viewpoint	68		Holly Groom Head of Product Marketing, Triptease	Do's and Don'ts in Direct Bookings	Revenue + Marketing	106



Floor Bleeker - CTO, Accor

Investment

A New Age of Hospitality-Tech: Investment Booms and Maturing Technologies



Floor Bleeker
CTO Accor

SYNOPSIS

The hospitality industry presents a challenging landscape for technology development and adoption, primarily due to its complex structure and global reach. Despite these difficulties, there is a significant opportunity for transformative investments in innovative solutions that can drive efficiency, sustainability, and personalized guest experiences.

When Edward T. Drumheller was persuaded by the famous Mr Edison to try out electric lighting in his hotel in Sunbury Pennsylvania in 1883, he backed a winning technology. The magic of a winning idea often lies in its simplicity: it addresses a need we were hardly aware of. However, transforming a great, simple idea into a winning innovation is never easy. This journey is particularly challenging in the hospitality industry, where, let's face it, selling new technology is a tough task.

Firstly, the fragmented ownership model, where brands do not own the assets but operate through managed and franchise models, makes large-scale investments cumbersome and slow. Convincing various stakeholders to invest in a vision and comply with ever-changing global

regulatory standards adds another layer of complexity. Additionally, the sales cycle in hospitality is notably intricate due to the diverse ownership structures. For example, selling technology to an Accor hotel in Asia requires approval from multiple layers of the organization, including corporate, regional offices, and the hotel's general manager and owner. This multi-stakeholder environment makes the process time-consuming and complicated.

Above all, historically, investment in technology within the hospitality sector has been minimal, rarely exceeding 2% of revenue. This underinvestment poses significant challenges for technology developers, making it difficult to penetrate the market and achieve substantial margins even when successful. Consequently, while there are promising start-ups, few manage to scale to the enterprise level.

Despite these challenges, the current technological landscape offers an unprecedented opportunity for the hospitality industry to invest and thrive. To survive and grow, the industry needs to reduce operational costs, enhance distribution efficiency, improve revenue management, and personalize guest experiences. According to recent surveys, 71% of customers demand hyper-personalized experiences, particularly targeting premium clientele. Let us not forget that guests are now increasingly seeking sustainable travel options, necessitating adaptation to new sustainability standards.

We are therefore at a tipping point where emerging technologies such as

cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics are maturing and becoming highly applicable to hospitality. These technologies can revolutionize operations, enhance guest experiences, and drive sustainability - paving the way for a transformative era in hospitality.

It is interesting to highlight the noticeable shift in investment models within the industry recently, with brands allocating a higher percentage of their revenue to technology. For instance, 78% of hoteliers plan to increase their technology investments over the next three years, with over 40% of these investments directed towards predictive AI. The movement towards cloud-based systems signifies a shift from individual investments to centralized, scalable solutions, indicating a readiness to embrace innovation and drive change. The industry is hungry to invest, they are looking for innovation.

As a CTO, identifying the hospitality tech winners of the future is a day-to-day concern for me: ensuring Accor remains a leader requires our senior team to be constantly aware of 'what is coming next'. Given the current landscape, two key areas for technology investment stand out: AI and sustainability.

Artificial Intelligence

The potential for big data to deliver a better guest experience has increased exponentially now AI is a day-to-day reality. Hotels, especially those that are part of a global brand like Accor, have amazing opportunities to utilize this data to improve their service offerings.

For premium brands, data and machine learning can enable hotels to anticipate and proactively meet guests' needs, offering highly personalized experiences. Innovations such as tailored loyalty offers and personalized dining recommendations based on guest history are likely to deliver substantial value. Accor's 2022 investment in Dailypoint, which integrates loyalty and booking processes, exemplifies the benefits of leveraging AI for personalization.

For midscale and eco-brands, the focus should be on seamless service through mobile apps, self-check-in, and in-room automation. These technologies improve guest convenience and optimize daily operations. Accor's 2023 partnership with start-up Alltheway, offering online baggage collection and delivery services, highlights the industry's move towards streamlined operations.

The third area of possible interest to investors is automation: automation both of physical tasks and administrative processes through Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and AI can be transformative. These technologies can relieve general managers of cost-optimization pressures and improve overall operational efficiency. For example, chatbots can provide 24/7 service without constant staffing, and robotic room-service agents are already part of Accor hotels in Greater China.

Sustainability

This is a critical priority for guests and a potential sensitivity point, as businesses are increasingly assessed on their environmental impact. Technological solutions can drive significant sustainability improvements in hotel operations such as helping hotels cut waste, from energy to food. The AI-based restaurant forecasting tool, Fullsoon, in which Accor invested, helps reduce food waste. Smart thermostats that we have started installing in hotels, respond to a guest's presence in a room and can reduce energy use by up to 40%. Both innovations not only enhance sustainability but also reduce operational expenses, benefiting both hotel owners and managers.

The third area of possible interest to investors is automation: automation both of physical tasks and administrative processes through Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and AI can be transformative. These technologies can relieve general managers of cost-optimization pressures and improve overall operational efficiency. For example, chatbots can provide 24/7 service

without constant staffing, and robotic room-service agents are already part of Accor hotels in Greater China. It's clear that there is no shortage of ideas out there for investors to consider. As ever, the challenge is identifying the winners. A winner must clear the many hurdles we have already identified. *Can you build it? Sell it? Monetise it?*

Our role as hospitality tech leaders is to deliver solutions that power our hotels and ensure they are competitive; I trust the HITEC conference serves as a pivotal platform to drive this technological transformation. By fostering a collaborative ecosystem, we can enhance customer experiences and build a more sustainable technology framework. Funding start-ups and scale-ups is crucial; innovation alone isn't enough—we need global scalability. Fullsoon is a great example. They have been successful in Paris, but how do you make it work worldwide with a global salesforce? According to me, great ideas can transform the industry only with robust investment and strategic scaling efforts. If I had one final piece of advice for investors, it would be to open to those conversations!

Dollar-dropping drones on Wall Street



Floor Bleeker
Chief Technology Officer, Accor



Survey Reveals Surge in Hotel Tech Investments Activity geared around Data-Driven Solutions



Henri Roelings
Founder & CEO, Hospitality Net

The words ‘cautious optimism’ have been a recurrent theme for many other sector outside of hospitality, but within the world of hotels there are especially true as we look ahead to ongoing travel growth amidst a series of red flags indicating an economic slowdown. Our industry appears to be in a state of contradictions that indicate a bullish future but a bumpy road along the way.

Some segments continue to rise in relative contribution; others are flat or slightly shrinking. Major chains continue to launch novel franchising opportunities with mounting tension over owners to fund property improvements, while new upstart brands or small groups likewise expand their footprints. Labor issues are omnipresent as always while inflation still rears its head for select goods. At the very least, all this is never not entertaining to follow!

One consistent area of optimism, though, is within the complex ecosystem of hotel technology where it is widely accepted that further investments by hotel buyers from all sizes and categories will yield positive results over the long run. As measured by guest satisfaction, topline gains, bottom line savings,

improved team productivity, meeting new energy management goals or pointing to a specific line item improvement, the megatrend is that hotels are incentivized to continue adopting better and better tech.

As we proceed into June 2024, a convergence of forces is making this period especially ripe for investment into hotel technology providers as a means of fueling their product development and their ability to help hotels evolve their service offerings. All this is reaching its apogee at the HITEC Technology Investment Conference at the end of the month in Charlotte as an inaugural extension of the aforementioned international hotel technology convention, and this was the impetus for our survey leading up to the event in order to understand where those investments are most needed.

ANOTHER tech tool? Yes and no.

For those who are new to our world of hotel technology, the multitude of overlapping vendors and operational niches may all seem needlessly, and laughably, fragmented when compared to software and platforms servicing other industries. This comparison is critical because hospitality is a unique bird; hotels need technology not just for their teams to use and interpret but for each individual guest to make bookings or special requests.

In other words, hotels aren’t widgets, while each guest is their own veritable Ship of Theseus (if you understand the philosophical reference!) in terms of their evolving demands across time and space. This difficulty in achieving operational excellence has always been reflected by the inborn entanglement of various software pieces that’s jargoned as the ‘tech stack’. But that fragmentation is slowly giving way and it’s important for all parties – venture partners, vendors and hospitality buyers – to consider the various underlying forces as context for a survey of current investment sentiment.

1 Cloud-Based Everything:

As more brands adopt a mindset of cloud-native tech architecture and more universal standards for interfacing, it’s easier to make the case to recruit nonlocal vendors who may have a superior product, enabling rapid scalability while often also lowering development or interface costs.

3 All-In-One Systems:

Optimizing between best-in-breed and unified dashboards, hotels are now often choosing the latter as they recognize that too many screens can negatively impact the team’s usage or morale, thereby compelling vendors to ‘build or buy’ in order to check all the boxes for their product feature set on the march to having a grail of a ‘single source of truth’.

5 Development Democratization:

One of the other profound ways that GenAI is lowering costs is by helping programmers code faster, allowing smaller players with limited budget and a sound business model to more quickly build a minimum viable product and accompanying features in order to get hoteliers interested.

2 Remote Work:

One of the traditional, and still widely applicable, reasons for preferring local vendors is customer service, where the acceptable of remote teams now further enables vendors to rapidly develop a ‘beachhead’ in a given territory by not requiring a physical office.

4 Machine Learning (ML):

While GenAI is getting all the attention these days, lest we forget that there are plenty of lucrative possibilities that hotels can benefit from by merging data sets then letting ML find the patterns to predict future outcomes, wherein those vendors with competitive data capture or modeling techniques may be in an excellent position for growth.

6 Hospitality Springboard:

Many tech companies have long understood the trials and tribulations of gaining traction in the hotel vertical, but whereas in the past they may have avoided an entry or acquisition, now the advent of using guest data to inform customer service improvements in other sectors is presenting some highly lucrative crossover applications.

About Our Respondents

To give you a sense of the composition of those who answered our survey, we targeted primarily C-level executives, with a total of 90 participating tech suppliers. Over half (57%) were from companies of less than 50 employees, while only a third (33%) of these businesses have less than \$1M USD in annual recurring revenue. Significantly, 70% of respondents cited having active clients outside of hospitality, reaffirming the notion that our vertical is part of a broader commercialization strategy for many companies.

For current and future funding, 70% of respondents said their companies don’t rely on external capital sources, while those who are seeking capital are flexible on

sourcing (all except for crowdfunding). Most agreed (70%) that the current funding climate is challenging, while 37% of respondents affirmed that they are actively investing in other companies or looking for mergers and acquisitions. Of those companies that do invest, over half (55%) thought the current funding climate seemed balanced, nearly a third (30%) thought it’s moderately favorable with opportunities that must be tempered due to prevailing uncertainties, and another third (35%) foresee an increase in valuation levels.



To unpack the opening thought of cautious optimism, the top three most significant challenges cited for today's investment environment were:

1 Technological Disruption:

Keeping pace with rapid technological changes and predicting which innovations will dominate future markets.

2 Economic Uncertainty:

The impact of current economic fluctuations and uncertainty on investment stability and growth prospects.

3 Competition for the Good Deals:

The high level of competition among VCs, PE and other types of investors, driving up prices and makes it harder to find attractive investment opportunities.

Data Access Top Determinant

The top three rationales for investing companies as cited in the survey were:

1 Strategic Expansion:

seeking new markets, product lines or vertical integration opportunities.

2 Innovation and Future Growth:

accessing innovative technologies, products or services for long-term growth.

3 Operational Synergies:

pursuing cost reductions, increased efficiency, or technology acquisition.

Gleaned from survey results and anecdotally from comments, both the willingness to fund and a key influence on valuation is the company category with data-driven products generating the most demand. Only one respondent mentioned in their rationale that they were acquiring a company to onboard its skilled workforce. The segments where interest seems to be emerging around include AI, business intelligence (BI), building management systems (BMS) or infrastructure, customer data platforms (CDP), digital marketing, revenue management (RM) and upselling.

This sentiment about category focus seems to corroborate several of the underlying forces identified in the introduction, whereupon the use of CDPs or robotic processing automation (RPA) and other tools to structure massive data sets around unified guest profiles or total property operations then enables ML to test and refine business models that fuel further expansion within hospitality or propel entries into other service-oriented verticals.

After all, and as touched upon in the opener, hotels represent the pinnacle of personalized service. So, if there's a tool that can help to accurately anticipate needs or interpret sentiment, it will be in high demand for giving subscribed hospitality brands an edge or perhaps sharpening the service delivery for adjacent businesses in retail, foodservice, clubs, cruises, events and so on. For hotel technology investors, think of hospitality as an incubator for customer service tools that can be refurbished then deployed wherever service may influence client retention – financial services, airlines, medical offices, ecommerce, auto sales, telecom, tourism operators, to name a few. It can all start with hotels!

Also central for this discussion is the matter of primary or owned data as it relates to the intellectual property (IP) a vendor may have, as this is instrumental for the training and feedback of proprietary algorithms. With the origination of

data used in the training of large language models (LLMs) coming under increasing scrutiny from governmental authorities, investors must remain cognizant of both how the initial training data was sourced and all consents from a consortium of third parties that are necessary for acquiring then storing all ongoing data collected from guests. As remarked from the survey's comments, if a company's IP is too reliant on one single source such as a real-time data extraction from the PMS, then the risk of getting cutoff may instill serious doubt for investment.

Ending Consternations

Just because the hotel technology supplier space is fragmented and ripe for consolidation doesn't mean that this will happen overnight. One specific bottleneck cited multiple times within the survey was that post-merger amalgamation work takes years to accomplish as vendors must assume the costs that hotel owners, and often operators, aren't willing to front for updating all modules onto a best-of-breed stack. Existing relationships and integrations within each brand's tech stack are also hard to unwind because this must often be tackled as a sequence of one-off projects, impeding scalability of newer tech and aiding in the preservation of the loathsomely long sales cycles for hotel tech.

To finish on a positive note, while many have often besmirched hospitality for being laggards when it comes to prioritizing tech investments, it was remarked that this attitude is changing as the next generation of hotel leaders takes shape – a generational shift as executives who were born into technology take the reins. We're seeing this with the now-commonplace chief innovation officer (CIO) role and in having the head of technology involved in matters of commercial and financial planning. Concurrently, owners have clear historical precedents from the near-past to extrapolate a connection between tech investment and profitability. Altogether, this evolving ecosystem

makes for a highly receptive audience to usher in the next generation of hotel technology.



Henri Roelings
Founder & CEO, Hospitality Net



The Future of Revenue Managers in the Age of AI Co-Pilots: Evolution, Revolution or Goodbye Revenue Managers?

Viewpoint by



Fabian Bartnick
Founder, Infinito

With views by



Vassilis Syropoulos
CEO and Head of Product
JUJO ANALYTICS



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel Tech
Consultant



Oleksii Kapichin
Revenue Management Expert



Thibault Catala
Founder and Managing Director of
Catala Consulting



Harald Bindeus
Commercial Leader | Marketing,
Revenue Management, Sales



James Bishop
Vice President, Ecosystem and
Strategic Partnerships at SiteMinder



Pablo Torres
Director at Teduka



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist



Kelly McGuire
Principal Travel & Hospitality, ZS



**Diego Fernandez
Perez De Ponga**
CEO, Port Hotels (Spain)



Jason G. Bryant
Vice President, Nor1 GTM
Oracle Hospitality



Paul Rantilla
Senior Vice President, CRO Hospitality
Ancillaries, Plusgrade



Klaus Kohlmayr
Chief Evangelist and Development
Officer, IDEaS



Niki Van den Broeck
Product Manager Parity Insight and
Rate Insight, Lighthouse



Fabian Bartnick
Founder at Infinito



Ira Vouk
Hospitality Technology and Revenue
Management consultant

In the rapidly evolving landscape of hospitality revenue management, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged not just as a tool, but as a potential co-pilot. Where it started out as handling complex data analysis, forecasting, and giving recommendations for the decision-making process, it soon moved to automation and finally contextualization.

As AI technology advances, the hospitality industry must consider how to best integrate these tools with human expertise to enhance both operational efficiency and guest satisfaction. To become a collaborator or a displacer.

This shift prompts an essential question: Will AI soon take the steering wheel in revenue management, signaling the end for human revenue managers?



Vassilis Syropoulos
CEO and Head of Product
JUJO ANALYTICS



Thibault Catala
Founder and Managing Director of
Catala Consulting



Pablo Torres
Director at Teduka



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist

It depends. Smaller less complex hotels will be the first ones where there is no need for a revenue manager. Pricing and Inventory Management can be indeed fully automated. The role of a revenue manager already has evolved / needs to evolve to focus more on-demand generation. For medium-sized hotels or small hotel groups, it is about doing more with less. Revenue managers can overlook many more hotels as technology does the heavy load of automating and gathering insights. Larger hotels will still require a strategist to focus on all Revenue and Profit drivers. That is even if technology evolves to automate all revenue-generating areas.

Currently, doing research on the topic and most of the experts I tand/or integrated with other hotel functions such as Commercial).Now, I believe there is stillkled to indeed think that the position of Revenue Manager will disappear in the next 5 years (replaced by AI tools a a human angle needed that AI / GenAI cannot replace, and that the experimentations and communication/ influence elements. So to answer the question straightforward: Is Artificial Intelligence going to replace Revenue Managers? Yes. Is Revenue Management at a tipping point and need to evolve to remain relevant? YES!

The first thing I've done - of course- is ask Chat GPT. AI itself "believes" that it will not fully replace humans as It can not match human insight and intuition or adaptability to crisis scenarios, nor has interpersonal and leadership skills. Besides this humble approach from AI itself, my personal view is that revenue managers, as we know them, will definitely disappear. Why? because with the full implementation of AI, there will be no need to manually extract data from Excel, or read and interpret Power BI graphs. "AI" a revenue manager will have to do, eventually, is decide the strategy, and supervise it's done correctly. This is a change that has been happening for millennia: machines replacing manual work because they are more efficient. The big change happening with computing is that it replaces not manual but mental labor. And there is where the change of paradigm lays: Coping with the fact that an AI can take better decisions, faster, than any human. Embracing it, and being able to make the most out of it. Those who fully comprehend how AI can support their strategic efforts, will be the winners in this scenario.

I would word it differently. Let's ask ourselves what the future of AI revenue managers in the "age of human co-pilots" will look like. IMHO, AI is expected to handle most revenue management tasks in the next few years, with humans contributing their unique "magic touch." Consider the U.S. stock market, where approximately 70% of all trading volume is conducted through algorithmic trading—even amidst the market's vast complexities. By comparison, the hospitality industry presents a much simpler landscape. Currently, the main challenge is that most data are compartmentalized within property management systems. However, this barrier is likely temporary. As soon as AI models become seamlessly integrated into our technological frameworks, the role of revenue managers will evolve predominantly into overseeing these AI systems. Or, to borrow a phrase from Kurt Cobain of Nirvana, we'll soon, whether we like it or not, "serve the servers."





Kelly McGuire
Principal Travel & Hospitality, ZS

The right way to think about AI for the near future now is as a co-pilot, enhancing and enabling humans so they can focus on human-centric tasks, like reasoning, extrapolating, and hypothesizing. I don't see AI replacing a human revenue manager, but I do see it enabling a dramatic change to the tasks the revenue manager must do today, and probably even the job description itself. Remember, AI is largely a black box. Given the volume of data and the complexity of the algorithms, it can be very difficult to understand where recommendations or outputs have come from if you don't have some expertise in the domain. This will increasingly be the role of the revenue manager.



Klaus Kohlmayr
Chief Evangelist and Development Officer, IDEaS

AI systems effortlessly perform tasks associated with human cognitive functions, and rather than reducing jobs, AI applications seek to enhance employment opportunities. The hotel industry is one of the most promising business sectors that can leverage the power of AI. This is due to the ongoing processing of vast amounts of data to better understand the underlying demand patterns. AI is also a growing opportunity to improve business practices and enhance myriad touch points throughout the guest journey. We need to remove the mystery of a technology that has been a part of our daily lives since the evolution of the internet and the smartphone. The development teams at IDEaS created a system that could not only withstand the intricacies of the hospitality business but also deliver statistically proven results. Their mission was clear: to optimize automation with the right type of user interaction, eliminate user error, and create a framework where the RMS can dynamically respond to changing conditions. It's an exciting time to be at the forefront of revenue science, providing our users with more confidence in the system's decisions and more time back in their day while driving a better customer experience in their hotels.



Fabian Bartnick
Founder at Infinito

Every RM will have a companion!!! here is the deal. Staffing is the new luxury. Owners will check: Human or AI? If human they will ask: Which human? A human that can do AI or USES AI to their advantage. But not just any AI. An AI that works for the human, enhancing their own capabilities - ie replacing their weaknesses as strength and supercharging strength. It will be conversational based...this also means, many RMs will not be standing anymore as those that embrace it, will make it in the long run. My advise: You are good at excel, Now get good at AI!



Diego Fernandez Perez De Ponga
CEO, Port Hotels (Spain)

On the other hand, I think revenue managers need to be closer to people, much like the commercial departments are. Let me ask you a question: Is anyone considering replacing sales directors with AI? No, and why not? Because AI cannot replace human-to-human interactions. So, if you want to sleep well, please add a strategic layer to your Revenue Manager role and become more sociable.



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel Tech Consultant

A predictive AI-powered Revenue Management System (RMS) with real-time market, travel demand and comp set analytics, website and digital marketing analytics, and online reputation/consumer sentiment data feeds to optimize performance can achieve near-perfect real-time pricing in response to market dynamics. The question is: will such an AI-powered RMS become a collaborator or a displacer of human revenue managers? Collaborator: Full-service 3-5 star hotels make roughly five million pricing decisions every year (IDEAS), it is not humanly possible for human revenue managers to do their job without the support of an automated RMS system. Due to the complexity of the hotel product and marketplace, an automated RMS cannot handle revenue management without the strategic input by human revenue managers. Displacer: Budget, economy and lower midscale properties can entrust their revenue management to a fully automated AI-powered RMS, fully integrated with the property PMS and CRS, plus use of an outside RM consulting firm to provide the strategy and periodic tactics, corrections and analysis. Now is the time to convince management and ownership that only a cloud AI-powered revenue management system (RMS) can help the property maximize revenues and successfully compete in the super complex post-crisis marketplace.



Harald Bindeus
Commercial Leader | Marketing, Revenue Management, Sales

I do not anticipate the demise of human Revenue strategists soon. The daily activities of a RM may change and many entry-level positions will be eliminated. Even the fastest Formula 1 car needs a driver. The AI will still need human input to configure the system and provide input. The RM is also the person translating the decisions of the RMS for the other stakeholders. AI is not at a point to make decisions based on empathy or feelings. Output is strictly based on logic. Customers of hotels are not other computers, but humans and the emotional connection with customers is still very much relevant in high-end properties. (people will not remember what you said, but how you made them feel) - and humans will have the advantage in this area for a considerable time. After all, that is why Captain Kirk and not Mister Spock was in charge of the Enterprise. With the advances of AI, the RM will be freed from manual aspects of the job and the required skill set will tilt towards more of a technical background with a solid business expertise. The focus will shift towards strategic distribution and the creation of a Commercial Strategy discipline.



Niki Van den Broeck
Product Manager Parity Insight and Rate Insight, Lighthouse

I remember the potential threat posed by Business Intelligence to Revenue Managers was a hot topic at the first industry event I ever attended 6 years ago. Back then Revenue Managers spent a fair share of their time manually compiling data from various sources into a single, giant, Excel sheet that could be analysed for optimisation. As BI solutions became more widespread, some feared that their roles would become redundant. Fast forward to today and it's clear that BI solutions have actually become the Revenue Manager's best friend by automating the mundane, freeing up valuable time for the more strategic work. In the next few years, I expect AI to have a similar impact on revenue management. With the ability to analyse vast amounts of data and identify patterns, AI-powered tools can make accurate predictions about future demand. At Lighthouse, we have introduced "smart summaries," a popular feature that utilizes GenAI. The role of the Revenue Manager is ever evolving, lately I'm starting to see more Commercial Strategists and Total Profit Managers on LinkedIn. With the help of AI applications, "Revenue Managers" will be able to drive success for the hotels they manage in a more efficient and effective manner.





Ira Vouk
Hospitality Technology and Revenue
Management consultant

As you may be aware, AI has been utilized in data analysis for decades. AI algorithms are best used to quickly sort through large amounts of data and draw important conclusions for optimal decision-making but human input and human decision-making are still required. RMSs are inherently using AI since their inception so it's really nothing new for them. And lately, they have been experimenting with the adoption of GenAI for contextualizing. While some RMS vendors are still struggling with adopting LLMs for this purpose, others have made significant progress in that direction. I'm convinced we have witnessed ample evidence of the necessity for collaboration between humans and machines in the area of revenue and profit optimization, and this is unlikely to change anytime soon. AI is not yet powerful enough to completely displace revenue managers.



Oleksii Kapichin
Revenue Management Expert

AI can quickly analyze large amounts of data, generate unbiased decisions and explain them, suggest possible outcomes of different strategies, etc. However, for AI to be of any value, it must have quality historical, forward-looking, and real-time data about specific hotels and markets. Let's face it: currently, hotel data is spread between old and new PMS, RMS, BI systems, Excel spreadsheets, notes from revenue meetings, etc. Let's assume AI has relevant data; revenue managers will still make final decisions because they know what kind of data was fed to AI and how and what to ask. AI needs good data and quality prompts to be useful to revenue managers. Let's also remember that revenue managers build relationships with clients and suppliers, negotiate deals, and handle the human side of the business in a way that AI simply can't. AI is just a tool and should be viewed as such. The future of revenue management involves a combination of AI tools and skilled revenue managers who can use them effectively.



James Bishop
Vice President, Ecosystem and
Strategic Partnerships at SiteMinder

Without question, AI is destined to reshape revenue management. It will empower every revenue manager to make faster, more informed pricing and distribution decisions, uncovering new opportunities in real-time – outside of mere rate changes. For non revenue-experts, it will also contextualise suggestions, removing the need to justify every decision to management. And, of course, it will automate the repetitive and take personalisation to a new level as properties seek to grow guest satisfaction, loyalty and returns. In spite of these advancements, however, accommodation businesses will remain deeply rooted in HI – human intelligence. We're a people-driven industry and SiteMinder research shows that travellers prefer hotel experiences that involve genuine human connection.

While AI can enhance data processing, it lacks the essential human qualities of intuition, ethical judgement, creativity, empathy and deep contextual understanding – the traits of our industry's leaders. Human revenue managers not only need to make data-based decisions, but consider the broader impact of those decisions on their brand – and communicate them, too. Yes, AI will make revenue managers more effective, and make revenue-driving capabilities accessible to all, but as to who will be making tomorrow's final decisions, hoteliers are set to keep their hands placed firmly on the wheel.



Jason G. Bryant
Vice President, Nor1 GTM
Oracle Hospitality

There has been much speculation and concern about whether AI will take away jobs from human employees, including in revenue management. At Oracle Hospitality, we believe AI and other technological tools work best in conjunction with humans. A critical difference between machines and humans is that machines aren't yet particularly good at creating strategies. What machines do well is to create predictions and probabilities. They can enhance our human efforts by doing what the human brain cannot, such as real-time pricing and demand management, but the human component - especially when it comes to setting and executing a revenue strategy - is essential. For instance, AI can provide real-time information and related recommendations using guest data such as previous purchases, room and dining preferences, and personal interests. Staff can then efficiently offer the presented, targeted upsell offers at check-in and provide a more tailored service for guests. While AI has the power to replace tactical pricing and demand management with real-time forecasting and predictions, it can't replace executive functions like execution, measurement, and strategy management. Successful revenue executives will know how to work with and harness AI, and they will be in demand for hospitality companies for some time to come.



Paul Rantilla
Senior Vice President, CRO Hospitality
Ancillaries, Plusgrade

AI is a powerful tool that revenue managers should be harnessing. It will allow them to see patterns and solve for things that may have been hiding in the data. It will also enable them to analyze larger and more complex data sets easily. We think that the gold in revenue management lands in the nexus of a larger view of the traveler, which includes loyalty. In recent years, ancillary revenues and loyalty programs have become a cornerstone of hotel financial health. Rather than making a revenue manager obsolete, AI will make them more valuable and influential, but every instance should be designed with a human at the helm. That's what we do at Plusgrade – we use AI to help us compute better, make better and faster decisions, and weave it through all of our solutions, from room upgrades to early check-ins, stay extensions, and service add-ons. AI can guide revenue managers to make data-fueled decisions at a large scale to drive even more revenue for hotels. By leveraging AI as a co-pilot, revenue managers can elevate their role to become strategic partners in guiding pricing strategies throughout the entire traveler's journey, from planning to rebooking, ensuring a seamless and personalized experience for guests.



Fabian Bartnick
Founder at Infinito



It's Never Been Better for Investment in the Hotel Technology Industry



Frank Wolfe
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), HFTP

Just as the hospitality industry evolves, so too must the format of its conventions, especially one as influential to the hospitality industry as HITEC. This year, the senior team at HFTP has expanded the tradeshow's depth and impact with the inaugural HITEC Technology Investment Conference, taking place immediately after the main event on Thursday, June 27 and Friday, June 29. While it's been in the making for a long time, we couldn't have hoped for a better year to debut this addition.

Why is 2024 particularly ripe for investment in this sector? Needless as it may be to the mention at this point, the pandemic accelerated brands' prioritization of technological adoption, and we are still technically within this event's bullwhip as hotels look to stabilize occupancy forecasts and labor costs while charting a course for the rest of the decade. This alone will mean a receptive audience for new ventures that can help brands take their businesses to the next level. Other concurrent changes have opened the doors to rapid scalability and consolidation, though.

Executive hotel teams and other senior leaders have long been aware of the power of technology

to support the guest experience and the financial engines, but four interrelated bottlenecks that have perennially challenged our IT professionals to deliver on these two central objectives include industry fragmentation, on-premises systems, costly integrations and siloed data. All of which are now much more easily overcome as newer systems and tools are introduced to the market.

Firstly, the shift towards open APIs, the use of CDPs or other connective microservices and even certain types of AI like RPA have together helped hotels conquer the problems of siloed data and expensive interoperability – both in money and in time. It seems like every leading vendor, as well as the smaller scaleups, now offer some version of a unified guest profile, bringing together multiple sources from across the entire customer journey to provide more granular analytics and recommended actions.

This centralization represents a treasure trove of possible ways to enhance service and profitability, especially with prospects of readily-available machine learning tools being able to chew on all those recorded guest interactions to

produce stronger, and eventually predictive, business models. From the perspective of investment, this emancipation from data siloes means that hotel properties can untether themselves from legacy providers in an affordable and reasonably pain-free manner, enabling a significantly faster shift to best-of-breed solutions than ever before.

Likewise, the industry is far past the early adoption phase of migrating to a cloud-native architecture. Sure, there will always be laggards along with notable concerns over data ownership and security, but the demise of on-prem or hosted server technology strategies ushers in a new outlook, or dare I say culture, surrounding vendor selection. Besides the potential for cost reductions, a cloud-centric approach means that it is far easier to swap systems with unencumbered data extraction, giving more power to hoteliers to build the tech stack that fits their specific goals. As before, this progression indicates a major changeup in the vendor landscape, presenting a strong case for investment.

The cloud is also eroding fragmentation by geography. True today as it was two decades ago, quality customer service is a critical operation for any vendor, with the historic need for on-prem systems preventing nonlocal players from feasibly satisfying their clients' needs. This imbued a territory-specific mindset in hotel buyers where, for instance, American companies would be hard-pressed to consider a European provider lest they already have an established domestic subsidiary – and vice versa.

Nowadays, however, the combination of cloud systems and remote or offshore workforces makes it drastically easier to roll out 24-hour support and overcome this legacy issue. And the hotelier mindset is shifting in stride, with brands willing to consider vendors based out of another continent. In the past few months, we've already seen several prominent acquisitions and fundraising rounds to further fuel the global growth of rising stars, and this trend will continue as the industry becomes geography-agnostic.

While AI has been mentioned twice thus far in the vein of democratizing data connections and honing business models, the third major way that it will impact software development is in the programming itself. Whether it's by clever prompting on ChatGPT or using another copiloting tool, developers are now able to code, test and implement new product features faster and cheaper. We are only at the start of the AI revolution, but this trend alone has revealed its transformative power as upstarts can now quickly scale features and compete with the big table names. Of course, such AI-driven alacrity in software development will also inevitably aid in the deployment of next-gen products for hotels in the

areas of web3, sustainable energy management or virtual reality – yet more goodies on the horizon!

Finally, it deserves mention that hotel technologies now have addressable markets beyond only the traditional boundaries of the hospitality industry. Other areas of residential and commercial real estate are recognizing the merits of incorporating hotel-esque services, but the only way the economics will work in this hybrid model is through automation and tech-born productivity gains.

As an example, look no further than offices still struggling in the wake of the remote work and virtual organization trends, where the promise of hospitality service offerings acts as a compelling way to induce new leases. Similarly, for product differentiation and to value-add any recurring fees, condominiums and eldercare accommodations are on the hunt for technologies that can efficiently facilitate extended stay-oriented services in a labor-light manner. Ultimately, addressing these cross-sector use cases presents a lucrative opportunity for vendors and their capital partners by sourcing revenues outside of only the mainstays like hotels, resorts, clubs and restaurants.

Altogether, we are about to embark on the next wave of both innovation and change within the hotel technology landscape. The time is ripe for serious investment as well as deeper collaboration. We're looking forward to seeing you all at this inaugural event and having HITEC continue to serve as a leading platform for innovation within the hospitality industry.



Frank Wolfe
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), HFTP



Do's and Don'ts for Successful Process Automation in Hotels



Linda Girrbach
Co-Founder & Head of Hospitality Consulting, RobosizeMe

Automation in the hospitality industry is rapidly transforming how hotels operate and deliver services. From streamlining mundane tasks to enhancing guest experiences, automation offers significant benefits. However, implementing automation requires careful consideration to

Automation in the hospitality industry is rapidly transforming how hotels operate and deliver services. From streamlining mundane tasks to enhancing guest experiences, automation offers significant benefits. However, implementing automation requires careful consideration to

Getting Started with Process Automation in Hotels

Understanding Process Automation

Process Automation is a technology that uses software bots to emulate human interactions with digital systems to execute business processes. These bots can interact with various applications, including user interfaces (UIs), application programming interfaces (APIs), databases, and flat files like CSV and Excel. Process Automation can handle repetitive and rule-based tasks, such as data entry, report generation, and booking management.

✓ Do's

1 Be Open to Automation & Encourage Your Team to Embrace It

Automation can significantly enhance hotel operations, but its success depends on the willingness of both management and staff to embrace change. Encourage your team to see automation as a tool to simplify their tasks rather than a threat. Providing training and showcasing the benefits can help in gaining their support.

2 Get Started - You'll See, It's Addictive

Starting with small, manageable automation projects can demonstrate immediate benefits and build momentum. Once you see the efficiency and accuracy improvements, you'll likely find additional areas where automation can be applied. Start with simple tasks to build confidence and experience.

3 Start with an "Easy" Process to Get Automated

Begin with a straightforward process to automate, such as sending confirmation emails or updating booking information. This helps your team get accustomed to the new technology without overwhelming them.

4 Analyse and Optimize Current Processes Before Automating Them

Before implementing automation, it's crucial to thoroughly analyse and optimise your existing processes. Automating a flawed process will only replicate its inefficiencies. Use tools like process mapping to identify bottlenecks and streamline workflows first.

✗ Don'ts

1 Don't Think Your Existing Tech Stack Doesn't Allow for Automation

Modern automation solutions are designed to integrate with a wide range of existing technologies. Don't assume that your current systems cannot support automation without exploring available options. Modern automation solutions are designed to integrate with a wide range of technologies, whether a modern web application or a legacy system from the previous century.

2 Don't Be Afraid - You Don't Need to Be a Tech Expert to Get Started

Fear of technology can hinder the adoption of automation. It's important to understand that you don't need to be a tech expert to implement automation. Many solutions are user-friendly and designed for ease of use by non-technical staff.

3 Don't Expect a Messy Process to Improve by Process Automation

Automating a disorganised process will not magically make it efficient. If a process is inherently flawed, automation will only replicate and possibly exacerbate these flaws. It's essential to streamline and optimise processes before applying automation.

4 Don't Fear That Automation Is Replacing You or Your Job

Automation is designed to augment human roles, not replace them. It should be seen as an opportunity to shift focus from routine tasks to more value-added activities. Emphasise to your staff that automation can create career growth and skill development opportunities.

5 Plan Ahead for What Can Be Done with the Freed-Up Time

Automation frees up valuable time for your staff. Plan how this time can be repurposed for more strategic tasks, such as enhancing guest interactions or focusing on upselling opportunities. This shift can lead to higher job satisfaction and better guest experiences.

6 Involve Your Teams in the Use Case Exploration Process

Involving your team in identifying which tasks to automate ensures that the solutions meet their needs and improve their workflows. Their first-hand knowledge of daily operations can provide valuable insights into which processes would benefit most from automation.

7 Identify Mundane, Time-Consuming, and Repetitive Tasks

Focus on automating repetitive and time-consuming tasks, such as data entry, inventory management, and report generation. This can significantly reduce staff workload and minimise human error.

8 Identify Processes That Directly Impact Guest Satisfaction

Automate processes that directly impact guest satisfaction, such as reservations, check-in/check-out, and guest requests. Enhancing these touchpoints can lead to better reviews and higher guest loyalty.

9 Always Have a Contingency Plan

Ensure you have a contingency plan in place. Partner with reliable automation vendors who can provide support when needed and ensure there are team members who know how to perform tasks manually in case of system failures.

5 Don't Automate Tasks That Have Many Exceptions and Variations

Avoid automating tasks that involve numerous exceptions and require frequent human judgment. Such tasks are better handled manually to ensure accuracy and personalised service.

6 Don't Just Look at the Financial ROI - Consider the Bigger Picture

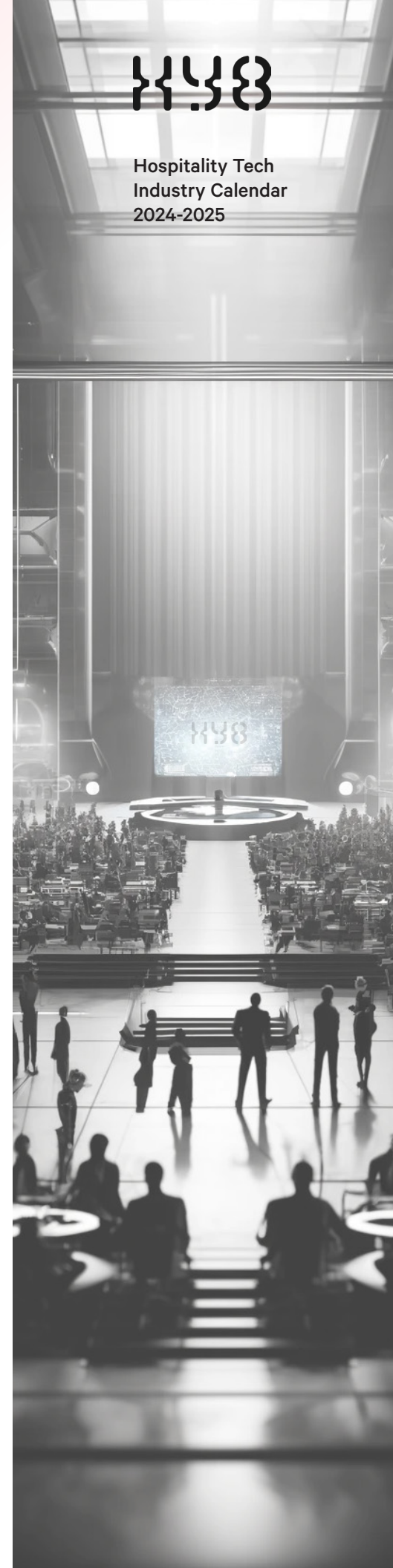
While financial ROI is important, consider other benefits, such as improved employee satisfaction, better guest experiences, and reduced error rates. These factors contribute to long-term success and sustainability.

7 Don't Automate Processes That Will Be Changed Soon

Avoid automating processes that are likely to undergo significant changes, such as those related to system migrations or major operational overhauls. Automating a stable and well-defined process is more beneficial and cost-effective.

8 Don't Confuse Automation with AI

While both automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are transformative technologies, they serve different purposes but can intersect. Automation handles repetitive, rule-based tasks like data entry and report generation, following predefined rules without decision-making. AI involves simulating human intelligence, learning from data, recognising patterns, and making decisions. Sometimes, these technologies overlap, such as when AI enhances automated processes by adding intelligent decision-making capabilities. Understanding the difference and potential intersections ensures proper expectations and application, making automation a more accessible starting point for improving efficiency while gradually incorporating AI's advanced capabilities.



HITEC® 2024 Charlotte
Jun 24 – 27, 2024
Charlotte Convention Center

HSMAI Americas - Commercial
Strategy Conference
Nov 25 – 26, 2024
Charlotte Convention Center

HITEC Technology Investment
Conference
Jun 27 – 28, 2024
Charlotte Convention Center

2024 Hotel Data Conference
Aug 7 – 9, 2024
Grand Hyatt Nashville

Skift Global Forum 2024
Sep 17 – 19, 2024
The Glasshouse, New York

HEDNA Asia Distribution Conference
Sep 23 – 24, 2024
Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok

FHS World 2024
Sep 30 – Oct 2, 2024
Madinat Jumeirah Conference &
Events Centre

HSMAI Asia - Digital Marketing
Conference
Oct 10, 2024
Phuket

Hospitality Tech Expo
Oct 15 - Oct 16, 2024
Excel London

ITB Asia
Oct 23 – 25, 2024
Marina Bay Sands Singapore

The Hospitality Show 2024
Oct 28 – 30, 2024
San Antonio, TX, United States

Cvent CONNECT 2024 - Europe
Nov 5 – 7, 2024
Hilton London Metropole

International Hotel Technology Forum
Asia 2024 (AHTF)
Nov 12 – 13, 2024
Pan Pacific Singapore

Hotel Technology Forum (HTF) 2024
Nov 18 – 20, 2024
Rancho Palos Verdes

The Phocuswright Conference
Nov 19 – 21, 2024
JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge
Resort & Spa

HSMAI Middle East - Commercial
Strategy Conference
Nov 26 – 27, 2024
Conrad Dubai

HSMAI Europe Revenue Optimization
Conference
16 Jan, 2025
London

HEDNA Global Distribution
Conference: North America
Jan 27 – 29, 2025
Catamaran Resort Hotel and Spa

ITB Berlin 2025
Mar 4 – 6, 2025
Messe Berlin

International Hotel Technology Forum
2025 (IHTF)
Mar 18 – 20, 2025
Lisbon

HITEC DUBAI
May 27 - May 29, 2025
Dubai World Trade Center

HITEC® 2025 Indiana
Jun 16 – 19, 2025
Indiana Convention Center



Linda Girrbaach
Co-Founder & Head of Hospitality
Consulting, RobosizeMe



Near-Term Machine Learning Use Cases for Hospitality

Viewpoint by



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.

Using interfaces to access the multitudes of information housed within a hotel's property management system (PMS), technology vendors have on their hands a literal treasure trove of first-party training data for machine learning applications. Any primary data extraction must nevertheless be focused around specific use cases that must be tested and verified before deploying in a live environment. Thus far, we've seen lots of discussion around what's possible in the abstract for machine learning, but outside of perhaps chatbots and algorithmic rate optimization recommendations, many of the purported use cases are not practical for the here and now.

So, if we look specifically at machine learning applications based upon PMS data extraction, what are the top three use cases or tools hoteliers should investigate in 2024, and what tangible value will be created?



Frédéric Brayer
Vice President Accor Tech Sofitel, MGallery and Emblems

Using interfaces to access the multitudes of information housed within a hotel's property management system (PMS), technology vendors have on their hands a literal treasure trove of first-party training data for machine learning applications. Any primary data extraction must nevertheless be focused around specific use cases that must be tested and verified before deploying in a live environment. Thus far, we've seen lots of discussion around what's possible in the abstract for machine learning, but outside of perhaps chatbots and algorithmic rate optimization recommendations, many of the purported use cases are not practical for the here and now. So, if we look specifically at machine-learning applications based upon a PMS data extraction, what top three use-cases or tools should hoteliers investigate in 2024, and what tangible value will be created? There are some uses cases that would be very interesting to deep dive with machine learning applications to unlock valuable insights and improve efficiencies for hoteliers. A first use case should be targeting guest personalization. This use case will benefit mainly upscale and luxury hospitality. Machine learning algorithms could analyze Guest's data such as booking history, billing details, preferences. The outcome and tangible value would be the possibility to define patterns for next reservation for either a specific guests or a specific context. This use case would be more efficient and pertinent when it concerns a large volume of hotels with a unique guest profile management between them. Another use case would bring benefits in helping automatize administrative task like room's status reconciliation. By analyzing historical data and different context of room occupation (business traveler, family stay, etc.), room's status change could be predicted thus helping the housekeeping team define their priority list for cleaning. Last but not least, analyzing historical occupancy data and retrieving major events happening in the city or region from a Revenue Management system (for example), Machine Learning could help plan staff schedule in the hotel for mid and long visibility.

With views by



Frédéric Brayer
Vice President Accor Tech Sofitel, MGallery and Emblems



Fergus Boyd
Hospitality Consultant



Mark Fancourt
Co-Founder at TRAVHOTECH



Tomeu Fiol
Global Hotel Technologies Director en Meliá Hotels International



Darko Vukovic
CEO and Founder at PolyAPI



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist



Uli Pillau
Founder and CEO of Apaleo



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner at Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.



Luis Weir
Senior Director, Integrations and API Strategy, Oracle Hospitality



Dave Berkus
Managing Partner
Wayfare Ventures LLC



Juanjo Rodriguez
Founder, The Hotels Network



Tomeu Fiol
Global Hotel Technologies Director en Meliá Hotels International

Artificial intelligence (AI) in general, and generative AI in particular, excel at identifying patterns. However, to achieve this, they require accurate and bias-free data, as well as a well-designed training process. In the context of hotel management, the PMS data model handles critical information about customers, reservations, stays, and billing. We are currently witnessing a potential decline in the exaggerated enthusiasm for generative AI. Although it is acknowledged that AI will shape the future of society and industries, finding use cases with tangible returns is not as straightforward as expected. An effective strategy involves identifying use cases that generate clear and quick benefits, thus driving the adoption of AI in our companies. Specific examples could include upselling strategies, using purchase propensity algorithms, and detecting errors in financial audits and billing processes. These use cases would leverage PMS data and could be implemented swiftly and efficiently, promoting business growth and effectiveness.





Uli Pillau
Founder and CEO of Apaleo

The future of machine learning (ML) in hospitality applications is set for a transformative shift through readily trained large language models (LLMs) and prompting. This democratization of technology enables even those with minimal technical skills to enhance hotel services, from personalized guest interactions to efficient back-end operations. Prompting offers a “no-code” approach for creating AI applications, allowing hoteliers to develop solutions in natural language, bypassing the complexities of traditional programming languages. OpenAI provides capabilities similar to workflow automation tools like Make.com and Zapier, enabling hoteliers to act as developers. AI needs extensive access to hotel data to make informed decisions and the ability to implement these decisions seamlessly into daily operations. API-first architecture facilitates both effortlessly, driving unprecedented innovation and competitiveness in hospitality. The most common applications, currently centered around inventory optimization, revenue management, upselling, guest communication, and concierge applications, are set to expand. The simplicity of no-code solutions means that these tools are scalable, adapting to the needs of both small inns and large hotel chains. The future will likely see a spread of “top hospitality prompts” curated by major players in the industry, shared publicly to standardise and enhance AI application across the sector.



Dave Berkus
Managing Partner
Wayfare Ventures LLC

How will we roll out AI tomorrow morning and this next year? There are two answers here: 1. For training and customer support of complex systems, the operator’s guides for each are now able to be fed to any of several existing limited (not large) language models (micro-LLM’s) that are restricted to the user property’s account. Within minutes or less from creation, any user on the local system is now able to ask natural language questions that might concentrate on a single task or combination of tasks. 2. For complex questions by staff or management, there are now and will be more vendors linking micro-LLM’s to accounting systems, reservations and front office databases, CRM, sales department contracts, emails sent and received through the system, messaging from guests and within the property and more. At the speed we are seeing vendors use new tools from major vendors such as Google and Microsoft to create their LLM’s, this will mature quickly - perhaps by the time you read this.



Juanjo Rodriguez
Founder, The Hotels Network

PMS data is only one source of first-party data, and it’s actually quite limited because it focuses only on past guests. A richer set of data is built when combining PMS with CRM data and direct website behavior data. Once powered by that dataset, some key practical applications are:

- **Benchmarking:** create automated competitive sets for each hotel and find opportunities for improvement.
- **Predictive Personalization:** understand user behavior and respond to it in real-time.
- **Audience creation:** find the ideal audience for your hotel, both by segmenting users that come to your website property and by finding similar, high-value guests.



Darko Vukovic
CEO and Founder at PolyAPI

Behaviors of guests & sorting of all offerings (room, packages, meals, drinks, activities) based on previous behaviors. Much of this if done on a per person can be done using general purpose AI along with a just in time prompt injection model. Does not even need machine learning. However, it can use machine learning in aggregate to provide suggestions to new users who have no history with the particular hotelier.



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner at Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.

The best data that a PMS stores is its guest history - travel purchase, rooms stayed in, ancillary purchases, number of occupants, special requests and so on. While we can discover some patterns to help grow the business, a machine can sift through this multitude far more efficiently to find patterns and do so in an unbiased manner. Once you have some pattern recognition in hand, the best use cases are all about personalization: 1). Anticipating special requests: A hallmark of hospitality service, ML can help you to scale instances where incoming guests are identified as wanting particular setups (extra towels, extra pillows, two bottles of a particular mineral water in the room etc.), prompting you to ask them if they indeed would like this to show that you care. 2). Ancillary upselling: This one has been described at length with platforms that are helping augment guests’ stays. It works, and it works better when machines can build an initial model off guest history data. 3). Rooms upgrades: Hospitality is also a business of ‘surprise and delight’, and there’s nothing that can make a guest happier than an upgrade, with ML cluing you into which guests deserve or will appreciate this.



Luis Weir
Senior Director, Integrations and API
Strategy, Oracle Hospitality

Machine learning is particularly well-suited for tasks that involve analyzing large volumes of guest data to identify patterns, trends, and non-obvious relationships. This can extend from enhanced guest experiences through streamlined check-in processes, to more personalized experiences that empower employees to allocate more time to value-driven tasks. Oracle has exposed the largest set of API on the market through the Oracle Hospitality Integration Platform (OHIP). Combining access to guest and transactional data with these API’s, customers and partners can create AI and machine learning innovations that elevate guest experiences, simplify operational tasks, and refine staffing efficiency. Hotels and technology partners can create and test these new AI technologies faster and cheaper than ever before. Where it previously may have taken months for new technology adoption to fail or succeed, results can now be seen in just a few weeks. Hotels are then able to quickly decide whether to fully adopt that new solution or quickly pivot to another technology. Collectively this will make a significant impact throughout the business, especially in areas like customer service, where technology will be able to make real-time, personalized suggestions for everything from room upgrades to acting like a virtual concierge with dining suggestions.





Mark Fancourt
Co-Founder at TRAVHOTTECH

Over time the value of this type of technical capability will increase for the industry. However, in the immediate state, one of the consistent challenges the industry has faced is to better understand the customer, initially at a macro level and eventually at a micro level. Core hospitality systems do track a significant volume of behavioral information, whether that be spend-related or preference-related. Although generally, these systems do not provide a depth of analysis. Aggregation exists but in specific subsets based upon the pre-programmed reports or queries. This is where the opportunity for immediate advantage can be gained with the broader, more unique, or specific review of sets of information. The combination of available data with flexibility of the type of information output, based upon the ask goes well beyond the standard outputs from operational systems. The power of analysis and prioritization of information at speed is remarkable. The back of house presents additional opportunities across maintenance, supply chain, and even manpower utilization. Used frequently, this type of information can be applied back into the business in a shorter timeframe with targeted results than has been the case using the core metrics, KPIs, processes, or tools that the industry has traditionally leveraged.



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist

Given the huge amount of data inherent in hotel operations, such as check-in/out dates, guest names, booking sources, pacing, preferences, and market trends, it is imperative to reconsider the strategic use of these resources. Drawing parallels with industry giants like Reddit, Twitter, and Tesla, which have capitalized extensively on utilizing (selling?) their data to train AI models, the hospitality sector should recognize this information as a critical asset—perhaps its most critical. The pivotal question then arises: how can these data be valued and effectively utilized? The answer involves navigating the complexities of property management systems, which serve as the primary repositories of this data, often constrained by technical or commercial (if not political) limitations. Once these issues are addressed (and we're a loong way), I think the main application of machine learning reveals three promising areas: predictive guest personalization, dynamic pricing strategies, and operational automation. Fix the data silos problem, and we'll get there.



Fergus Boyd
Hospitality Consultant

Rather than PMS guest profile extraction, I'd focus on your CRM/CDP and social media listening tools and extract guest feedback data from these and use Gen AI tools to create segments around top topics. Your CRM/CDP should be the central place for guest information, not the PMS. Also, download data from third party tools like Tripadvisor and look for patterns, eg feedback on your website, F&B offerings, call centre agents, retail offerings etc. All feedback is useful, and a good use case for Gen AI is to summarise large volumes of data. Share the highlights with staff so they can implement operational improvements.



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner, Hotel Mogel

Viewpoint sponsored by



EHL Graduate School MBA in Hospitality

Apply here:



Hospitality Redefined: Shape the Industry, Shape Your Career

- Graduated Degree Program
- Blends online learning with weeks on campus
- Taught in English
- 24 months
- 6x online modules
- 3 x one-week courses on campus
- 1x Capstone Project
- March and August intakes



Blended Learning

Our MBA is delivered through six online modules along with three one-week courses on campus in Lausanne.



Virtual Online Classroom

Virtual Live Connect classes every two weeks to ask questions, present ideas and take part in round table discussions.



Regular Assessment

At the end of each course, we will assess your mastery of the topic and guide you towards the next stage of your learning.



Capstone Project

The project is an opportunity to apply your learnings to address a real-world challenge. A professor will supervise you as you choose your own topic.

Do's and Don'ts in Artificial Intelligence (AI)



Ivo Minjauw
Chief Product Officer,
Lighthouse

Introduction

At Lighthouse, we see AI as a game-changer in terms of transforming commercial strategies for the hospitality industry. The shift has been remarkable—from a time not so long ago, when critical data was scarce - to an era where the sheer volume of information can be overwhelming.

This abundance of data presents a new challenge: how to manage and utilize it effectively when it far exceeds human analytical capacity.

In this landscape, AI is not just a tool but an essential ally. It cuts through complexity, allowing Revenue Managers and commercial teams to focus on the most critical information to make strategic decisions.

Previously, our industry grappled with siloed and fragmented data. AI helps manage data complexity, reduces time spent on low-value tasks, and frees teams to focus on high-value activities. We firmly believe that AI can and will continue to empower your commercial team to perform more efficiently and effectively.

We see three primary impacts of AI for travel & hospitality commercial teams:

- 01 Uncover Hidden Insights:**
AI reveals critical insights buried in data, supporting smarter decision-making.
- 02 Capture Missed Opportunities:**
AI helps spot overlooked opportunities, improving revenue and guest experiences.
- 03 Work Smarter, Move Faster:**
AI streamlines operations and decision-making, enabling teams to operate more efficiently and effectively to optimize commercial team performance.

As we move into the second half of 2024 and beyond, managing data complexity remains a central challenge. Lighthouse advocates for AI integration to overcome this hurdle, equipping clients with the tools to navigate, analyze, and act upon the right information.

While this list of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' is by no means exhaustive, it underscores essential best practices and priorities that can significantly improve the effectiveness of AI implementation for your commercial team.

✓ Do's

1 Prioritize data quality

Ensure your data is accurate, consistent and relevant. High-quality data is the foundation of effective AI solutions.

2 Rigorously evaluate vendors

Choose AI solutions and vendors with proven expertise and a strong track record. Look for those who understand the unique challenges hoteliers face.

3 Run pilot programs

Start with small scale programs to test AI solutions. This helps identify potential issues and assess efficacy before a full-scale rollout.

4 Focus on integration

Ensure that the AI solutions you're considering can seamlessly integrate with your existing systems. AI can improve operational connectivity by integrating various aspects of operations, reducing bottlenecks, and improving workflow efficiency

5 Embrace continuous learning

Encourage ongoing education and adaptation as AI technologies evolve, ensuring your team stays ahead of the curve.

✗ Don'ts

1 Don't expect low quality data to create high quality outcomes

High-quality AI outputs depend on the quality of the data fed into the system. Using poor-quality/biased data will lead to poor results, so prioritize collecting and maintaining high-quality data.

2 Don't ignore data bias

Be aware of the risks of biased or poor-quality data affecting AI outcomes. Always ensure your data is accurate and unbiased.

3 Don't disregard staff training

Don't assume your team will automatically know how to use new AI tools. Proper training is essential for successful implementation.

4 Don't ignore the need for scalability

Ensure your AI solutions can grow and scale with your needs to avoid any future limitations.

5 Don't assume that AI will eliminate the need for human oversight

AI augments human decision-making, but doesn't replace the need for human expertise.

6 Don't neglect data security

Never compromise on data security. Protecting data from breaches and unauthorized access is vital.

6 Use AI for predictive analytics

Utilize AI to forecast market trends and demand patterns, allowing you to optimize pricing strategies and improve occupancy rates with minimal human intervention.

7 Adopt AI for automated reporting

Implement AI tools to automate the generation of daily performance summaries, ensuring timely and accurate insights that are easily shareable with all relevant stakeholders.

8 Secure your data

Ensure that sensitive data is not used in public AI tools. Maintain strict data security protocols to protect proprietary data - as well as guest data.

9 Implement strong data management practices

Establish robust protocols to maintain data quality, accuracy, and consistency over time.

10 Collaborate with experts

Work closely with domain experts to ensure AI solutions are tailored to meet the needs of you and your team.

11 Improve operational efficiency

Use AI to streamline operations by automating routine tasks, allowing your teams to focus on high-value, strategic activities.

7 Don't assume AI will fix all problems

AI is a powerful tool, not a cure-all. It should be part of a broader strategy that includes optimization paired with human expertise and oversight.

8 Don't overcomplicate AI implementations

Keep it simple. Overcomplicating AI solutions can lead to inefficiencies and increased costs.

9 Don't neglect AI maintenance

Regular upkeep is crucial for AI systems to perform well. Skipping maintenance can lead to a decline in their effectiveness over time.

10 Don't rush AI Deployment

Take the time to thoroughly research, evaluate, vet and test AI solutions before implementing them at scale.

11 Don't ignore feedback

Pay attention to feedback from both staff and guests regarding AI tools. Ignoring feedback can lead to missed opportunities for improvement.

12 Don't ignore the value of external expertise

consider consulting with AI experts to help drive your implementation strategy and address any complex challenges.

12 Make sure your data is comprehensive

Your data should cover all necessary aspects to explore problems thoroughly. Ensure it has breadth and depth.

13 Prepare thoroughly

Invest time and resources to prepare your data before implementing AI. Clean, structure and organize your data to maximize AI's power.

14 Hold vendors accountable

Keep your vendors accountable for building AI best practices into their solutions rather than expecting your team to create them from scratch. Demand transparency and accountability in AI development.

15 Incorporate feedback loops

Implement processes to gather and act on feedback from AI users, ensuring continuous improvement and adoption the technology

Conclusion

While we're just getting started on this journey, it's critical that you hold your tech vendors accountable for adopting emerging technology and ensuring their systems serve their users well.

The market will be divided between those who adopt AI and become more efficient and those who fail to adapt and are gradually displaced. By managing data complexity effectively, Lighthouse

equips our customers with the capability to uncover insights, capture missed opportunities, and operate more efficiently.

In the rapidly evolving world of AI, the real value comes from the synergy between sophisticated tools and high-quality, differentiated datasets. Remember that the success of AI lies not just in its technological capabilities but in the quality of the data that powers it.

Focus on quality data, and you'll achieve quality outcomes. Embrace AI with a commitment to high-quality data, and your hotel will thrive in this evolving landscape.

13 Don't forget to define clear objectives

implementing AI without clear goals can lead to wasted resources and subpar results. Define specific and measurable objectives from the start.

14 Don't overlook AI's limitations

Understand that AI can make mistakes. Regularly review and validate AI outputs, and be prepared to intervene when necessary to correct errors or biases.

15 Don't underestimate the importance of context

ensure that the AI solutions you leverage are fed with contextually relevant data to produce meaningful and actionable insights.



Ivo Minjauw
Chief Product Officer,
Lighthouse

Evolving from CRM to CDP: What got us here won't get us there



Karen Stephens
Chief Marketing Officer, Revinate

Meet Caroline Brettell.

She travels frequently for work, and she's stayed at properties within The Avertine Group several times: Avertine Seattle, Avertine New York, and Avertine Dallas. She also takes a trip twice a year with her spouse and their dog, usually within driving distance of their home in Tampa, Florida.

With just this narrow slice of data, Caroline has the ideal profile of a guest that a savvy hotel marketer could target to book directly on her next work trip, or for a pet-friendly getaway in Orlando or even New Orleans.

One problem, though.

The Avertine Group has no idea that Caroline is even a repeat guest.

Why?

Because their CRM can't give them the full picture.

When you know your guests, you know how to engage them: you know their likes and dislikes, and what offers might just tempt them to stay with you again. The problem hoteliers

face today is that the only way to know guests at scale is with data. And what most hoteliers use — the CRM — hasn't kept pace with the fragmented digital ecosystem that guests operate within, or the sheer volume of data that is pervasive across the entire guest journey.

This is where the next evolution of guest data management comes in: the Customer Data Platform, or CDP⁰¹.

ANOTHER tech tool? Yes and no.

Look, we know hoteliers, like everyone else, are tired of being told they need the latest, shiniest toy. In this case, it's a matter of evolution, not replacement.

The CRM was a huge leap forward for hoteliers' ability to communicate and engage with their guests. It brought guest data and contact information in front of hotel marketers in a previously untapped way, allowing them to build databases and market directly to their guests.

Unfortunately, the CRM is no longer enough to empower the kind of booking journey and guest experience that today's travelers expect. Data proliferation has accelerated exponentially in the last few years, and savvy marketers are picking up on zero-party⁰² and first-party data⁰³ wherever they can find it. But if you're still using a legacy CRM that relies almost exclusively on PMS data, you are missing the boat.

Put another way, guests are sending you data signals all the time, and expect personalized communication on their preferred channel, whether that's voice, webchat, texting, social media, or, yes, even email.

If you want to keep up, what you need is a Customer Data Platform. A CDP covers the same functionality as a CRM — in fact, CDPs include a CRM — but with a much more powerful data engine underneath.

Think of the CRM as the interface you use to interact with your guest data. What matters most is the technology platform that powers that interface. When you're working with a CDP, the guest data that you access through the CRM will be more complete, robust, and actionable because of three critical functionalities a CDP has that a simple CRM doesn't.



Three ways CDPs supercharge CRMs

Let's go back to our friend Caroline Brettell and take a look at her booking journey to understand where The Avertine Group's CRM came up short, and where a CDP would give them the insights they need to create an incredible guest experience and drive direct revenue along the way.

Data integration

When Caroline stays with The Avertine Group, sometimes she orders room service and books a massage at the spa. If the Avertine marketing manager knew this, they could automatically offer relevant upsells in Caroline's next pre-arrival email.

A hospitality CRM should integrate with your PMS, but that is usually about it. A hospitality CDP⁰⁴, however, can collect data from your PMS plus other critical hotel systems, like your golf club, spa, restaurant, and folio. Other data sources can include guest surveys, online reviews, website activity, reservation agent notes, text messaging, and email engagement.

All of these data sources come together in a CDP to give you a true 360-degree view of your guests, and to allow you to create segments based on shared characteristics. So you're not just getting to know Caroline better — you're also identifying guests just like her who are likely open to the same messaging based on their shared interests.

In the age of first-party data⁰³, hoteliers need a robust data collection operation that can capture data at every touchpoint throughout the guest journey, AND a platform that can ingest and analyze it. Too often, important guest data remains trapped and cordoned off in different systems. Your survey data is stuck in your survey tool, your email marketing data is stuck in your email platform, your voice channel data is stuck in your call center software, and so on. And when your data is isolated in different tools, its usefulness is diminished.

But with a CDP, you can collect

survey tool, your email marketing data is stuck in your email platform, your voice channel data is stuck in your call center software⁰⁵, and so on. And when your data is isolated in different tools, its usefulness is diminished.

But with a CDP, you can collect and analyze all of this data together, building richer and more detailed guest profiles. This, in turn, offers you a more complete view of your guests — and more opportunities to create hyper-targeted, personalized campaigns that drive direct revenue.

If Avertine had a hospitality CDP, they could see Caroline's room service orders, spa appointments, and restaurant reservations, along with notes from reservation agents, her Net Promoter Score⁰⁶, and messaging behavior⁰⁷.

Identity resolution

Caroline booked one trip via an OTA. On another, she used the nickname Carol when filling out her first name. On her third stay, she used her work email address instead of her personal one. On her fourth visit — booked with a different OTA — the front desk asked for her email address, but they entered a typo: *caroline.brettell@yahoo.com* instead of *caroline.brettell*.

This chain of booking and stay behavior, all common occurrences for hotel guests, led to the creation of four different profiles in The Avertine's CRM. Now, all CRMs have some form of "merge and dedupe" to get to a profile view of a guest. The question is, how robust is that underlying technology?

A typical CRM needs each field in the name and email address to match perfectly to recognize the same guest. However, since realities like Caroline's happen all the time (multiple booking channels, error in data entry, OTA masked emails) many loyal, repeat guests fall through the cracks. This inaccurate guest data leads to inaccurate segments, hindering the effectiveness of your marketing and communication efforts.

A CDP overcomes duplicate and messy data with identity resolution⁰⁸.

Identity resolution employs advanced AI and machine-learning algorithms to merge and dedupe guest records into one comprehensive profile with a high degree of confidence. Identity resolution can also incorporate other guest interactions like survey responses, abandoned cart information, messaging history, and more into profiles to give you the complete picture of your guests and how they interact with your hotel.

Identity resolution is a powerful weapon against OTAs, which mask guest emails to try to maintain control of the guest relationship. Identity resolution programs using AI that is trained on hospitality data can unmask those OTA emails and give you back a direct line of communication with your guests.

According to our 2024 Hospitality Benchmark Report⁰⁹, 18% of raw profiles in hotel databases¹⁰ contain OTA-masked emails. That's up to 18% of your guests who could be unavailable for retargeting.

Revinate has merged nearly three million guest profiles with OTA-masked email addresses using identity resolution, and we found that 17% of those profiles contained two or more different OTA emails. Those are repeat guests — just like Caroline — who are loyal to your brand, but not necessarily the booking channel.

⁰¹ <https://www.revinate.com/blog/customer-data-platform/>

⁰² <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/418790.html>

⁰³ <https://www.revinate.com/blog/first-party-data/>

⁰⁴ <https://www.revinate.com/blog/hospitality-cdp-reasons/>

⁰⁵ <https://www.revinate.com/blog/the-call-center-software-features-every-hotelier-should-look-for/>

⁰⁶ <https://www.revinate.com/2024hbr/email-channel-global/#surveys>

⁰⁷ <https://www.revinate.com/2024hbr/messaging-channel-north-america/>

⁰⁸ <https://www.revinate.com/blog/identity-resolution/>

Without identity resolution, hoteliers are missing the loyal guests with whom they've already built relationships — the guests who are mostly likely to book again and book direct if you can give them a reason to do so — simply because they aren't using the right tools, like a CDP. built relationships — the guests who are mostly likely to book again and book direct if you can give them a reason to do so — simply because they aren't using the right tools, like a CDP.

Data Activation

This is the money-maker. After all, what good is all of this robust guest data unless you put it to good use?

A CRM may only allow you to activate its data in one channel (typically email), or you may have to go through the tedious process of exporting contacts as spreadsheets and uploading them into another email tool for every single campaign that you want to send.

The result of all that manual work is that your team will have to spend more time and effort on each individual campaign, resulting in fewer, more generic messages sent to larger audiences.

With The Avertine's CRM, Caroline might receive a birthday discount for a property she only stayed at for work, or a generic newsletter.

But with a CDP, Avertine could send Caroline — and guests like her — personalized upsells, incentives, and promotions, earning the hotel more direct revenue while delighting Caroline with an exceptional guest experience.

We're not just saying this. Our data backs it up. We've found that smaller, more targeted lists have significantly

higher conversion rates: emails sent to less than 5,000 recipients have a 23x higher conversion rate than those sent to 50,000 or more recipients. And hoteliers generate 2.6x more revenue per email when at least three segment filters are applied to the audience. So what if instead of launching one large email per month, your marketing team could send 5-10 campaigns to different guest segments, each with a relevant and timely message, using the same amount of effort (or less, thanks to automation)? Your direct email channel revenue would soar. Take it from Columbia Hospitality, which nets an average room revenue of \$10k per campaign using a mix of automated and one-time email sends.

A CDP enables exactly this level of agility and efficiency by putting rich guest data in the hands of hotel marketers alongside the tools to activate that data across channels. Because while email remains a vital communication avenue, it's not the only one where guests expect to hear from you. Your guest data can be deployed across voice, messaging, and web channels to drive direct bookings and ancillary revenue with personalization and precision.

What's more, the results of your activation efforts — regardless of channel — should be fed right back into the guest profile, giving you even more insights to work from.

09 <https://www.revinate.com/2024-hospitality-benchmark-report/>

10 <https://www.revinate.com/2024hbr/database-health-global/#identity>

11 <https://www.revinate.com/2024hbr/email-channel-global/>

12 <https://www.revinate.com/customer-stories/how-columbia-hospitality-boosted-revenue-with-revinate/>

Powering hospitality's next transformation

The heart of the CRM and CDP debate is the question of whether hoteliers want to settle for marginal gains while the world evolves around us, or whether we want to be part of the evolution. CDPs offer the hospitality industry — and not just the big players — the chance to confidently dive into the age of data-driven personalization.

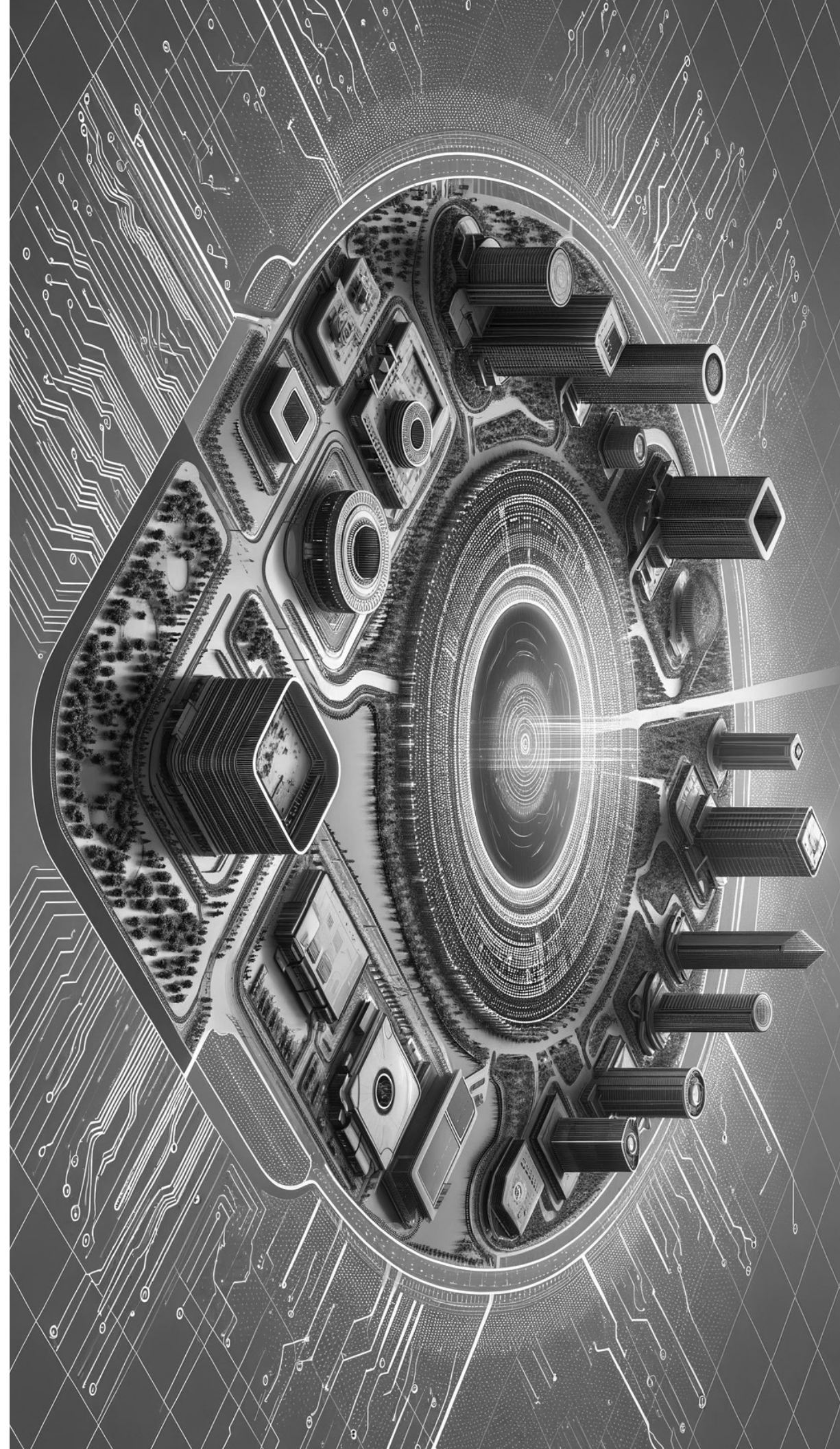
It matters what is under the hood of the tools in your tech stack. Is it a basic CRM, powered by an old jalopy that needs replacement parts no longer in circulation? Or is it a CDP, with a data engine fueled by advanced machine learning and AI-modeling, with data integration, identity resolution, and data activation built-in?

Caroline expects more than a generic experience — and she might just shift her loyalty to a hotel group that can offer the surprise and delight of true personalization.

CRMs have gotten us this far as an industry, bringing us into the 21st century. But they aren't going to take us to the next era of innovation. And to show that we're putting our money where our mouth is, Revinate is upgrading our existing CRM customers to a CDP data-engine throughout this year.

Eventually, you'll need to upgrade your CRM and capitalize on the advanced marketing and direct booking capabilities that a CDP brings. The only question is whether you'll do it in time to lead the pack in the race for guest loyalty and direct revenue, or if you'll be miles behind.

Connected
Data Lake



Karen Stephens
Chief Marketing Officer,
Revinate



Do's and Don'ts in Hospitality Procurement



Hospitality Procurement Do's & Don'ts to Stay Ahead, Boost Efficiency and Reduce Cost



Frank Dierberger
CEO, FutureLog

The practice of sourcing and buying all the necessities required to run a hotel, restaurant or other venue, hospitality procurement includes everything from the sheets on the

beds to the fresh food in the kitchen. Procurement manages purchases, contracts and inventory, and effective procurement strategies are key to controlling costs and ensuring

smooth operations. While a good revenue strategy is also important, it is the meticulous execution of a robust procurement strategy that truly leaves a tangible impact on the profit and loss statement. Efficient procurement translates every dollar saved directly into improved financial health, a distinction not easily mirrored by revenue alone.

But procurement is not just about saving costs; it also contributes to upholding your brand's reputation, pleasing your customers, and keeping up with ever-changing market trends. Let's explore some of hospitality procurement's key do's and don'ts.

✓ Do's

Procurement in the hotel industry isn't just about buying what you need, but also about making practical and wise purchases. Let's break down the steps to winning at procurement.

1 Mastering the Basics of Procurement

Firstly, you need a plan. This means knowing what you have, what you need, and when you need it. It also means doing your homework about market trends and prices to get the best value for money. Next, build solid relationships with suppliers. Communicate openly, work through problems together, and strive for solutions that benefit both parties.

✗ Don'ts

For hospitality procurement to truly succeed, knowing what to avoid doing is just as necessary as knowing the best practices. Here are some typical mistakes you should avoid.

1 Depending Only On A Few Suppliers

Depending too much on just a few suppliers is risky. For instance, your supply chain might fail if a primary supplier runs into trouble, like a materials shortage or a natural disaster. It's critical to have connections to multiple suppliers to avoid risks and guarantee an uninterrupted supply of goods and services.

2 Optimizing Supplier Relationships and Negotiations

In dealing with suppliers, aim for strong, long-lasting partnerships. Loyalty can lead to better prices, top-notch service, and access to useful insider tips. Remember to pay promptly, provide helpful input, and help them grow. A win-win approach turns suppliers into valuable business allies. Look for cost savings like volume discounts or bundled services, but never at the expense of quality. Cutting corners could hurt your brand and disappoint guests.

3 Value Your Data

Data is a tool that can highlight areas for improvement and places to save money in your procurement process. Ensure you have the right tools and know-how to analyze this data to make the best decisions.

4 Pay Attention to Risk Management & Legal Compliance

Be aware of potential risks involved in procurement, such as interruptions to the supply chain, issues with product quality, or your suppliers' financial stability. Have plans ready to counteract these risks. Additionally, ignoring Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors has the potential to harm a hotel's reputation. Ensure compliance with labor laws and environmental regulations, check for sustainable practices, and keep carbon footprints in mind.

5 Keep Automation At The Fore

While it's important that suppliers commit to delivering on time and meeting order specifications, it's also crucial that they embrace digitization and automation, e.g., sending electronic delivery notes, etc. The long-term benefits, such as saving time and improving efficiency, are much more valuable than short-term cost savings.

2 Prioritizing Price Over Quality

Always remember that cutting costs should not compromise quality. Guests have high expectations, and to meet them, your goods and services must meet your brand's standards. If you cut corners to save money, you run the risk of disappointing your guests and harming your brand's reputation.

3 Not Keeping an Eye On Market Trends

It's essential to keep track of market trends and price changes. If you don't regularly check for linen price changes, you might miss an opportunity to upgrade your bedding when prices are low. This could improve guest satisfaction and lead to better reviews and repeat business. Staying up-to-date on market trends prepares you to take action when the opportunity arises.

4 Ignoring the Importance of Negotiating

Don't underestimate negotiation. It's more than bargaining for the lowest price. It's about finding solutions that benefit both parties involved. Good negotiators in hospitality understand their suppliers' needs and challenges. This leads to strong partnerships and can help improve business terms like payment conditions or getting priority service during busy times.

5 Underestimating the Importance of Time and Planning

Neglecting adequate planning time pushes you into an emergency procurement situation where choices are very limited. In this crisis mode, your bargaining power diminishes significantly, rendering effective negotiation strategies nearly impossible. From an operational standpoint, the immediate necessity for products overrides careful selection, compelling you to accept whatever is available – a situation far from ideal. Strategically, expiring supplier contracts with no time for a comprehensive tendering process leave you

6 Relying on Manual Processes or Legacy Technology

Modern procurement strategies can only exist with technology, and procure-to-pay (P2P) technology streamlines operations and provides insights for improved efficiency and cost reduction.

Time is crucial in hospitality, and P2P technology helps automate routine tasks and provide real-time data. This enables quick decision-making and reduces manual errors. Paper-based systems have been replaced with digital ones for convenience. Analytics help track expenses, predict future costs and make informed purchase decisions.

P2P technology also fosters transparency and accountability, as all transactions can be traced and recorded. This minimizes fraud risks. These digital systems can quickly pinpoint discrepancies between orders and deliveries.

Takeaways

The rules of procurement in the hospitality industry carry significant operational weight, and efficient strategies involve being proactive, innovative, and strategic. One of the most crucial 'do's' is implementing technologies such as procure-to-pay systems. These systems not only streamline procurement processes and digitize manual tasks but also empower you with real-time data and insights for improved efficiency and cost reduction. Your confidence in adapting to technological advancements can set you apart in the industry.

Mastering hospitality procurement's do's and don'ts can unlock significant value, potentially making the difference between meeting budget goals or surpassing them. By fostering strong relationships with suppliers, taking a proactive approach to risk and compliance, and intelligently using technology, you can streamline processes and yield substantial cost savings.

Prioritizing quality over price, paying attention to market trends, recognizing the importance of negotiation and avoiding reliance on a few suppliers will also help ensure



Frank Dierberger
CEO, FutureLog

Mistakes in Procurement

Here are some real-world examples that show why procurement best practices matter.

Imagine a hotel that chose the lowest-priced food supplier without checking their reliability—the outcome was late and sometimes poor-quality deliveries. This caused guest complaints and even led to the hotel refunding some meals. In another case, a resort relied solely on one furniture supplier. When they halted production of a beloved furniture line, the resort had no choice but to spend heavily on interior redesign.

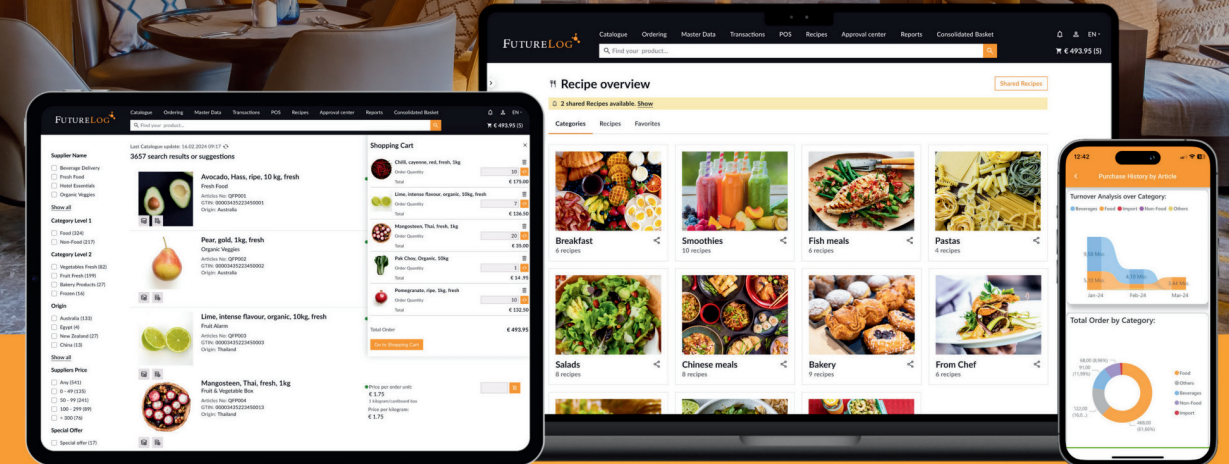
These real-world examples serve as stark reminders of the potential consequences of neglecting essential procurement steps. They clearly illustrate how taking shortcuts or not planning ahead can lead to significant financial losses and damage to one's reputation. This awareness can help avoid such pitfalls and ensure a more secure procurement process.

your procurement strategy aligns with your hospitality goals. Embracing these principles will set your brand apart with high standards of service, a stronger bottom line and smoother operations while meeting and exceeding your guests' expectations.

Remember, in procurement, the **way you do things** matters as much as **what you do**.



PROCURE-TO-PAY SOLUTIONS FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



About Us

Designed by hoteliers for hoteliers, our comprehensive suite of market-leading procure-to-pay solutions brings automation, efficiency and simplicity to the P2P process. We have 25 years of experience in supporting customers to digitise their P2P tasks, saving them time and resources while ensuring cloud-based accessibility and secure, seamless connectivity.



FutureLog has transformed the way we handle the ordering process across our entire group. Now we're fully automated, we have streamlined communication with our suppliers, it's so easy to use and it has saved our teams so much time and effort.

- Denis Karalić, ACHAT Hotels



- ✓ No capital expenditure required
- ✓ Multi-lingual expertise & follow-the-sun support
- ✓ Swift onboarding and implementation
- ✓ Easy integrations to POS and ERP platforms

Contact us for a commitment-free demo:

✉ sales@futurelog.com www.futurelog.com



ORDERING

Simple, streamlined ordering with all supplier product ranges in one place.



INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Reliable, real-time stock overviews, master data handling and easy in-house transfers.



RECIPE MANAGEMENT

Easy recipe and menu creation, POS connectivity, robust costings & reporting.



CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Secure, audit-compliant digital archive with automated notifications and easy retrieval.



BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

In-depth analytics, trend identification, rich visualisations & actionable insights.



INVOICING

Centralised, AI-powered invoice processing with transparent approvals.



CAPEX MANAGEMENT

Intuitive, efficient financial planning, with clear status overviews and activity logs.



Do's and Don'ts in Digital Payments



Lennert De Jong
President Hospitality, Planet

Introduction

Hoteliers know they need to get every detail right to attract and keep their guests, who today are better informed, more tech-savvy and carry significant buying power and influence.

They are also carrying a very powerful tool: their smart device enabled mobile wallet.

Guests now expect to be able to make hassle-free seamless payments as they go about their day – with a simple tap of their phone. The ‘Uber-like’ payments experience, where the payment method is completely behind the scenes, has raised expectations even higher.

Let's also be honest, nobody really ‘enjoys’ making a payment. In fact, a bad payments experience can detract from guests’ enjoyment of their stay, and it can lead to them posting negative reviews which can damage the reputation of the hotel.

This is especially relevant at the front desk where the guest is looking to be welcomed and eased into their room. Being asked for their payment method multiple times, having to tap, swipe, or worse, hand over their card and wait for authorisation to go through and then potentially sign, doesn't add up to a memorable and positive hospitality experience.

So, what does all this mean for hotel payments?

At its simplest, guests want choice and convenience, and they want payments to be fast, simple and secure. But in this age of smart hospitality, the technology exists to go much further than that and to instead use payments to transform the overall guest experience, so they are almost invisible and hassle-free.

To achieve this, hoteliers need to focus on connecting their payments systems to the PMS (Property Management Systems) and other key technologies they use to run their business. It's a major trend this year and for good reason, as many hoteliers see the benefit this brings to their bottom line.

Here are some thoughts on how hotels can make the most of this opportunity. The Do's focus on the guest experience, the Don'ts are more operational, and risk focused.

✓ Do's

1 Make Sure Payments Are Fully integrated:

connecting payments to the PMS and other core systems such as the Booking Engine and CRS (Central Reservation System) and POS (Point of Sale) is fundamental to empowering a better guest experience. Beyond streamlining operations for your staff, integrating your hotel payments reduces friction and enhances the guest experience.

2 Only ask for payment once:

the ultimate objective. Make sure your tech stack allows you to centrally capture the choice of payment method when a guest books their stay. This should automatically feed into your PMS where it's held securely as a token, so you can lessen the number of times you ever have to ask for a payment from a guest.

3 Pre-authorise and top-up payments:

this is the second essential requirement to achieve the aim of only asking for a payment method once. It saves guests the hassle of always having to take their payment method with them so they can spend freely whether they are paying for a spa treatment or at a gift shop in the hotel or grabbing a drink by the pool. PMS integration with payments coupled with workflow automation allows for continued pre-authorisation top-up as their stay progresses and based on the level of spend on the folio.

4 Streamline the check-in process:

based on Planet's recent research study, for 60% of global guests, avoiding queues at check-in is a key factor in their ideal experience. Integrating payments means you can get your guests' payment details onto your PMS at the time of booking so they can check-in quickly and start enjoying their stay.

✗ Don'ts

1 Give your guests lots of admin to do when they arrive:

one of things guests dislike is filling in paperwork, so by removing this you can help them spend more time enjoying their stay. Integrating payments into the PMS saves having to ask for card details when they check-in.

2 Overcomplicate things for guests:

this extends to all aspects of their stay – capturing payment details and storing these securely for use on the PMS means they don't have to reach for their card whenever they want to add extras to their room.

3 Prioritise security:

don't store card details anywhere other than on the PMS. Spreadsheets and scribbled notes are not secure.

4 Expose sensitive card data:

cyber-crime is on the increase globally and hotels are increasingly being targeted, so make sure you follow all the advice and best practice to reassure your guests that their personal information and payment details are safe.

5 Take compliance for granted:

make sure staff are trained and always fully meet the PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance standards so you adhere to the payments rules and regulations.

5 Offer guests the payment methods they are comfortable with:

this is important as international guests return. For example, offering Alipay+ opens-up payments to capture most of the digital wallets used across Asia, all through a single connection.

6 Make the most of payment tokens:

large chains and multi-site hotels can use a Token Vault to centralise payments activity across all locations so they can develop a deeper and more holistic view of spend so they better target loyalty programmes.

7 Use Pay by Link to take deposits:

send guests a safe link via email when they call to make a deposit so they can make a payment to secure their booking, with the payment directly feeding into the PMS.

8 Offer guests currency conversion:

international guests value being able to pay for accommodation and hotel services in their own currency. It makes for a better guest experience so don't forget to offer it at all points of the journey. It also boosts revenue..

9 Give staff more time to spend with guests:

less time looking at the keyboard, more making eye contact with guests. Automatically capturing and storing card details securely on the PMS allows staff to spend more time with guests, leading to a better experience while saving back-office staff hours on admin.

6 Waste time on inefficient reporting and reconciliation processes:

back-office staff can waste valuable time reconciling and reporting on payments data when it's held on multiple platforms and is not centralised. Integrating payments into the PMS helps staff work more efficiently.

7 Miss no show fees:

holding payments details securely on the PMS as a token makes it is easy for you to charge for no shows so you can protect your revenue.

8 Overlook ancillary charges:

the insignificant things can add up – safeguard your revenue by making sure that all food & beverage purchases and room charges are paid for by capturing payment details. You can then charge guests for what they've taken from the mini bar after they've left.

9 Leave payments terminals out overnight:

take steps to keep all terminals safe and secure when the shift ends to protect valuable payments data.

10 Use integrated payment terminals to run end of shift reports on a printer:

these reports can be retrieved online now with most modern payment companies removing the need for a lengthy paper trail where terminals are fully integrated.

12 Prioritise automation:

it's one of the biggest enablers to free-up time for staff. Tight PMS integration with payments allows hotels to automatically take deposits, pre-payments, cancellations and other rate requirements based on rules stored in the PMS and associated with rates and packages. This is an extension of a comprehensive revenue management optimisation strategy.

12 Recognise repeat guests:

it's one of the biggest enablers to free-up time for staff. Tight PMS integration with payments allows hotels to automatically take deposits, pre-payments, cancellations and other rate requirements based on rules stored in the PMS and associated with rates and packages. This is an extension of a comprehensive revenue management optimisation strategy.

12 Give staff a centralised, real-time view of payments across points on sale:

integrate and centralise your PMS, POS and payments to empower staff to report on and use real-time data to boost spending and work more efficiently.

Conclusion

More hoteliers now realise they need to make smarter decisions when it comes to payments, to make the journey as efficient and frictionless as possible.

Those I speak to understand that connecting their payments systems to the PMS and the other key technologies leads to a smoother and more enjoyable journey from booking to check-out, and it delivers guests a better brand experience. It also helps hoteliers to operate more efficiently too, all of which boosts bottom line.

Integrating payments makes life easier for guests and using the data to better understand their behaviour leads to a more personalised and enjoyable brand experience – increasing the chances of guests leaving positive reviews. And in this digital age, the more positive reviews you get the more chance you have of winning and keeping guests.



Lennert De Jong
President Hospitality,
Planet



Do's and Don'ts of Hotel Data Security Awareness Training



David Christiansen
Chief Information Officer, VENZA

Hospitality is the third-most targeted industry by cyber criminals and, unfortunately, over 30% of hotels have experienced a breach.

Despite this, however, the industry is also the single most under-

trained—over 84% of hospitality employees have not received data security awareness training.

This gap presents a major risk. Because over 80% of all cybersecurity incidents begin with an element

of social engineering—those attacks that target employees and attempt to manipulate them into disclosing sensitive information or compromising system security—shoring up your “human firewall” is critical to a strong defense.

One of the best ways to do so is through security awareness training. With dedicated, refined instruction about the principles of data protection, the most common dangers, and techniques to remain secure, your teams can learn the best practices of data security and improve their resilience to threats.

✓ Do's

1 Teach Fundamentals:

Understanding how to protect payment cards and other sensitive information, maintain email hygiene, and be aware of social engineering provide an essential security foundation.

2 Be Comprehensive:

Train against a wide variety of techniques and scenarios, including phishing, smishing, and vishing, to prepare for unexpected threats.

✗ Don'ts

1 Take Security for Granted:

Over 60% of people are unaware of basic threats like phishing. Don't assume members of your organisation are aware of cybersecurity threats and will prioritize data security without your intentional efforts.

2 Neglect the Human Firewall:

Technological solutions like firewall management or endpoint detection and response are necessary tools, but incomplete without addressing the human causes of many security failures.

3 Use Hospitality-Specific Content:

Hoteliers face unique challenges, so training should be tailored to match. Use examples from the Front Desk, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, and IT to cover real-world risks.

4 Include All Staff:

Aim for 100% training completion by including all employees, not just managers or those who handle credit card information.

5 Adapt for Role:

There is no one-size-fits-all cybersecurity solution. Training should account for nuances in staff roles and levels of responsibility.

6 Involve Leadership:

Set your organisation's tone from the top by having key leadership commit to the enterprise of data protection and demonstrate it in their daily practices.

7 Communicate Clearly:

Define the purpose, goals, and method of training delivery with clear messages. Ensure these are echoed regularly by General Managers and on-property leaders.

8 Reinforce Learning:

Supplement courses with ongoing learning interventions. Use breakroom posters, short videos, activities, and games to extend and build upon formal experiences.

3 Overwhelm With Jargon

Avoid using complex technical language that might confuse rather than enlighten, especially for non-technical associates.

4 Ignore Learning Styles:

Effective training should be delivered through multiple channels to resonate with different levels of expertise and experience.

5 Punish Employees:

Avoid using punitive measures as a response to failures. Instead, focus on encouragement and constructive feedback to improve outcomes.

6 Overlook Feedback:

Do not dismiss the importance of feedback from training participants. It is essential for refining future sessions.

7 Use Forgettable Lessons:

Employ engaging, memorable training materials that resonate with the day-to-day experiences of associates.

8 Miss New Threats:

Cyber threats are constantly evolving. Make sure your training reflects the latest dangers such as quishing, voice spoofing, and more.

9 Build A Culture:

Security awareness succeeds when it is embedded in your organisational DNA. It should become a value, not just a practice.

10 Appoint Training Champions:

Designate a member of your corporate or HR team to lead the training rollout, encourage participation, and follow the results.

11 Dedicate A Data Security Month:

Training is not one-and-done, but designating a month to prioritize information security can help establish accountability for completion.

12 Make Incentives Positive:

Reward strong performance to make the training experience engaging and fun. Everyone responds well to prizes, acknowledgment, and encouragement.

13 Set Deadlines

Prevent training from becoming an afterthought by setting clear deadlines for completion

14 Train Annually:

Best practices and key requirements like PCI DSS require training must be completed on a yearly basis, at a minimum.

9 Assume Vendors are Secure:

Many hospitality breaches are caused by vulnerabilities in the software of third-party vendors. Regularly assess your providers to ensure they adhere to the best practices for data security and instruct team members on how to identify these risks and protect their properties from them.

10 Forget Organisational Policy:

Training must be reinforced with formal, written organisational policies that govern acceptable use, email security, and more.

11 Limit Training to Once a Year:

Avoid the pitfall of infrequent training. Regular updates and refreshers are necessary to keep security top of mind.

12 Overfocus on Compliance:

Compliance is not security. Don't make the mistake of simply checking a box at the expense of meaningful data protection.

13 Rely Solely on IT

Don't delegate all responsibility for data security to your IT department. Data security is everyone's responsibility.

14 Overburden Your Team:

Consider group training efforts for associates that are busy or don't have ready computer access. Use short, impactful trainings that cover the essentials.

15 Track Results:

Visibility is the first step in defense. With clear results, you'll be equipped to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities.

15 Do It All Yourself:

Leverage expertise from outside your organisation to enhance the effectiveness of your training regimen and reduce the burden on your staff. Guidance from training professionals is a difference-maker.

Conclusion

Security awareness training can play an important role in protecting hoteliers against cyber threats. By hardening the "human firewall," criminals will find it more difficult to execute social engineering and other attacks that risk creating breaches, financial loss, and severe reputational damage. However, to be successful, training must be designed and delivered carefully. By adhering to the best practices described above, hoteliers can ensure that their associates are not only informed but also equipped to act as the first line of defense against cyber threats. Ultimately, a proactive and comprehensive data security awareness program is an investment in your hotel's future—safeguarding not just data but the trust of guests and the integrity of your brand.



David Christiansen
Chief Information Officer,
VENZA



Shiji PMS, the choice of luxury



Find out more



PMS

Do's and Don'ts in Selecting and Implementing an Enterprise PMS



Wolfgang Emperger
SVP & GM For Europe, Africa, And UK & Ireland, Shiji

The hospitality industry finds itself at a critical point where innovation and efficiency must blend seamlessly to meet the evolving demands of guests and operational complexities. A robust PMS stands as the backbone

of hotel operations, significantly influencing everything from booking management to guest satisfaction. For enterprise hotel chains, selecting the right PMS is paramount, as it can drive operational excellence

and elevate the guest experience. But choosing the right PMS for hotel groups and chains is more challenging due to the complex needs of large-scale operations, which require a system capable of handling extensive integrations and diverse functionalities across multiple locations. Additionally, the high volume of data and transactions necessitates a stable and secure solution that can ensure seamless performance and compliance with industry standards. Here are the Do's and Don'ts that we've observed in selecting the right Enterprise PMS.

✓ Do's

1 Teach Fundamentals:

Establish the most important goals trying to be achieved by switching the PMS, such as improving guest experience, increasing operational efficiency, or integrating new technologies. These clear objectives will guide the selection process, ensuring the chosen PMS aligns with overall business strategies and priorities.

2 Assess your needs:

When planning a global roll-out, conduct thorough assessments to understand the unique needs and requirements of each region. This includes legal compliance, cultural considerations, and local market demands to ensure the PMS can meet diverse as well as operational needs.

hotelyearbook.com

✗ Don'ts

1 Take Security for Granted:

Over 60% of people are unaware of basic threats like phishing. Don't assume members of your organisation are aware of cybersecurity threats and will prioritize data security without your intentional efforts.

2 Take Security for Granted:

Over 60% of people are unaware of basic threats like phishing. Don't assume members of your organisation are aware of cybersecurity threats and will prioritize data security without your intentional efforts.

3 Ensure legal compliance:

Verify that the PMS solution adheres to all legal and fiscal regulations across the various regions and countries where your hotels operate, ensuring compliance with local regulations, accounting systems and tax systems, some countries might be missing, check if they are on the roadmap.

4 Appoint a project leader:

Identify an internal stakeholder who will oversee the entire project from initiation to completion, ensuring consistent progress, accountability, and effective communication among all involved parties.

5 Involve all departments:

Engage various departments that will use the system and get their input and feedback. Frontdesk, Housekeeping, Maintenance, Reservations, Accounting and of course Management. Secure their buy-in. This collaborative approach ensures the PMS implementation aligns the needs and expectations.

6 Plan for change management:

Set your organisation's tone from the top by having key leadership commit to the enterprise of data protection and demonstrate it in their daily practices.

7 Clarify responsibilities:

Develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the implementation requirements are understood and embraced by end users, incorporating extensive training programs and ongoing support. This approach facilitates smooth adoption and effective utilization of the new PMS across all levels of the organization.

3 Avoid random input channels

Do not allow random input to be sent to your partner without a single communication funnel to the PMS partner. A centralized communication channel ensures clarity, consistency, and effective coordination throughout the planning and implementation process.

4 Forget to consider end-user involvement:

Early involvement of end-users ensures that the system meets practical needs and gains necessary support. Failing to involve end users and other stakeholders early in the process can lead to poor adoption and project failure.

5 Fail to consider support structures:

Do not decide without considering the long-term support and service structure of the PMS partner, for every region where you have hotels. Adequate support and service level agreement is crucial for ongoing system maintenance, troubleshooting, and ensuring long-term success.

6 Ignore scalability costs per your needs:

Avoid choosing a PMS that cannot scale with your enterprise's growth and future needs at a reasonable cost. Scalability is essential for accommodating expansion and adapting to evolving operational demands across the entire organization.

7 Leave out customization needs:

Ensure the PMS offers necessary customization options to meet your enterprise's unique operational requirements, as customization is crucial for addressing specific needs and optimizing performance across various properties and departments.

8 Ignoring to check the roadmap:

What features are on the roadmap, does the PMS partner have a vision for the coming years and decades, do they have the resources to execute on the vision?

8 Review reporting and analytics capabilities:

Choose a PMS that offers robust reporting and analytics features, enabling you to gain valuable insights into your operations. Comprehensive data analysis helps optimize performance, identify trends, and make informed decisions across your entire hotel chain.

9 Evaluate data privacy and sovereignty laws:

Ensure the PMS complies with local data sovereignty laws and privacy regulations. Understand the legal landscape, storage requirements, and cross-border transfer restrictions to protect sensitive information, maintain compliance, and avoid legal repercussions.

10 Focus on security:

Prioritize a PMS that provides robust security features to safeguard guest data and ensure operational integrity across all properties. Are they doing penetration testing? What are the stats and how do they deal with problems when they arise. Implementing strong security measures is essential for maintaining trust with your guests and compliance with data protection regulations globally.

11 Rapid property creation:

Select a PMS that enables quick and efficient creation of new properties, facilitating seamless expansion and ensuring that new locations can be brought online rapidly without disrupting existing operations or compromising service quality.

12 Guest profiles and preferences:

Ensure the system makes it easier to recognize guests, know their preferences, understand their lifetime value to the hotel and the group, and share those with the hotels and staff who need to use it to deliver better service.

9 Disregard data privacy:

Do not neglect to ensure the PMS can adhere to data privacy compliance because different regions might have different laws. A disregard in one region could effect the whole enterprise's reputation and operational integrity.

10 Choose based on price alone:

Do not select a PMS solely on cost; it is the backbone of your operation. Look at all aspects including its features, support, and how well it meets the specific needs of your properties across different regions.

11 Neglect training:

Avoid choosing a vendor that does not offer comprehensive training programs for your staff, as thorough training is essential for successful implementation and ensures that all users can effectively utilize the new PMS.

12 Ignore integration limitations:

Do not overlook a PMS's limitations in integrating with your current systems, as this can create operational silos, hinder seamless workflows, and prevent efficient data sharing across various departments and properties.

13 Disregard multi-currency support:

Ensure the PMS can handle multi-currency transactions if operating in multiple countries, as this capability is essential for seamless financial operations, accurate accounting, and providing a smooth guest experience across different regions.

14 Downplay language and cultural differences:

Do not underestimate the impact of cultural differences on system adoption and usage. Tailoring the PMS to accommodate multiple languages, local customs, preferences, and practices can enhance user acceptance and overall operational efficiency across different regions.

13 Adaptability to regulations:

Ensure the PMS can easily update rules and processes to comply with changing regulations across different properties. This flexibility is crucial for maintaining legal compliance and operational consistency throughout the entire hotel chain.

14 Request extensive demos:

Test the PMS with real-world scenarios across multiple properties to thoroughly evaluate its performance, compatibility, and scalability with your operations. Ensure actual users are on the demos so they can evaluate and test it. This ensures the system can handle the unique demands and complexities of your hotel group.

15 Plan for future technological advancements:

Ensure the PMS you choose is designed to accommodate future technological innovations and advancements in the hospitality industry. This requires a strong API-first foundation that will not be a blocker for future technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced data analytics tools. Futureproofing your operations is crucial to protect your investment.

16 Review integration capabilities:

Ensure the PMS can seamlessly integrate with other existing systems and third-party applications across the entire hotel chain, maintaining operational performance and enabling comprehensive data sharing and management throughout the enterprise.

15 Underestimate the importance of local support:

Ensure the PMS can handle multi-currency transactions if operating in multiple countries, as this capability is essential for seamless financial operations, accurate accounting, and providing a smooth guest experience across different regions.

In summary, the multifaceted and large-scale nature of enterprise hotel chains makes the selection of the right PMS even more critical compared to individual properties. The system must support extensive integrations, scalability, data management, and regulatory compliance while ensuring consistency and efficiency across all locations.

Cloud Connected Hotel



Wolfgang Emperger
SVP & GM For Europe, Africa, And UK & Ireland, Shiji





Cendyn™

Grow with every guest

At Cendyn, our integrated technology solutions bring growth to the hospitality industry by connecting you with your perfect guests through uniquely meaningful experiences. We make every guest interaction an opportunity to nurture relationships and maximize profitability. With every search and every booking, we help you create momentum that drives growth for your business and turns your hotel into a place of deeper human connections and everlasting success.

Find

Transform first impressions into enduring connections

Website

Rate Match

Digital Marketing Platform

Creative Strategy & Services

Full-Service Digital Marketing

Book

Turn new connections into direct bookings

Booking Engine

CRS

GDS

Corporate Sales

Call Center

Proposals

Catering

Grow

Grow your revenue with every guest

CRM

CDP

Loyalty

Revintel

Guestrev

Grouprev

Get in touch with us now to maximize profitability and success for your hotel.

INFO@CENDYN.COM | WWW.CENDYN.COM

Revenue + Marketing Do's and Don'ts in Digital Marketing



Tina Markowitz
VP, Global Strategy, Cendyn

Keeping up with the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing can feel like traversing a maze without a map. Yet, when the right strategies are in place, businesses can unlock boundless opportunities to engage

and captivate their audience. Whether you're a seasoned marketer or just dipping your toes into the digital waters, understanding the fundamental principles is paramount. In this comprehensive article,

In this comprehensive article, we'll unveil 15 crucial DOs and 15 critical DON'Ts to steer your digital marketing endeavors toward success, helping you harness the power of online platforms to propel your brand forward.

✓ Do's

1 Optimize for mobile:

Ensure your website is mobile-friendly and provides a seamless experience across all devices thanks to an adaptive web design as 70% of research is now done on mobile.

2 Leverage social media:

Engage with your audience on platforms like Meta (Instagram, Facebook) to showcase your hotel's unique features and attract potential guests through organic posts, reels, and stories. Including Paid social in your digital marketing strategy can also boost your visibility and tap into a qualified pool of travelers.

✗ Don'ts

1 Use AI:

Google's Core Update from March is no ordinary core update, as it includes major changes to multiple core ranking systems – and it introduces brand-new spam policies. AI-generated content isn't inherently bad, but Google values real experiences and first-hand expertise in the interest of its users. So, make sure your website only hosts content that exhibits experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness to keep your SEO in check.

3 Invest in quality visuals:

Use high-resolution images and videos to showcase your hotel's amenities, rooms, and surrounding area to entice potential guests. Utilizing high-quality images (especially videos) greatly improves the user experience and drives direct bookings on your website. So, favor photos and videos taken by a professional.

4 Convey unique and impactful storytelling:

Tell your story and what makes your hotel unique. Your web and ad content should support your images in transmitting emotions with clear, precise, positive, and impactful speech. Your storytelling must be well-written and highlight your establishment while connecting with your audiences.

5 Convey unique and impactful storytelling:

Tell your story and what makes your hotel unique. Your web and ad content should support your images in transmitting emotions with clear, precise, positive, and impactful speech. Your storytelling must be well-written and highlight your establishment while connecting with your audiences.

6 Utilize email marketing:

Build and maintain an email list to send targeted promotions, special offers, and newsletters to past and potential guests, based on your CRM data and customer behaviors. Thoughtful email campaigns can help attract new guests and build loyalty to encourage repeat bookings.

7 Create a content calendar:

Creating a content calendar ensures consistency in your digital marketing efforts by planning and scheduling content in advance. It helps you stay organized, maintain a strategic focus, and align your content with your marketing goals. Additionally, a content calendar allows for better collaboration among team members and provides a clear roadmap for content creation, ultimately saving time and maximizing the impact of your efforts.

1 Ignore (negative) feedback:

Regularly monitor and respond to reviews and comments on social media and review sites to maintain a positive online reputation. Address negative reviews and feedback promptly and professionally to demonstrate your commitment to guest satisfaction.

3 Overlook website speed:

Ensure your website loads quickly to provide a smooth browsing experience and reduce bounce rates. Every second lost represents 40% fewer conversions on your website! Hosting and media file optimization are two sources you can work on to increase the speed of your website.

4 Overspend on paid advertising:

While paid advertising can be effective, overspending without a clear strategy can lead to wasted resources. Set a budget and closely monitor your campaigns to ensure you're getting a good return on your investment.

5 Rely on ROAS:

An obsession with achieving a high ROAS can mean overlooking opportunities for incremental revenue growth. This is due to narrowing the focus predominantly on immediate returns, rather than creating sustainable growth strategies that consider the bigger picture. Instead, look beyond ROAS and consider the Cost Per Acquisition (CPA) and lifetime value (LTV) of each guest to provide a multifaceted measurement of the effectiveness of your marketing efforts.

6 Neglect SEO strategies:

Optimize your website content with relevant keywords to improve your search engine rankings and increase organic traffic. Set up title tags (your web page name) and meta description tags (description of your page, under the blue links of the results). Choose the languages of your website and URLs to cover the maximum of markets in adequacy with your clientele to offer relevant content to the search engines.

8 Use retargeting:

Retarget previous website visitors or those with abandoned carts. By pairing these individuals, based on their past actions, with hyper-targeted offers you'll increase the likelihood of conversion, improve brand recall, and maximize the efficiency of your advertising budget. Bonus: you can easily set this up in your CRM as automated emails with personalization.

9 Offer a seamless booking journey

Less is more. Make it easy for guests to book directly through your website by providing an intuitive, user-centric booking interface, with visible "Book" call-to-actions and a sleek design, otherwise you will lose direct bookings.

10 Encourage reviews:

Entice satisfied guests to leave positive reviews on platforms like Tripadvisor, Google, and Yelp to build trust and credibility. In 2023, as 92% of consumers looked at reviews before buying a good or service.

11 Personalize content:

Tailor your marketing messages and offers based on guest preferences and past interactions to create a more personalized experience. You can leverage CRM data integrated with a digital marketing platform to elevate your advertising efforts and optimize your campaigns.

12 Incentivize direct bookings:

Along with competitive rates, offer additional benefits for direct bookings, such as free breakfast, or discounts on spa services. Highlight these special offers and make sure they are clearly visible on the reservations page.

7 Rely solely on third-party platforms:

While OTAs can help generate bookings, don't rely on them for the entirety of your marketing efforts. Invest in building your brand and direct bookings through cross-channel marketing actions to optimize your return on investment and reduce third-party commissions.

8 Forget to A/B test:

Digital marketing is constantly evolving, so it's essential to test different strategies and iterate based on results. Failing to adapt to changes or sticking to outdated methods can hinder your marketing efforts and limit growth.

9 Spam email subscribers:

Avoid bombarding subscribers with irrelevant or excessive emails, as this can lead to unsubscribes and damage your brand reputation.

10 Ignore analytics:

Analyze your website visitors' behavior as well as your digital advertising campaigns to identify strengths and weaknesses to optimize your online acquisition strategy. Regularly look at website traffic, booking data, click rate, conversion rate, cost of booking acquisition, and other key metrics to identify areas for improvement and adjust your strategies.

11 Neglect social media engagement:

Don't just post content on social media platforms; actively engage with your audience by responding to comments, messages, and mentions.

13 Forget about local events

Stay informed about local events, festivals, and attractions, and leverage them in your marketing efforts to attract guests attending these events.

13 Boost your visibility with paid search:

Implement paid search campaigns such as Google Search Ads and launch brand protection campaigns to seize the top spot on search engine result pages, protect your brand name against competitors and OTAs, and reclaim direct bookings. You can now launch Google Search Ads in Cendyn Digital Marketing Platform in a few clicks, alongside your other campaign types.

14 Track KPIs:

Monitor metrics like booking conversion rates, website traffic, and ROI to measure the success of your marketing efforts, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to optimize your strategy for better results.

15 Launch Google Performance Max for travel goals campaigns:

Capitalize on Google’s machine learning and artificial intelligence to increase your visibility and reach a qualified audience on all Google surfaces for better conversion rates. This type of campaign allows you to rapidly gain media coverage and increase your visibility on all Google platforms, in addition to your other automated or manual campaigns.

16 Appear on metasearch:

Metasearch engines are used by 72% of travelers preparing their trips. Posting your rates on metasearch will give you greater visibility and increase direct bookings on your hotel’s website by up to 30%!

To do this, remember to add all your business information, a link to your website, and list your additional services. The more complete your listing, the more effective it will be. As we conclude this journey through

the DOs and DON'Ts of digital marketing, it’s clear that success in this realm requires a delicate balance of strategy, creativity, and adaptability. By adhering to the principles outlined in this guide,

businesses can forge stronger connections with their audience, amplify their brand presence, and ultimately drive tangible results. Remember, in the dynamic world of digital marketing, staying informed, experimenting with new approaches, and learning from both successes and setbacks are key to staying ahead of the curve.

14 Ignore your competitors:

Monitoring your competitors’ strategies and performance can provide valuable insights and help you stay ahead in the market. Ignoring competitors may result in missed opportunities or falling behind in industry trends.

15 Create advertising fatigue:

Ad effectiveness diminishes over time due to repetitive creative, resulting in declining returns on investment. Avoid ad fatigue with varied and targeted creatives, as 67% of consumers dislike repetitive content and say they want a variety of storytelling, so they don’t have to see the same ad. Find the right balance between reach & frequency to maximize advertising effectiveness.

16 Forget to update your Google Business Profile:

Your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) can help you gain visibility on the Internet. This is your hotel’s identity card on Google. It brings together all the information that characterizes your hotel, making it visible and accessible in a single click. By optimizing your Google listing, you can attract up to 38% more interest from travelers.

Digital Hoteliers

In days of yore, with charm and grace,
Hoteliers knew their rightful place.
Hosts supreme, with hearts so kind,
Creating havens, peace of mind.

Yet now the world has spun anew,
With challenges fresh and dreams to pursue.
No longer just a smiling face,
But masters of a digital space.

Guests arrive with high demands,
Expecting magic at their hands.
Seamless check-ins, Wi-Fi strong,
Every detail must belong.

Hoteliers now must wear the crown
Of tech gurus in a bustling town.
Marketing whizzes, online flair,
Drawing guests from everywhere.

They navigate the realms unseen,
From social feeds to touchscreens’ gleam.
Analytics and data streams,
Fueling hospitality dreams.

Personal touches, modern feel,
Combine to make the perfect meal.
Tailored stays, with apps in tow,
Creating memories that glow.

The art of welcome, timeless and true,
Blends with tech to start anew.
Evolving roles, yet hearts remain,
Hoteliers rise to meet the strain.

So here’s to those who blend and bend,
Who craft the future and transcend.
Hosts and techies, one and the same,
In this grand, evolving game.

Created with ChatGPT 4o



Tina Markowitz
VP, Global Strategy, Cendyn



Do's and Don'ts in Evaluating an Effective Business Intelligence solution



Bill Daviau
VP of Strategic Accounts & Partnerships,
Lighthouse

A good BI solution custom-tailored to your organization's needs is hard to find in any industry, hospitality being no exception. At Lighthouse, building a BI solution from the ground up has been a major undertaking for us over the past decade, and even though we've come a long way, in many regards we still feel like the journey has only just begun. We are constantly enhancing our own business intelligence platform, and still have a laundry list of future enhancements that we are eager to add.

Currently, the amount and complexity of data in the hotel industry have never been higher. Hotel commercial teams increasingly need a solution that allows for quick insights leading to revenue-boosting strategic decisions. If a BI solution doesn't allow for this kind of analysis, it won't be able to compete in the market.

Now, let's consider the essential Business Intelligence Do's and Don'ts. If we were to start from scratch and develop another BI solution for our industry, what would be our top priorities? Similarly, from

the perspective of a prospective customer, what should you look for when evaluating a BI solution for your hotel or organization.

Below, I've compiled a list of Do's and Don'ts based on our experiences developing our platform. This list will offer some basic guidelines, and while it's not exhaustive, it should address the most critical aspects an effective BI solution should cover.



✓ Do's

- 1 Invest in/develop a BI solution that is tailored for the nuances of the hotel industry. Complex nuances specific to the hotel world like pace, as-of-date, comparison date ranges should be addressed.
- 2 Identify your super users, and build a solution that works best for them. Revenue Managers, Commercial Strategists, Revenue Executives etc. are often roles that will spend the most time using a BI solution compared to other roles.
- 3 Provide convenient emailed reports that summarize data in a digestible format for those users who can't be expected to log-in to a new system every day.
- 4 Use KPI Dashboards to summarize important data for the average user, while also allowing for deeper analysis by the super-user.
- 5 Become irreplaceable to the right teams/ personas - an effective BI solution should be a crucial tool for the commercial team.
- 6 Create open feedback channels for users to suggest enhancements.
- 7 Integrate with other industry leaders. By collaborating with other best-in-class platforms you can create cross-platform efficiencies that would be otherwise prohibitively expensive, and risky to develop in-house.
- 8 Be transparent with the data. Call out any discrepancies, unmapped rate plans, etc. so users get the complete picture. Let users know exactly what sources refreshed and when.
- 9 Provide a robust training library and customer care team to allow users to learn more in their own time, and troubleshoot efficiently.

✗ Don'ts

- 1 Assume an out-of-the-box BI solution will work seamlessly for the hospitality industry.
- 2 Expect everyone in the organization to become a superuser - many will only interact with the platform once or twice a week, so the interactions that these users have with a BI solution need to be efficient and highly impactful, not tedious and confusing.
- 3 Rely on KPI dashboards that don't tell the full story behind the data. More doesn't equal better when it comes to dashboards; data should always be actionable.
- 4 Try to be all things for all users. A BI solution should be just that, not also a channel manager, CRM, accounting software all-in-one.
- 5 Add shiny new add-ons without a clear purpose. Things like an AI chatbot, or live inbound flight data via an API might seem slick, but do they ultimately serve the purpose of the platform? Can users find actionable insights from these additions?
- 6 Ignore user feedback - this one goes without saying, but many of our best enhancements have been client requests that weren't previously on our roadmap.
- 7 Create excessively complicated integrations that lead to extremely long onboarding times.
- 8 Sell a BI solution and then go dark, offering no additional value after purchase.
- 9 Neglect the integration of key data sources such as PMS, RMS, Short Term Rental, and other market demand indicators, which are crucial for comprehensive analysis.
- 10 Overlook the importance of a seamless, brand-neutral integration approach that makes data look consistent regardless of the source.

- 10 Have flexible integrations with a variety of quality data providers and data source.
- 11 Continue to bring value to customers after initial purchase of the solution, ongoing education, enhancements, events and training, etc. all bring value.
- 12 Utilize AI to streamline data, be more productive and break down silos to help your team quickly surface actionable insights.
- 13 Automate routine reporting and analysis to increase productivity and free up your commercial team to focus on strategic tasks.
- 14 Provide multi-hotel rollups and dashboards to allow for portfolio-level analysis.
- 15 Provide exports in convenient formats that users still utilize in their day to day. Exporting to .xls and .pdf formats still has value for many stakeholders, and you can't expect users to only live in-platform

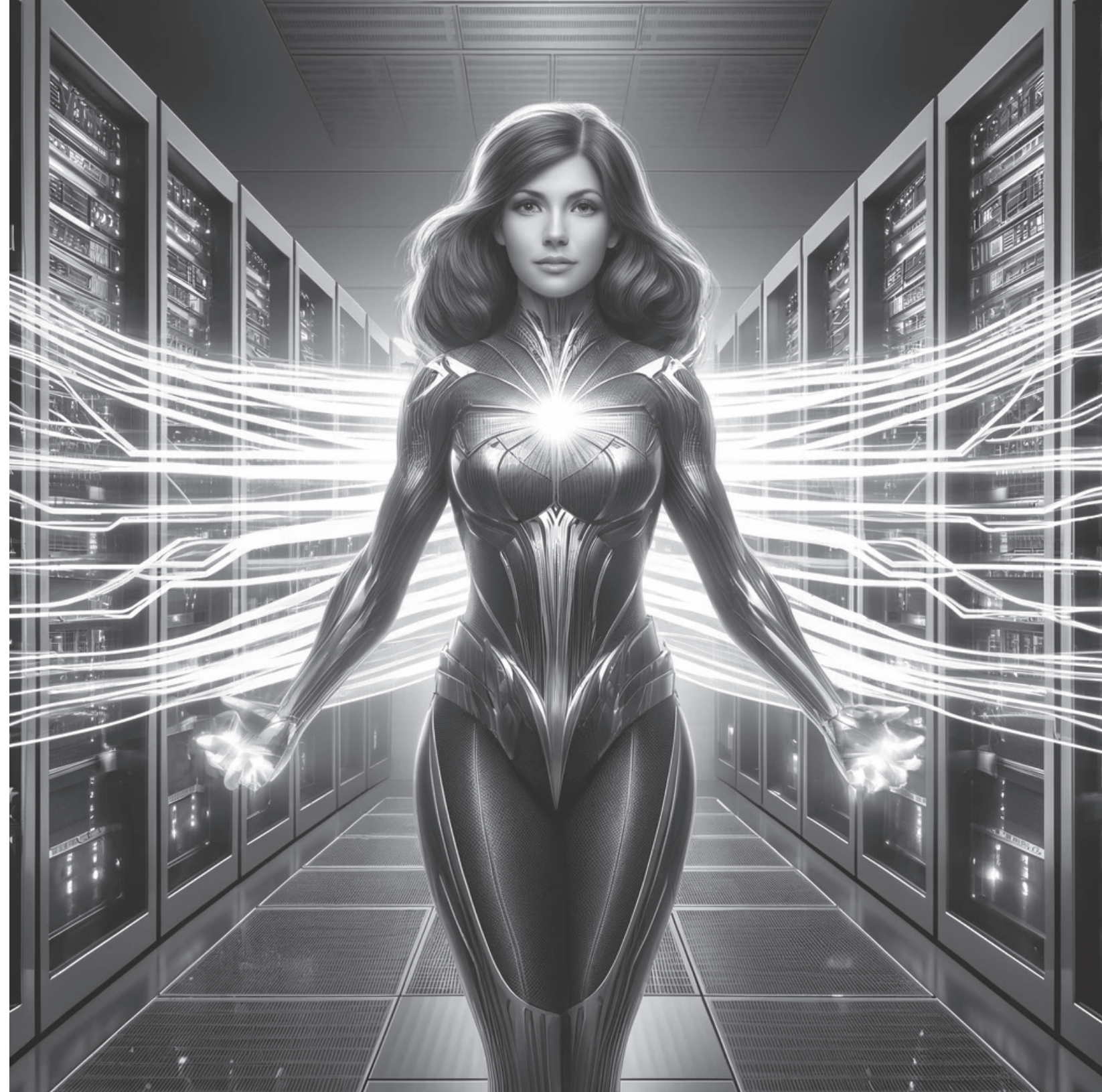
- 11 Ignore the need for ongoing support and robust onboarding. Customers should not be left to navigate the system on their own after the initial purchase.
- 12 Underestimate the value of security. Ensure your BI solution is ISO 27001 certified and developed with a secure SDLC process to protect sensitive data.
- 13 Implement a one-size-fits-all approach. Each hotel has unique needs, and the BI solution should be adaptable to various operational requirements and scales.
- 14 Assume the industry is static. Ten years ago, digital strategy was much less prominent. In another decade, commercial teams may be handling unforeseen responsibilities.
- 15 Assume a BI solution cannot be improved further - There will always be improvements to be made to a BI solution.

Summary

Selecting the best fit for a business intelligence solution is a huge decision that no hotelier should take lightly. When evaluating options, if you find a solution that aligns more with the “Do’s” than the “Don’ts” listed above, it’s a strong indicator that you might be on the right track.

The Business Intelligence landscape continues to become more competitive. BI solutions with a clear sense of purpose, a user-first approach, and actionable data will fare the best. Additionally, a robust BI solution should integrate seamlessly with key data sources, offer ongoing

meet the changing needs of the industry. By focusing on these key aspects, hoteliers can ensure they choose a BI solution that not only meets their current needs but also scales with their future growth.



Chief Data Officer



Bill Daviau
VP of Strategic Accounts & Partnerships, Lighthouse



Image generated with DALL-E

How Data Science Can Transform Conventional Hotel Hierarchies

Viewpoint by



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel Tech Consultant

Surprisingly, many hotel groups and brands have yet to integrate data scientists into their core marketing and IT teams despite the explosive growth of data-

driven decision-making in other industries. These hotel groups seem entrenched in traditional, hierarchical organizational structures that are not conducive to integrating data

science, as these rigid frameworks often lack the flexibility required to incorporate and fully utilize innovative analytical roles. The absence of specialized data professionals means these hotel groups are not leveraging available data to its fullest potential to predict trends, understand customer preferences, and drive revenue growth. This oversight represents a significant opportunity for these companies to gain a competitive edge by embracing data science to unlock innovative strategies for market differentiation and operational efficiency.

What are your thoughts and experiences around this topic? How can hotel groups restructure to incorporate data science into their core-organisation?

With views by



Fergus Boyd
Hospitality Consultant



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel Tech Consultant



Juanjo Rodriguez
Founder, The Hotels Network



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist



Mark Fancourt
Co-Founder at TRAVHOTTECH



Binu Mathews
CEO at IDS Next



Michael Toedt
CEO and Founder, dailypoint



Uli Pillau
Founder and CEO of Apaleo



Jason G. Bryant
Vice President, Nor1 GTM
Oracle Hospitality



Fergus Boyd
Hospitality Consultant



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel Tech Consultant



Juanjo Rodriguez
Founder, The Hotels Network



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist

Any hotel group which values the direct channel (brand.com) already knows that data science has been at the core of digital marketing in hospitality for many years. It's fundamental to customer segmentation, targeting and results measurement. Data analysis is also core to loyalty and membership programmes. Also to anyone in Finance who produce dashboard for Exec level. Also, brand teams who create differentiated customer propositions know the value of qualitative and quantitative (qual and quant) research. The sudden interest in Gen AI hasn't invented Data Science. The experts are already in your companies, unless of course you haven't invested in Direct and instead gift your inventory at high cost of sale to the OTAs. Their data science teams love to exploit your brand!

The data fragmentation in hospitality is a huge challenge the industry faces today. Guest and operational data lives in multiple "data islands" that do not talk to each other: PMS, CRS, WBE, CRM, ORM, CMS, DMS, Social Media and BI. Just a few hotel companies can boast a true single view of operational and guest customer data. Quite often different teams at the property use different sets of data in their day-to-day operations, creating a total "data integrity mess," which directly affects the property's service delivery and guest satisfaction, acquisition and retention efforts i.e. its bottom line. The goal here is clear: bridge the data and technology silos and create an end-to-end data platform. Here is the big question: Can the hotel group or independent property even afford to hire a data scientist to do all that? The answer is no: there is a shortage of data scientists plus they are very expensive. The average salary for a data scientist in the U.S. is \$168,000/year. I believe it is up to the hotel tech vendor sector to create solutions to bridge the data silos. Cendyn's Starling Customer Data Platform (CDP) is a great initiative in this respect.

Data science is an area of expertise that needs specialists, similar to other areas like design and creativity. Typically, most companies have outsourced these non-core functions; in the case of creativity, to ad agencies, for example. A similar process will happen in hospitality: data science can be applied across multiple functions in a hotel brand, but most hotel brands don't have the knowledge or resources to build their internal data science teams. Also, data science lives on data, lots of data. Many brands don't have enough volume to build solutions for themselves. So, if we follow the agency reference, hotel companies will need a team to take the lead in data science, then hire the appropriate talent for each specific project and challenge in their organization.

Oh, that's a good one! I think the problem with our industry is that we tend to fear data as the nemesis of the 'human touch' (whatever that means). Henri is right about hierarchical organizational structures. I live by a quote from Ed Catmull, who says: 'If there is more truth in the hallways than in meetings, you have a problem.' Apparently, this seems to be a recurring theme in our industry, and I think data scientists are feared because they can show that the Emperor actually has no clothes.





Mark Fancourt
Co-Founder at TRAVHOTTECH

My experience has followed the standard technology adoption cycle where early adopters recognise the opportunity and put manpower and tools in place to leverage their data assets. However, in this instance the horse must go before the cart. The ability to have a data science function inside the business is predisposed to whether the business possesses useful data. The lasting challenge faced in the hospitality industry is the lack of automation, and resistance to the adoption of automation. Unless business processes and platforms are automated, there is no data to analyse. In respect of such a role in an organisation, larger organisations have a function of the business to perform the role across the business, as far as available information can support. Others have a level of capability in revenue and forecast or finance functions. None of these approaches are wrong. Simply a starting point for the organisation. Over time and as supporting information from across the business can be harnessed, this team, along with their toolset becomes a support function of the entire business with the ability to provide useful forward looking and retrospective information that can be utilised to improve the overall operation of the business.



Binu Mathews
CEO at IDS Next

The hesitation of some hoteliers to integrate data scientists into their core operations represents a missed opportunity for growth, especially with data being the new oil. There is no doubt that data debt can significantly hinder a hotel's operations and profitability. Here's where data scientists enter, acting as the 'oil refinery' that converts raw guest data into actionable insights. Data scientists are instrumental in establishing and maintaining a data collection strategy, including identifying the relevant data sources and designing efficient data collection processes. Data scientists also enable hotels to make the best use of AI models. This translates to data quality checks that reduce the chances of messy data slowing down the AI model training process, feature engineering, and even selecting and implementing the most appropriate AI model architecture for specific tasks. Having that data discipline significantly improves the efficiency of processes, with clean, high-quality data allowing the AI models to learn faster. In essence, data scientists act as the bridge between raw data and actionable insights, enabling organisations to leverage the power of data and AI effectively.



Jason G. Bryant
Vice President, Nor1 GTM
Oracle Hospitality

We see data maturity across the spectrum in the hospitality industry, but the single most important dimension of a successful implementation of data science and AI is a senior executive who has a clear vision of what is possible. With this leadership in place, organizations can progressively invest in and create a culture where strategic decisions are fortified by data. Generative AI is helping to bring the data science revolution to even non-data science professionals. With relatively simple prompts anyone can access and leverage increasingly sophisticated ML and data science in an instant. This is enabling data-driven decisions to help manage almost all facets of a hospitality business. However, to enjoy those benefits, hospitality brands, owners, and management companies must first invest in the necessary infrastructure. This includes the education of team members on data science and analytics, providing the necessary analytics tools and cloud based data access and storage, and defining processes that support data analysis and data-based decisioning. With strong leadership, educated teams, a central data source that all functions can access, and a proven partner service vendor, then hospitality businesses ready to fully unlock the power of their own data.



Michael Toedt
CEO and Founder, dailypoint

The hospitality industry is ripe for a digital transformation that shifts from traditional, compartmentalized IT practices to a unified, data-driven approach. Traditionally, hotels have operated in silos, but there's a growing push for an integrated system that enhances guest experiences akin to digital giants like Amazon and Uber. A Central Data Management System (CDM/CDP) is crucial for this shift, aggregating data from various customer touchpoints—from websites to POS systems—into a comprehensive dataset. This consolidation is vital for leveraging insights that improve guest satisfaction and operational efficiency. However, simply collecting data isn't enough. Implementing Data Quality Management (DQM) ensures the data is accurate and reliable, forming a solid foundation for strategic decision-making. Once the data infrastructure is robust, hiring data scientists becomes a transformative step, refining raw data into valuable insights that drive innovation. This strategic overhaul not only enhances operational efficiencies but also redefines hotel management, making data-driven decision-making the cornerstone of modern hospitality. This evolution from data to valuable insights mirrors the refining of oil, turning data into a strategic asset that propels the industry forward.



Uli Pillau
Founder and CEO of Apaleo

Hoteliers are increasingly leveraging generative AI like ChatGPT, enabling a "no-code" approach for natural language inquiries and reshaping the traditional complexities of programming and data analysis. Given the industry's labour shortage and the cost of skilled data scientists, we advocate for practical implementation over data accumulation, prioritising actionable insights from essential data. While traditionally led by data scientists, the rise of AI introduces new organisational structures. The democratisation of data through extensive AI use empowers individuals with minimal technical skills to enhance hotel services, from personalised guest interactions to streamlined operations. This includes citizen data scientists who utilise AI tools for analysis, fostering collaboration within centralised or unit-specific data teams. Experienced data scientists usually lead data teams, while citizen data scientists, even if they're part of a team, often work independently to tackle different business needs across departments. To ensure success, hotels should make data easily accessible, enabling citizen data scientists to access it whenever and however they need. This means connecting AI, like ChatGPT, to the hotels' operational data, such as the property management platform. We envision this collaborative structure promoting knowledge sharing and innovation, ensuring holistic utilisation of data resources throughout the organisation.



Max Starkov
Hospitality & Online Travel
Tech Consultant



Pillars of Continuity: A CTO's Strategy for Navigating Tech Trends in Hospitality IT



Matt Schwartz
Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
Sage Hospitality Group

Pillars of Continuity: A CTO's Strategy for Navigating Tech Trends in Hospitality IT

Matt Schwartz, CTO of Sage Hospitality Group, underscores the importance of foundational pillars in the ever-evolving field of IT, drawing a parallel to the enduring structures of ancient Greece. Upon joining Sage in 2015, Schwartz established five key strategic pillars that guided Schwartz's IT strategy, enduring through various technological trends. Schwartz details the integration of AI into these areas, enhancing data analysis, personalized guest experiences, cybersecurity, associate productivity, and guest services. He advocates for AI's role in future innovations, including hiring processes and advanced technical support, urging IT leaders to identify their own foundational pillars to navigate constant change.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is credited with saying, "Change is the only constant in life". And no functional discipline changes more frequently and more dramatically than IT. So how do hospitality CTOs keep up with all of this change? Well, similar to the ancient Greek structures like the Parthenon and the Acropolis that are still standing today, the key to longevity is to have strong, foundational pillars.

In 2015, I took the helm of the IT team at Sage Hospitality Group. I identified five focus areas – my pillars for success. After securing buy-in from the CEO and the board, these pillars became the foundation for our IT strategy. For the past nine years these pillars have remained constant, they have become my de facto agenda, even as the hype cycle around new

technologies such as blockchain, NFTs, cryptocurrency, and, more recently, AI, have dominated discussions. True foundational pillars stand the test of time, especially as technology fads come and go. Here are my five pillars:

01 Business Intelligence (BI) and Analytics

Despite years of hype around BI – dashboards, alerts, Big Data, Hadoop – many development teams still define success by sheer volume of reports or dashboards. But hospitality leaders didn't enter this industry to be buried in reports. To solve for this potential misalignment, I focus on cutting through the noise by delivering fewer and more impactful reports. Each report must drive tangible value; unused reports are decommissioned. This frees up valuable time for what truly matters: ensuring data quality.

02 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

At Sage, we always strive to provide personalized and memorable guest experiences, and the key is knowing preference details for each guest. After exploring various CRM platforms Salesforce.com emerged as the best option. Now, our independent hotels, spas, restaurants and guest Wi-Fi systems, feed data directly into Salesforce.com. This has resulted in the creation of a powerful, proprietary, CRM database that contains more than 1.5 million unique guest profiles. As the database grows in both volume and detail, we can recognize repeat guests with "surprise and delight" experiences across our portfolio of independent hotels and restaurants.

03 Cybersecurity

Cyber criminals have not been kind to the hospitality industry. Just last year, giants like MGM Resorts, Motel One, Caesars Entertainment, and Omni Hotels & Resorts fell victim to major attacks. For every vulnerability we address, the cyber criminals seem to find five vulnerabilities to exploit. We

are constantly in reactive mode, always playing defense; the power dynamic isn't changing.

However, proactive defense is possible. We must build a security framework and invest in the areas of prevention, detection, and response. At Sage we follow the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) and prioritize endpoint monitoring, network monitoring, email scanning, associate identification and authorization, as well as associate training and routine testing. This is one area of IT where spending is an investment, not a cost. We constantly inspect for intrusions, and are prepared to respond quickly – having a relationship with a good cyber attorney always helps too.

04 Increasing Associate Productivity

Labor is the number one expense of running a hotel and many hotels are still operating with reduced labor levels after the pandemic. Given the challenges of this labor environment, we must empower associates with tools to tackle their workload and increase efficiency. At Sage, we equip our team with tools to help them 'do more with less.' We use Microsoft Office 365 for email and productivity applications, Box.com for file management and document collaboration, Zoom for web conferencing, Asana for project management, and Concur for expense management. This streamlined approach frees up valuable time, allowing our associates to focus on what really matters: creating amazing guest experiences.

05 Improving the Guest Experience

At Sage Hospitality our mission is to "Enrich Lives, One Experience at a Time." Guests expect the basics: ample hot water, A/C on a hot day, reliable Wi-Fi and clean rooms. But it's the extras that transforms an overnight stay into a memorable experience. The warm and knowledgeable team behind the front desk, the engaging activation

in the lobby, a compelling food and beverage program, inviting scents and music...it all adds up to create an atmosphere that makes a guest smile. We look for opportunities where technology can mitigate friction; think online check-in, kiosks, mobile key, interactive guest communication, and plenty of power outlets.

Applying AI

Now, back to my original analogy about the architecture of ancient Greece: these pillars are meant to stand the test of time. So let's apply Artificial Intelligence (AI) to the five Sage Hospitality IT pillars and see how it can help to strengthen our foundation: AI, have dominated discussions. True foundational pillars stand the test of time, especially as technology fads come and go. Here are my five pillars:

01 Business Intelligence (BI) and Analytics

We are applying a private instance of OpenAI's ChatGPT to our financial data so that all corporate and property leaders can retrieve information without having to login, or navigate, any applications.

02 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

We are leveraging Salesforce.com's "Einstein" AI to create micro-targeted guest lists for intelligent email marketing offers. With AI, CRM platforms can recognize guest behavior patterns to create customized promotions and maximize campaign performance.

03 Cybersecurity

All of our primary software partners, including CrowdStrike, Arctic Wolf Networks, Abnormal Security, and Okta, leverage AI for anomaly detection and pattern recognition, as well as Machine Learning (ML)

techniques for identifying malicious activity.

02 Increasing Associate Productivity

All of our primary productivity tools have implemented AI enhancements. Microsoft introduced Copilot for Office 365 which automates tasks across the Office portfolio. Box.com introduced Box AI which helps to create new documents and summarize existing documents. Zoom introduced Zoom AI which summarizes meetings, providing notes and action items for each attendee. Over time I imagine that all of our productivity tools will deploy AI functionality, providing us a path to continue to increase associate productivity.

02 Improving the Guest Experience

We are piloting several guest-facing applications of AI including facial recognition, voice assistants in the guest room, AI-based phone operators, and robots. Many guests, particularly in the lifestyle hotels that Sage Hospitality operates, want to interact with people, so we are being extremely thoughtful about how and when to use



Looking ahead

AI is poised to revolutionize the hiring process. Imagine resumes analyzed for fit and accuracy; technical interview questions crafted by AI, and perhaps even AI-powered initial screenings. As IT leaders we need to get ahead of the curve and start incorporating AI skills assessments into interviews: do you use ChatGPT and if so, for what purposes? We have the opportunity to start evaluating candidates based on their first-hand use of AI skills, not just their traditional qualifications.

I think we can all agree that technical support is due for an overhaul. AI-enabled chatbots and phone operators are becoming commonplace for basic technical support. But the future holds something bigger: imagine a world where my well-trained technical support bot doesn't just troubleshoot, it would have secure access to your computer, phone, server, and be able to help on the spot. If it gets stumped, my personal support bot could escalate the matter when it needs my assistance. With this additional functionality my technical support bot could theoretically handle even Tier 3 support issues.

What are your primary focus areas? Once you identify your pillars you will have a robust, hospitality CTO agenda that will guide you through the change we are certain to encounter.



Matt Schwartz
Chief Technology Officer
Sage Hospitality Group

Operations

Reviewing the Welltech Available to Grow Your Brand



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.

Rather than start with some glowing statistic to show the growth of wellness worldwide across various markets or industries, here's a more profound statement: If you don't make time for your wellness, you will be forced to contend with your illness.

Each day, millions of people are acting on this principle by upgrading, updating, adjusting, tweaking and honing their lifestyles with more wellness products, habits and services in order to stave off the trip to the doctor, while also realizing other benefits like better mood, increased cognition and fat loss. It's perhaps the biggest win-win for any individual nowadays. Critically for hospitality, though, as one does at home, one will expect at their chosen hotels.

Yes, investing in wellness is a defensive play to protect a hotel's brand equity over the long run, but it's also a tremendous value-add in terms of growing ancillary revenues, inducing direct bookings through wellness packages, encouraging longer length of stay, improving booking pace or even carving out a new room type for upselling. That said, there's a huge scalability challenge. Most hotels don't have spas and retrofitting space is a

prohibitive cost. For those that do, spa practitioners and therapists are in perennially short supply.

The solution then is to look to welltech, a portmanteau of 'wellness technology', with other related compressions like spatech, sleeptech, fittech and others. The justification for welltech is threefold:

- 01** Allows a brand to expand wellness footprint with relatively low additional labor requirements, making it highly scalable.
- 02** Comes in many sizes and flavors, allowing hotels to pick their own adventures insofar as what welltech to deploy and where, albeit with a bit of shopper's paralysis.
- 03** As this is within the realm of technology, there is the promise of data accumulation that, with the right integrations, can add to a guest profile for future modeling and personalization.

To dwell on the first point, yes there are numerous forms of welltech that require lots of specialized labor such as medspa treatments, any form of injection administration or diagnostics interpretation. But there are numerous other paths that hotels can take where, for instance, spa treatment rooms can be configured for a 30-minute session with the guest left alone besides the beginning and end or devices left in the guestroom as a welcome amenity.

For those hotels with a preexisting wellness center, there are lots of fancy equipment that can be set up so that treatment rooms effectively operate like a multiplex cinema; one therapist moves like a theater projectionist from room to room, setting up treatments at specific intervals on a programmed rotation. Think red light therapy (RLT), infrared (IR) saunas, pulsed electromagnetic fields (PEMF), cold chambers, deprivation tanks, meditative soundscape pod, vibroacoustics, lymphatic drainage suits or combining several of these modalities into one multisensorial experience.

That's the spatech, but not all hotels have spas and not all guests have time to use the spa. Every guest sleeps (hopefully!), so this is perhaps the top area where hotels can excel. Indeed, sleep tourism has emerged in just the past few years as a buzzy way for urban hotels to get an edge by deploying a cluster of sleep hygiene amenities and sleeptech to help guests improve their nightly recovery.

For those traditional amenities, there are the customary pillow menus, pillow concierges, blackout curtains, sleep masks, blue light blocking glasses, herbal teas, aromatherapy and turndown snacks that can induce sleep like a shot of tart cherry juice (one of the rare foods to naturally contain melatonin). Sleeptech, on the other hand, presents a way for hotels to tremendously augment their in-room sleep programs by giving guests an experience they can't get anywhere else just yet.



Here are some options that fall under the purview of sleeptech:

- 01 Circadian lighting that's app or television-integrated and perhaps motion-activated, dimming in the evening and adjusting to the red-amber color spectrum to imitate a setting sun.
- 02 Wearable rings and bands that track one's sleep to highlight any deficiencies as well as other specifics like blood oxygenation, possible apnea or heart rate variability (HRV).
- 03 New types of noiseless HVACs with enhanced air purifiers to improve the air quality in the room.
- 04 Advanced climate controls that can adjust the room temperature to be optimized for both deep sleep and REM cycles.
- 05 Mattresses and bedding technologies that now have built-in temperature and moisture controls or mats that wrap around the bed to provide those attributes as well as electrical grounding.
- 06 On-demand yoga, stretching, journaling or mindfulness programs accessible via the in-room television or app-integrated Shower technologies that can range from vitamin-infused showers to new systems that tell you temperature and time for those that want in-room contrast therapy.

- 07 While mentioning melatonin, there are plenty of other sleep-enhancing supplements that can be delivered to the room efficiently via on-demand ordering systems (and maybe delivery robots).
- 08 Calming soundscapes from speaker systems or other meditation-oriented apps Vibroacoustic and gravity wave installations under the mattress that can deliver relaxation and lymphatic drainage while one rests

There are a handful providers who can help with all of these amenities, so it is a matter of planning what direction you want to go in with your sleep program. Indeed fitness also plays a role in the sleep that one gets, so we cannot exclude fittech from the conversation. But good sleep is the foundation of foundations for good health and that's also the primary reason why most guests need a hotel room, so an enhanced sleep program with sleeptech is the best place to start. Beyond this, there's a whole world of other welltech at your disposal worth exploring to see if they are applicable to your brand, so keep learning and keep upgrading your hotel's wellness programming.



Adam Mogelonsky
Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd.



Operations

Do's and Don'ts when Selecting and Managing Online Reputation Solutions



Danica Smith
Director of Product Engagement & Strategy,
Shiji ReviewPro

Effectively managing hotel reviews is critical for maintaining reputation and enhancing guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Reviews have a significant impact on everything from guest perception to revenue,

making it essential for hotels to manage them efficiently. The process involves addressing diverse needs across the industry, requiring systems capable of handling extensive data, integrating with various platforms,

and providing actionable insights. Additionally, the growing emphasis on personalized guest experiences and prompt responses to feedback necessitates strategies that are solid and adaptable to industry changes. The following practices are a must, for hotels to significantly improve their guest review management and with that their overall guest satisfaction.

Effective review management not only addresses guest feedback but also integrates valuable insights into operations and marketing strategies. This comprehensive approach ensures that hotels remain responsive to guest needs, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in service. Adopting these practices will help hotels maintain a competitive edge, build stronger relationships with their guests, and drive sustained success in an increasingly dynamic hospitality industry.

✓ Do's

1 Implement a guest experience/reputation management solution:

Drive efficiency and ensure guest satisfaction is central to your business with a solution providing tools and strategies to enhance guest satisfaction and streamline operations.

2 Source a partner, not just a vendor:

Choose a partner who shares best practices, sets strategies to improve guest experience, and supports you throughout the journey, not just a vendor.

✗ Don'ts

1 Vendor investment and adaptation:

Don't choose a vendor that doesn't invest in their solutions and adapt to hoteliers' needs, like an impact analysis dashboard for understanding positive and negative impacts on guest experience.

2 Client feedback in development:

Ensure the vendor builds their platform with client feedback. For example, Clermont Group helped Shiji ReviewPro create a 'To Do' page for their Case Management Solution based on maintenance team needs.



3 Choose an industry-specific

Ensure the platform is tailored for the accommodation industry, as its needs are distinct from retail or banking, providing relevant tools and features.

4 Look for a vendor who provides great educational content:

Select a vendor offering valuable educational content, like industry benchmark reports, to keep you informed about best practices and industry trends.

5 Ensure the provider you work with stays updated on industry changes:

Opt for a vendor that monitors industry updates, as online reputation management evolves rapidly, ensuring you stay current with changes.

6 Great UI experience and mobile app:

Choose a vendor with an intuitive user interface and mobile app for staff, enabling easy navigation and quick access to detailed guest data.

7 Manage guest expectations:

Ensure property review and OTA page content accurately reflects what guests can expect during their stay, managing their expectations effectively.

8 Guest experience strategy specialists:

Ensure your vendor offers specialists who provide quarterly business reviews, highlighting performance areas and suggesting improvements to enhance guest experience.

9 Benchmark against competitors:

Select a vendor allowing you to benchmark performance against competitors at both property and brand levels across various key metrics.

3 Identify strengths and weaknesses:

Leverage guest review solutions to identify strengths and weaknesses, improving guest experience. A Harvard study shows a 1-star increase can contribute to a 5-9% revenue increase.

4 Unlimited user access:

Choose a solution provider offering unlimited user licenses at no extra cost. Everyone, from owners to housekeeping, should have access to the guest experience platform.

5 Value of negative reviews:

Don't assume all negative reviews are bad. They make positive reviews more trustworthy and allow you to respond with context, focusing on areas needing improvement.

6 Tailored training for team

Provide all team members with training on the guest experience platform, tailored to each department. Choose a vendor offering premium account management support.

7 Significance over volume of mentions:

Don't assume the volume of mentions is the most important metric. Few complaints about dirty bathrooms are more significant than many about cocktail prices.

8 Flexible account configuration:

Choose a vendor that provides flexibility in configuring your account to match your business setup, whether regional, by brand, or by cluster GMs, essential for brands and management companies.

9 Forget to update your Google Business Profile:

Don't launch marketing campaigns without aligning them with guest satisfaction data. Avoid promoting bed quality if you have negative bed reviews.

10 Technology investment:

Choose a vendor investing in technology to stay ahead, as most travelers believe advanced tech enhances safety and personalizes travel experiences.

11 Provide relevant data to relevant users:

Ensure your solution delivers pertinent data to appropriate users through customer views, reports, and filters, maintaining engagement and focus.

12 Set goals and KPIs:

Establish clear goals and KPIs, like guest satisfaction scores, to benchmark performance, drive improvements, and tie them to incentives such as GM bonuses.

13 Respond to reviews strategically:

Implement a management response strategy to address reviews effectively, considering their influence on prospective guests' booking decisions.

14 Leverage guest feedback for Cap-Ex decisions:

Use guest feedback to prioritize capital expenditure decisions, such as refurbishments, by addressing areas with the highest negative mentions.

15 Understand different guest segments:

Analyze guest segment preferences and complaints to support both operational and commercial teams, ensuring tailored experiences and improved satisfaction.

10 Timely review responses:

Respond to reviews in a timely manner. Sixty-eight percent of TripAdvisor's website traffic would choose an establishment over another based solely on management response.

11 Avoid generic review responses:

Don't respond to reviews with generic responses; it's not a tick-box exercise. Personalize responses to address specific guest feedback and concerns.

12 Use workgroups for guest intelligence:

Utilize workgroups to funnel guest intelligence to the right teams for actionable insights. For instance, create a housekeeping case for every negative review mentioning "dirty."

13 Significance of review volume:

Review volume significantly impacts ranking algorithms on OTA and review sites. Don't underestimate its importance in your online presence and reputation.

14 Leverage guest intelligence across organization:

Share guest intelligence beyond operations. HR can celebrate staff mentions, procurement can monitor supplier impact, and IT can assess technology's effect on satisfaction.

15 Monitor sustainability mentions:

Don't ignore guest feedback on sustainability. Mentions of sustainability have increased yearly since COVID ended, reflecting its growing importance to guests.



Danica Smith
Director of Product
Engagement & Strategy,
Shiji ReviewPro



Leading with generative AI: From enablement to empowerment



Stephan Wiesener
Founder, Apaleo



Mike Rawson
CTO, citizenM

How you integrate generative AI into your hotel operations will be the most important technology decision for the next 10 to 15 years. Just like the internet redefined our world, AI is set to do the same, and possibly even more.

Identifying your north star is crucial when considering where AI can most benefit your business. CitizenM, a rapidly growing global hotel chain, is guided by a dual focus on AI-driven automation and personalisation at scale. This approach drives significant outcomes for staff and guests, hinging on their property management platform, Apaleo, to unlock AI's full potential.

The future of property management must evolve to enable AI innovation, making it quick and easy for hoteliers to integrate constantly evolving generative AI into daily operations. Instead of merely tackling current challenges, a property management system should maximise AI's benefits, offering

scalability and flexibility for new innovations to come.

The big question is how to achieve this while keeping costs down and avoiding the need for a large tech team.

Your backbone, fully accessible via APIs

Your first crucial step is ensuring your technical ecosystem is flexible enough to embrace new innovations. AI needs seamless access to your property data and business logic to make informed decisions. This is why a PMS fully accessible via APIs is at the heart of your AI journey. It ensures all your property data and capabilities are available and easy to integrate with your entire ecosystem, spanning multiple third-party hotel apps and touchpoints, including AI.

An API-driven platform with MACH architecture (Microservices-

based, API-first, Cloud-native, and Headless) places APIs at the core. Unlike pre-built solutions that only address specific problems for a narrow range of users, this approach unlocks endless possibilities for your AI-driven innovation. In the next few years, this could even eliminate the need for a traditional PMS user interface, allowing property data to be accessed and managed directly through APIs via voice assistants, text messaging or future AI-driven channels, which we don't even think of today.

Trying out ready-made AI-driven apps

You don't have to be tech-savvy to notice how quickly businesses and newly funded start-ups are launching their AI-driven apps. According to research by Gartner, by 2026, 30% of new applications will use AI, up from less than 5% today. Similarly, the market of hotel apps is evolving at an incredibly fast pace.

One of the benefits of an open MACH ecosystem is that you can plug in the best third-party tools available whenever you want. These tools often come with free trials and 1-click connections, making it easy to integrate, test, and find the best fit for your needs.

With such open ecosystems, the onboarding or offboarding of AI tools can be completed in just a few hours. This flexibility allows you to integrate top third-party tools for various AI applications, including voice-assisted reservation management, upselling, inventory optimization, and in-room energy usage controls.

A MACH ecosystem can provide a stable, long-term foundation to cope with the highly dynamic development of AI and AI-driven applications. From a technology perspective, using a MACH platform allows hospitality businesses to try out and roll out the latest AI tech without replacing their core systems; they only need to plug in new apps.

Create your own custom AI extensions

One of the most exciting and competitive aspects of AI integration is the ability to connect your MACH platform directly to large language models (LLMs) like OpenAI's Custom GPTs, enabling AI to execute automated workflows tailored exactly to your business ideas and needs. Think of AI extensions as your intelligent assistants behind the scenes, engaging guests and streamlining your operations across all aspects of your business, whether it's managing reservations, front office communication, marketing, or maintenance. This positions AI as the first line of defence, handling repetitive tasks and significantly reducing the burden on your staff.

AI extensions excel when integrated with your property data. Unlike generic chatbots, these AI extensions offer flexibility to act seamlessly on your business processes, using your hotel's data in real-time. Since the triggers come from APIs and the actions are executed via APIs again, an API-driven MACH platform is crucial in this process.

Create your own custom AI extensions

When connecting an LLM to your MACH architecture you can write requests and give instructions in plain language, and it will handle them.



These commands are called "prompts." You don't need developers for this; it's like talking to your hotel software. In the past, you had to program software for this, but now it's more like having a conversation in everyday language with your team. This will lead to the democratisation of AI in hospitality. In a MACH ecosystem, AI prompts can be easily published and shared like code snippets. Imagine a community of hoteliers, consultants, and developers who are constantly evolving and sharing AI recipes that can be picked up and adapted to the specific business needs of individual hotels. AI transformation in hospitality is ultimately about collaboration, instant sharing, and continuous learning.

Final thoughts on the future outlook

Anticipating future needs is challenging - we can only discover what AI will truly bring as time progresses. Many of the AI applications that will shape the future are ideas that haven't even crossed our minds yet. All technology implementations are dynamic and iterative processes, and with the business landscape constantly in flux, choosing a rock-solid, compliant, and secure AI-enabling foundation for this journey is essential.

Navigating AI doesn't have to be overwhelming. By partnering with forward-thinking organisations like citizenM, we're leading AI innovation by integrating your property

management platform with LLMs, exploring endless possibilities to elevate your business.

Embark on your AI-driven journey with confidence, free from limitations. Together, we're shaping and acting on the future as it emerges in the present.

API Application Programming Interface:

The foundation of connectivity in your ecosystem, allowing seamless access to your property data and functionality. They allow different systems to communicate effectively. For example, external apps for guest communication, CRM, or staff collaboration can easily access reservation details, guest names, occupancy, rates, and more.

MACH Microservices, API-first, Cloud-native, Headless:

A software architecture that separates the user interface from the business logic, enabling the use of best-in-class technologies. This approach allows different components to communicate via APIs and can be replaced without affecting the overall system.

LLM Large Language Models:

LLMs are advanced AI models that handle text-based tasks. ChatGPT, for example, is powered by OpenAI's GPT models, which are a type of LLM. These models have gained significant attention worldwide for their impressive capabilities in understanding, generating and acting upon human-like text.



Stephan Wiesener
Founder, Apaleo



Mike Rawson
CTO, citizenM



Why Siloed Hotel Tech Categories Should Be Removed From Our Vocabulary



James Bishop
VP Ecosystem and Strategic Partnerships, SiteMinder

As both a keen traveler and someone who works in hotel technology, I straddle two very distinct worlds. ‘Traveler me’ knows what it’s like to experience the seamless – to book a hotel with hours to spare, to navigate a foreign town and find great coffee with the help of satellites 12,000 miles overhead, and to post the experience on social media – all with a few taps of my smartphone.

‘Hotel technology me’ probably knows too much. This version of me knows that the revenue team downstairs is likely bogged down in antiquated, siloed systems that can’t speak with each other, in real-time if at all, to match the speed of progress. This me also knows that, because of this literal lack of connection between systems, the B&B I recently checked into hasn’t changed its rates in eight months and is leaving huge amounts of money on the table. Yes, this me even knows the reasons why the ‘personalized’ ad I was just emailed included some very fundamental errors.

It’s a disconnect of experiences that isn’t just ironic; it’s unacceptable.

Why hasn’t the hospitality industry, which thrives on providing impeccable service to a tech-savvy

clientele, evolved in tandem with its guests? And, given we have the tools and knowledge to break down these barriers, why is industry-wide progress so painfully slow?

As industry insiders and leaders, we owe it to ourselves to ask these questions loudly and regularly, and to hold each other accountable. We should take it personally that findings from SiteMinder’s Changing Traveler Report 2023 showed 78% of travelers globally saw our sector as either average or behind when it came to tech adoption.

We also need to open our eyes wide, and deeply examine how an industry like retail for example has evolved, and shifted from once highly-fragmented to integrated for the purpose of streamlining operations and enhancing the experience of its customers.

The industry transformations happening around us

Let’s dive for a minute into the world of retail, which both we and our customers know so well. Retail was once an industry defined by disconnected experiences. Physical stores, online shops and customer

Let’s dive for a minute into the world of retail, which both we and our customers know so well. Retail was once an industry defined by disconnected experiences. Physical stores, online shops and customer service centres largely operated as separate entities with little to no interaction, and shopping was anything but seamless. Were you ever impacted by ‘in stock’ online, ‘out of stock’ in store? It was a really great way to sprinkle some genuine frustration onto your Saturday morning.

Today, the vast majority of retailers have taken an omni-channel approach to provide shoppers with a unified experience. Customers can browse products online, check availability (accurately), and opt for home delivery or in-store pickup, the internal systems working in harmony to ensure the ordered management of store inventory.

Importantly, the industry has also harnessed the power of big data and analytics to fine tune its marketing efforts. By integrating data from various touchpoints, like online browsing behavior, purchase history and in-store interactions, retail providers are now able to generate personalized recommendations that are likely more impactful than in any other industry, boosting not only sales but loyalty when delivered consistently – all of this the result of connected, flowing streams of data.

The guest problem with siloed hotel tech systems

Unlike users of retail tech, users of hotel tech are met with an environment that remains largely fragmented. Hotel technology is traditionally divided into numerous categories (you’ve all seen the re-hashed visuals): Property Management Systems (PMS), Channel Managers, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Revenue Management Systems (RMS) and more. Every couple of years, a new mega diagram emerges in our industry, depicting the extent of the

choices now available to hotels – and rather than be appalled by the lack of connectivity between the systems contained within these diagrams, we seem to applaud the sheer volume of choice, forgetting that choice can be paralyzing without consideration for best-of-breed systems that connect seamlessly with others.

We should welcome and embrace specialization, but equally we should ensure that it never operates in silo as that can often lead to inefficiency or, worse yet, become visible to guests. Hoteliers are often forced to juggle multiple systems, each with its own interface, data formats and learning curves, not only complicating operations but also increasing the risk of errors and inconsistencies.



The cost of little system-to-system integration to hotels is significant, spurred by sync issues, inefficient rate updates, lack of coordinated real-time insights, and the need for shrinking teams to become comfortable with several solutions. These are but a few of the issues that are leading to both lost opportunities and revenue.

An environment has been created that is squashing, rather than harnessing, innovation among hoteliers who feel frustrated rather than enabled. Similarly, it is encouraging hotel tech companies to literally think in boxes, rather than openly. If you’re one of the few who dare to step out of your lane, you can expect to be penalized by reducing yourself to category speak at events, or being

The harsh reality for independent operators

The reality is that for the world’s hundreds of thousands of small properties, complexity is either the reason they use technology minimally, or don’t use it at all. We are talking about hoteliers that are looking to change their rates for an upcoming event in the same hour they are ordering the new pillow sheets and trying to find their cleaner’s updated bank details.

They are doing their best, but are under pressure, balancing the demands of guests with the need to maintain profitability. In this high-stakes environment, the complexity and fragmentation of technology can be overwhelming. As one of our customers recently remarked, “Being a hotelier is very stressful. If you get just a few of these revenue management strategies wrong, you can ruin your business or life with debt.”

This sentiment is echoed across the industry. Hoteliers face an uphill battle against outdated systems that don’t communicate well with one another, and rather than the current tech landscape supporting hoteliers in their quest to provide an exceptional service and maintain a competitive

forced to select a specific category in awards programs and even... editorial features, such as HOTEL Yearbook Technology’s :)

If the above struggles are coming from even our most seasoned hoteliers and industry vets, spare a thought for the smaller properties that make up the industry’s majority.

MEWS

Empower your staff,
boost your bottom line,
delight every guest.
Remarkable hospitality with Mews.

Welcome to the best in class.

Want to discover more?



Scan the QR code to book a demo.

mews.com

Make it remarkable.

PMS

Do's and Don'ts of an open API PMS



Richard Valtr
Founder, Mews

Across all industries, there's a consistent move towards cloud-native solutions. Hospitality is no different, and hoteliers are adapting quickly to changing guest habits and expectations.

Migrating to this new generation of technology is only the first step. Once you've onboarded with a modern property management system (PMS), it's important to ensure you're getting the most from your new smart, connected solution.

This list of dos and don'ts is by no means exhaustive, but it covers some of the most important areas when it comes to your hospitality cloud. Follow these rules, and you'll ensure your operations see the tangible

✓ Do's

1 Leverage connectivity:

free access to a marketplace of the best hotel technology should fill any hotelier with excitement. Build a tech stack that suits your specific business needs.

2 Test, analyze and repeat:

plug-and-play software with no connection fees means you can keep testing to find which integrations work best for you.

3 Train your teams well:

your PMS is only as good as the people using it. Make sure your teams get proper role-based training at the start and regularly refresh their knowledge to stay up to date.

✗ Don'ts

1 Take on too much at once:

with all the industry's best technology at your fingertips, it can be tempting to connect to everything. Prioritize what's most important so you don't overwhelm your team.

2 Forget about your tech stack:

hospitality is changing faster than ever, so keep track of new technology (particularly involving AI) that could make your operations even more efficient.

3 Rely on your PMS to do everything:

the purpose of a PMS is not to reduce your staff – it's to reduce the burden on them. Your teams still have the most important job: providing personal and remarkable experiences for your guests.

4 Think about the staff experience:

whenever you're implementing new software, make sure you understand how it works and how it affects those using it. It should always make their role easier, not harder.

5 Think about the guest experience:

likewise, every guest-facing software should streamline or eliminate parts of the guest journey that don't add value; think waiting in line on arrival or having to ring reception for room service.

6 Automate wherever you can:

the more processes your PMS can handle automatically, the more time your team will have to provide remarkable hospitality for guests.

7 Utilize mobile access:

one of the benefits of a cloud-native PMS is that you can use it from anywhere, including phones and tablets. This flexibility can modernize guest stays and remove the need for intimidating reception desks.

8 Choose relevant KPIs:

industry classics like ADR and RevPAR will only tell you so much, so it might be worth considering more modern, holistic metrics to track like RevPAG (revenue per available guest) and space utilization.

9 Take security seriously:

particularly if you're taking advantage of open APIs, make sure that high levels of security keep sensitive business and guest data safe.

4 Retain legacy ways of working:

some processes are so ingrained that we continue with them even when they become redundant. Fully embrace cloud-native solutions by dropping outdated tasks like the night audit and manual data entry.

5 Use standard templates

automated emails for booking confirmation, online check-in and post-stay are a fantastic time saver – just be sure to tweak the copy and any imagery so it creates a cohesive brand experience.

6 Treat every guest the same:

everyone is different. Using personalization will ensure that guests who prefer to self-serve can do so, while your team has more time for those who want a more personal touch.

7 Ignore feedback:

whether you solicit it via post-stay surveys or if a guest offers their comments freely, it's vital that you respond to feedback. If it's in a public forum like a review site, be sure to address any concerns in a personal reply.

8 Disregard the data:

working in a cloud-native PMS means you have access to a wealth of data. Don't let it gather metaphorical dust: automate key reports straight to your inbox.

9 Overlook proper access rights:

there's a lot going on in a modern PMS, and not every employee needs access to every part of the system. Role-based access enhances security.

10 Integrate payments:

a fully integrated payment solution means big time savings for staff and ensures ultra convenience for guests.

11 Sell throughout the guest journey:

a modern PMS makes it easy to maximize revenue at multiple touchpoints with one-click payments, from pre-arrival to check-in to in-house.

12 Monetize beyond beds:

rooms are only one piece of the revenue pie. A powerful and flexible PMS allows you to sell multiple spaces and services within the same platform, from parking spots to meeting rooms.

13 Personalize your marketing:

from pre-arrival emails to chat bots to post-stay comms, create segmented and tailored messaging that gives guests the offers and information they need.

14 Implement guest feedback tools:

there are many great reputation management tools that will help you receive and analyze guest feedback so you can keep improving.

15 Consider sustainability:

cloud-native technology means you can eliminate all paper waste if you choose, and there are also plenty of integrations that can help your eco credentials.

10 Fail to communicate changes:

if there's a new feature you're trying or if you're changing processes in any way (even just to eliminate something unnecessary), make sure everyone on your team knows about it.

11 Neglect data security:

slack security measures can lead to data breaches and a loss of trust. All your technology, including API and integration connections, should be of the highest standard.

12 Skip release notes:

cloud-native solutions mean that feature updates and new products can be released without any downtime; read all the release notes as there may be new functionality that will transform your operations.

13 Rush your decision:

if you're choosing a new PMS, take the time to research thoroughly and consult key stakeholders across the business.

14 Be obsessed with competitors:

your property is unique. Don't try to imitate what other hotels are doing; be guided by your own brand values and you'll provide more authentic experiences.

15 Think only in terms of rooms:

overnight guests will remain the bulk of your business, but your local neighborhood can also play a big role in your success. Embrace the community to diversify revenue and broaden your customer base.



Conclusion

Embracing a cloud-native, API-first PMS brings a plethora of benefits. By customizing the system to meet your specific needs, integrating it seamlessly with other critical tools, and leveraging its automation and data analytics capabilities, you can significantly enhance your hotel's operational efficiency and boost guest satisfaction.

The key to success lies in not only choosing the right PMS, but also in ensuring that your staff is well-equipped to use it effectively. Regularly monitor performance metrics, stay updated with the latest software enhancements, and always be open to feedback from staff and guests.

You may find that as you use your hospitality cloud more effectively, you interact with it less on a day-to-day basis. This is the true power of automation: more time to spend providing remarkable experiences to guests.



Richard Valtr
Founder, Mews

M E W S

Security

eIDAS 2.0: A New Regulation That Will Change Guest Data Privacy And Security



Pedro Torres
CEO and Co-Founder, Youverse

The EU is implementing a standardized digital identity system with a secure European Digital Identity Wallet. This will revolutionize travel by eliminating cumbersome paperwork, boosting security, and streamlining. Hotels need to prepare for mandatory adoption by 2026 and develop a strategy to integrate eIDAS 2.0 with existing systems.

In our increasingly digital world, where identity is shaped by both our physical selves and their online representations, governments and organizations are striving to make digital interactions and identity management more secure.

The European Union recently approved a framework for a standardized digital identity system called eIDAS 2.0. The new version is an upgrade to the existing eIDAS regulation established in 2014, that strengthens online authentication across the European Union. Its goal is to create a secure and seamless experience for digital interactions within all member states.

Among other things, it establishes a consistent and interoperable approach to digital identity across the EU. This new regulation mandates robust user authentication procedures for online identification by private service providers,

allowing individuals to manage their credentials in a central digital wallet, simplifying online identification across the different geographies.

But what does eIDAS 2.0 mean for hotels?

With the upcoming eIDAS 2.0 regulation, the European Union is poised to revolutionize travel with a secure and standardized approach to digital identities. Guests today face a multitude of paper documents and fragmented verification processes. This not only frustrates them, but also creates security and privacy vulnerabilities.

The current system relies heavily on physical documents, which leads to a cumbersome experience and increases the risk of counterfeiting and identity theft. As guests are increasingly concerned about how their personal information is collected, stored and managed, feeling in the dark about how their data is handled creates a trust gap for guests.

eIDAS 2.0 promises to streamline identity management, not only for hospitality, but across all industries, ushering in a new era of seamless, secure, and privacy-conscious

customer data management.

This new regulation promotes the use of strong identity verification methods, reducing the risk of fraudulent identification documents being used for bookings or check-in. This creates a more secure environment for both hotels and guests.

A major shift from the 2014 regulation is the introduction of the European Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI Wallet). This secure digital vault allows individuals to store and manage all their personal credentials electronically, paving the way for its widespread use.

EUDI Wallet will let guests store their essential travel documents, like identification, in a secure digital format. This eliminates the need for physical documents, simplifying the checking-in process and ensuring only the necessary information is disclosed. This provides a much higher level of privacy compared to the current system where entire documents are often scanned and stored.

With secure digital identities established through eIDAS, hotels can potentially transform their guest check-in processes and the way they manage and store guest information. Verifying identities electronically is faster compared to traditional methods relying on passports or other documents, translating into shorter queues and a smoother experience for guests upon arrival.

It will be feasible for guests to verify their identity self-service on their phone and get mobile keys instantly delivered upon arrival with a simple ubiquitous face verification on their trusted device.

More importantly, a privacy-preserving approach eliminates the burden of collecting and storing vast amounts of sensitive guest data, reducing administrative burdens.

Standardized digital identities could potentially simplify data collection for hotels. This could lead to more accurate guest information and potentially allow for a more personalized guest experience. However, it's important to remember

EIDAS 2.0 in hospitality: When and how?

Streamlining processes and increasing security aren't optional for hotels with eIDAS 2.0 on the horizon. This regulation is coming into effect in the EU, and by 2026, all businesses will be required to accept and recognize digital wallets.

In the hospitality industry, two years can fly by. Hotels that proactively develop a strategy for eIDAS 2.0 will be well-positioned for a smooth transition when mandatory acceptance arrives.

By prioritizing privacy, hotels can not only comply with regulations but also build stronger relationships with guests, ultimately driving business success. Look for a solution that integrates seamlessly with your PMS and empowers you to put guest privacy at the forefront of your data management strategy.

Privacy-focused data management solutions that integrate with your

existing Property Management System can eliminate the need for separate data entry, reducing the risk of errors. This not only saves you time and resources by ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, but it also fuels personalized guest experiences. Imagine suggesting on-site amenities based on past preferences or sending targeted promotions for relevant services – all while keeping customer data safe from potential breaches.

EIDAS 2.0 in hospitality: When and how?

The upcoming eIDAS 2.0 regulation ushers in a new era for identity management. This shift has significant benefits for both guests and hotels. Guests will enjoy a more streamlined experience, with faster check-ins, elimination of physical documents, and a higher level of data control. Hotels will benefit from enhanced security, reduced administrative burden, and the potential for more personalized guest experiences.

The key to unlocking these benefits lies in proactive preparation. Hotels that embrace eIDAS 2.0 and invest in privacy-focused data management solutions will be well-positioned to thrive in this evolving landscape and differentiate from their competitors.

By prioritizing both security and privacy, hotels can not only ensure compliance but also build stronger guest relationships and drive business success in the digital age.

Operations

Personal Vs Personalization: Why Your Future Starts With Learning From Concierges



Tristan Gadsby
Co-Founder and CEO, Alliants

Tristan Gadsby of Alliants argues that the future of hospitality hinges on empowering staff with the right tools and knowledge rather than focusing solely on guest-facing technologies. Drawing parallels to sailing, he emphasizes that equipping the crew (staff) is more critical than just having the best equipment. He points out the high turnover rates in the hospitality industry and the resulting impact on service quality. Gadsby advocates learning from concierges, particularly Les Clefs d'Or members, who excel in making personal connections with guests, thereby driving higher revenues. By investing in staff training, integrating user-friendly technology, and unifying guest data, hotels can enhance service levels and profitability. He concludes that balancing contactless and high-touch engagement, supported by generative AI, will create a seamless guest experience and empower staff to deliver exceptional service.

From our office at Universal Marina on the English coast at Southampton, I've long been inspired by the sport of sailing. As a sailing skipper, I have learned that having the right equipment and knowing the environment around me are among

the most critical roles at the helm. What is the tide like? How strong is the wind? Are my sails even capable of getting me where I want to go? Yet, something is more critical than my tools or knowledge at the helm. It is ensuring my crew has the tools and knowledge they need to do their jobs. What's the point of having a beautiful boat if you don't have a knowledgeable and well-equipped crew to get you to a safe harbor?

If we take that page from the skipper's manual to ensure the crew has what they need, our industry must reconcile with an unfortunate truth. Too many guest-facing teams lack the tools, knowledge, and support to deal with their environment and elevate service levels that ultimately improve profitability.

Recent data reaffirms this truth. According to the US Bureau of Labor, approximately 1.7 million employees were hired in the accommodations and food industry during February and March 2024, while 1.6 million people left the industry at that same time. At a recent AHLA on-the-road show, their data showed that approximately 70% of front desk employees quit their jobs within the first 90 days of employment. Similar data is echoing across the rest of the world.

This data is concerning because

the cornerstone of exceptional service delivery requires long-term experience, all while our customers are questioning the value of the service they spend their money on. This problem had me asking one question more than any other.

Which should come first: Investing in the hotel, its offerings, and technology that "personalizes" directly to guests... or investing in your teams and their tools to make the act of service so personal the offerings are more memorable?

I found myself circling one group of people the more I tried to find an answer that applies to all hotels no matter their classification: the concierges of the world, specifically Les Clefs d'Or members. My team and I were recently proud to partner with the global concierge organization at their annual Congress in Bali, Indonesia, where we explored this very issue together. The answer we collectively found to the question can be summed up in a quote by Richard Branson:

"Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients."

So if hoteliers follow this advice, then what's the return? Together with Les Clefs d'Or, we discovered that hotels with Les Clefs d'Or concierges generate an average of 40% or higher ancillary revenues than those without them. Why? Because concierges take service so personally, they make the art of service an experience worth returning to. They know personalization has become cut and paste. They know personal connections are unique and lasting. They know their boat and environment better than the competent skippers who empowered and equipped them.

During our time together at their international congress, we focused on three areas for the future with this answer in mind that will help all staff, whether you have a concierge



Pedro Torres
CEO and Co-Founder,
Youverse



desk or not: How can we invest in and spread the concierge mindset across the industry, how do we balance contactless and high-touch engagement technologies, and how can generative AI turn any guest-facing team into superheroes that can automate the ordinary so to deliver the extraordinary.

In this hotel yearbook, we pragmatically break down the how-tos for each of these areas so you're correctly set up for success and can lead your property toward higher profitability and a safer harbor.

The future of profitability is rooted in the traditions of the concierge

According to our partners at Amadeus, their Traveler Tribes research shows that the #1 traveler of every generation is to make memories. And even better, they will spend a premium on those memories. Global ADR and occupancy have slowed while experiential spending is rising, so we must now look beyond the room as the main profit driver. This trend is why we believe our future as an industry is rooted in the traditions of the concierge and expanding their service mindset across all teams. Concierges are, after all, the masters of curating lifelong memories and making service exceptional.

For example, when a concierge focuses on making a personal and honest connection with a guest, that connection creates a lifetime of profit and loyalty. Therefore, a talented concierge's guests will follow them no matter what hotel they work at. No reward points or direct "personalization" is needed. They make service that personal.

During the Les Clefs d'Or Congress, the art of blending technology with the tradition of service was at the heart of everything. In our education day, we outlined a few best practices when looking toward the future of where to first invest in your teams:

Don't cut training. Invest in soft skill development like empathy and active listening. Most of your staff are new to the industry and need the upskilling.

Invest in technology that can support your teams as if it were consumer-grade in usability. Given the above point, the tech should be simple enough to self-learn.

Do away with fragmented guest data in your CRM or PMS that is accessible only to a select few in your operation. When investing in future tech, look at the solutions that help your teams understand the guest's context and needs through connected data. Software that unifies your guest profile data across all siloed systems into a single source of truth is essential.

Primarily relying on tactics like automated pre-stay room upsell emails doesn't cut it anymore. Content is king, so your tech needs to enable your operators to curate content about your offerings on the proper channels and at the right time from pre-stay through departure. Digital itineraries and content management tools should also be commonplace here.

Lastly, remember what Richard Branson said. Your staff are your greatest profitability asset and should always come first. Listen to them and their needs and act accordingly so they can elevate service levels to new heights.

Focusing too much on "personalizing" your assets over your people can ultimately make your guests feel they've been reduced to a membership number. So, instead, give your guest-facing teams and concierges what they need to act with a service mindset alongside the tools to remain consistent. Afterward, you can easily future-proof the growing guest demand for a balance between contactless and high-touch

The future of profitability is rooted in the traditions of the concierge

Historically, major brands worldwide adopted contactless solutions, digital messaging, and other technologies without fully understanding the customer. Digital messaging without unified profiles to give context to customer desires massively eroded the value of messaging to make service personal. Implementing contactless check-in kiosks instead of first looking into digital check-ins via mobile devices did nothing to help check-in queues. Most importantly, stitching together the tech through individual systems meant haphazard integrations that needed more integrity.

The short truth about the future of using generative AI

Without belaboring a topic that has already saturated our entire industry with cautionary tales and wishful thinking, we have learned one blatant fact about the future of generative AI. It has nowhere near the capability to replace staff and directly engage with guests beyond simple low-hanging questions.

However, it can effectively collate data and spit out insights and suggestions to guest-facing teams as their sidekick, turning them into superhumans of personal connection and service. Use generative AI tech to turn the commonly used buzz phrase

The way towards the future here is a simple path forward. This time, "simple" can be achieved with tech that balances everything for you underneath a single platform. By having one holistic system that can offer digital engagement and contactless tech flowing through unified profile management, you immediately have a seamless experience that works. For example, the technology already exists to web provision digital room keys onto someone's smart watch or phone, all while staff text the guest along the way without ever swiveling between

applications.

A seamless digital hotel experience like this is expected to work as efficiently as tech in a guest's home. Through an integrated singular platform of contactless and digital engagement at your hotel, you give your guests the flexibility to choose in real-time whether or not they want to have white glove service or not engage with a single soul from arrival through departure.

"work smarter and not harder" into an actual reality for your teams—hard stop.

In closing, when leaders act as competent skippers and empower their teams to take care of their guests with the right tools and knowledge, your service becomes more personal while you watch your profits roll in as naturally as a tide. As the old sailing adage goes, you cannot direct the wind, but you can trim your sail so as to propel your vessel as you please, no matter which way the wind blows. applications.

A seamless digital hotel experience

like this is expected to work as efficiently as tech in a guest's home. Through an integrated singular platform of contactless and digital engagement at your hotel, you give your guests the flexibility to choose in real-time whether or not they want to have white glove service or not engage with a single soul from arrival through departure.



Tristan Gadsby
Co-Founder and CEO,
Alliants

Harnessing Data Lakes to Transform Guest Experiences and Drive Business Growth



Joe Vargas
SVP & General Manager, INFOR

Data – in many ways – rules the world that we live in today. With countless digital touchpoints woven into our daily existence, data has become its own language and currency, flowing from person to person and platform to platform. Of course, consumers are intimately aware that it's their data that informs the more personalized and convenient experience they crave, but they do not hand that information over without expectation. As the saying goes – with great power comes great responsibility. Data may be a primary currency in today's market, but it must be spent in a manner that protects its value.

The hospitality industry is no stranger to this conversation; hotels are a people-first business and, therefore, a data-centric business. The most successful hospitality brands are those that curate meaningful connections with guests and go the extra mile to offer a comfortable bed and a clean room – but a multi-faceted experience that can't easily be replicated. So, it should come as no surprise that the most successful hospitality brands are those that effectively capture and leverage guest data to curate more meaningful connections and

experiences for their guests. In fact, a HotelTechReport survey revealed that 81% of hoteliers believe it's very likely that technology will be critical for the success of a hotel business in the next five years.

With the inevitable rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), there is a significant opportunity to use data to tailor experiences to individual preferences and behaviors – and yet, many properties are still struggling to effectively implement the technology needed to gather, analyze, and act on customer data in real-time. Moreover, while some leading chains and properties have begun to leverage advanced analytics, ML, and AI to unlock dynamic pricing, personalized marketing, and operational optimization, the wider industry still shows a reluctance and slow adoption rate, likely due to cost, complexity, and lack of expertise.

Your backbone, fully accessible via APIs

The hospitality sector sits atop vast amounts of data generated from each guest interaction – but without the appropriate tools to capture, sort, and action that data, it lacks meaning. It's like cooking a new dish with the right ingredients but no recipe, putting together IKEA furniture without the instructions, or trying to read a book in a different language. Raw data, on its own, isn't valuable – but data that is effectively aggregated and interpreted is a gold mine of insights that can transform operational processes and personalization strategies. Hotels require a tool that provides context and does the heavy lifting, and without this framework, hotels may find themselves at the mercy of a variety of challenges.

First and foremost, it's important to acknowledge that not all platforms are created equal. With AI cementing itself as the buzzword of the season, there is no shortage of hospitality platforms labeled as “cutting-edge” and “AI-driven,” and hotels may feel compelled to build out their technology stack with new, exciting applications. However, the accumulation of platforms can reach a point of diminishing returns; that is, a “platform paradox” effect takes shape when a hotel's operational ecosystem becomes overwrought with disparate systems and, consequently, data silos. According to a study by Experian⁰¹, a staggering 40% of business-critical data is trapped in data silos. Moreover, 84% of executives⁰² report suffering from the negative effects of data silos. Why? Because many of the systems businesses adopt in the interest of optimization are not designed to communicate with one another and, as a result, data can become trapped. Inconsistent data formats, duplicate data, and lack of clear data governance policies can also stand in the way of effective data application and exacerbate the issue of silos. Ultimately, a data-driven platform is only as valuable as its ability to

integrate into your hotel's ecosystem and communicate effectively with other platforms to provide actionable insights. To this effect, 65% of hoteliers⁰³ say the integration of new technologies into existing systems is their biggest challenge.

At the same time, hotels must remain cognizant of cybersecurity and data privacy risks. Across this data-centric landscape, consumers have become increasingly wary of brands that don't go the extra mile to protect their information. As hotels become more digital and adopt more platforms, they also become more vulnerable to cyber threats. With this in mind, it's imperative that properties invest in solutions that offer robust security measures and ensure compliance with data privacy laws.

The role of a data lake

Fortunately, a data lake – a centralized repository that ingests, stores, and allows for the processing of large volumes of data in its original form – serves as a remedy to this problem, effectively breaking down data silos to maximize data insights. Unlike other data storage solutions, a data lake can handle vast amounts of unstructured and structured data without requiring it to be categorized upon entry. This flexibility is especially impactful within the hospitality realm, as data is pulled from a variety of sources and formats.

By storing data in its raw form, data lakes enable hotels to preserve all potential insights, which can be extracted when needed using advanced analytics and ML techniques. This tool also prevents the creation of a “data swamp” via intelligent metadata management. In other words, a data lake acts as

a master interpreter of raw data, ensuring hoteliers understand the data they've captured. A truly interoperable solution, a data lake integrates seamlessly with other platforms to continuously aggregate data from different systems (such as a hotel's PMS, CRM, or POS) without the risk of creating new silos.

Ultimately, a data lake empowers hoteliers to capture data from across their enterprise – regardless of its source – and deliver schema-on-read intelligence along with a fast, flexible data consumption framework to enable new ways of making key decisions. Using this tool, hoteliers can unlock meaningful insights, such as identifying which amenities are most loved by guests or predicting future booking trends. Furthermore, ML models can be applied to this data to enhance a hotel's personalization efforts, from suggesting tailored offers and services to dynamically adjusting room rates based on demand forecasts.

The best part? A data lake is infinitely scalable; as your hotel grows (along with the volume of data you capture), the subsequent infrastructure of a data lake can expand accordingly without significant re-engineering. From a cybersecurity perspective, the centralized, secure, and scalable nature of data lakes also makes them an ideal choice for hotels aiming to protect sensitive data, comply with regulations, and respond swiftly to emerging cyber threats.

As technology continues to evolve, the hospitality industry must embrace digital innovations to stay competitive. In today's market, the ability to capture, analyze, and act upon vast amounts of data (in real-time) can significantly enhance a hotel's success and competitiveness. hotel. By offering a centralized, infinitely

scalable, and flexible repository for all types of data⁰⁵, data lakes enable hotels to break down silos, integrate disparate systems, and uncover deep insights that drive strategic decision-making. More importantly, the implementation of data lakes can transform the guest experience through personalized services, operational efficiencies, and proactive service enhancements. Investing in a robust data infrastructure, such as a data lake, is not just a technological upgrade. It's a strategic imperative that can place your property at the forefront of the industry – today and in the years to follow.

- 01 <https://www.datadynamicsinc.com/blog-disentangle-from-the-shackles-of-data-silos-the-key-to-unlocking-the-transformative-power-of-your-data-assets/#:~:text=Data%20silos%20occur%20when%20different,to%20a%20study%20by%20Experian.>
- 02 <https://www.datadynamicsinc.com/blog-disentangle-from-the-shackles-of-data-silos-the-key-to-unlocking-the-transformative-power-of-your-data-assets/#:~:text=Data%20silos%20occur%20when%20different,to%20a%20study%20by%20Experian.>
- 03 <https://wifitalents.com/statistic/technology-in-hotel-industry/#:~:text=Over%2090%25%20of%20hotel%20bookings,50%25%20of%20hotel%20properties%20globally.>
- 04 <https://www.infor.com/en-ca/products/data-lake>
- 05 <https://www.infor.com/en-ca/products/data-lake>



Joe Vargas
SVP & General Manager,
INFOR



Do's and Don'ts in Aligning Deliverables Versus Guest Expectations



Terence Ronson
Founder and Managing Director,
Pertlink

In today's data-driven world, the hospitality industry landscape is increasingly dominated by large hotel groups and a few pivotal tech providers who manage vast amounts of inventory data. This consolidation has profoundly reshaped guest expectations and preferences. Despite the primary goal of profit-making, hotels must remember that their core mission remains service-oriented.

To navigate this complex environment effectively, here is a list of the Top 10 DOs and DON'Ts for what hotel guests are currently seeking:

✓ Do's

1 Personalized Experiences:

Use guest data to customize their experiences, from room preferences to tailored recommendations for dining and activities.

2 Data Transparency:

Communicate what data is being collected and how it will be used, ensuring guests feel in control of their personal information.

3 Seamless Technology Integration:

Implement efficient technology solutions for check-ins, reservations, and room controls that enhance, not complicate, the guest experience.

4 High-Speed, Reliable Wi-Fi:

Provide complimentary, high-quality internet access; guests expect connectivity to be as dependable as at home.

✗ Don'ts

1 Overuse of Personal Data:

Avoid using data in ways that feel invasive or unnecessary, which can deter guests from returning.

2 Ignoring Data Privacy Concerns:

Pay attention to the importance of data privacy and the potential for breaches, which can significantly damage your business's reputation.

3 Complicated Technology:

Do not implement technology that complicates the guest experience or requires extensive effort.

4 Neglecting Offline Interactions:

Digital interactions should not replace valuable face-to-face customer service, which remains crucial.

5 Rapid Response to Feedback:

Use data to quickly address feedback and improve service in real time, showing guests that their opinions are valued and acted upon.

6 Loyalty Rewards:

Offer value-driven loyalty programs that utilize customer data to provide meaningful rewards and recognition.

7 Consistent Service Across Channels:

Ensure service quality is uniform across all digital platforms and physical interactions, using data to maintain high standards.

8 Advanced Security Measures:

Protect guest data with up-to-date and robust cybersecurity measures to prevent breaches and gain their trust.

9 Environmentally Friendly Options:

Use data to offer sustainable choices that align with the increasing guest preference for eco-friendly accommodations.

10 Health and Safety Transparency:

Communicate health and safety measures, especially in a post-pandemic world, using data to demonstrate compliance and reassurance.

5 Inconsistent Personalization:

Avoid inconsistent or incorrect personalization, which can frustrate guests and lead to a feeling of negligence.

6 Hidden Fees:

Refrain from surprising guests with hidden charges, especially those related to digital services, which can lead to dissatisfaction and mistrust.

7 Ignoring the Human Element:

Don't rely solely on data and technology; the human element in hospitality can never be entirely replaced by automation.

8 Slow Response to Technology Issues:

Address technological failures, as these can significantly disrupt the guest experience.

9 Lack of Training on New Technologies:

Avoid insufficient staff training on new systems and technologies, which can lead to poor guest interactions.

10 Ignoring Cultural Sensitivities:

Consider cultural sensitivities and nuances before using data, which can lead to inappropriate assumptions and services.

This guide will help your hotel align more closely with modern guest expectations, ensuring your service commitment remains competitive and relevant in this evolving industry landscape.



Terence Ronson
Founder and Managing
Director, Pertlink



The Rise of the Post-Search Era: How AI is Transforming Digital Interaction



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist

Simone Puerto of *Travelsingularity* explores the transformative potential of AI in reshaping digital interactions, heralding the advent of a “post-search” era. Using examples like Netflix and TikTok, he illustrates how AI-driven personalization is replacing traditional search methods by predicting user preferences and delivering relevant content proactively. This shift towards AI-centric interfaces, exemplified by tools like ChatGPT and Claude, suggests a future where conversational AI becomes the primary medium for accessing web information, integrating various data sources seamlessly. Such a development could render traditional websites and apps obsolete, leading to a more unified, intuitive, and human-like digital experience. Puerto envisions this evolution as a significant leap in how we interact with the web, moving from fragmented searches to holistic, AI-driven interactions that align more closely with natural human behaviors.

We have built platforms to aggregate other platforms, which aggregate other platforms. Guess what? AI could fix that.

In recent years, we have been evolving towards what I call a “post-search” era. Take Netflix as a paradigmatic example. With a catalog of thousands of titles and a highly diverse user base, it is almost mandatory for them to offer not only hyper-personalized title suggestions but also to propose them in an equally hyper-personalized manner. A particularly effective strategy the video streaming company uses is the customization of artwork used to represent the content. Personalizing not only the titles based on tastes but also how those titles are presented allows Netflix to maximize the click-through rate and, consequently, the time spent on the platform. It’s unsurprising that, according to McKinsey, as much as 75% of the content viewed on Netflix today comes from algorithmic recommendations rather than active and conscious searches⁰¹.

No longer “search,” in short, but “post-search.” This trend is evident, though to a lesser extent, in e-commerce. Today, the most successful companies are not those with the most content but those capable of offering that content in a more finely calibrated way, focused not so much on position but prediction. The validity of this thesis

can be empirically proven by the growing dominance of platforms like TikTok in the field, not only of social media but also of search itself. The AI heart of TikTok, Monolith, tailors content increasingly suited to user preferences. Once we overcome a first wave of generic content, as we interact with Monolith, the algorithm begins to reward us with increasingly relevant results, to the point of making Facebook seem more like a mass media platform than a social media platform in comparison. It is no coincidence that in recent years, there has been a change in user preferences, especially among young people, who increasingly tend to favor platforms such as TikTok and Reddit for their searches, to the detriment of Google.

“Post-search”, “Search” Or, perhaps, even better, “anti-search.” “Anti” because search implies the need (or at least the willingness) to go online and look for something. But if the results come to us without first invoking them, then the term becomes misleading. With the advent of technologies such as MUM and SGE, which bring the power of conversational natural language queries into the search experience, it’s worth asking ourselves: Does it still make sense to talk about topics such as OTA ranking or search engine optimization? The web has finally begun to understand English, too, and not just coding. When Google used to say: “write for humans, don’t write for algorithms,” it was probably warning us. And, it was right. The bad news is that now that we’ve spent thirty years becoming fluent in “algorithmic lingo,” this language has become as helpful as Esperanto (meaning: not helpful at all).

This paradigm shift suggests a radical transition in how web interfaces are conceived and used. Hypothetically, tools like ChatGPT or Claude could one day become the primary or even the sole interface for web access. I envision a future where LLMs transcend their roles as simple external data processors. Instead, these models could evolve into

primary aggregators and distributors of information, particularly in industries such as travel. Such a development would signify a fundamental reversal in the traditional digital ecosystem and a move towards an unprecedented dynamic in terms of interface. Today, OpenAI’s APIs power Expedia and Booking UIs, but tomorrow, it could be OpenAI’s UI powered by OTA’s APIs.

This evolution would radically transform the architecture and interface of the World Wide Web as we know it. Browsing through multiple sites or proprietary applications may become obsolete. In the (near?) future, users could prefer to interact exclusively through a single, all-knowing conversational platform. A transition from an informative web, based on HTML user interfaces and mobile apps, to a generative web, supported by sophisticated LLM algorithms and driven by a new AI (post)search paradigm. A centralized AI assistant powered by a myriad of APIs, with the World Wide Web as the underlying infrastructure and large language models as the user interface.



This shift could significantly transform the traditional reliance on websites and applications to a more unified and composite web interaction. Ideally, a user could scan the label of a bottle of wine, receive an immediate assessment of its qualities, and then seamlessly move on to queries about the provenance of the wine, suggestions for travel destinations related to its origin, recommendations for activities, and even the best way to communicate with locals, all within a single interface. This evolution would be not just a technological advancement but also a behavioral redefinition of how we interact with the digital world, converging specialized functionality into a cohesive, AI-centric user experience. It’ll mark the end of what I call the “logistics” of travel planning (Hallelujah!).

If today we open a thousand browsers and apps, tomorrow we will open a single conversational platform. The practice of sifting through a multitude of websites and applications is, in hindsight, only a convention born out of necessity and, therefore, not immutable, we know

that. The web began with sites, which were then indexed by search engines. This led to meta-search engines, which indexed the search engines. The advent of mobile technology led to the creation of apps designed to improve this frustrating user experience, forcing us to develop app stores to organize this chaotic ecosystem. We have built platforms to aggregate other platforms, which aggregate other platforms. With over a billion websites and nine million apps, I believe that the digital world is ready for a change, as transformative as it is necessary, towards a web in which decision-making processes and digital interaction are simplified and, upon closer inspection, more aligned with human cognitive and conversational models.

It’s just funny that it took AI to make search more human.

Isn’t it?

⁰¹ [mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-keep-up-with-consumers](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-keep-up-with-consumers)



Simone Puerto
Founder | CEO | Futurist



✓ Do's

3 Understand which variables are used for unconstrained demand forecasting.

Understanding these variables allows you to better evaluate and interpret the RMS's recommendations and make appropriate adjustments.

4 Set clear guidelines and criteria for when overrides are permissible.

Specify whether the override should be an input override (adjusting forecasting variables) or an output override (adjusting final recommendations). Additionally, decide on the frequency (how many overrides are allowed within a specified time) and the magnitude (percentage of increase or decrease) of the overrides.

5 Recognize that humans are prone to biases

and consciously try to avoid or minimise them. This can be done by ensuring that override decisions are always grounded in objective information and thorough analysis rather than unsupported intuition or assumptions. a.k.a. gut feeling.

6 Regularly monitor the impact of overrides

on revenue and occupancy. Overrides can be necessary in certain situations, but their impact on key performance indicators should be carefully monitored.

7 Always document the reasons for each override

to maintain transparency and accountability. This best practice can lead to more informed and effective revenue management decisions.

✗ Don'ts

3 Forget to document each override and its rationale.

to maintain transparency and accountability in revenue management. This practice ensures a clear record of why decisions were made, which can be invaluable for future reference and analysis.

4 Bypass established procedures and company guidelines for overrides.

These procedures ensure that overrides are implemented thoughtfully and based on sound reasoning.

5 Avoid making bold override decisions

but be mindful not to overestimate your ability to make correct decisions. The system is there to help and not replace or compete with you. Hence, cooperate and collaborate with it.

6 Accept RMS recommendations hook, line, and sinker.

Even when the system's recommendations align with your expectations, it pays to play the devil's advocate and ask yourself, what if you and the system are wrong?

7 Be overly influenced by the outcomes of your previous override decisions

to make current decisions unless the conditions are the same and related. Always remember that current and past decisions may look similar but are independent.

8 Overlook competition

but learn to move beyond anchoring your decisions to only the competitive set and trust the system.

8 Train the revenue management team

on how to implement and manage overrides properly. The training should emphasise how the team can perform overrides without disrupting the system's learning. **Therefore, the system must be recognised as part of the team.**

9 Know that in normal times, an 80:20 rule of no overrides to overrides is acceptable.

A system reconfiguration may be necessary if the override rate is consistently above 20%.

10 Understand that overreliance on the system's recommendations solely takes away the art of revenue management.

So, it is important to remember that the system does not have the heart to determine guests' feelings and the long-term impact of the decisions on satisfaction and loyalty.

9 Ignore internal and external stakeholder pressures

on human-system interactions - they are real. Do not be fazed by them unless they are data-driven and factual!

10 Note that no overrides are as concerning as too many overrides.

Hence, do not prevent overrides or set rigid rules to stop them. This could lead to dissatisfaction and lack of proactivity.



Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed



Basak Denizci Guillet



Revenue + Marketing

Do's and Don'ts in Direct Bookings



Holly Groom
Head of Product Marketing,
Triptease

Of all the hotel marketing strategies used by successful hoteliers, there's one approach that impacts almost every key performance indicator (KPI) that matters for hotels. Whether you're looking to boost revenue per available room (RevPAR), increase guest loyalty and repeat bookings,

decrease your gross operating profit per available room (GOPPAR) or improve website and booking engine conversion rates, a strategy to drive direct bookings will impact all of these metrics.

Hotels typically pay Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) a commission rate

that can range from 15% to 30% per booking, but the exact rate will vary based on the specific OTA and the hotel's size, location, and the volume of bookings. The more bookings a hotelier can shift to direct, the more revenue and profit they'll drive for the business.

The good news is that getting a direct bookings strategy in place doesn't have to be complicated. This article will walk you through the direct booking basics that every hotelier should focus on first, but also the latest innovations to increase bookings and boost your hotel revenue.

✓ Do's

1 Make rate parity your priority:

Guests will always find the cheapest price online. If you're not paying close attention to the rates available for your rooms across the web, it's highly likely you'll be losing bookings to distribution partners who are advertising prices they shouldn't be. That's why monitoring and fixing those prices should be your top priority. You can do this via test bookings (although this can be a very manual, slow process) or via a rate parity monitoring tool⁰¹.

01 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/new-parity-tool>

✗ Don'ts

1 Use your CRM to only communicate with guests who have already booked:

Most hotel CRMs are full of guest data from customers who have already booked and stayed at your hotel. If that's all you're using your CRM for then you'll only be getting half the impact you could be from this crucial tool⁰¹. Capturing data from guests who have not yet stayed at your hotel and sending them personalized marketing encouraging them to book will both increase the value of the data in your CRM and drive more direct bookings for your hotel.

01 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/grow-revenue-with-pre-stay-guest-data>

2 Fix the biggest parity issues first:

For hotels with significant parity issues, the best approach is to start by resolving the most impactful OTA undercuts first. Look at each disparity in terms of the amount you're being undercut and the number of times it's been seen by searchers to work out which disparities should be fixed as a priority.

3 Build strong OTA relationships, but know when to end them too:

Outside of regularly checking in on your rate parity using a parity monitoring tool, you should also take some time to focus on your relationship with your OTA and distributor account managers⁰³. Check in with them even when you're not having parity issues and build a healthy working relationship - this can make all the difference when problems do arise. And if you have problems repeatedly with the same offending OTAs, consider ending the partnership. OTAs have their place in a hotel's distribution mix, but only if they adhere to the rules of your agreement.

4 Ensure you always have the best price on metasearch:

Many hoteliers struggle with a common issue - their direct channel is visible on metasearch but price undercutting from OTAs is stealing traffic away from their direct website. Triptease data has shown that 61% of all direct prices that appear in meta auctions being undercut⁰⁴ by at least one other OTA which presents a big problem for hoteliers. If you're bidding to appear in metasearch results but you don't have the best price, you're paying to send a booking to an OTA. To prevent this from happening you need to be able to monitor both your direct rates in comparison to your partner OTA websites as well as rates that are appearing in metasearch results too⁰⁵. Again, a rate parity monitoring tool can help with this, but if a potential guest has already seen a better price elsewhere in metasearch then you've already lost the booking. Using technology that can automatically adjust your direct price in the metasearch results and on your booking engine⁰⁶ is the best way to ensure that you beat OTAs on metasearch every time.

03 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/the-hoteliers-guide-to-wholesalers-has-arrived-2>

04 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/new-data-how-often-are-you-being-undercut-on-metasearch/>

05 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/find-out-who-is-undercutting-you-on-metasearch-with-a-free-parity-health-check>

06 <https://www.triptease.com/en/price-match-metasearch>

2 Discount more than you need to on metasearch:

The common belief is that the lowest price on metasearch wins, but Triptease data reveals a more complex picture. While having a competitive price is crucial, excessive discounting doesn't always equate to more direct clicks to the booking engine. Triptease data shows that, while OTAs have to continually offer greater discounts to get clicks, hotels only need to be cheaper by a small percentage⁰². That's why blanket discounts on metasearch aren't always the best strategy. A product like Price Match allows hotels to automatically provide precision discounts to guests⁰³ - only discounting the price by just enough to win the booking.

3 Ignore the importance of high quality first-party data:

First-party data is gold for hotel marketers⁰⁴. Its customer data collected directly by your company through its own channel and sources, avoiding complications caused by data governance rules. But it can be difficult to capture high quality data (including guests' preferences and interests) and even harder to connect data from siloed systems to your hotel CRM for use in future direct booking campaigns. Luckily there are technology providers able to assist hotels in capturing detailed guest data and sending it automatically to their CRM⁰⁵.

4 Offer big discounts to customers who are already likely to book:

With the right tracking on your website you can ensure that you tailor offers and discounts based on a potential customer's likelihood to book. By tracking various events (e.g. running multiple date searches or visiting multiple pages) you can then trigger messages that display only to customers who are either likely or unlikely to book. This means you don't offer the same high-value deals to everyone, and you don't waste special offers on people who would likely have booked a full price room.

02 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/outsmart-the-otas-with-dynamic-pricing>

03 <https://www.triptease.com/en/price-match-metasearch>

04 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/solving-first-party-data-challenges-for-hotels>

05 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/solving-first-party-data-challenges-for-hotels>

5 Invest in a search engine optimisation (SEO) and content marketing strategy:

Regularly update your blog with relevant content to improve your visibility on search engines. AI tools can be a big help to busy hoteliers, because you can prompt them to help you write SEO optimised content quickly. Not sure how to get started? Watch Alex Velazquez, Vice President of Digital Marketing at Westgate Resorts, share his process for creating hotel content marketing using AI tools to save time and drive incredible SEO performance.

6 Invest in a high performing booking engine:

While every business is different and there can never be a 'best' booking engine for all hotels, taking a look into typical conversion rates can offer some guidance. If you're considering switching booking engines you should look to benchmark your current booking engine's searcher conversion rate with the data available for any alternative providers you're considering⁰⁸.

7 Simplify the booking process:

Every additional decision you ask a potential guest to make on the path to booking has the potential to lose their custom entirely. Simplify the number of room types you offer, and provide really clear information on what those rooms look like and what's included in the rate. Make the booking process as straightforward as possible, minimizing the number of questions and decisions you put in front of your guests.

8 Answer potential guests' questions via live chat:

Use a live chat tool⁰⁹ to provide immediate assistance and answer potential guests' queries in real-time. Remember, if they have to leave your website or booking engine to find the answers they need, they might not come back.

5 Miss any opportunity to highlight your direct price:

Price is the number one consideration for customers when they're deciding whether to book, so make sure you highlight your pricing in all available touchpoints of the booking journey⁰⁶. That includes email headlines, in retargeting adverts and even in paid search results. Highlighting your price in paid search ads doesn't just help the right customers to book your hotel, but also prevents you paying for clicks from customers who can't afford your hotel.

6 Let customers leave your booking engine without capturing their data:

Two ways that hotels frequently lose direct booking revenue⁰⁷ are when a potential guest sees 'no availability' for their search dates, or when they abandon their cart before completing their booking. Make sure you are able to capture a customer's details if they abandon their cart⁰⁸ - this can be done via personalized messaging or by capturing the email they input when they began the booking process⁰⁹. For customers who couldn't complete their booking because there was no availability for the dates they searched, provide the option to receive an email alert if the room becomes available again. Even if you can't sell them a room this time around, you can add them to your CRM to target in future marketing campaigns.

7 Pay more than once for the same booking:

Avoid spending money on multiple advertising channels for the same booking. Ensure that your marketing campaigns across different platforms are well-coordinated to avoid overlaps and redundant costs. Use tools that can help track the customer journey and attribute bookings accurately¹⁰, or alternatively consolidate your paid marketing channels under one provider who can guarantee that you'll only be charged once for a guest that has interacted with multiple channels.

9 Personalize your website for every guest:

Every guest is different, but most hotel websites are the same for all visitors. Great eCommerce websites drive conversions by providing a personalized website experience - and there's no reason why hoteliers can't do the same! Using a website personalization tool to create messages tailored to different types of guests¹⁰ will not only encourage them to take action but also give you a competitive edge. By using guest and booking behavior insights, you can tailor your website to boost mid-week occupancy, offer upgrade options to guests who are highly likely to book, and highlight benefits based on whether they are a family or a solo traveler. But it doesn't stop there. For the finishing touch, when a guest lands on your booking engine, you can reassure them that you have the best price and automatically match undercutting OTAs when you're not.

10 Enhance your loyalty program to drive repeat bookings:

About 18% of frequent travelers will choose a hotel brand based on its loyalty program¹¹, and frequent travellers are willing to spend an extra \$41 per night to stay a hotel if they're a part of the loyalty program. A loyalty offer doesn't have to be a discount that decreases your RevPAR either. You could offer late check-outs, free wifi or a complimentary drink for loyalty program members instead of reducing your rates.

11 Offer exclusive deals and packages:

Create special offers that are only available on your direct website and highlight these prominently across your marketing channels. This could be anything from a three nights for the price of two offer on selected dates, to free kids club activities or restaurant and spa discounts.

12 Use high quality visuals and detailed room descriptions/floorplans:

Make sure that the content on your direct website provides as much detail as possible about your hotel and rooms. Guests are used to seeing high quality visual content on websites like booking.com and Airbnb, so will expect the same detail from a hotel website too.

8 Waste budget bringing the wrong customers to your website:

Ensure that your paid marketing efforts are targeted towards bringing the right audience to your website. Use data analytics to understand your guest demographics and focus your budget on the channels and strategies that bring in the most relevant traffic. Work with a provider who can take into account your rate parity status and previous on-site guest behaviour when bidding¹¹, so that you only bid on guests who are likely to book.

9 Keep your data locked in siloed systems:

Without a unified view of guest data, hotels struggle to understand and anticipate guest preferences and behavior. This limits their ability to offer personalized experiences, which are crucial for attracting direct bookings. Separate systems lead to inconsistent and incomplete data, making it difficult to create targeted marketing campaigns, which results in lower conversion rates and wasted marketing spend.

10 Stick with technology that isn't working:

Continuously evaluate the performance of your technology stack. If certain tools or platforms are not delivering results, don't hesitate to switch to more effective solutions. Stay up-to-date on new innovations in booking engines, website personalization tools, CRMs, traffic acquisition tools and mobile payment gateways. Remember that some vendors may be great at selling products but may not offer adequate support or guidance on product usage. Checking references from similar properties can provide valuable insights.

11 Be afraid to outsource tasks to an A.I. assistant:

Use AI tools to streamline and enhance your marketing operations, from generating personalized messaging to data analysis. Many hotels use AI assistants to handle repetitive tasks, which allows their team to focus on more strategic activities to drive direct bookings. The best website personalization tools are incorporating AI into their products¹² so that hoteliers can write impactful messaging for their website automatically.

07 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/seo-success-in-30-minutes>

08 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/hotel-booking-engine-performance>

09 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/triptease-partners-with-hijiffy/amp>

07 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/8-innovations-to-drive-direct-bookings-in-2024>

08 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/two-ways-to-use-email-data>

09 <https://www.triptease.com/en/customer-stories/amarante>
<https://www.triptease.com/blog/a-product-that-pays-for-itself>

10 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/introducing-the-triptease-data-marketing-platform>

11 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/introducing-the-triptease-data-marketing-platform>

12 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/say-goodbye-to-boring-campaign-headlines>

13 Optimize your website for mobile visitors:

A significant portion of website visits come from smartphones and tablets, so it's important to ensure your website provides an equally good experience for mobile users. From scrolling fatigue to slow loading pages, it's important to understand and fix any issues that could be preventing guests from converting on mobile¹².

14 Be clear and transparent about your prices:

Clear pricing, including all taxes and fees, is essential for building trust, enhancing guest satisfaction, and ensuring compliance with legal requirements. It also reduces friction in the booking process and helps to prevent cart abandonment. Make sure the price that customers see on your booking engine is accurate and consistent with the prices they might have seen elsewhere.

15 Create some urgency to book:

OTAs employ urgency messaging frequently, and there's no reason why hoteliers shouldn't do the same. Use a countdown timer to show that a flash sale or special offer is ending soon¹³, or add messaging to let customers know that you only have a few rooms left to book for their chosen dates.

10 <https://www.triptease.com/en/messages>
11 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/loyalty-programmes-three-keys-success/amp>
12 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/how-hotels-can-increase-their-mobile-booking-conversion-rates/amp>
13 <https://www.triptease.com/blog/booking-com-flash-deal>

A focus on driving direct bookings can transform your hotel's profitability and operational efficiency. By adhering to these do's and don'ts, hoteliers can optimize their direct booking strategies, enhance guest

satisfaction, and ultimately boost their bottom line. Implementing these practices not only reduces reliance on OTAs but also builds stronger, more personalized relationships with your guests, leading to increased

loyalty and repeat business. As the hospitality industry evolves, staying proactive and adaptive in your direct booking strategies will ensure long-term success and growth.

12 Fail to communicate the benefits of booking direct:

Make sure your guests understand the advantages of booking directly with you, such as exclusive deals, flexible cancellation policies, and loyalty points. Clearly communicate these benefits on your website and marketing materials.

13 Spread your marketing efforts too thin:

Concentrate your marketing spend on the impactful channels where you know your guests will be. Don't spread yourself too thin. It's better to execute really effectively on a few channels than ineffectively on lots of channels.

14 'Set-and forget' your paid marketing channels:

Work with providers that take a data first, active approach to campaign management of your paid channels. It's helpful if they work specifically with hotels so that they are able to bid strategically based on your current parity status, market trends and guest behavioral data.

15 Forget to align your teams internally:

Many hotels are beginning to take a more holistic view of their commercial strategy, bringing together a cross-functional team of Marketing, Revenue and Sales to focus on shared direct booking goals. Create joint KPIs and help the whole commercial team understand the value in working together to drive direct bookings.



Holly Groom
Head of Product Marketing,
Triptease

TRIPTEASE

443824

