

# The Overview: In Depth

Spring 2024

## Take your first steps into AI

Transform guest engagement  
and manage costs

**Page 16**

### **Inside**

The impact of  
The Employment  
(Allocation of Tips)  
Act 2023

**Page 28**

### **Inside**

Find out what  
The Other House  
use as their ERP

**Page 36**

# Welcome to THE OVERVIEW

**W**e all wish we had more hands. Right now, you're probably thinking of seven or eight other things you could be doing and need to be doing.

Adam Smith taught us that we could be more prosperous if we specialised, but in hospitality we need to be the jack of all trades. Staffing shortages have meant that CEOs are cleaning rooms, the FD has been refilling ketchup bottles and anyone passing is welcome to sign in the drinks delivery.

It's not just the shortage of willing hospitality team members demanding more skills: guests have become more demanding and, well, why shouldn't they be? Taught that if they want a goat's milk latte then they should have it, their way, this has been applied across hospitality. The attitude of 'be happy with what you're given' is long behind us and, with the exception of the indecisive, this has been received by the consumer as a good thing.

This takes us back to the hands. We don't have enough and buying more in isn't an option. We need more hands and, importantly, they need to be clever hands. Preferably hands which are cost neutral or can generate much-needed ancillary revenue.

The sector has been reluctant to leap into automation, despite its many hands, because of an idea of what service is and how it can be delivered. Service delivered by an overworked, harassed team member is not going to be great and, if you're unlucky, it's going to be

full of errors. One of the factors which drove many people out of the sector after seeing another way during the pandemic was not the work, it was not having the breathing space to do it well.

But if you pick and choose your technology, it can do all the dull bits, allowing your team to focus on delivering that hospitality. Inputting, checking data, making reservations, plotting more efficient staffing schedules. No one likes doing them. No one races into work to do them.

You are also delivering what people want. Transactions are not fun. People like to do them on their device and have them done. When you're buying a burger the happy part is the burger, not talking to the waiting staff. And, if you can do it on your phone - away from judgement - research has shown you're more likely to up the happiness of that burger with extra cheese and maybe bacon.

All this extra cheese and less stressed teams can only go one way: better experiences for everyone. Lower team turnover, more return visits. And we'll give that a hand.



**Katherine Doggrell**

Editor | [katherine.doggrell@hospa.org](mailto:katherine.doggrell@hospa.org)

## CEO

Jane Pendlebury  
[jane.pendlebury@hospa.org](mailto:jane.pendlebury@hospa.org)

## Editor

Katherine Doggrell  
[katherine.doggrell@hospa.org](mailto:katherine.doggrell@hospa.org)

## Membership & Events

Amanda Brown  
[hospa@hospa.org](mailto:hospa@hospa.org)

## Treasurer and Accounts

Diana Mountain  
[accounts@hospa.org](mailto:accounts@hospa.org)

## Head of Sponsorship

Helen Marshall  
[Helen.marshall@hospa.org](mailto:Helen.marshall@hospa.org)

Helen Rhodes  
[Helen.Rhodes@hospa.org](mailto:Helen.Rhodes@hospa.org)

## Publisher

Hospitality Professionals Association

## Professional Development

Janel Clark  
Programme Director  
[education@hospa.org](mailto:education@hospa.org)

## Media Enquiries

PicPR  
[hospa@picpr.com](mailto:hospa@picpr.com)

## Spring 2024 Inside this issue

- 03 CEO's message
- 04 Unlocking hotel revenue potential
- 06 How hotel data can transform your business
- 08 HMA Hotel Marketing Awards
- 10 Is your digital guest experience delivering?
- 12 The AI powered revolution of hotel door locks
- 13 How tech helps deliver experiences, loyalty, & profits
- 14 A startling wake-up call for the hospitality industry
- 16 Taking your first steps into AI
- 17 Scaling the tech stack for future growth
- 18 HOSPA Sponsors
- 22 Leveraging technology to empower hotel staff
- 24 Boost your F&B revenue
- 25 Guest intelligence tech
- 26 Revolutionising the hospitality market
- 28 The biggest shake-up to hospitality in decades
- 30 The right payment gateway
- 32 Want to achieve revenue success in 2024 and beyond?
- 34 Levelling-up hospitality
- 36 Simplify your accounts payable
- 37 Why AI is essential for hospitality's success
- 38 People and Technology in harmony

**HOSPA, Uplands Cottage,  
Grayswood Road, Haslemere, GU27 2BS**

**The Overview online**  
Visit [www.hospa.org](http://www.hospa.org)



# A Message from the CEO

As we move into spring, as ever, it brings with it a promise of hope. But that hope isn't limited to just better weather. Hopeful shoots are evident across the hospitality industry – and particularly so for conferencing and events.

In the last few weeks, we've been compiling a whitepaper that we've produced in partnership with De Vere Hotels, HotStats and Venue Performance, which analyses the state of play. Taking into consideration the past few years, it compares the pre and post Covid landscape. And what have we found? Well, in short, the situation for conferences and events is looking very positive. So much so that we've practically returned to pre-Covid levels.

Our top line findings show there's been an average 14% increase in revenues across the board. Meetings, conferences and banqueting are performing strongly – but parties have dropped significantly, while both in London and regionally, conference and banqueting revenue has transformed to positive growth.

If you'd like to dig into the numbers, you can read the full whitepaper on the HOSPA website. It makes for interesting and reassuring reading that our industry is doing well.

**Our top line findings show there's been an average 14% increase in revenues across the board. Meetings, conferences and banqueting are performing strongly – but parties have dropped significantly, while both in London and regionally, conference and banqueting revenue has transformed to positive growth.**

Continuing on the theme of positivity, the Hotel Marketing Association Awards have recently closed for entries and the judging team is working through to establish a shortlist of finalists following another record number of entries. The efforts we've been privy to from initial viewing have been incredible, with some fantastic innovation and initiative in evidence. Again, it's further testament to the strength of our industry! If you would



like to join in the celebration of the best in the industry - check out the HOSPA website for tickets to the awards ceremony at Ham Yard Hotel, London on June 18th.

And now onto a slightly different topic, albeit with an underlying positive theme.

Working in hospitality means that, between us, we've no doubt got an abundance of unfortunate or 'interesting'

incidents we can recall. I think we're all aware that from time to time, hospitality isn't always as glamorous a job as some may think!

So, here at HOSPA, we'd like to hear about any outlandish incidents you've encountered in the course of your career. From unreasonable guest rudeness, bedrooms left in chaos and disarray, to inappropriate guest shenanigans and more.

But why do we want to hear these anecdotes? We're looking to put together a 'Good Guest Guide', which uses some of the more outrageous tales of guest misbehaviour, to draw attention to the good.

The messaging behind it will be positive – that working in hospitality shouldn't be taken lightly, and that it shouldn't be seen as a lightweight role. By highlighting the challenges we're hoping to show that people working in hospitality are capable and unflappable – whilst also having the opportunity to promote courteous guest behaviour too.

So, if you have memorably standout incidents in mind that you're able to share with us, please do so! We can keep it anonymous if preferred, and I'll be able to reveal more on this as things progress, but in the meantime, please share any anecdotes you have in mind via [hospa@hospa.org](mailto:hospa@hospa.org) with Good Guests/ Bad Guests as the title.

And, before we move into the Overview proper, I'd like to, as ever, include my customary plea to please block out space for this year's HOSPACE. Set for the 14th of November, the latest news titbit I can offer is that we're introducing a new business lounge to help maximise your opportunities to mingle with the great and good of the hospitality industry. So put it in the diary, block it out, and we'll continue to update you as it approaches!

**We'd like to hear about any outlandish incidents you've encountered in the course of your career. From unreasonable guest rudeness, bedrooms left in chaos and disarray, to inappropriate guest shenanigans and more.**

# Unlocking hotel revenue potential: The power of automated RMS

Hoteliers know that they need to remain agile and competitive in today's ever-changing world. This is especially true when it comes to revenue management, as manual processes simply won't cut it anymore.

**A**n automated revenue management system (RMS) not only removes the risk of errors associated with manual processes, but also generates prices and decisions that adapt to market changes while considering the competitive landscape and a guest's willingness to pay. And given that a typical hotel will make roughly five million pricing decisions every year, only an automated RMS can handle the sheer volume of data that needs to be gathered and analyzed.

## Exploring the benefits of an automated RMS

1. Forecast with certainty: A more accurate demand forecast assists hotels with pricing decisions, inventory management, staff allocation, property maintenance and general operations.

It's also especially important for hotel owners and investors assessing the performance – or financial potential – of a property. With an automated RMS, revenue managers can build their forecasts based on several scenarios (optimistic, probable and pessimistic) and review the actual demand versus forecasted results regularly to adjust long-term pricing strategies.

2. Analyse, adapt and predict: An automated RMS employs sophisticated analytics to solve a variety of challenges, including adapting the forecasts to demand shifts and holistically understanding the relationship between demand and pricing for various room-type products. Predictive modelling and forecast data play an essential role for forward planning. An advanced RMS uses a

variety of relevant data sources and modelling techniques to facilitate this look ahead, ensuring decisions are powered by industry-leading data science.

3. Decisions driven by data, not feelings: Unfortunately, many hotels get stuck basing revenue management decisions on competitors' prices or gut feelings. Following a competitor's lead on price alone risks chain reactions in reductions that cut into revenues for both properties. Instead, hoteliers should focus on rational, analytical and data-driven strategies to pricing that revenue science technology provides to protect their business in the long term.

4. Interaction and automation enhanced: Revenue management isn't just a set-it and forget-it kind of thing. When users can interact with an automated revenue system, whether it be influencing demand or affecting pricing, they impart their expertise and market knowledge into the solution. This results in revenue professionals being able to fully understand and articulate the value the RMS delivers.

Any savvy, revenue-minded hotelier knows that they must attract the right guest, through the right channel, at the right price. And only revenue management can make that possible. An automated RMS that makes effective pricing decisions to maximise business results and revenue, even in an uncertain market, is no longer a "nice to have" – it's a business necessity.



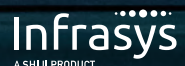
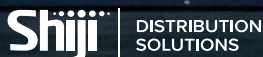




# Together, we reimagine the digital guest experience.

Shiji offers a unified platform, simplifying tech complexity for exceptional guest experiences.

- PMS
- Online Reputation
- POS
- Distribution
- Payment
- [shijigroup.com](https://shijigroup.com)
- Golf & Spa



# How hotel data can transform your MICE & corporate travel business

In today's highly competitive hospitality industry, data is the key to unlocking growth and profitability.

By harnessing the power of data, hoteliers and MICE venues can gain valuable insights that enable them to make informed decisions, optimise operations, and attract more business. Let's find out how different roles within the industry can leverage hotel data to drive success.

## 1. Sales Professionals: Reaching More Planners

Data is the lifeblood of sales professionals. By analysing historical booking patterns, customer preferences, and market trends, sales professionals can identify potential clients and tailor their pitches to meet their needs. Utilising data-driven prospecting tools and customer relationship management (CRM) systems can help sales professionals expand their reach and connect with more planners, ultimately driving higher conversion rates.

## 2. Director of Sales and Marketing: Bringing in Great Fit RFPs

For a Director of Sales and Marketing, attracting RFPs that align with the property's offerings is paramount. By leveraging data analytics, they can identify target markets, understand customer segmentation, and fine-tune their marketing strategies. This data-driven approach ensures that the property receives RFPs that are an ideal fit, leading to higher conversion rates and increased revenue.

## 3. Sales Managers: Converting RFPs to Booked Business

Sales managers play a crucial role in converting RFPs into confirmed bookings. By utilising data on customer preferences,

historical booking patterns, and competitor analysis, sales managers can personalise their proposals, highlight unique selling points, and negotiate effectively. Armed with this data, sales managers can increase their conversion rates and secure more business for their venues.

## 4. Hotel Operations: Efficiently Managing Business

Efficient management of the business that comes to a venue is essential for seamless operations. Data can help hotel operations teams optimise staffing levels, streamline workflows, and enhance guest experiences. Analysing data on occupancy rates, guest feedback, and service requests can enable operations teams to anticipate needs, allocate resources effectively, and deliver exceptional service consistently.

## 5. Revenue Managers: Improving Hotel Revenue

Data is a revenue manager's best friend. By analysing market demand, pricing trends, and competitor rates, revenue managers can optimise room rates and inventory allocation. Additionally, data-driven forecasting models can help revenue managers identify periods of high demand, enabling them to implement dynamic pricing strategies and maximise revenue potential.

## 6. Chain and HMC Leaders: Managing a Group of Hotels

For chain and hotel management company (HMC) leaders, data plays a pivotal role in overseeing multiple properties. By consolidating data from various sources, they can gain insights into individual property performance, market

trends, and guest satisfaction levels. This data-driven approach allows leaders to make informed decisions, identify areas for improvement, and implement effective strategies across their portfolio.

## 7. CVBs: Bringing More MICE Business to the Destination

By analysing historical event data, understanding attendee preferences, and identifying emerging market trends, CVBs can market their destinations more effectively. Data-driven insights can help CVBs showcase their unique selling points, align their offerings with industry needs, and secure more group bookings.

## 8. Hotel Managers: Capturing Corporate Travel Opportunities

For hotel managers, corporate travel represents a significant revenue stream. Data on corporate travel patterns, preferred amenities, and booking behaviours can help hotel managers tailor their offerings and create attractive packages. By leveraging data-driven insights, hotel managers can position their properties as preferred choices for corporate travellers, leading to increased occupancy rates and revenue.

**Data is the secret to unlocking the path to success.**



Scan the QR code to download our eBook that will guide you on how to set SMART goals, move toward improvements, and create your business case for success. Get ready for growth when you have data to inform your KPIs!



A woman with glasses and a yellow shirt is looking at a tablet in a warehouse setting. The background is filled with shelves of boxes and equipment, creating a busy industrial atmosphere. The lighting is warm, highlighting the woman and the tablet.

**sky** business

Better solutions  
to keep businesses  
moving forward

**Unmissable live sport & entertainment**

**Next-generation network**

**Connectivity and content to help you grow**

Find out more visit [skybusiness.com](https://www.skybusiness.com)

All products and services are tailored to each client and are subject to availability and location.

# The 29th HMA Hotel Marketing Awards

Celebrating those who champion and inspire marketing excellence within the sector since 1994, the 29th HMA Hotel Marketing Awards recognise and celebrate the best Marketing practice in the UK hotel industry, as well as the best young Marketing talent.

The Hotel Marketing Association would like to say a massive thank you to every single person who took the time to submit an award application for the 2024 Hotel Marketing Awards.

Since nominations first opened, the team have received entries from across the country and from all corners of the hotel industry, showcasing an array of remarkable and innovative marketing initiatives.

The shortlisted entrants are as follows:

## BEST WEBSITE

- Cheval Collection
- The Grove
- The Hari

Sponsored by  
Clockwork Marketing



## BEST HOTEL MARKETING AGENCY TEAM

- Pic PR
- Providence Hotels
- Up Hotel Agency



## MARKETING INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

- The Athenaeum Hotel & Residences
- The Clermont Hotel Group
- RBH Hospitality Management

Sponsored by  
Profitroom



## BEST WEBSITE

- Cheval Collection
- The Grove
- The Hari

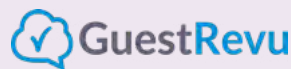
Sponsored by  
Clockwork Marketing



## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

- Hilton London Metropole
- The Grove Summer Campaign
- Yotel, Non-Stop Pride

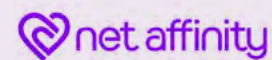
Sponsored by  
GuestRevu



## BEST HOTEL MARKETING TEAM

- Hilton London Metropole
- Foxhills Club and Resort
- Cycas Hospitality

Sponsored by  
Net Affinity



## BEST LOCAL COMMUNITY MARKETING

- Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort
- Hart Shoreditch, Local Community Partnerships
- Red Carnation Hotels, Make Travel Matter

Sponsored by  
Agilysys



## EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

- Balmer Lawn Hotel, Monopoly Moments
- The Landmark London, Bake Off : The Professionals
- Luxury Family Hotels, The Little Things Newsletter

Sponsored by  
Airship



## BEST PARTNERSHIP MARKETING

- Apex City Quay Hotel and Spa, Blamazing Beano.
- The Grove, Everyman Secret Garden.
- Marriott Bonvoy, Make it Magical.

Sponsored by  
The Audience





**BEST INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

- Hastings Hotels, Doorman and The Duck Two
- Leonardo Hotels, Rebrand Campaign
- Rudding Park, Follow the Christmas Stars

Sponsored by CTI Digital



**MOST CREATIVE CONTENT MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

- Marine & Lawn
- The Waldorf Hilton, 'Be Our Guest' A Winter's Tale afternoon tea
- Yotel

Sponsored by Pic PR



**RISING STAR IN HOTEL MARKETING**

- Lauren Bradley, The Waldorf Hilton
- Chloe Organ, Marriott International
- Bradley Spillman, Whittlebury Park Hotel and Spa

Sponsored by For-Sight



Join us to celebrate the winners of the 29th HMA Hotel Marketing Awards: The awards ceremony will be held on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at the Ham Yard Hotel, London. Find out more and register your place at [www.hospa.org/hma-awards-booking](http://www.hospa.org/hma-awards-booking)

**Who are The HMA?**

The Hotel Marketing Association (HMA) is the only dedicated body for hotel marketers in the UK. Providing support and inspiration for hotel marketers and the wider industry seeking guidance and insight for their business and career. The HMA's key areas of focus include delivering an annual schedule of engaging events and networking, partnering with like-minded institutions offering third party resources, expertise and exclusive benefits, as well as helping members access the best programmes for learning, career development and professional qualifications. The HMA is now part of HOSPA.



# Is your digital guest experience delivering?

Tristan Gadsby, CEO & founder, Alliants, investigates how to implement a digital guest experience which delivers for both customers and teams.

**D**igital transformation is more urgent than ever. Your customers demand it, and so do your teams serving them.

Investing in the digital experience was a necessity during social distancing, but many properties have been disappointed by their purchases, which may be difficult for staff to use or to integrate into operations.

In addition, a guest is no longer just someone spending the night, it can be someone dropping in for a meal, using the spa or making the most of the reception as a shared workspace. With so many moving parts, it's hard to be confident that what you have in your tech stack is enough to strengthen your revenue through in-person and digital guest experiences.

## How to find out if your digital guest experience technology is truly enough?

According to Hospitalitytech.com's annual Lodging Technology Study, almost half of hotel employees find the technology they use to be a source of friction rather than a means of empowerment to de-liver exceptional service.

- Changing the way you listen to your teams: To assess your current guest engagement tech, gather feedback from your staff about the issues they face by watching them use it. Look at how much they look down at a device rather than up at their guests. Measure how much silence there is in between phone calls or text messages when fulfilling requests. Ask questions like if they feel empowered by their tech to help them anticipate guest needs. Then, turn this



feedback into questions to hold existing tech providers accountable. Find your tech providers' plans to improve and adapt as your teams change their working methods. The quicker you learn your staff's sentiments towards tech, the faster you can identify if you need to change providers.

- Auditing the level of investment by your current tech providers: It's critical to know which tech providers are creating pain points for your teams because they haven't spent time or money optimising their tech. Don't be afraid to ask your current and prospective tech providers how much they invest back into their tech development and how often. How many new or improved features are they developing to help users? This mentality gives you an easy way of identifying which tech providers are all in on your long-term success and which ones you may need to rethink your relationship with.

Once you understand the current status quo of your staff tech sentiments, you need to expand how you view who your "guests" are and how you capture insights about them.

## Broadening the idea of the "guest"

The term "guest" has broadened beyond the room in hospitality. This means splitting your "guests" into segments such as primary guests, additional guests, visitors, and local patrons. Every segment is equally essential as a source of income now, so you need to start gathering as much data as possible about each segment via the system that stores and exposes your guest profiles. Can your existing tech stack store this level of information for guests beyond who is the primary name listed on a PMS reservation?

Now is the time to ditch the idea that your PMS is where your profiles should exist for guest-facing teams. Not only are you limiting guest-facing teams that don't have access to your PMS, but you are also leaving your teams at a considerable disadvantage. How can they create incremental revenue opportunities for everyone else walking through your doors if they don't have deep knowledge about who each customer is?

## If your teams aren't happy, and you struggle to deeply know your guests, then...

### Partner with tech providers that can empathise with you:

Do your current tech providers have a healthy mix of staff that used to work in hospitality operations? Don't be afraid to ask how many team members in a tech provider's staff force used to work in roles similar to yours. Think of it this way: Do you want your tech providers to develop solutions based on second-hand assumptions about your





challenges? Or, are they developing solutions based on firsthand experience of those challenges because they used to deal with them as operators?

**Look for providers that can unify all customer profiles:**

The first significant step to understanding how to improve profitable revenue is to centralise all relevant customer data via profiles. Leading brands do this by collating all major guest behaviours and preferences into profiles that any guest-facing team member can use, whether digitally or in person. This knowledge forms the foundation for anticipatory decision-making and improved strategic revenue priorities. If you can't do this in your current guest engagement tech, look for tech centralising customer profile data across all major systems, like your PMS, CRM middleware, and F&B reservations software. Also, look for technology that allows your teams to create a profile for anyone who walks through your door. Who knows, maybe you'll find that your local patrons or visitors are a much more valuable source of revenue than previously thought.

**Find out if your providers are evolving with you:**

Investigate if your tech providers are focusing on automating ordinary tasks, continually improving user experiences, and acting on what they listen to from you over time. This means asking current providers how often they invest funds into existing solution development while exploring and conceiving new ones. Ask them how they take your feedback into their development decisions as well. It's often overlooked to hold your tech providers to account if they are not investing in their evolution towards the future. If they aren't continually developing and optimising, can you trust they have your long-term success as a top priority?

**Thoughtfully consolidate your guest experience tech wherever you can:**

The pandemic caused a lot of technology investments to happen in silos which created gaps in the effectiveness of digital guest experiences. When you don't think holistically about connecting your tech, you leave your operation open to ineffective and costly maintenance. Does your guest messaging platform live in synergy with your profile management and guest request tools? Can you easily

manage digital key provisioning and payment facilitation in the same system as your profiles, or are you copying and pasting your way through work tasks and wasting time? The more systems under one technological roof, the better off your teams will be.

**Look for both breadth and depth with guest experience tech stack integrations:**

Integrations with your guest experience technologies are not just about the breadth of integration volume but the depth of how the integrations operate to facilitate data and processes. The more data and processes that can be automated between systems, the better. This means asking about two-way vs. one-way integrations and what use cases were accounted for when your guest experience tech providers built those integrations.

By adopting these steps to understand your current status quo around your digital guest experience, you can more easily navigate the complexities of empowering your teams better, ensuring you both survive and thrive in an era of digital innovation with the right tech partners behind you.

# The AI powered revolution of hotel door locks & the guest experience

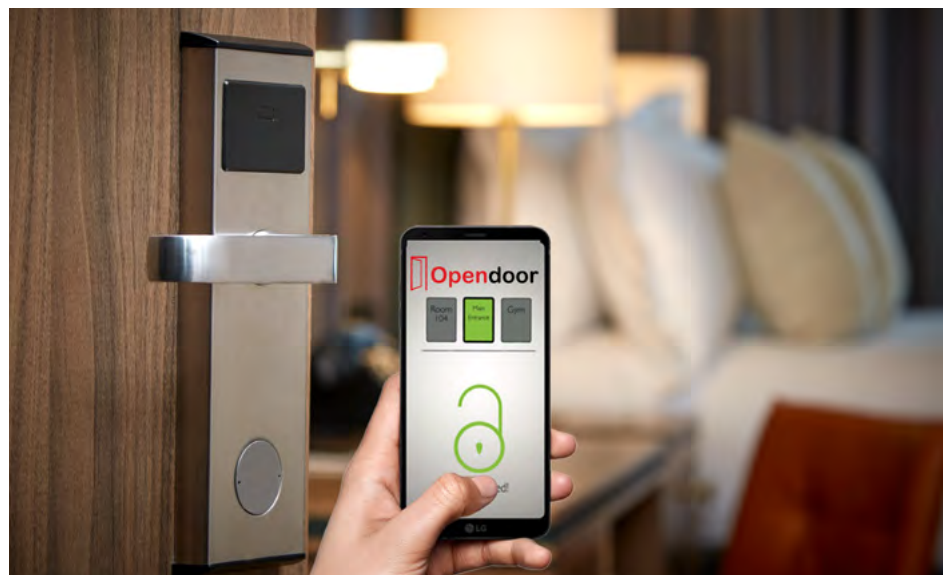
Get ready to go on a journey into the future of hospitality, Artificial Intelligence is set to have a significant impact on hotel door locks, just as it is revolutionising all aspects of hotel operations.

New advancements in IoT have started to move forward improvements in access control connectivity by utilising AI (artificial intelligence) and mesh networking, with the evolution of this technology, hoteliers will realise its potential beyond just opening doors. “Open Sesame” It’s something out of a futuristic sci-fi movie as you approach your door it will just unlock magically.

By integrating with other security systems such as surveillance cameras, access control systems, and alarm systems this will allow for real-time monitoring and coordination of security systems, that enable a comprehensive and proactive approach to hotel security. These capabilities will allow hotels to enhance their security measures, detect and respond to potential threats more effectively, and provide a safer environment for their guests.

One example of how AI-powered locks can improve hotel security is through their ability to continuously monitor guest door status. AI algorithms can detect and analyse patterns of door activity and raise alerts when unusual or suspicious events occur. For instance, if an empty bedroom is accessed at 4:00 am, AI can flag this activity as potentially suspicious and hotel staff can then be notified to investigate the situation.

While door locks are advancing with improved aesthetics and mobile key capability, hoteliers should expect to see the new technology trends beyond the locks themselves. Keystep recently released its LockGuard Solution, which



provides full access control management for hotels while enabling them to meet mobile technology demands of the guest. The LockGuard Solution allows for roving check-in, with an easy-to-use tablet, so staff can greet and engage guests without the barrier of a reception desk or being able to “Queue Bust” during peak times. At the same time, LockGuard is directly integrated with mobile key so hoteliers can seamlessly deliver mobile key credentials to guests who wish to use their smartphone as their room key.

Mobile enabled locks are quickly becoming an industry standard, with many brands making mobile key a requirement to meet the brand standard. With this in mind, hotels are now offering guests an all-encompassing “Guest App” that allows them to access multiple services, from booking to room service to mobile access,

streamlining the guest experience.

Although the uptake of mobile key is slow it is gathering pace as hoteliers are finally replacing their ageing Mag Card Lock Systems. The trend toward engagement with guests via the mobile device will only grow over the next few years. Guests will continue to demand more control and hotels will continue to put solutions in the palm of their hand.

## **Andrew Evans, Keystep Solutions**

Andrew is the CEO of Keystep Solutions, which provides Electronic Lock Solutions and Digital Key to hospitality companies around the world. Keystep have shattered the stagnation and lack of customer service that has dominated the sector for decades with Keystep being the first company to fit Bluetooth Low Energy (Bluetooth LE) as standard in all its locks.



# How tech helps deliver experiences, loyalty, & profits

With recruitment challenges and rising operating costs still impacting the hospitality sector, businesses are required to constantly adapt to remain ahead of the curve. The key? Delighting customers with consistently exceptional experiences that foster loyalty and, ultimately, drive profits.

**A**s hospitality continues to battle headwinds, this is no easy task, however technology can lend a helping hand.

With the right tools in place, operators can provide customers with top-quality and personalised experiences that drive frequent visits and long-term loyalty. Here are a few ways which technology can help operators achieve this...

## Identify and remove pinch points in the customer journey

Our GO Technology research showed that 49% of guests would reduce loyalty to a venue or brand if they had a few bad experiences, so eliminating potential pain points and delivering consistently great experiences has never been more important. Operators that have an integrated suite of tech solutions will be able to accrue data on customer behaviour, pinpointing where common customer frustrations occur and eliminate them happening again. For example, long wait times at the bar during peak hours. Enabling customers to order and pay through an app or online by scanning a QR code can speed up the process for guests, meaning they are not left waiting for staff to take orders and payments or stuck waiting at the bar. Not only this, but previous research has shown that consumers tend to spend more when paying via app.

Another pain point for guests is ordering an item only to find out it's out of stock, with 22% citing this as their top frustration. Operators who integrate their stock management system with their EPoS, means staff and operators get access to live product availability. With

this information at their fingertips, staff can update customers on accurate menu availability, removing a pain point before it's even happened.

## Create easy-to-use loyalty schemes in a few clicks

We know that guests are interested in personalised deals, with 80% of consumers now interested in some form of personalisation from the restaurants, pubs and bars that they visit. Technology makes it easier than ever to meet this demand. By collecting valuable customer insights, operators can personalise the experience and suggest relevant offers. Not only does this free up staff time – whether through quick and easy setup of loyalty schemes, or integrated redemption at the point of sale without the need for further staff input – but it enhances the overall customer experience, incentivises repeat visits, and fosters long-term loyalty.

Loyalty programmes are another great tool to use to encourage repeat visit but implementing this shouldn't make customers feel like they're jumping through hoops. They should enhance the customer experience, not create headaches, which is why an integrated system is key. Redeeming rewards seamlessly, whether grabbing a drink at the bar, online during booking, on an app, or at their table via serving staff's

**By providing easy ways to redeem and the easier it is to use, the more likely guests are to use it again and again.**

handheld devices. By providing easy ways to redeem and the easier it is to use, the more likely guests are to use it again and again.

## Automate and personalise customer comms

To ensure a loyal customer base is being built, it's also important to keep your venue at the forefront of customers' minds in between visits. Data from EPoS, bookings, and loyalty programmes can be used to set up automated, personalised communications to help build relationships with customers and drive loyalty, without adding masses of extra work for operators and staff.

Furthermore, most customers actually appreciate booking reminders, with research showing only 17% don't want to be contacted by a venue after booking. Operators with digital reservation systems can set up automated reminders, keeping their booking fresh in their minds and ultimately reducing the risk of dreaded no-shows. Our #ShowUpForHospitality campaign found the industry loses a shocking £17.59bn annually due to people not honouring their reservations, so having digital booking platforms that provide automated reminders and clear cancellation options and are more important than ever.

Technology is the key to unlocking a venue's full potential. By implementing the right solutions, operators can not only streamline operations and boost profits, but also create a loyalty-building experience that keeps people coming back for more. Happy customers are loyal customers, and in today's competitive landscape, that's the recipe for sustainable success.

# A startling wake-up call for the hospitality industry

More than half of British hoteliers are teetering on the edge of burnout and contemplating leaving their roles due to skyrocketing stress levels.

In a startling wake-up call for the hospitality industry, a new Profitroom study reveals that nearly 70 per cent of hoteliers have considered leaving their position due to stress.

This is joined by claims that 72 per cent of hoteliers describe their stress levels as “high” during peak Christmas and summer periods.

From battling a staffing crisis to rising interest rates and inflation, UK hoteliers are facing unprecedented pressure, with nearly one in seven reaching breaking point during these periods.

Adapting to the dynamic market and latest technological advancements also cause stress for more than 50 per cent of the hoteliers surveyed.

Patryk Luszcz, Profitroom regional director, said:

“We knew anecdotally that hoteliers

were stressed but this study has unearthed just how bad the problem really is and the issues that are causing the most amount of worry and anxiety.

“It’s a real wake up call for all those involved in the hospitality industry.”

The survey also uncovered that over a third of hoteliers find utmost satisfaction when guests book directly - with half believing an automated booking and marketing system would boost satisfaction levels and reduce stress.

The data also revealed that in hospitality roles, General Managers experience the most stress, and rank highest for having the hotel’s most demanding job. Many General Managers even stated they would rather “get through the airport with their children” (30 per cent) or “complete a tax return” (23 per cent) than deal with stressful hotel costs and OTA fees.

Patryk said: “We conducted the survey so we could further understand the issues hoteliers face. Booking tech and OTA’s are high areas of concern and thankfully that is somewhere we can help.

“Profitroom’s goal is for UK hoteliers to wake up to a liberated team, with time to prioritise guest satisfaction and loyalty all while increasing revenue and direct-bookings.

“I would urge hoteliers to wake up to what’s possible with a tech partner like Profitroom that guarantees an increase in direct bookings and reduces workload with low time and initial cost investment.

“Profitroom provides our hoteliers with user-friendly and innovative booking technology that can have a real business impact - and perhaps most importantly a real impact on how our hoteliers feel about coming to work.”

## WAKE UP!

UK hoteliers are on the brink of *burn-out!*

Profitroom®





# HOWDEN

You help your guests relax.  
Our insurance helps you do the same.

Howden is an insurance broker that understands the value of good service. We know your business puts people at its heart – so we do the same.

We're here to serve handcrafted insurance that lets you relax and focus on your customers.

Scan to find out how Howden can help your hotel.



Howden UK Brokers Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority No. 307663. Registered in England and Wales under company registration number 02831010. Registered Office: One Creechurch Place, London, EC3A 5AF. Calls may be monitored and recorded for quality assurance purposes.

HUBL-CC-COM-251-0324

# Taking your first steps into AI

How the AI solution trusted by Marriott, Hyatt, Lore Group and more, is helping hotels transform guest engagement and manage costs.

**T**hroughout the HOSPACE event, a clear message emerged: the time for hoteliers to embark on their AI journey is now.

The AI panel left no one in doubt - the benefits of AI-powered solutions are not a distant promise but a tangible reality awaiting exploration.

AI is almost everywhere. It can help create marketing, write code and save time by summarising reports, emails and more. Great! But how can AI truly revolutionise the hotel industry, transforming guest experiences and operational efficiencies alike?

For those fortunate enough to witness the Fourteen IP HOSPA 300 session, the comedic portrayal of Jeff, the archetypal nuisance guest, served as a poignant reminder of AI's potential. Enter EVA (Evolution Virtual Agent), a guest-driven voice assistant delivering efficiency and customer service excellence, powered by an AI engine designed specifically for the hospitality industry.

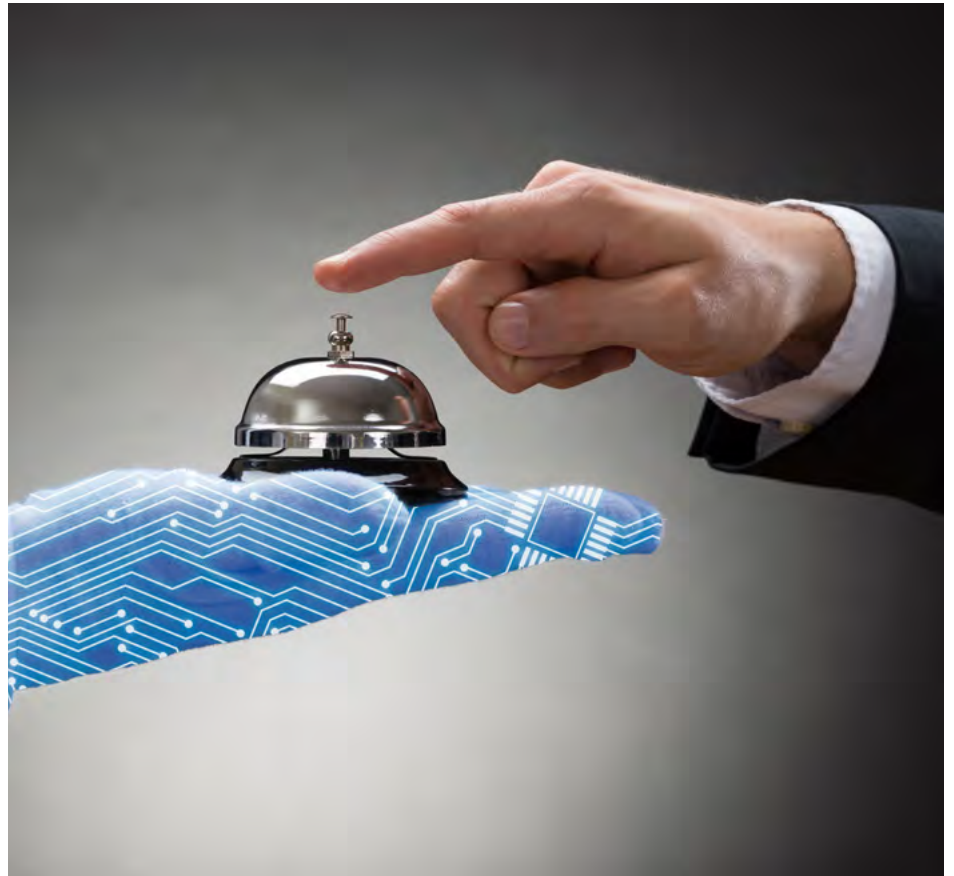
Operating 24x7x365, EVA liberates staff resources, ensuring that the human touch remains paramount in guest interactions - a priceless asset in an era plagued by staffing challenges.

## **What about the AI bots we hear about going rogue and giving huge discounts?**

Good question, I wish I had managed to get a bot to sell me a £75k SUV for £1! Questions around security, compliance and guard rails are ones you should ask any vendor you are speaking to about an AI solution. EVA has passed and continues to pass every test and scan that is thrown at it.

## **And what of the alleged demise of voice communication, don't people speak with their thumbs these days?**

Whilst it is true that text-based chat is ubiquitous, and there is an EVA solution



**EVA answered over 10,000,000 calls for one customer last year, managing around 70% of them without involving a live agent - saving many hundreds of hours.**

for that - it was interesting to see at a recent conference where this subject was discussed, as soon as the break arrived, pretty much every delegate left the room and had their phones next to their ears - a testament to the irreplaceable role that voice has in human interaction.

In the ever-evolving landscape of hospitality, AI isn't merely a tool - it's a beacon of innovation, guiding hotels

towards unprecedented heights of efficiency and guest satisfaction. With EVA leading the charge, hotels are poised to harness the full potential of AI, revolutionising guest engagement and operational dynamics alike.

As the industry embraces this transformative wave, one thing becomes abundantly clear: the future of hospitality is AI-driven, and the time to seize its benefits is now.



Hear EVA in action for yourself.



# Scaling the tech stack for future growth

Choosing a new finance system for your organisation can be overwhelming. Standalone systems are rapidly becoming an outdated concept for growing hospitality businesses. Instead, your 'tech stack' needs to integrate across your organisation to achieve your business goals. A Sage Intacct solution by Percipient could be the answer.

**C**reating a modern, integrated set of applications to span across your core functions, from finance, HR, operations and maintenance, PMS and CRM, is intrinsic to driving visibility and building a live picture of business performance. With Sage Intacct at the heart of your tech stack, you can easily view and analyse integrated insights so you can react to trends, mitigate threats and capitalise on opportunities in the moment.

## Sage Intacct for Hospitality

Everything within Sage Intacct is preconfigured and data can be categorised according to location, entity, accounting period or currency, in a couple of clicks. Flexible enough to drill

**Flexible enough to drill down into specific areas without the need to navigate a complex route to accessing information, and scalable enough to support mergers and acquisitions, or simply bring new vendors on board easily, Sage Intacct facilitates a common chart of accounts which is incredibly intuitive to use.**

down into specific areas without the need to navigate a complex route to accessing information, and scalable enough to support mergers and acquisitions, or simply bring new vendors on board easily,

Sage Intacct facilitates a common chart of accounts which is incredibly intuitive to use.

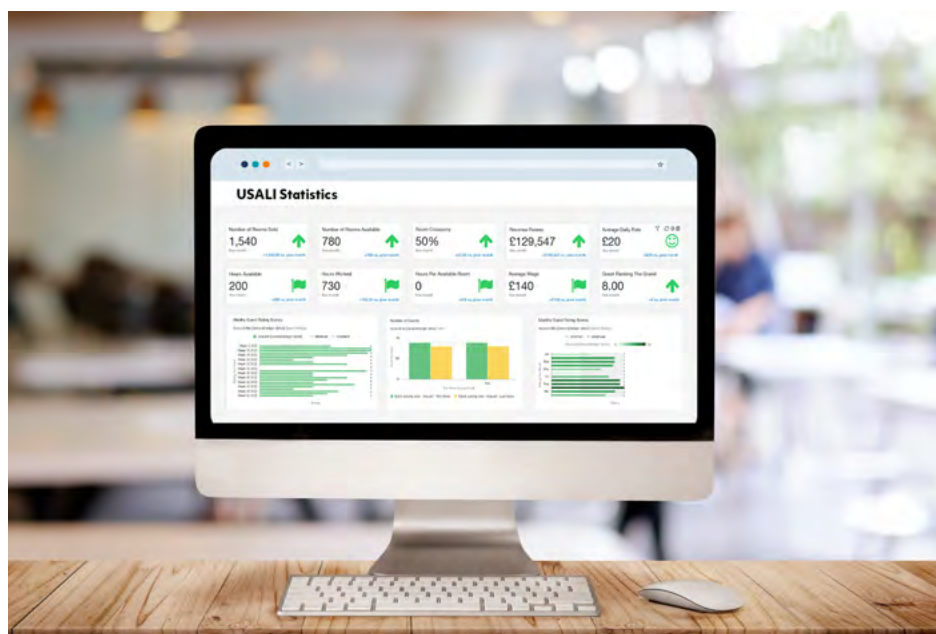
New entities can be set up instantly with configurable rules for inter-entity transactions, bank accounts, and more. They can simply inherit the group's existing lists, process definitions, and charts of accounts, or new ones can be created. Crucially the system leverages APIs to integrate with all other systems, thus bringing all insights from across the business into simple-to-navigate dashboards.

## The Right Tech Stack

The right tech stack is important, not only in the successful running of the business but in times of consolidation. In the event of an acquisition, investment, or expansion, essentially whenever the valuation of the company comes into play, optimising the value of newly acquired hotels, and delivering returns in line with expectations is crucial. Where management companies operate different hotels with different systems, there are inevitable roadblocks in the way of the all-important synergies and collaboration needed to thrive.

What is certain is that the foundations from which to build out the right capabilities must be scalable, flexible and foster collaboration. This is where the hospitality tech stack comes into its own as a real value add for owners and operators alike.

For more information on how Percipient can help you succeed with Sage Intacct, contact [info@percipient.co.uk](mailto:info@percipient.co.uk).





# The Overview

## Sponsors listings

### Platinum Sponsors



#### Agilysys

Agilysys is a hospitality-focused technology innovator. The Company delivers solutions that maximise Return on Experience (ROE) through hospitality encounters that are both personal and profitable.



#### Amadeus

Amadeus' cutting-edge solutions are designed to enrich every stage of the traveller journey and help hospitality providers acquire, service, and retain guests.



#### BT

BT Wi-Fi has been at the forefront of BT Group's connectivity services since 2002. We are the UK's leader in wi-fi, with over 5.5 million public hotspots and more than 1.6 million daily users.



#### FourteenIP

Fourteen IP is the leading supplier of hospitality AI and communications solutions, supporting leading hotels and groups worldwide, together with individual boutique and independent hotels.



#### Fourth

Fourth is a leader in data-driven workforce and inventory technology for the hotel, restaurant & retail sectors. Proudly serving 15,000 customers across 100,000 sites globally, with 2.5m users.



#### FreedomPay

FreedomPay is the world's largest independent payment gateway that delivers Next Level performance for companies all around the world by transforming existing systems from legacy to leading edge.



#### Infor

Infor Hospitality provides end-to-end scalable cloud-based solutions to serve hotels including PMS, RMS, Room Pricing, Sales & Catering, financials and analytics. Your trusted hospitality tech partner.



#### Percipient

Intacct's world-class cloud financial management software, to help hospitality businesses work smarter.



#### RMS Cloud

RMS Cloud provides trusted, scalable, cloud technology for managing hospitality businesses worldwide. Driving revenue growth, operational efficiencies, and guest engagement. Visit [rmscloud.com](https://rmscloud.com)



#### Shackle

Shackle digitalises the entire hotel guest journey, seamlessly integrating with existing systems for a fully contactless experience from check-in to check-out, with everything in between.



#### Shiji

Shiji aims to enhance the hospitality industry to better serve guests with an integrated platform, prioritizing security, usability, and connectivity, allowing customers to focus on the guest experience.



#### Yooz

Yooz provides the smartest, most powerful and easiest-to-use cloud-based E-invoicing and Purchase-to-Pay automation solution.



## Eproductive

Eproductive provides EPS, the leading people management system designed for hospitality businesses by hospitality professionals, which is used in the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands.



## Howden

Howden is an expert insurance group full of talented people with the freedom and support to do what we do best: safeguard your business.



## RUCKUS

RUCKUS delivers purpose-driven networks that offer the best possible performance for the unique needs of the hospitality industry.

## Gold Sponsors



## Adyen

Adyen, a leading financial technology platform, offers end-to-end payments, data-driven insights, and global financial solutions. With global offices, Adyen works with the likes of Facebook, Uber, H&M, eBay, and Microsoft.



## Alliants

Founded in 2009, Alliants has built industry-changing technology solutions, including award winning mobile apps and chat applications that transform the digital guest experience.



## BDO

Our specialist accountancy expertise ranges from the annual requirement for audits, financial statements and tax compliance to more specialist advisory work.



## Centelli

Centelli provides award-winning automation & AI solutions to the hospitality industry, saving clients time. Village Hotels and Ivy Group are just two companies using Centelli's Digital Workers to transform guest experiences while increasing efficiency.



## Cvent

As the largest event and hospitality technology provider, Cvent unites the entire meetings and events ecosystem to streamline processes, foster collaboration, and deliver impactful experiences.



## Elavon

Elavon, a leading global payments company and U.S. Bank subsidiary with more than 1.5 million customers, enables all types of businesses to accept payments from customers.



## Euronet

Euronet Merchant Services offers a specialised range of services, including card acceptance, DCC solutions, tax refund, payment services, reporting, accounting, and management functions.



## Glory

Whatever the volume of cash in your hotel, Glory's CASHINFINITY™ cash automation solutions improve staff productivity, speed up the transit of cash, reduce shrinkage, and enhance guest experience.

# The Overview

## Sponsors listings

### Gold Sponsors



#### GuestRevu

Easily analyse feedback from your guests and actively manage your online reputation with GuestRevu's award-winning automated guest surveys, online review collection and consolidated reporting.



#### Harri

Harri is the global leader in Frontline Employee Experience technologies. The Harri suite of talent attraction, workforce management, enables organisations to attract, manage, and retain the best talent to improve their business.



#### HotStats

HotStats tracks 500+ KPIs for revenue, expenses, profit, crucial for hotel performance. Invest in your success now. [www.hotstats.com](http://www.hotstats.com)



#### IDEaS

IdeaS, a SAS company, is the world's leading provider of revenue management software and services. Forecast accurately, price confidently and achieve greater profitability fast with the latest in automated, advanced data science technology.



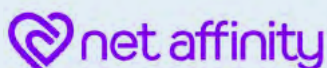
#### IRIS

IRIS provides digital F&B ordering, guest directory and concierge solutions for hotels, empowering them to increase revenue, streamline processes, and enrich the guest experience.



#### Mews

Powering over 5,000 customers across more than 85 countries, Mews Hospitality Cloud is designed to streamline operations for modern hoteliers, transform the guest experience and create more profitable businesses.



#### NetAffinity

Net Affinity simplifies the lives of hoteliers by delivering commercial success through direct bookings. Our latest booking engine technology, drives direct business, boosting the guest experience.



#### Oracle

Oracle cloud-based Property Management and POS solutions give you new ways to innovate by easily integrating other technologies - creating moments that guests will never forget.



#### Profitroom

The award-winning Profitroom platform is more than just a highly converting booking engine - it's a user-focussed, powerful marketing automation tool, advanced channel manager and website builder all in one.



#### Sky Business

No matter the size or sector, Sky Business keeps businesses connected and customers entertained with their next generation network and unmissable live sport and entertainment.



#### Wifirst

Wifirst provides Fully Managed WiFi as a Service. Increase your guest satisfaction and benefit from financial peace of mind. No capital required, low monthly cost.



#### Zonal

Zonal is a UK-based, family-owned, connected technology provider offering innovative solutions, from hotel PMS to EPoS systems, to 16,000+ businesses across the hospitality sector.



## Silver Sponsors



### Aruba

Aruba is redefining wired, wireless and WAN access for today's intelligent edge mobility and IoT requirements in the global hospitality industry.



### Avenue9

Avenue9 Solutions helps hospitality businesses improve operations through consulting, implementation, and management services. Our focus is on streamlining processes to reduce costs and boost revenue.



### Troncmasters

Our specialist Troncmaster service provides advice, set up and the management of Tronc schemes, with the aim to support employees and employers to save on their National Insurance costs.



### FM Recruitment

FM Recruitment is a global search company, based in London. Part of Hospitality People Group, they specialise in Finance roles across the hospitality industry.



### For-Sight

Drive your hotel's success with For-Sight's Hotel CRM and marketing platform. Boost bookings, revenue, and loyalty through advanced reporting, targeted communications, and automated marketing campaigns.



### Keystep

Keystep's range of electronic locks are the perfect fit for any hotel. From smartphone-enabled bedroom locks to lift controllers meeting the demands of today's tech-savvy guest.



### Prommt

Replace risky phone payments with Prommt's card and instant bank payment requests. Drive profitability by reducing fraud, chargebacks, operational costs & lengthy payment settlement times.



### RSM

RSM is a leading provider of audit, tax and consulting services with 4,715 partners and staff in 30 locations across the UK, operating in 120 countries globally.



### SHR Global

SHR Group unites hotel technology and marketing services to empower hoteliers. Our allora.ai platform is an eco-system of tools that maximizes guest success and value.

# Leveraging technology to empower hotel staff

The hospitality industry has undergone substantial changes, especially in the wake of the global pandemic. As hotels adapt to new norms, technology plays a pivotal role in attracting, supporting, and retaining talent.

Your staff are consumers too and they are used to shopping, banking and entertainment online. If the technology at your property presents them with dated and cumbersome interfaces that require hours or days of training, then you have a problem. So, what can be done?

## More effective communication

Effective communication is the backbone of any hotel operation and technology can enable staff to collaborate more seamlessly helping them organise, respond, and stay connected, increasing efficiency and freeing up more time to spend with guests.

Guests too appreciate more efficient communications including the ability to directly engage themselves through their mobile devices, so enabling guest self-service also free's up your staff to better serve your guests.

## More efficient hotel services

From housekeeping to maintenance, technology can optimise service delivery. Connecting your staff to streamline operations like delivering real-time room assignments to housekeeping, or maintenance requests in real-time. Staff become more engaged, wait times are reduced and guests are delighted.

## Eliminate repetitive jobs

Technology that enables processes to be automated and streamlined, frees up staff time to spend with the guests. These productivity gains are also helped further by using guest facing technology to enable guests to self-serve in more ways. As well as increasing staff productivity, freeing them to focus more on the guests, the gains can also help to close gaps in staffing as labour

continues to be difficult to attract and hire into the sector.

## Make guests more self-sufficient

Empowering guests with self-service options reduces staff workload. Mobile apps enable guests to check in, access room keys, and even control room settings independently. Digital concierge services provide recommendations, directions, and local information. By allowing guests to handle minor requests themselves, staff can focus on creating memorable moments during their stay.

## Modern PMS is at the heart of operations

At the heart of an integrated property infrastructure is a modern property management system (PMS). A modern PMS needs to be adaptable and flexible to be able to cope with different operating environments like on-premises or in the cloud. It needs to offer both best of breed integration options through modern APIs, but also an ecosystem where applications are pre-integrated and provide an infrastructure that takes care of itself. However you operate your property, the PMS needs to adapt and it's the PMS that will help you empower staff and increase productivity and your guests experience.



To learn more about empowering staff through a modern PMS system just scan the QR code.

# Say hello to the future of hotel booking technology

Personalised, powerful and precise, Net Affinity uses the latest booking technology to help hotels around the UK and Ireland reach their full potential.

Net Affinity simplifies hoteliers' lives by delivering commercial success through direct bookings for independent, resort and group hotels. Our platform uses the latest booking engine technology on the market, driving a rapid increase in direct business and enabling hoteliers to focus on creating the best guest experience possible.

Our entire product suite is built around your guests. We deliver an immediate and sustained increase in direct business for your property through market leading technology partnered with highly specialised expertise in digital marketing and web design.

This new piece of technology has been built from the ground up, with years' worth of knowledge and learnings applied. Hosted using modern cloud infrastructure and with an integrated business intelligence dashboard, we are able to artfully link all of your tech together, propelling your systems toward extraordinary heights whilst maximising upsell opportunities and increased revenue.



**97%**

Client retention rate



**31%**

Average revenue growth



**56%**

Average mobile revenue

Do you know if your online booking process is working for your customers? Using our years of experience in the field, let us analyse your booking journey and provide relevant and practical feedback on how to improve.

## TESTIMONIAL

"Since moving to Net Affinity, we've increased our conversion rate year over year based on data that was never available to us before. The customisation on offer within their booking engine technology has given our team the ability to fine-tune in ways we didn't dream of."

**Darren Kearney**, commercial director of Carlton Hotel Group.

Request your complimentary Booking Journey Analysis today or schedule a demo at <https://www.netaffinity.com/request-booking-journey-analysis.html>



# Boost your F&B revenue and FREE up staff time with F&B mobile ordering

Digital innovation is growing, and hoteliers are enjoying big revenue gains and process efficiencies with mobile technology. Furthermore, guests are relishing a mobile-first approach to F&B operations and the benefits it delivers.

IRIS, the market leader in digital F&B ordering, guest directory and concierge solutions for hotels, has noticed a huge uplift in recent years amongst its client base that includes many of the world's leading chains including Marriott, Ennismore, Mandarin Oriental, and Four Seasons.

Much of its popularity lies in its flexibility. Mobile ordering provides a convenient, accessible option for guests to review, order and pay for items all from their own device, at a time and location that suits them. Without being restricted by the need to find a physical menu or flag down a waiter. Greater accuracy, less friction, and a swifter delivery of orders from staff result in an improved guest experience, and a boost in revenue of between 20-40% on average.

Mobile ordering also leads to a higher volume of orders. In a survey conducted by Phocuswright, 47% of guests would be more likely to order room service if they could do so within an app.

Likewise, enhanced operational efficiencies are also enjoyed by staff. They no longer need to take orders over the phone or in person and then manually upload them as they're automatically delivered to the bar or kitchen. Swifter ordering capabilities means staff can serve more covers, with fewer resources and less stress, without compromising on service or profits.

Reassuringly for operators and guests alike, mobile ordering platforms also offer a host of features to support different guest requirements and to maximise



revenue opportunities. On IRIS' digital menus for example, search and filter functions for allergens enable guests to personalise their menu preferences; a 'Call waiter' button gives guests the option to signal for a member of staff and advanced ordering enables guests to pre-order items ahead of their stay and operators to secure revenue ahead of a guest's arrival.

#### Client case study: London Marriott Hotel County Hall

The 5\* London Marriott County Hall were keen to implement mobile dining as a way of delivering a contactless dining service for guests. This was

achieved via the IRIS mobile ordering app which also enabled them to boost F&B revenue, eliminate mistakes and enhance the guest experience.

The app is promoted to guests on arrival and via QR codes. Now 97% of all orders are made through it. Its widespread adoption by guests has not only minimised the pressure on staff and reduced their workload, it has also delivered consistent increases in both order volumes and guest spend each month.

To find out more about how IRIS' mobile ordering platform can support your revenue, staff and guests please visit [iris.net](http://iris.net).

# Guest intelligence tech: helping out behind the scenes

In recent years, our global society has become more comfortable using technology for everything from contactless check-in to remote conferencing.

**T**ools that promise to simplify, streamline, automate and generally facilitate hoteliers' lives abound, and between staff shortages, tighter profit margins and demanding customers, technological solutions have to be embraced. But which ones? Most hoteliers (and many of their guests, for that matter) still value face-to-face interactions with real people. Meeting your guests and creating fleeting but enriching interpersonal connections is arguably the essence of hospitality. The role of technology in hospitality should be in the background, supporting administration processes and facilitating the eventual face-to-face experience. Let computers do the number crunching, data capturing and other drudgery, freeing you and your best and most personable employees from the back office and free to interact with your guests.

By helping hoteliers better understand their guests through review analysis and direct guest feedback surveys, guest intelligence technology is one such tool that can make online reputation management, marketing, operations, and staff training easier. It supports the post-mortem evaluation of real-life guest experiences, without detracting from your interpersonal relationships with your guests. This helps the hotelier to adapt and enhance their real-life interactions with future guests.

In hospitality, your customers can't take your hotel for a test drive, or send their holiday back if they don't like it, and making a purchase is costly in terms of both time and money. They depend, primarily, on reviews of your hotel from other travellers to decide if your hotel is worth the risk. Tending to your online reputation consistently and carefully is essential for building trust in your hotel brand. Using online reputation

management (ORM) technology to collect reviews from multiple sources and present them in one online location for you to read, analyse and respond to can help you do this more effectively.

Keeping track of direct guest feedback (from the guest straight to the hotel, rather than on a review website) can also make managing your online reputation easier by highlighting potential issues before they result in negative reviews – as they say, prevention is better than cure. Customised guest satisfaction surveys can also help you gather detailed feedback specific to your hotel's unique offerings.

The key to good marketing is delivering the right message at the right time to the right person. Analysing your guest feedback also helps you create a clearer picture of who your target customer is, and therefore who you should target with your marketing. Trends in what guests enjoy most about their experiences with you become easier to spot, making it easy to emphasise the most appealing aspects of your offering in your marketing materials.

Guest feedback technology also provides a ready source of social proof in the form of guest comments that you can share across your social media accounts, website, and other marketing channels. Evidence that past guests have enjoyed their stays with you could provide travellers with the reassurance they need to click "book now". In a way, it provides the closest approximation to a "test drive" that the hospitality industry can deliver. A prospective guest tests the hospitality product through the eyes of

**In hospitality, your customers can't take your hotel for a test drive, or send their holiday back if they don't like it.**

the guest that went before him.

If understanding what guests enjoy is valuable for your marketing efforts, then being aware of what they don't enjoy is indispensable for making enlightened operational decisions.

It can be difficult for hoteliers to see their hotels, with which they are so intimately familiar, from the guest's perspective, leading to hoteliers spending their tightly controlled budgets on things with a relatively small impact on guests, while flaws in the guest experience that really matter go unattended to.

A guest feedback system collects data that you can use to assess the potential impact of operational and budget decisions on the guest experience. This data can be accessed and analysed as and when it is needed, going back as far as the implementation of the software.

As important as facilities and operating budgets are, any hotelier knows that your guest's experience with your hotel can be marred, or made, by a single interaction with a single member of your team, which is why effective staff training in the hospitality industry is crucial.

Using guest feedback as a tool to highlight areas of concern for staff, and reward team members when they excel at providing a positive and memorable guest experience can make staff training an easier, better informed and more pleasant process for all involved. Staff gems that may otherwise have remained unrecognised are often highlighted in feedback from a delighted reviewer.

Depending on the guest experience you plan to create, technological solutions now exist for everything from in-room climate control to concierge services. Guest intelligence, however, provides a strong foundation to back up almost all departments, and inform your future technological and operational decisions.

# RUCKUS networks and Wi-Fi 7: Revolutionizing the hospitality market

In the hospitality industry, the guest experience is paramount, and seamless, reliable connectivity plays a crucial role in shaping that experience.

**R**UCKUS Networks, a leader in advanced networking solutions, is redefining the hospitality landscape with its innovative, guest-centric approach and the introduction of Wi-Fi 7 technology.

RUCKUS Networks, a part of CommScope, is at the forefront of the latest evolution in networking technology - Wi-Fi 7. This newest standard in Wi-Fi comes with many enhancements designed to improve the user experience, particularly in high-density environments like hotels, resorts, and conference centres. With Wi-Fi 7, guests can enjoy faster speeds, greater capacity, and more efficient performance, even in crowded networks. This ensures guests can stay connected wherever they are on the property, enhancing their overall experience.

But RUCKUS's commitment to the hospitality industry goes beyond providing the latest Wi-Fi technology. The company's approach to networking is purpose-driven, leveraging advanced technologies like AI to design and deliver solutions that put the customer's needs at the centre. RUCKUS One offers a comprehensive, all-in-one solution for network management in the hospitality industry, ensuring seamless connectivity and superior guest experiences. On the other hand, RUCKUS AI leverages Artificial Intelligence to optimise network performance, providing real-time insights and proactive issue resolution, which are crucial for maintaining high-quality service in the fast-paced hospitality sector.

RUCKUS's value proposition for the hospitality industry is built on these

**But RUCKUS's commitment to the hospitality industry goes beyond providing the latest Wi-Fi technology. The company's approach to networking is purpose-driven, leveraging advanced technologies like AI to design and deliver solutions that put the customer's needs at the centre.**

pillars: enhanced guest satisfaction, robust security measures, scalable and flexible solutions, real-time insights and analytics, simplified technical support,

and green technology adoption. By focusing on these potential gains, RUCKUS Networks can develop networking solutions that not only address the specific needs of the Hospitality Industry but also offer added value and benefits. This alignment with desired outcomes forms a compelling value proposition, positioning RUCKUS Networks as a preferred partner in the industry.

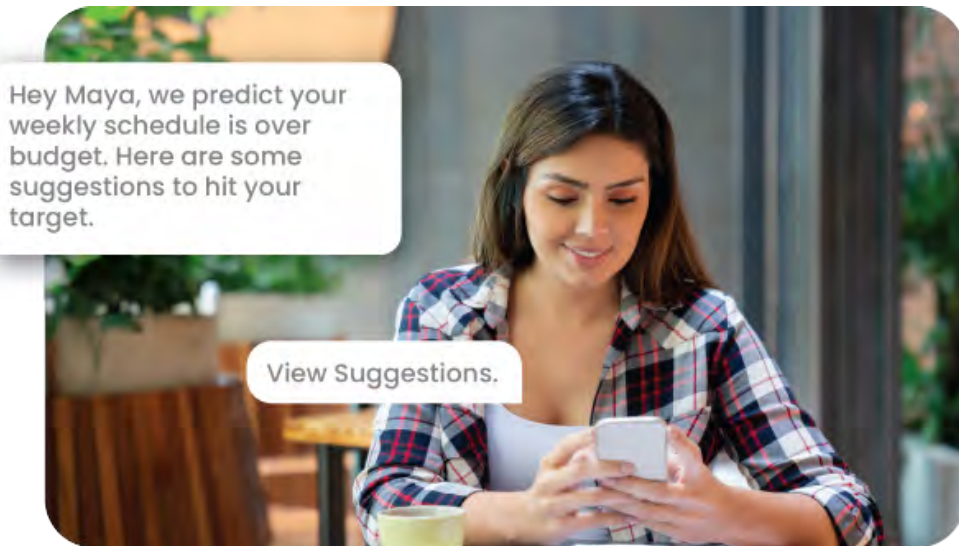
In conclusion, RUCKUS Networks is not just leading the way in the hospitality industry; it's redefining it. With its innovative approach to networking, advanced Wi-Fi 7 technology, and commitment to customer-centric solutions, RUCKUS is setting new standards in hospitality connectivity.





# The Fourth AI Platform is the first of its kind.

AI is set to transform the hospitality industry – helping you make great decisions to control costs and grow sales, while giving your people time back to focus on what they do best.



Our customers are achieving great results

**15%**

Sales boost

**22%**

Reduction in  
over scheduling

**25%**

Accuracy  
improvement

**96%**

Decrease in time to  
process invoices

## Act now to gain the competitive advantage.

Scan the QR code to see why Fourth is the best way to embrace AI across your entire operation.



# Employment Act 2023: The biggest shake-up to hospitality in decades

We've seen countless legislative changes shake up payroll, but few are making as big a difference as The Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act 2023.

The new act, which was passed by Royal Assent in May 2023, will come into law on 1st October 2024.

Its purpose is to create a legal obligation for businesses to allocate all qualifying tips to workers without any deductions while also requiring employers to ensure that the distribution of tips between workers is fair and transparent.

The onus is now on businesses and payroll professionals to facilitate this change and remain compliant.

## What exactly does the Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act 2023 change?

The legislation states that 100% of tips must be passed on to staff, providing protection for employees and creating fairness around tipping practices.

In fact, it is expected an extra £200 million will go directly to hospitality workers who would otherwise lose out to employer deductions.

A few technical requirements are introduced, including:

- Passing on the full tip amount to workers, with no other deductions than statutory deductions such as tax
- Paying all qualified tips by the end of

the month following the one in which the tip was initially received, with all card gratuities, employer-influenced cash tips and service charges now defined as qualifying tips

- Classifying agency workers with similar rights as employed workers to receive a tips allocation
- Ensuring fair methods, such as a tronc scheme (learn more below), are in place to ensure fairness and compliance with the legislation
- Communicating your tip policy to staff and agency workers
- Keeping records in the case of a tribunal request in the same way employment documentation and financial records must be kept

Overall, these changes will become part of Employment Law, meaning employees will be able to request information about their tips allocation every three months, and will be able to take their employer to a tribunal if they think they have been unfairly treated with their allocation.

## What is a tronc scheme?

Tronc originates from the French phrase "tronc des pauvres", meaning collection box.

Tronc is the name given to arrangements in hospitality businesses which pool and share tips and gratuities paid by customers to staff.

As such, those distributing tips via a tronc scheme are referred to as a Troncmaster.

By divorcing the distribution of the tronc from the employer through an agreement with a Troncmaster, the obligation to pay National Insurance (Employers and Employee), pension contributions, student loans or earnings attachments on tips is removed.

This can represent a big saving for employers and employees alike.

## Why are the changes being introduced?

The Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act 2023 aims to improve fairness for workers by ensuring the tips left by customers, usually in recognition of good service, are going to workers as intended.

Many workers have argued that employers were taking a substantial portion of the tips or they were distributing them unfairly – some staff even stated they were receiving none of the tips and service charges customers paid.

Before this act, cash tips were the employee's property, while card tips and service charges belonged to employers with only a voluntary obligation to pay them back out to staff, often resulting in unfair allocation and disparities in distribution.

Recent research that Troncmasters conducted with KAM Media revealed that 24% of tippers believe non-cash tips go

By divorcing the distribution of the tronc from the employer through an agreement with a Troncmaster, the obligation to pay National Insurance (Employers and Employee), pension contributions, student loans or earnings attachments on tips is removed. This can represent a big saving for employers and employees alike.



to all front-of-house staff working at the time, and 16.4% believed it went to the person(s) serving them.

With 77% of tippers also stating they care where their tips go and 85% exclaiming that they think it is important tips are shared fairly, it's not just staff wanting to see change.

The new legislation mandates that employers distribute all qualifying tips and service charges fairly, introducing policies for transparency and a definite timeline.

Employers are prohibited from compensating salaries above the national minimum wage with tips, promoting transparency in tip management and a fairer share for workers.

### What is classified as fair tip allocation?

At the time of writing, the Statutory Code of Practice is drafted with the law expected to go live this year, setting clearer guidelines around what constitutes "fair" distribution of tips.

The new Code of Practice does not offer a cement definition as all businesses have nuances in distributing tips, resulting

in 'fair' looking different for everyone.

Fairness as a concept is subjective; however, there are some listed factors in the legislation which could help define fair allocation including:

- Employee's experience
- Responsibility
- Length of service
- Job role
- Seniority

### Tronc case study: the Biltmore Hotel, Mayfair

We discussed the new legislation with the Director of HR at the Biltmore Hotel, Mayfair.

They told us the goal of engaging Troncmasters Ltd was to ensure fairness, continuity of the scheme and enable savings for the employee and business.

Their tronc allocation uses a points system based on the job role.

Complications arose as they sometimes have staff in more than one role in different areas of the business, so the tronc system is designed to take this into consideration.

Sometimes, there have been changing service provisions; for example, the bar started to generate the same tronc as the restaurant as its own outlet; with these nuances in mind, the tronc compliance team at Troncmasters Ltd has been able to review and redesign the points system to reflect these changes.

### A step in the right direction

Without a doubt, this legislation is a fantastic step in supporting employees and ensuring they receive their tips fairly and promptly.

However, if steps aren't taken, it might put added pressure on hospitality businesses who are already struggling.

Though there may be some amendments to come, employers and payroll professionals must familiarise themselves ready for the October deadline.

All employers with qualifying tips to pay their employees should prepare themselves by checking their employment contracts, arranging a troncmaster to manage a fair distribution, updating/creating a tipping policy and considering how they will respond to data requests.



# The right payment gateway is the gateway to business success

While rolling advancements in tech are fuelling the innovative engine of hospitality businesses, frictionless and secure payment gateways remain key to keeping operations moving at all. However, enhancing payment systems and keeping track of evolving security concerns can feel like a daunting undertaking for hospitality leaders.

**A** robust and secure payment structure can significantly impact a hotel and its guest loyalty. The key is to partner with the right payment gateway – one which offers both innovation and guidance, as well as opportunity and support.

Here are three ways in which the right payment strategy and partnership will boost business and foster guests loyalty:

## Frictionless payment experiences keep guest returning

Guest expectations are progressing just as fast as technology is evolving. Today, guest expect seamless payments whenever and however they choose, and a payment gateway equipped with the latest payment technology makes that possible. Hotels are already catching on to the fact that a smooth check-in and checkout experience – across both physical and virtual channels – provides a competitive edge.

## Modern payment systems form stronger bonds with customers

Modern payments technologies give hotels the chance to form stronger and more personal relationships with their guests. By using smarter technologies, these payment gateways can do more than just process



payments – they can responsibly and securely gather payment data to unlock valuable guest insights and improve their experience. By understanding their guest better, hotels can strengthen relationships and build loyalty.

## Robust security to bring comfort to cautious guests and secure trust

Guest security is a non-negotiable in terms of both basic law and guest favour.

Keeping a payment experience smooth without compromising its security is critical to securing brand reputation – as well as trust. The best and most dynamic way to keep up with evolving cyber threats and security shortfalls is to partner with a knowledgeable and experienced payments provider to keep payment gateways up-to-date and leaders in the loop of new tech.

Visit FreedomPay's website for more on how the right payment gateway can take you to the Next Level.

# SHACKLE

## your *elevated* digital experience awaits...



Contactless check-in/out with direct integration to PMS.



In-App delivery service from hotel F&B outlets.



Tokenised payments & virtual credit cards.



Full visibility through one centralised solution.



Keyless room entry via mobile phone.



Seamless integration to other hotel systems.

[EXPLORESHACKLE.COM](https://exploreshackle.com)



# Want to achieve revenue success in 2024 and beyond? Here's how...

As people travel year-round, their pursuit of unforgettable and distinctive experiences remains constant. For hoteliers, this offers a chance to distinguish themselves and attract guests, no matter the time of year.

Ensure you're making the most out of each season with this concise yet comprehensive checklist from Amadeus, made up of six strategies to help you stand out from the competition, boost direct bookings, maximize profitability, and elevate your hotel's success across all seasons!

## Strategy #1: Tailored Packages

- Craft and market customized packages with perks and amenities for guests - "New year, new you! Enjoy a free massage with any 3+ night stay in January."
- Highlight and promote unique events, dinners, and celebrations hosted at your hotel - Valentine's Day speed dating event, "Galentine's" brunch, spa packages for two, etc.

## Strategy #2: Clear and Flexible Policy

- Communicate clear, flexible, and guest-friendly booking and cancellation policies.
- Highlight any specific minimum stay requirements or special booking conditions.

Reward loyalty with exclusive member deals and enable gift-giving with vouchers or experiences guests can purchase - *"Black Friday shopping got your feet hurting? Enjoy a foot massage on us – exclusive for members only!"*, or *"Make your summer nights memorable – treat a loved one to a sunset dining experience for two."*

- Ensure competitive pricing, member rates, and rate parity across all distribution platforms.

## Strategy #3: Enhanced visibility across channels with strategic Marketing

- Direct users to Easter offers via homepage banners. "Get 15% off an Easter-themed afternoon tea experience with any 2-night minimum stay"
- Optimize websites with relevant keywords for improved search visibility.
- Share promotions on Google My Business, engage on social media and enhance visibility on meta platforms with exclusive rates and Google's Property Promotion Ads.

## Strategy #4: Direct Booking Optimization

- Utilize targeted email campaigns for exclusive offers and personalized messages for loyal members with special promotions - "Celebrate the bank holiday weekend in style with 30% off room upgrades for returning customers."
- Ensure your website is user-friendly and implement recovery strategies like abandoned cart emails.

## Strategy #5: Upselling and cross-selling

- Utilize guest data for intelligent upselling, offering room upgrades, spa packages, or exclusive event access.
- Reward loyalty with exclusive member deals and enable gift-giving with vouchers or experiences guests can purchase - "Black Friday shopping got your feet hurting? Enjoy a foot massage on us – exclusive for members only!", "Make your summer nights memorable – treat a loved one to a sunset dining experience for two."

## Strategy #6: Post-Stay Engagement and Guest Loyalty Encourage

- Guest reviews to gather valuable feedback and attract prospective guests.
- Engage guests post-stay to join your loyalty program, offering exclusive benefits and early booking options for future stays - "Don't miss out! Join our loyalty program to benefit from our exclusive perks, such as members-only packages, discounts, experiences, and more!"

### Ready to maximize direct bookings year-round?

To learn more about the strategies in detail and discover how Amadeus' Digital Media and iHotelier® Solutions can help you.

Contact our team of UK & Ireland experts at [amadeus-hospitality.com/uk/contact](https://amadeus-hospitality.com/uk/contact).



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

DEMON TAP  
DANCER

# MORE THAN AN ACCOUNTING MACHINE

Our people are wonderfully complex. They harness experience, insight and intelligence to uncover the full story behind the analytics.

[www.bdo.co.uk](http://www.bdo.co.uk)

TRUE CRIME  
PODCAST FAN

AUDIT  
PARTNER

CLASSICALLY  
TRAINED GYMNAST

LIQUORICE  
ALLSORT  
LOVER

FILM  
BUFF

**BDO**

# Levelling-Up hospitality

## Centelli's Digital Workforce Skyrockets Clermont Hotel Group's Efficiency.

Carving out a space where hospitality merges with technology to redefine guest experiences, Centelli has emerged as a trailblazer by introducing a digital workforce solution to the Clermont Hotel Group, a premier name in the hospitality industry. This collaboration highlights how Intelligent Automation (IA) and AI can overcome operational challenges, increasing efficiency and guest satisfaction.

### The Challenge: Streamlining Operations

With 17 hotels and over 5k bedrooms, Clermont Hotel Group faced significant hurdles in managing its Reservation

Service Centres (RSC). Diverse booking information from various partners required meticulous manual entry into the hotel's Property Management System (PMS), Oracle OPERA. The challenge was twofold: maintaining high booking accuracy while managing staffing issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### The Solution: Bertie, The Digital Worker

Enter Bertie, Centelli's Digital Worker, revolutionising Clermont's booking management. Bertie handles 20k transactions per month, automating 50% of the tasks that would otherwise require human intervention. This digital assistant works tirelessly, extracting booking details

from emails, updating the PMS, and ensuring guests are set for a seamless hotel experience. Bertie's precision and around-the-clock operation have led to a 15 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) reduced workload from repetitive tasks, moving them onto guest focused activities illustrating the immense potential of digital workers in the hospitality sector.

### Impact: Enhanced Efficiency and Satisfaction

The introduction of Bertie has significantly reduced manual data transfer errors, leading to happier guests and a more content team. By automating routine tasks, staff can focus on providing bespoke guest services, thereby elevating the overall customer experience. The benefits are infinite: reduced operational costs, improved staff retention, and smoother recruitment processes.

Chris Ball, ex-Business Development Director at Clermont Hotel Group, notes Bertie's synergistic integration with existing processes, emphasising efficiency gains. Melanie Cole, Head of RSC, highlights the team's relief and satisfaction, as Bertie handles monotonous tasks, allowing them to concentrate on what matters most—customer satisfaction.

### Setting a New Standard

Centelli's partnership with Clermont Hotel Group is a testament to the transformative power of automated solutions in the hospitality industry. By embracing automation, and AI, Clermont has set a new standard for operational excellence and guest service. This case study is a beacon for other hospitality giants, demonstrating that technological innovation is not just a tool for efficiency but a strategy for redefining the guest experience in the modern age.

To find out more visit: [www.centelli.com](http://www.centelli.com), or contact Sam: [samuel.cornford@centelli.com](mailto:samuel.cornford@centelli.com)

**DONE WITH THE STAFFING HASSLES IN HOSPITALITY?**

*“Working with Centelli has been fantastic! No hassle whatsoever.”*

*“Centelli's Digital Worker Aligns Perfectly with Our Existing Processes.”*

**Digital Workers *AUTOMATE AND STREAMLINE* repetitive tasks between your applications 24/7.**

- **ERROR-FREE RESERVATIONS AND BOOKINGS.**
- **NON-STOP GUEST SATISFACTION.**
- **SAVINGS ON RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COSTS.**

We've helped major names in the Hospitality industry to:

- Reduce manual transaction by 50%
- Save over 20 FTEs worth of effort
- Over 50,000 communications a month!

For a free consultation or to find out more click the icons below!

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](https://mews.com)

Make it remarkable.



# Why The Other House chose Yooz to simplify their accounts payable.

Yooz is a smart, powerful, and easy-to-use E-invoicing and Purchase-to-Pay (P2P) Automation Cloud solution and integrates natively with more than 250 ERPs, including Sage Intacct, which is The Other House's ERP.

With Yooz, invoices emailed from suppliers are now automatically recorded, analysed, and processed for payment within The Other House's Sage Intacct accounting system without any need for human intervention.

Backed by AI, Machine Learning, and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, the accounts payable solution allows The Other House finance team to make faster, more accurate financial decisions as well as adopt more secure processes.

The Other House is pioneering a new hospitality concept that is shaped through a residential lens rather than a conventional hotel approach. Located on leafy Harrington Gardens in South Kensington, the experience offers guests the perfect city spot they can call their "other house", no matter how long they stay.

## A quick, powerful solution that integrates seamlessly with Sage Intacct

After conducting extensive research, Ashley Slinger, Director of Operations Finance at The Other House, selected Yooz as its AP automation solution to address its financial reliability, integration, and user experience needs.

"The quality of integration with Sage Intacct ERP was key in our selection process. Prior to Yooz, the bookkeeper had no clear and overall vision of the AP process, whereas now we can see in real-time where invoices are in the approval flow," Slinger said.

"What's more, the project

management team was very reactive and professional, implementing the system in less than 2 months. Because the platform is so easy to use, staff only needed a few minutes of training, and they can now also benefit from the Cloud by being able to process invoices wherever and whenever they wish."

Laurent Charpentier, CEO at Yooz said, "The powerful combination of Sage Intacct and Yooz means The Other House can get the most out of accounts payable automation. Not only is the invoicing management and approval process simplified, but it also brings a level of accuracy, speed, and security unrivalled by any other system on the market. This will help bring down the cost associated with manual accounts payable as well as streamline the supplier payment process - a win-win for both sides."

## About Yooz

Yooz provides the smartest, most powerful and easiest-to-use cloud-based Purchase-to-Pay (P2P) automation solution. It delivers unmatched savings, speed and security with affordable zero-risk subscriptions to more than 4,000 customers and 200,000 users worldwide.

Yooz's unique solution leverages Artificial Intelligence and RPA technologies to deliver an amazing level of automation with extreme simplicity, traceability and end-to-end customizable features. It integrates seamlessly with more than 250 financial systems, exceeding any other solution on the market.

Yooz is a fast-growing, award-winning company that perfectly fits the expectations of mid-size organisations

across all sectors. It has been recognised as a SaaS innovator, recently named as a 10 Best Cloud Solution Provider by Industry Era, Best of SaaS Showplace (BoSS) by THINKstrategies, Top 10 Accounting Solution Provider by CFO Tech Outlook; and Top 50 Company to Watch by Spend Matters.

Yooz is based in the US and Europe, with a UK Office located in Woking – Surrey.

Visit us on [www.getyooz.co.uk](http://www.getyooz.co.uk)

## About The Other House

The Other House is tearing up the rule book and launching a new sector of Residents Clubs, redefining the hospitality market. It effortlessly combines apartment-style living with hotel services and access to an exclusive private club. Think pied-à-terre meets private club, available for all residents to enjoy. It is cool, intriguing, bold and committed to sustainability. Whether it's for a day or a year, it is your other house for as long as you are in town.

Launched in 2019, The Other House is a joint venture partnership between London Central Portfolio (LCP), leading real estate investment advisory in Prime Central London and APG, the largest pension provider in the Netherlands. The Other House opened in South Kensington in July 2022, with Covent Garden opening early 2025 and plans for Belgravia in the pipeline. Further openings in London and internationally are also in the works.

Learn more about The Other House here: [www.otherhouse.com](http://www.otherhouse.com)

# Forget nice to have: Why AI is essential for hospitality's success

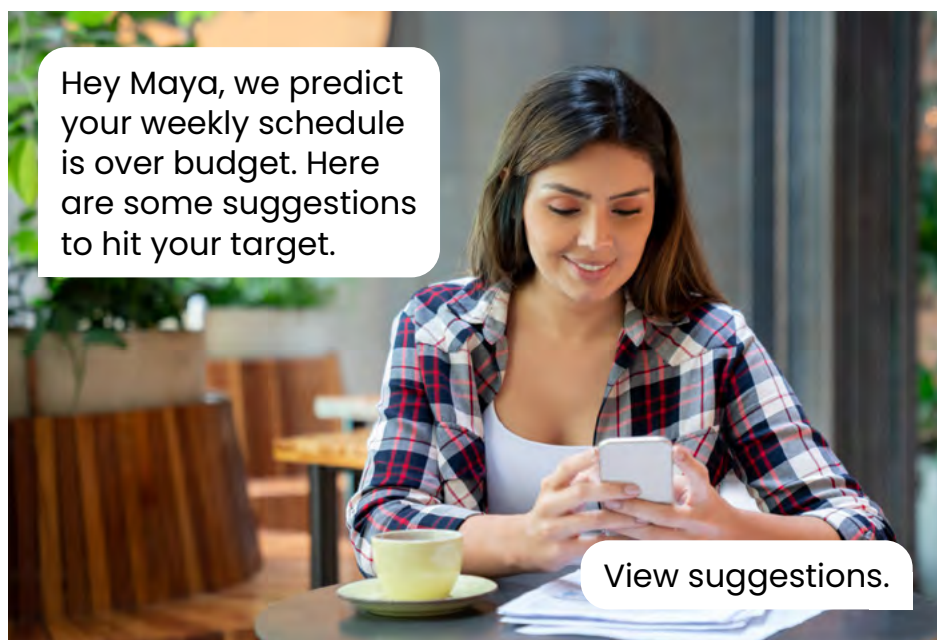
Over the last 12 months, the adoption of AI within the hospitality industry is the single most common topic of conversation I have with our customers.

**A**s a career-technologist leading a tech company, it's unsurprising that AI is something I am heavily invested in. But you may ask why our partners in industry are placing so much emphasis on their own AI adoption strategy. I believe our customers have come to the same conclusion as myself - AI is set to transform the hospitality industry.

Running a successful hospitality business has always been challenging. Margins are tight and the imperative to increase efficiency is always front of mind. It is well documented how tough the last few years have been, and those challenges are still with us in 2024.

Demand volatility, rising operational costs and supply issues are eating into profits, even as sales rise - we call this 'profitless growth'. A raft of legislative changes – including the recent updates to the national minimum wage – increase costs and force operators to constantly adapt to new rules and regulations. Add to that the growing admin burden that keeps managers tethered to their computers for huge chunks of their shift, and you have an industry still looking for new ways to relieve some of the pressure.

This is where AI comes into play. With the ability to predict demand, automate tasks, optimise processes, and provide real-time decision support, it provides solutions to an industry looking for new ways to combat rising costs and volatile operating conditions. The potential applications of AI are endless, it can be used to accurately predict revenue, anticipate exactly which menu items



will sell and in what quantities. It can then optimise employee scheduling, purchasing and preparation to ensure customer demand is met as efficiently as possible. AI can be embedded directly into the systems and applications already in use in hospitality businesses. Soon, Generative AI copilots tailored to hospitality use cases will emerge to provide conversational decision support to teams throughout the entirety of hospitality operations.

As AI adoption becomes mainstream, and leading operators start to leverage the technology effectively, the competitive advantage it offers will become more noticeable. Operators that embrace AI and succeed in applying it to their specific use cases will cut inefficiencies, maximise profits and give

their teams more time to focus on what they do best. Hospitality is inherently a human business, and deploying AI to handle repetitive admin tasks frees up workers to perform uniquely human jobs, such as maximising guest experience.

This is an excerpt from a longer article written by Christian Berthelsen, Fourth's Chief Technology Officer. Christian delves into embracing AI and introduces Fourth's industry-first AI Platform. To access the complete article, scan the QR code:



# Rethinking service: People and technology in harmony

In this era of rapid technological advancement, the integration of automation and innovative technologies presents a compelling opportunity to enhance, rather than diminish, the human service element.

Historically, terms like 'automation' might evoke concerns about sacrificing personal touch and warmth in service. However, recent insights from Hospitality Technology indicate a significant shift in guest preferences, with 78% expressing a preference for self-service options, emphasising the convenience. A report by Skift in 2023 informed us that 82% of travellers expect personalised experiences and services from hotels during their stay, indicating a growing demand for tailored offerings to enhance guest satisfaction.

These statistics not only underscore the evolving expectations of guests but also emphasise the pivotal role of convenience and personalisation in modern hospitality. Embracing technology and automation becomes imperative to meet these evolving demands effectively.

Consider the traditional check-in process, now streamlined through self-service kiosks, guest portals, and mobile check-in apps. These innovations empower guests to breeze through the process with minimal wait times, setting the tone for a seamless stay experience.

Beyond simplifying the check-in process, guest engagement solutions that streamline operations for hotel staff while enhancing guest convenience throughout the entire journey, are proving invaluable to hoteliers. Features such as real-time chat with reception, the ability to request additional items, and access to invoices can significantly reduce time constraints, allowing staff to prioritise service delivery and guest experiences. We've seen the value of this technology underscored by the widespread adoption of our Guest Portal solution, with an 80% uptake among



our hospitality customers worldwide.

Technology also empowers hoteliers to drive revenue by harnessing guest data to meet the demand for personalised offerings, maximising upsell opportunities. According to Deloitte in 2023, 85% of hotel guests indicated that they are more likely to return to a hotel that offers personalised experiences based on their preferences and past interactions, highlighting the correlation between personalisation and guest loyalty. By leveraging technology and data-driven insights, hotels not only enhance guest experiences but also ensure sustainable revenue streams, paving the path for long-

**It's crucial to recognise that automation doesn't seek to replace the human touch—it exists to amplify it.**

term success.

Alongside shifting guest expectations, the hospitality industry grapples with persistent staffing shortages, exacerbating operational challenges and further hampering staff ability to deliver great service.

However, technology emerges as a beacon of hope in this scenario. Modern property management systems equipped with automation capabilities can efficiently manage routine tasks, streamline payment processes, and augment operational efficiencies while improving staff morale. In a recent Deloitte survey, 64% of hoteliers identified labour shortage as a significant challenge, yet an overwhelming 87% expressed confidence in technology's potential to mitigate these challenges while maintaining service quality standards.

It's crucial to recognise that automation doesn't seek to replace the human touch—it exists to amplify it. While technology can handle repetitive tasks and operational intricacies, it empowers the hospitality workforce to focus on what truly matters: delivering exceptional, personalised service. People and technology in harmony, delivering exceptional service.

Article written by Zen Valli, Managing Director EMEA, RMS Cloud

#### About the Author:

Zen is part of the RMS Cloud senior leadership team and brings more than a decade of international hospitality tech experience. He is an expert in his field, pinpointing industry challenges and finding solutions for hospitality businesses with innovative PMS technology.





# MAKE YOUR MARKETING GO FURTHER

At Clockwork Marketing, we understand hospitality in a way only insiders can. With experience, data insights and creativity, we put wind in your sales and realise ROI.

**GET IN TOUCH TODAY.**

[www.clock-work.co.uk](http://www.clock-work.co.uk) | 01803 872 999

MARKETING | WEBSITES | BRAND & DESIGN | GIFT VOUCHERS



**Clockwork  
Marketing®**



# HOSPSPACE 2024

BROUGHT TO YOU BY HOSPA

THURSDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2024 | ROYAL LANCASTER LONDON

HOSPA's Annual Conference & Gala Awards Dinner  
for Senior Hospitality Professionals



Scan to learn more  
and register your place

Technology

Marketing

Finance

Asset Management

Owners

Investors

Revenue Management

