

SERVICES LEFT BEHIND: MORE HOTELS MOVING TO THE CLOUD



Every day it becomes more clear that one of the year's largest hospitality trends continues strongly. More and more top hotel brands are leaving their servers behind and either switching their service to the cloud or beginning their own mobile initiatives.

Over 60 InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) properties in the U.K. have chosen Symphony from MICROS Systems, which is cloud based, for its new point of service needs, IHG recently announced.

According to their press release: The ability to update prices in real time across all of their hotels with a simple click, having first hand expanded managing functions and being able to combine, track and compare all their hotels food and beverage data all played a role in their choice to switch to the cloud.

Also the advantages of having a single unified database which will translate into more promotional and marketing strength and flexibility played a factor.

At the same time high end chain Kempinski has turned to Cloudreach as it moves its operations from servers to cloud software in particular. Both infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and software as a service (SaaS) are being used with Google Apps now handling Kempinski's mail rather than Novell GroupWise and Amazon Web covering their PMS services.

The projected goal from Kempinski is to save 40% by switching from its old servers to the IaaS and managed services. They were formerly employing 140 servers across the company.

Kempinski said they work with myFidelio on the GDS side with some hotels still using third party internet companies for their extranet in certain areas. They are working towards cutting operations maintenance needs with RateTiger Channel Manager which would automate things like booking.com, Expedia and other third party website concerns.

IHG made news on the consumer end beginning a Priority Club Reward member mobile program that's open for enrollment. The leading European tech communications company RapidNFC is handling this program which IHG says is a new innovation for their hotel chain.

IHG's release pointed out: With the changes now their guests will be able to use their smartphones and a QR code or NFC chip in covered hotels speeding up their PCR registration speed.

Tent cards will be available in these select hotels which when touched with a customer's smartphone will bring them to the page needed to register. Another option is entering or scanning the QR code which will also take the guest to a registration form utilizing its own dedicated app.

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