

HOTEL INNOVATION SHOULD NOT RELY ON TECHNOLOGY ONLY



The hotel industry seems more than convinced of eliminating any friction both during the booking process as well as the stay of the guest. At the same time, through the hotel innovation, the establishments attempt to offer the guest all the technological elements within reach to make the stay as comfortable as possible.

Today, there are more and more hotels relying on hotel innovation and technological development. They are full of monitors, mosaic screens, smart mirrors and apps that turn the guest's mobile into a controller from which you can regulate lights, volume, and blinds.

Upon their arrival at the hotel, travelers find screens where they can do the check-in automatically, doors that open with the phone and even instructions for virtual gyms. **It gets to a point where it seems hard to find a flesh and bone employee during the whole stay.**

However, innovation must be conceived as something more than technology. New ideas of workflow or automation of tasks are getting in the way of the proper functioning of traditional hotels.

Carlos Martín-Ros, a professor from the prestigious hotel school of Lausanne, in Switzerland, carried out a study to see if greater knowledge of innovative practices and technological development also led to an integration of these in the business strategy. And the result was surprising, to say the least. 25% of those interviewed believe that this whole part of innovation will be subcontracted to other companies.

Most independent hotels believe that innovation doesn't suit them, for they lack the resources, while the big chains are better prepared for this challenge.

However, there's another interesting side: highly innovative companies don't depend solely on technological innovation. Meaning, technological innovation, on its own, is not enough to maintain a competitive advantage in the long term. Therefore, it is fundamental to take advantage of the nontechnical innovation, meaning organizational innovation, of the workplace, through marketing strategies or new business models.

Given the usually conservative nature of the hotel's management, external help can be essential to impulse a change that goes beyond technology. New ideas are needed regarding management, sales, and marketing.

Consultancy companies are being overcome by experts that navigate through the complexity of the internet like a fish in the water. And small specialists and gurus are popping out seducing the industry

since they provide many and very good ideas about how to improve and modernize the hotel industry.

Experts divide this new hotel innovation focus into three aspects: design, people management, and accounting.

The design of the hotel reflects the lifestyle a guest aspires to get when he chooses it. In the end, almost half the guests highlight design as an important part to feel comfortable and happy during their stay.

Service is another matter to consider. Especially regarding the staff being hired, for you must guarantee that it has a proper attitude to the guest.

Last, in the matter of accounting, the new methods for banking and management of treasury provide important advantages, especially for smaller companies.

Therefore, innovation goes way beyond turning the hotel into an electronic campus full of devices in order to save money on the workforce. The opportunities to reduce costs and create better client experiences have never been greater, but they must be driven by demand itself, be inclusive, sustainable, and without a doubt, open to external collaboration.

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