

TOP 7 HOTEL INDUSTRY TRENDS 2020



The fact that something is changing in the hotel industry is rather obvious. Especially the topic of digitalization currently plays an important role in any hospitality business development, no matter of size. Hotel executives have recognized that both guests and hoteliers benefit from digital assistants and other technological innovations. We offer the seven most important hotel industry trends in summary.

Trend 1: Digital Check-in, Check-out & the Registration Form

Hoteliers and associations have been fighting for the digital registration form for a long time. In 2020, it becomes a reality, which means less paper used. The old registration form, which had to be signed with a pen, is a thing of the past. Guests either check in on their own smartphones before arrival or use a check-in terminal in the hotel lobby. The digital registration form will be filled out and digitally stored at the same time.

The digital check-out process is also meeting with increasing enthusiasm in the hotel industry. After all, trains or buses do not wait. There are already various solutions in use to help guests and employees to facilitate the checking out. Whether via an app or the in-room tablet is up to the hotelier.

What other technology would the hotel guests welcome? A recent survey revealed that 33% of respondents would like to be greeted by a robot in their hotel. 69% of the guests would like the hotel service to automatically recognize that the guest is in his or her hotel room. 79% of the guests would like to have their taxi to the airport automatically ordered for a later time in case their flight is delayed. Automation is the common feature in all these concepts suggesting the coming hotel industry trends in this area.

Trend 2: Smart Hotels

Turn on the underfloor heating in the bathroom from your bed in the morning? No problem with the corresponding digital solutions. "Internet of Things" is the keyword here. At the touch of a button, finger swipe or voice command, not only the heating is regulated. The light is switched on and off, dimmed or the color is changed, blinds are controlled. The smart devices are connected and communicate with each other. The guest can thus quickly and easily adapt the hotel room to his or her individual wishes – and not the other way around.

Many guests will welcome such a feature as revealed in a survey where 39% of the respondents would love it if they could control the light, temperature or music in the room using an app or voice recognition. 31% of guests also wish they could open and close their room using an app on their smartphone.

Finally, personalized hotel stays and individualized travel are especially popular among guests. If the smart devices are connected to the cloud, hotel guest preferences can even be stored. The next time your guest checks in, the heating in the hotel room is automatically set to his or her desired temperature.

Trend 3: Hotel TV Solution

A television in a hotel room is nothing new. But besides linear television, streaming of films and series is gaining more and more enthusiastic viewers. With TV systems, hotels offer their guests the perfect mix of entertainment and information. The trend is going in the direction of "Bring Your Own Content": hotel guests connect their own terminal to the hotel TV to stream movies on Netflix or videos from YouTube on the TV in the hotel room. With the right system, apps for watching movies and streaming music can also be operated directly via the TV.

The Hotel TV solution draws the guest's attention to special hotel offers. Either the guest folder is digitally transferred to the television set for the guest to interact with. Or the guest is shown a selected welcome screen with hotel offers or the image film of the hotel is displayed. The sky's the limit. Hotels thus not only offer their guests more choice in addition to the classic TV programmes but also use the hotel TV as a clever marketing tool.

Trend 4: Digital Guest Journey

Digital assistants make it particularly easy for the hotel to establish a connection with the guest. And that even before arriving at the hotel. The important thing here is to make the guest as comfortable as possible. Hoteliers can use the hotel app to have a direct line to their guests even before they stay at the hotel. The guests inquire about parking possibilities on-site and check-in before arrival. There are many different solutions that can be combined and complement each other through interfaces. Small services and wow moments are the guest magnets that convince your guest to come back.

In the hotel room, the guest has round-the-clock access to the digital guest folder, which offers information, magazines, and newspapers, and enables the booking of wellness treatments. Guests can also find hotel information and recommendations for excursions on interactive displays in the lobby. With the In-Room Tablet, guests can check out comfortably without having to wait at the reception for half an hour. They have the chance to rate the hotel via the digital guest folder. Or they are reminded to leave a rating via push messages from the app.

Trend 5: Augmented Reality & Virtual Reality in a Hotel

Pictures of the hotel are among the decisive criteria for hotel guests. Videos also give the guest a good first insight into the hotel. The next trend is to use Virtual Reality (VR) with 360° videos to show the guest the advantages of the hotel. For example, event rooms can be illustrated by the simulation to show

guests how their wishes for an event can be implemented. But also the surroundings can be explored with the help of VR. In this way, VR supports the guest in deciding on a holiday destination and a hotel. 55% of travelers stated in a survey that would love to make a virtual journey to existing or fictitious places with VR glasses. Moreover, 54% of them said they would watch 360-degree vacation videos after their vacation with VR glasses. The possibilities of VR is thus huge.

During the hotel stay, Augmented Reality (AR) can be also used. 60% of survey respondents stated that they would welcome augmented reality in a hotel with the help of smartphone apps.

The interactive apps offer a new experience. When the guest scans a specific image or pattern in the hotel room using a smartphone or tablet, additional information is displayed in the app. So, the guest can learn more about the hotel or get recommendations for leisure activities in the surrounding area.

Trend 6: Language Assistants & Hotel Chatbots

Digital assistants such as language assistants are particularly interesting for business travelers. After all, they save time and can be operated quickly on the side. While the business guest is still answering e-mails on the laptop, an assistant like Alexa reserves a table in the hotel restaurant.

Automatic replies within seconds are provided by chatbots. Chatbots are becoming more and more common, even in the hotel industry. On hotel websites the bots offer friendly connections through social media platforms like Facebook, chatbots are active and diligently answer questions from interested parties.

But the clever helpers are also integrated into hotel apps and digital guest folders. The guest has a tireless assistant at his or her side around the clock, who knows the hotel, its offers, and the surroundings. While the chatbot answers recurring questions such as "By when do I have to check out", the staff takes care of the individual wishes of the guests. Whether information about breakfast times or recommendations for leisure activities – the chatbot helps the guest with its knowledge and at the same time relieves the employees.

Trend 7: Sustainability

Last year, the topic of sustainability and environmental protection was of great importance. The hotel industry has also reacted to the developments and has opted for more. Less plastic, less food waste, more alternatives. The trend will continue in 2020. Because there is still great potential in this area. Plastic straws are not the only evil with which the hospitality industry has to contend. The tourism sector is largely responsible for CO2 pollution. Intelligent energy-saving systems are in demand. The smart room control that does not overheat empty rooms, but maintains it at an efficient level, for example, makes an enormous contribution to saving energy. The whole thing is automated by the software behind it. This means less work for the staff and, on top of that, even more control through automated warnings

if the heating behavior deviates from normal. Open windows no longer drive the heating up to full speed unnoticed.

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