

Thynk[®]

Hotel Tech to Elevate Human Touch

Busting Myths, Breaking Down Jargon, and Delighting
and Empowering Staff

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Introduction

Hospitality technology encompasses a wide range of tools and technologies that enable the industry to elevate operational efficiency, enrich the guest experience, and drive business growth. Although the [adoption of hospitality technology](#) has been underway over the last 10 years, [the pandemic accelerated usage](#) significantly, transforming various aspects of the industry, including guest services, operations, revenue management, data analysis, and digital marketing.

To tackle critical business issues in hospitality, cutting-edge solutions such as artificial intelligence (AI), robots, virtual reality, and mobile ordering are becoming more prevalent. But as the industry navigates this new normal, there's a burning question: how do you keep the human touch alive? It's clear that innovative solutions such as AI and robots can provide tremendous value but they are not a replacement for a human who is capable of connecting with your guests on a personal level. Instead, emerging technologies can help your hotel improve efficiency, decrease overhead, and reduce tedious workloads, freeing up time for employees to have impactful customer interactions that enhance the guest experience. According to Thynk.Cloud customer Guy Hutchinson, President and CEO of Rotana Hotels and Resorts, "The real advantage that technology provides is the ability to remove bottlenecks [and] the ability to move traditional pain points in the customer journey through hospitality."

Adapting to the pace of change and understanding the role that technology plays can be confusing for employees and guests alike. For some sectors within hospitality, the transformation has been significant — and it's no surprise that this level of digital disruption may feel unsettling. In this report, we'll debunk common myths around hospitality technology, simplify essential terminology, and provide actionable insights for empowering hospitality employees.



Rotana

“THE REAL ADVANTAGE THAT TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES IS THE ABILITY TO REMOVE BOTTLENECKS AND THE ABILITY TO MOVE TRADITIONAL PAIN POINTS IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY THROUGH HOSPITALITY.”

Guy Hutchinson, President and CEO of Rotana Hotels and Resorts.

Demystifying Hospitality Technology: Debunking Myths



To make informed decisions for your hotel, it's important to understand common misconceptions surrounding hospitality technology. When technology is used correctly, it complements the services your employees provide, helping your hotel stay competitive and continue to meet and exceed customer expectations. Read on to learn about the top three myths that we hear about hospitality technology.

Myth

1

“Technology will replace human interaction in the hospitality industry.”

Myth

2

“Implementing technology is too complex and expensive for small establishments.”

Myth

3

“Guests are resistant to using technology in hospitality settings.”

Myth 01

“Technology will replace human interaction in the hospitality industry.”

A recent report by [Goldman Sachs](#) cited that in the near future, AI could “expose the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs to automation.” For employees, this raises concerns about layoffs and AI-driven systems replacing tasks currently performed by human workers. [Stefanie Coleman, a principal in consultancy EY’s people advisory services business](#), asserts that “humans will always have a role to play in business by performing the important work that robots cannot.” Relationship building, creativity, and emotional intelligence are examples of human skills that Coleman considers to be critical in today’s business environment. If hotels leverage robots and humans effectively, hotels can streamline workflows and empower employees to apply their soft skills, resulting in exceptional service. Hutchinson sums this up best: “Empowering staff to actually do what really matters, which is talk to their colleagues, focus on the quality of the service, convert customers, provide service, talk to guests, then you’re really, really completely empowering the hospitality environment in a different way.”

For the hospitality industry, there are several technology-driven solutions that improve guest experiences. Some examples include:

Mobile check-in and keyless entry: Mobile check-in allows guests to check-in remotely using their smartphones, reducing wait times at the front desk and providing a seamless arrival experience. Keyless entry systems enable guests to use their smartphones as room keys, eliminating the need for physical key cards.

Personalized offers and loyalty programs: Data-driven technology allows hotels to personalize offers and promotions for guests based on their preferences and past behaviors. Loyalty programs are also enhanced through mobile apps, offering guests seamless access to rewards and benefits.

Smart room automation: This technology allows guests to control various aspects of their room, such as lighting, temperature, and window treatments, through voice commands or mobile apps. This personalized control enhances comfort and convenience during their stay.

Myth 02

“Implementing technology is too complex and expensive for small establishments.”

The hospitality industry’s unique requirements and challenges make it necessary for establishments of all sizes to consider how technology can benefit their business. While smaller hotels may not have the same budget as big brand hotel chains, there are cost-effective solutions to accommodate different budgets and implementation needs. Cloud-based solutions, for example, offer flexibility and ease of integration with existing systems. An added benefit is that cloud-based solutions often can scale as business needs evolve over time.

Myth 03

“Guests are resistant to using technology in hospitality settings.”

Today’s guests aren’t just open to technology in a hospitality setting — they expect it. [A study by PwC](#) discovered that “81% of travelers want to see greater digital customer service from hotel brands.” In fact, [recent research by Skift](#) found that “73% of respondents would be more likely to stay at a hotel that offers self-service technology.” Examples of self-service activities include checking in online, making reservations, and using an app to order room service. These technologies offer guests the convenience of getting things done quickly and on their own terms, improving their experience.

Self service options also free up (limited) staff to assist guests that may prefer to go to the front desk and speak with a live person. Shorter lines make it easier for guests to approach hotel employees with questions or issues that arise during their stay.

To encourage guests to use technology willingly, your hotel should communicate with guests on how technology can enhance their experience in advance of their arrival. It’s helpful to address frequently asked questions and provide education on how technology can solve a particular need for the customer. For example, explaining check-in and checkout procedures, informing guests how to do so online for a quick and easy transaction.

“81% OF TRAVELERS WANT TO SEE GREATER DIGITAL CUSTOMER SERVICE FROM HOTEL BRANDS.”

Read on for real-life examples of small businesses that are embracing technology effectively.



The Stoos Seminar and Wellness Hotel
Stoos | Switzerland



Challenge: The hotel needed to improve the efficiency of back office staff by finding a better way to book and manage events.



Solution: The hotel purchased Think's MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) event booking and organizing tool because it afforded them the flexibility to configure the frontend and documents exactly how they wanted. The hotel now saves time on routine activities such as quoting events, planning with function sheets, and sending invoices.



The Dean Hotel
Providence, Rhode Island | United States



Challenge: The hotel needed a solution to manage guest data and reservations, run reports, and interface with third parties.



Solution: The hotel implemented RoomKeyPMS as their property management system and SiteMinder to manage their channel connections, allowing them to assist guests more efficiently and securely.



Grand View Lodge
Brainerd, Minnesota | United States



Challenge: The hotel needed to reduce staff workloads and streamline its operations.



Solution: The hotel invested in a mobile app to enable guests to book activities, view their schedule, and access information. As a result, the hotel increased in-room revenue; lowered the number of concierge calls by 15%; reduced the response time to guest requests by 15%; and increased activity sign-ups by 20%.

Breaking Down the Jargon: Simplifying Technical Terms

A recent survey by [HotelTechReport](#) found that “81% of hoteliers believe it’s very likely that technology will be more important for the success of a hotel business in the next five years.” With hospitality technology constantly evolving, it can be challenging to keep up with the latest terminology and how it applies to your hotel. Below are common technical terms that we believe are important for hospitality professionals to know.

[Revenue per available room \(RevPAR\)](#): Once a very important metric for gauging performance, RevPAR is calculated by dividing a hotel’s total room revenue by the total number of available rooms. Today, hoteliers are shifting their focus from RevPAR to using digitized and centralized solutions to maximize profit margins. These solutions help you analyze guest data, make informed decisions on promotions, and tailor offerings, creating a better experience for guests while increasing profitability.

[Property Management System \(PMS\)](#): A software platform used by hotels to manage their daily operations, including reservations, guest check-in and check-out, room assignments, billing, and more. A key benefit of a PMS is the ability to centralize information. This helps you streamline workflows for employees and align with guest preferences. [Recent data reveals](#) that “86% of hoteliers say [that a PMS is] the most important system for day-to-day operations.

Central Reservation System (CRS): A system that allows hotels to manage and distribute their room inventory across various online booking channels and travel agencies. A CRS can integrate with a PMS, ensuring that rooms that are booked via third party booking sites are properly assigned. This prevents administrative headaches for staff and ensures that guest preferences are taken into account.

Point of Sale (POS): This software is used in restaurants and retail outlets within hotels to process guest transactions and manage inventory. This technology is affordable and particularly useful for hotels that are short staffed because it enables them to process a higher volume of sales — a win-win for employees and customers.

Hotel Customer Relationship Management (CRM): A CRM that's designed for hotels helps you manage guest data and interactions, enabling personalized guest experiences and targeted marketing efforts. Modern CRMs for hotels are built on top of the best-of-breed platforms such as Salesforce, offering a way for you to simplify and automate sales, processes, and data management, reducing friction for employees and guests.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): We've mentioned the importance of AI extensively in this article, but what does the term mean exactly? AI is the simulation of human intelligence by computer systems, which can be applied to various aspects of hospitality, including chatbots, personalization, and data analysis. When catering to a customer's desire for personalization, for example, hotels can use AI-powered recommendation engines to tailor experiences for guests based on data such as past behavior, preferences, and demographic details.





Bridging the Technology Gap: Empowering Hospitality Staff

[According to a report by the World Economic Forum](#), “Employers estimate that 44% of workers’ skills will be disrupted in the next five years.” In particular, the report cites technology literacy as one of the top three fastest growing skills needed in today’s workplace. As you consider new hospitality technologies for your hotel, it’s important to be aware of skill gaps among your staff. Older, more seasoned employees may not be comfortable with new technologies, but the influx of tech-savvy Gen Z employees is an opportunity for you to bridge that gap. Encouraging this new generation of staff to embrace technology as a strategic tool is a way to improve adoption across staff.

To help staff forge emotional connections with guests, you need to provide training and educational resources to enhance their proficiency with technology. You can accomplish this through a resource library, e-learning courses, virtual training sessions, or gamified educational tools. Educating employees doesn’t just help them build skills, it helps them see a path forward for their personal growth and development. This type of investment helps drive employee engagement and ignite enthusiasm towards technology. Adjusting to new technologies and workflows may take time, making it especially necessary to provide ongoing education support to overcome early challenge

Nurturing a Human-Centric Approach: Balancing Technology and Personalization

Research by McKinsey found that “71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions.” To strike the right balance between technology and personalization it’s important to understand your guests’ preferences. When you have accurate information, it makes it easier for staff to use the data to improve the quality of customer communications and critical parts of the customer journey such as room mobile check-in options and digital concierge services.

Other tips to achieve this balance without compromising the guest experience include:

- **Personalizing messaging:** Leverage technology to send personalized messages and offers to guests based on their preferences and past behaviors. Avoid overusing automated messages to ensure that communications still feel genuine and thoughtful.

- **Offering choice:** Give guests the option to choose between automated processes and personalized services. Some guests may prefer self-service options, while others might appreciate a more hands-on approach.

- **Providing customization options:** Offer guests the ability to customize their experience, such as room preferences, amenities, and dining options, through technology platforms.



Hospitality Technology Today and Beyond

In the ever-evolving hospitality industry, technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing efficiency and guest experiences. However, amidst rapid digital transformation, it is crucial not to overlook the significance of human interactions. By leveraging technology and the human touch, hotels can streamline operations, empower staff, and create unforgettable experiences for their guests. While cutting-edge solutions like AI and robots offer many benefits, they should complement rather than replace the warmth and empathy of human connections.

To achieve this balance, it is essential to educate all stakeholders. Bridging the technology gap among staff by investing in training and support will empower employees to use technology effectively, fostering a human-centric approach to hospitality. Encouraging guests to use technology willingly by communicating its benefits and providing choices will contribute to a seamless and enriching guest experience. As the industry continues to change, embracing technology while nurturing the human touch will undoubtedly pave the way for a successful and guest-centric future in hospitality.

About

Thynk[®]

www.thynk.cloud



The Hospitality Cloud for Operational Excellence, Thynk.Cloud, is designed by hoteliers for hoteliers to simplify and automate sales, operations and data management.

Thynk.Cloud leverages the world's leading CRM, Salesforce®, as a platform to bring agile hospitality to the industry with a focus on driving B2B and Groups and Events sales through data-driven decision-making. With Thynk.Cloud every process is easier, faster and fully integrated.

Reach out to find more about Thynk and how we can help you.

Book a demo with us now!

