

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN HOTEL + LODGING ASSOCIATION WWW.LODGINGMAGAZINE.COM

LODGING



Technology: **THE NEXT DECADE**

Hoteliers discuss how new innovations and methods are shaping the industry.

Denny Fitzpatrick
General Manager
Hotel 2000

38 | Sheraton: Re-Calibrated 46 | Marketing: The 'New Normal' 52 | Employee Engagement

JUNE 2010



DENNY FITZPATRICK, GENERAL MANAGER, HOTEL 1000;
JAMES SIMKINS, CEO, MTM LUXURY LODGING;
AND CHUCK MARRATT, VICE PRESIDENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, MTM LUXURY LODGING



From guest service to operations, hoteliers tell how new tools and processes are shaping the way they do business.

There's little doubt that technology is increasingly playing a bigger role in the management of hotels. As we kick off a new decade, it is apparent that new technological innovations and the mastery of these technologies will become even more vital to hotel operators in the coming years.

Exactly what role will technology play, and how will hotels take advantage of a multitude of offerings? In the following pages, hoteliers tell how technology will help define the industry in the years to come, and how their companies, as well as the industry as a whole, can use these innovations to their advantage.

TechTalk

BRANDYKOR JERICHO

Service Through Technology

BY JAMES SIMKINS, CHUCK MARRATT, AND DENNY FITZPATRICK

Hospitality is about service and human interaction. It is about the customer receiving what they desire, when they want it, in the manner in which they prefer, and executed effectively in anticipation before they ask.

The essence of hospitality will not change in the future, however; the advancement and utilization of technology will facilitate this goal and keep us on the cutting edge of service. The key here is "technology-enabled service." Technology-enabled service will become evident and relevant in a number of key ways that will have impact through the industry regardless of the type of product being sold.

Technology provides guests with options or choices of how they would like to be served—from what music to listen to or whether to use automated or personal services. For example, customers will be able to choose the medium to do business with which they are most comfortable, whether it be the phone, Internet, mobile device, or in person. The ability to check in and check out via the Web and service requests by SMS or phone apps are examples of those choices.

The investments that properties choose to make in technology will increasingly determine the customer and the market

segment they choose to serve. The simple option of wireless—available or not, free or not—is a determining factor in the choice of where we stay, where we eat, and where to get a cup of coffee. Additional technology will continue to influence our customers' decisions the way that wireless has. Ultra high-speed wireless, the ability to control

the way that they do in more familiar surroundings. In-room technology can, to some degree today and even more in the next decade, allow the guest to have access to all the information, media, and systems that they have at home, work, or on their personal device, and provide options not yet available at home.

In the past, any supervisor in the building or front desk employee must be savvy about technology because they operate up to 15 packages of software at any one time. This access to information and systems allows them to better anticipate and serve guests' needs.

From the facilities themselves to the "heart of house" systems that are available online, technology can provide the hotel's onsite team with more information. Real-time sharing of information that shields the guest from issues behind the scenes provides a more seamless experience. For example, if a boiler malfunctions and water is no longer being heated, the building management system generates a text message and e-mail to all key staff. This text is received instantly by the staff, who are equipped mobile devices. The text message includes an embedded link to a wealth of information that has been logged by all previous work orders, factory specifications, and notes for that particular issue and that particular piece of equipment. The staff now has an earlier warning of the problem and more time to get ahead of the issue. This all happens hours before the first call is made to say, "The guests are reporting there is no hot water."



the guestroom, and the ability to check in, order food, and request service from a personal mobile device will all guide consumer decisions moving forward.

The technology provided in a customer service experience should provide the guest with more options, allowing the guest to behave and interact

The gathering, storing, organizing, and utilizing of information will change the way that we do business. This will influence who we hire, as well as how the guest experience can be personalized and customized. For example, at Hotel 1000 and MTM Luxury Lodging, we need to look for a different staff profile than in

James Simkins is CEO of Kirkland, Wash.-based MTM Luxury Lodging; Chuck Marratt is vice president of information technology at MTM Luxury Lodging; and Denny Fitzpatrick is general manager of Hotel 1000, which is located in Seattle, Wash.