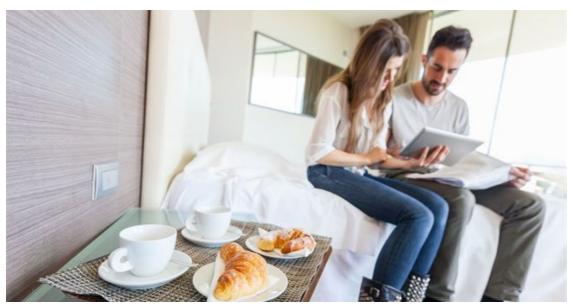# Why hoteliers need to consider a digital strategy to boost upsell time

The development of hotel guest technology is changing the way hotels communicate and do business. Gary Ernstzen, managing director of Nu Menu Solutions says: "With the right technology, hoteliers are able to reduce costs and increase their revenues at the same time. Some of the developments are even changing how hotel developers plan their buildings, infrastructure, management structure and staffing requirements."

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Consumers are moving towards an anonymous service style like we have seen from the disruptive success globally of technology services like Uber. "While hoteliers pride themselves on providing quality human interactions to their guests, the reality is once the check-in and check-out process is finalised, human interaction remains limited," says Ernstzen.

He says, more often than not, the entire service experience comes down to just those two interactions. "However hard you train your staff, the welcome and goodbye will often remain stereotyped, with predefined style and words. More importantly, the staff has a unique two-minute check-in window at possibly the worst moment of a guest's journey i.e. at the end of a long day. Upselling in that limited window definitely takes skill and tact and the usual, automated emails prior to arrival and the dated in-room clutter/collateral don't greatly increase that upsell rate."

Consider implementing a digital strategy

"If hoteliers wish to increase the touch points with their guests - before, during and after the guest's stay - they need to consider implementing a digital strategy. Just like at home, guests are seeking control, speed and in many cases self-service without the barriers of language or effort to communicate."

It all starts with self-service kiosks and online and mobile check-in facilities which eliminate the need for interaction during check-in and out because the kiosk replaces the front desk operator. These fully integrated apps allow tech-savvy travellers to book, use their cellphone as a room key and check-in remotely or utilise a 24-hour hassle-free, self-service kiosk.

In-room technology, like iRiS's Guest Valet for example, then focuses on extending that two-minute upsell communication window to the entire guest stay by placing a tablet in every room. "This becomes the hub of the hotel room, and the key to the communication and upsell strategy of a property. The combination of easy self-service check-ins, attractive physical in-room devices and recent trends in online food ordering is leading to double-digit growth in food and beverage orders as well as improved ROIs for many hoteliers," concludes Ernstzen.