

The Connected Hotel

5 reasons why the right
networking infrastructure is the
key to post-pandemic success

Connect what matters most *in hospitality*



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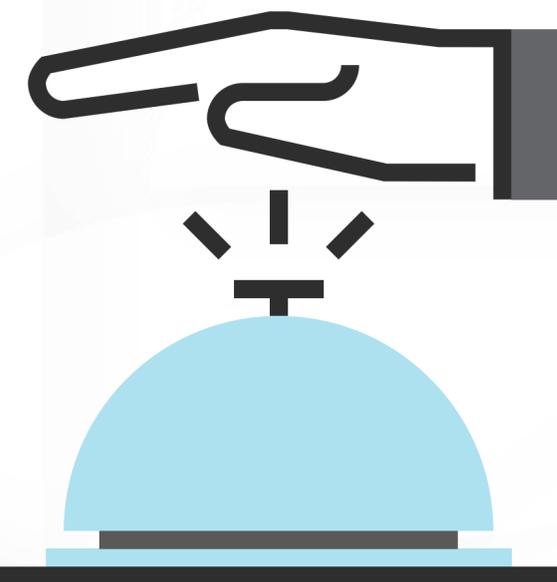
Introduction

As we move into a post-pandemic world, hotels face a clear challenge. Between staffing shortfalls, higher guest expectations, and the need to increase revenue and efficiency, hotels have a lot to lose. But with every challenge comes opportunity.

With the hotel industry recovering after a tough two years, networking technologies will be key to bringing new guests through the doors and enhancing the stay of loyal repeat customers.

The main priorities for hotel management right now are how they can save time, simplify solutions, and give their guests the attention and experiences they deserve.

For this eBook we have spoken with hoteliers from across Europe, as well as industry experts, to investigate what hotel management should be looking for today in order to lay the foundations for tomorrow. Read on to find out how selecting the correct tech solutions can help hotels upgrade seamlessly, deliver more memorable experiences, drive revenue generation, and ultimately, connect what matters most.





Managing the staffing shortage

The hospitality industry is striving to recover and rebuild following a tough period during the pandemic. Part of this recovery is the return of staffing levels to those seen pre-pandemic. However, the events of the last two years have caused many in the industry to reassess their lives, explore new career paths, and to work in a different way. 325,000 skilled workers in Germany alone have turned their backs on the industry*.

The evolution of this staffing trend means that the hotel industry must evolve too.

Technology can help to fill the gap of manpower, allowing hotel management to do more with fewer staff and to find efficiencies when managing multiple sites.

There are several technologies available that can reduce the workload of on-site employees, freeing them up to give the guests the attention and experience they deserve. However, bringing in new technology can often introduce unwanted complexity to the existing stack.

When looking for network and connectivity solutions, hotels should consider partners that offer a single management platform that can easily integrate with new and existing technologies.

They should also invest in *cloud-based systems*. The ability to access these systems remotely means the management of networks across multiple sites becomes simpler. Therefore, the ability to manage issues centrally, without the need for on-site IT expertise, should alleviate some of the current staffing pressures.

“This means reservations can be handled by someone doing van life in Portugal, not sat at a desk in my hotel.”

Andreas A
Hotel Manager, Munich, Germany



These solutions will simplify system management, free up time, and give hotel managers the confidence to introduce new technologies that can help them mitigate the current staffing shortage and create a foundation for the future.

* [Deutsche Welle](#) [Mr.PHotels.com](#)



Creating a flexible foundation for the future

As hotels look to thrive in the post-pandemic world, laying a future-proof foundation of network infrastructure will be critical. With rising expectations from guests and competition in the industry being fiercer than ever, there is a lot to lose from sub-standard experiences.

Investing in the right technology today can also save money and create efficiencies in the future. There are several considerations that hotel management should consider when future-proofing their network infrastructure:

- Any wireless solution should support Wi-Fi 6E, the latest iteration of Wi-Fi technology capable of delivering consistent reliable performance while handling much more traffic and many more devices than older iterations.
- The solution should be able to adapt and assist with future hotel plans – can it facilitate rugged access points in order to extend services outdoors?
- The vendor you choose should provide a full portfolio of wired and wireless solutions to ensure your infrastructure has the right capabilities regardless of circumstance.

Importantly, hotels should also be looking for a partner that thinks beyond the product.

We are entering an age of flexible networking solutions where pricing can flex based on your needs – essentially network as a service (NaaS). Service-based solutions increase long-term efficiency and ensure organizations are only paying for what they use. It also means the ability to shift a large part of hardware and software expenditure from a CAPEX to an OPEX model, which makes future spending more predictable, lowers capital costs, and helps to protect and increase revenue margins.

“In technology terms, what we need most is flexibility. The requirement to digitalize processes within hospitality is now immense. Our challenge was to establish a network platform that would enable us to address different use-cases and to integrate different applications – whatever applications we choose.”

Vibhu Gaiind – Chief Information Officer at RBH Management, Operator, The Westin London City



Simplifying software management

With small teams and a lack of specialists on-site, hotel management increasingly needs to wear an IT manager hat when it comes to monitoring network performance, pre-empting problems, and resolving issues with minimum downtime.

"We don't have the budget for specialists, we like to keep it simple."

Karina F – Small Hotel Owner, Germany

When it comes to network solutions, hotel management should look at platforms that provide 'single-pane-of-glass management' – a bird's eye view of everything on a clear dashboard. Unifying and simplifying the infrastructure into a single platform makes it easier to identify and isolate emerging issues before operations are affected.

Plus, advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning mean that a modern network infrastructure can self-assess in real-time and provide clear guidance on how to improve performance, or diagnose potential problems so early that guests won't even notice.

A last point of consideration is again to keep an eye on the future. The leading infrastructure providers will ensure that the initial installation and subsequent addition of access points is as simple as possible. 'Zero Touch Provisioning' means that the underlying infrastructure only needs to be set up once. Every device that is added to the network is automatically configured. This means that installation of additional access points can be done quickly and easily by non-specialists, often through something as simple as a smartphone app.

Delivering a smart but simple experience will ultimately result in a great saving in terms of costs, time and resource – reducing the impact on hotel budgets in the long term.

"Good technology solutions simplify life rather than complicate it. We give time back to you for what matters most – your guests!"

Markus Mayrl
Aruba EMEA Hospitality Portfolio Manager





Connecting everything, everywhere

With faster networks that can handle more devices and turn almost any everyday object into a smart, internet-connected version of itself, the Internet of Things (IoT) is already establishing itself as an integral part of hotel operations.

This technology opens the door to increased efficiency and greater visibility of what's happening in the hotel, and enables greater building automation. At a basic level, occupancy sensors, temperature sensors, and lighting can all be connected and monitored on a single platform. As connected devices are becoming more commonplace, gym equipment that connects to the guest account or coffee machines that notify staff when they're running low on coffee beans presents a clear opportunity for hotels to provide superior guest experiences and more efficient operations.

As these connected products all come from different providers with differing network requirements, it can be difficult to avoid complicated and isolated systems.

It doesn't have to be complex. Hotels should be looking for network infrastructure solutions that work seamlessly with a wide variety of third parties. This ensures that keeping up with technology is simple and fuss-free. Hotels should be in a position where products are easy to install with minimal additional infrastructure, no matter which brand of electric door lock or location-based beacon they choose.

"In the past, it was about Wi-Fi for guests only. Now we connect everything. Our access points have become gateways to multiple technologies like BLE, ZigBee and more."

Dobias van Ingen
Aruba EMEA Chief Technology Officer



Boosting the bottom line

Maximizing guest revenue is an age-old problem for the hotel industry, but as experiences become more digital, the opportunity to boost guest value also increases.

More data means more insight into guest behaviours and operational efficiency, but consolidating this information into a format that is digestible and actionable can be daunting.

Choosing a network provider that can deliver this information through a single platform will allow hotel management teams to take full advantage of the benefits of a connected hotel. From heatmaps of the site to see where the highest footfall or traffic is, to smarter inventory management, the right connection solutions can help find efficiencies to generate revenue.

Looking forward, the ability to monitor guests more closely and deliver personalized offers and services based on their behaviour has enormous potential not only to generate further revenue, but also create memorable experiences that can drive repeat business.

By investing in solutions that can deliver these insights, IT, marketing and revenue management can work together to deliver new opportunities to boost the bottom line.

“IT, Marketing & Revenue Management must all work closely, and align to drive business, from pre-stay, through check in and after departure. Each of the touch points offer a chance for revenue generation, ensuring success in a post-pandemic world.”

Stefanie M
Head of Revenue Management & Reservations, Berlin, Germany



Conclusion

As hotels aim to thrive in the post-pandemic world, the right choice of networking infrastructure can make all the difference.

Powerful networking solutions are key when it comes to mitigating industry-wide staffing shortages, simplifying complex infrastructure, and helping hotel management keep up with the ever-growing Internet of Things; all of which will lead to richer and more memorable guest experiences.

But beyond that, they also have the power to create new opportunities to boost revenue and ultimately future-proof hotels for years to come.

Find out more about how Aruba helps the hospitality industry connect what matters most

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