IMPACT OF TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGY ON HOTEL BUSINESS OF PUNE CITY

Dr. Seema Zagade¹
Professor
Email: sima1418@gmail.com

Dr. Anita Moodliar²
Principal
Email: anita.moodliar@gmail.com

¹²Maharashtra State Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology
Shivajinagar, Pune, India

ABSTRACT
The role of Information Technology has become widespread across hotels; in turn contributes greatly towards guest satisfaction, improved day-to-day operational efficiency and has increased the revenue earning potential of the Indian hospitality industry. From check-in to check-out, the role of IT has become omnipresent in the hospitality sector. The role of mobile technology is also gathering momentum in the industry. Smartphone’s and social media are expected to be among the chief tools of the hotels. Also in today’s stressed out, fast paced, highly materialistic times, the need of pampering, and taking care of one’s health and following a workout regime along with a suited diet has become an important part of guest lifestyle. To cater to these demands, hotels are gearing up and adopting and implementing strategies; embracing technology for greater guest satisfaction, a memorable experience at their property, is invariably adding up their repeat business and maximizing the revenue generation. This research is conducted with Popular Hotel brands both Business and Star properties of Pune city, to understand the role and impact of Technology and Trends in their Rooms Division department.

Keywords: Technology, Hotels, Rooms Division, Business.

INTRODUCTION
Technology can facilitate India’s Hospitality sector to improve its customer experience, which in turn could help to bring in increased return on investment for hospitality properties in the country. Technology has a catalytic effect towards improving customer experience and contributing towards several other aspects of the hotel industry.

The use of information technology has been growing by leaps and bounds in the hospitality industry over the past two decades the role of value additions is very important in today’s hospitality industry. Moreover, with globalization and increasing integration of world economies, hotels in India are today dealing with more number of well-traveled guests who are experienced in international standards of hospitality, than they did ever before. With so much dynamism in technology, high skill levels methods of working, downsizing mergers, one would expect a lot of changes in the hospitality sector.

However, the Indian Hospitality industry has to make continual efforts to not only attract the guests but also to make them regular visitors. The industry is envisaging several innovative steps to become
more guest friendly. Luxury properties typically operate in a very dynamic market where the expectations from guests for instant gratification are very high.

During the recent years, many hotels and resorts in India are using a gamut of sophisticated technologies to improve their services and enhance their revenues. Virtualization enabled the hotels to have speed in operations. Power consumption has reduced significantly with the use of sensors. Centralized applications help in delivering speed and with a single system integrator, hotels can streamline operations across properties. The industry has undergone significant changes during the past few years. With the emerging markets and more informed and demanding customers, the industry is adopting many technology tools these days. Cloud Computing is perhaps the biggest trend in PMS (Property Management System). The introduction of cloud-based PMS has revolutionized the hospitality Industry globally as it has opened up a vast array of features, allowing hotels to work in a new environment that is highly efficient, secured and technical and minimizes human errors.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the extent to which hotels in Pune are adopting technological advancements.
2. To examine to what extent trends and strategies help in minimizing expenses and maximize revenue generation.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is a significant development and adaptation of technology with Pune Hotels.
2. Adopting latest Technological trends has helped minimize expenses and save operating costs.
3. Various trends have helped hotels for Guest Retention and loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Technology for customer satisfaction- Sukesh Jain, V.P Enterprise Business, Samsung India
   “Hotels work hard to provide differentiated service experience to guests and technology can really enable them to do what with finesse. There are various tools available that are being used worldwide by the hospitality sector and we, in India, need to gradually shift to these tools to improve our services by getting their own Apps created, hotels can really make good use of technology and save their customers from a lot of inconvenience.

2. Technology promising better efficiency- Mr. Amlan Ghose, Managing Director, Prologic First. “Today, Technology touches every aspect of a hotels operation and is a critical tool for hotels business health. Demand Forecasting, competition intelligence and reputation management are technology enabled tools for Hotel revenue management. Online Distribution, which is technology empowered, is becoming or has become the single most important source of business. Cross-functional integration, email and text communication, electronic archival and data retrieval and mobility are improving hotels operational efficiency and reducing transaction costs.

3. Environment on their Minds “ Technology a Close Second”- Mr. Sridhar Chippa, Executive Housekeeper, Grand Mercure- Bangalore “ Many hotels are using easy-to-use software’s to automate and simplify time consuming housekeeping tasks such as setting the room-cleaning sequence, providing attendants with guest preference information, updating the room status in the PMS- Property Management System and so on. This reduces paper consumption and eliminates unnecessary phone calls between the housekeeping desk, floor staff and front office.”

4. Booked for Success “A reservation system isn’t about number crunching anymore, but a technologically advance set up that enables hotels to create newer values, tap new segments, forecast trends and even spearhead one, say the specialists”- If revenue management was all
about every room that is not sold is a room wasted, then reservation system, at least the modern version of it, is that every room not sold at the “best rate” is a room wasted. In fact, one of the big transformations that the internet brought to the hotels was the effectiveness to sell better. While the first time is relatively longish, the time spend in filling the list of information, which actually includes allergies, aromas and preferred view of the room, actually helps the hotel to custom-make the room- and in turn earn the loyalty to the brand.

5. Enchanting Domestic and Business Travelers- Shanta De Silva, Head of South West Asia IHG, Source- Hospitality Talk-Smaller Cities Big Potential, November 2016. Experience, both in-room and across the guest-journey, which they term as, Dream-Plan, Book, Stay and Share. Among the recent innovations is the first Cloud-based Guest Reservation System (GRS) in partnership with Amadeus and set to roll out in 2017. Also IHG have recently partnered with Alipay, China’s third party online payment solutions company, to enable guests to pay via Alipay through all of IHGs online and Mobile channels.

6. Evolution Trends and Outlook for Guest Loyalty.-Arpit Pant, Regional Director, South Asia and Middle East, Preferred Hotels & Resorts. Since the 1980s, the nature of guest loyalty has seen a change that has significantly influenced the rapport between customers and brands. Initially, consumers adopted an “Observant” attitude, making decision based on what organizations offered, by seeking the best competitive value in the market. In 2000s consumers were invited to be involved in deciding which products and services hotels would create a trend that gave rise to “Participatory” culture. Now there is “Convergence” age which alters the relationship between genres, markets, audiences, sectors and technologies. Guests are dictating what their needs are and how they want them satisfied.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

The research area for this study was Pune city (Maharashtra-India). Pune is been called as the Oxford of the East”, further most, it is one of the most popular IT destinations and booming Automobile and Manufacturing Sectors of the country, Housing prominent Corporate Offices though. Recent years has seen a growing demand in Business Travel and Pune also has been a host of many popular Events both in-house as well as off site.

This fortunately has given a rise in demand for Accommodation and invariably has observed a growth in Hotel Sectors. Pune has a variety of Hotel Brands e.g. Hyatt, Taj, Marriott’s, Hilton etc. to cater.

Therefore, the study selected Pune as the study area in order to accomplish the objectives of the study.

Sample population and size

The Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire. The sample population for this research composed of personnel’s from the Rooms Division Department of various Hotels. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the Research before they received the questionnaire. A total sample size of 30 was attained

Secondary data

Secondary data is source of information and has been collected through various written literature and Websites. In the secondary literature number of books, journals and e-journals available in the library were used.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research are important for both existing and upcoming hotels in and around Pune city. The Hotel properties will also benefit from the findings of this research as high customer satisfaction with hotels is highly essential to create a positive experience to Guests.
Distribution of Sample according to Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Hotels</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>14.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>23.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standalone/Clubs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-50 rooms</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 rooms</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-225 rooms</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225 and above.</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>23.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Designing of Questionnaire

It is designed keeping in Mind the Objectives and referring the available literature. Section I is focused mainly on Technological Advancements in the Hotel and Section II is focused on Current Trends Adopted by the Hotels.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Section I

Question: Does your Hotel have a Reservation app?

Out of 34 Hotels surveyed 70.58% hotels mentioned that they are connected with various Reservation Apps with can be downloaded from Google play store and supported by Android and Apple IOS E.g. Hotels.com, Bookings.com, Trivago.com, Expedia.com, Agoda.com
Question: Does your hotel provide Self-check in within the proximity?

14.7% hotels commented yes and basically they fall into the Budget category, 23.52% mentioned that they are in the thought process of the same and were seeking vendor information. 61.76% mentioned as No.

Question: Does your Hotel Offer Check-in via a lobby Ambassador holding a special I-Pad?

44.11% Hotel personnel’s mentioned yes they do have such services, but it was not a routine operational system, 55.88% employees mentioned No for such kind of service.

Question: Does your Hotel have Key less entry?

No hotel property in Pune has a Key less entry system as yet, but yes almost all the Properties have the key card systems/ Power saver Card.
Question: Is there an In-Car Wi-Fi access for cars booked from the Hotel?

11.76% said yes they do have a Wi-Fi connectivity into their Cars for Guest Services majorly this was commented by the Luxury brands, 88.23% commented no, and also said that the guest usually never demanded for such services.

Question: Does your Hotel support a third Party Payment system?

No Hotel Property in Pune has this system. Guests use more of the plastic money. But of course the Brands stated that soon the properties will have to implement such systems and few brands mentioned that the Corporate Offices are already with such kind of talks with service providers.

Section II: Trends and Services in Hotels
With the changing demands from Consumers/Guests, many hotels are striving to incorporate latest trends, as mentioned in the Abstract and Introduction they have become more health conscious. Taking a few parameters, 8.82% hotels of Pune are providing an in-room gym facilities (Work out gears, Floor mats, Spinning Cycles etc.) some have it placed in the room itself and few properties place it on demand. Approximately 45% hotels have the provision of Super Foods or Gluten free Menus, luxury brands have a channel dedicated to Wellness.

**QUESTION: TRENDS IN THE HOTEL GUEST ROOMS**

Remote Operated Curtains, Interactive Television sets and Motion Sensors Light Fixtures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote Operated Curtains</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Television Sets</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion Sensors Light Fixtures</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the trends followed in the Guest rooms, it was majorly observed that the new properties which have recently come up and also the luxury brands have implemented trends like Remote Operated Curtains, Interactive Television Sets and Motion Sensor light Fixtures.

Have the Latest trends and Technological Advancements helped the properties minimizing the labour/Manpower and also has it helped in generating Revenue and guest satisfaction was an open ended question which led to a discussion and the majorly included the Top management. The Management of the brands, who had incorporated the trends and technological advancements, clearly mentioned that the property has however spent capital wise, but they have definitely benefited both ways by reducing manpower and monetary gains. However they clearly stated that the up gradation of the systems had to be done periodically which is in the MOU. So a onetime investment was wise for technology. Some personnel’s mentioned that it didn’t make a difference for them for not incorporating these things since they have a Repeat client, and also the property was well established and had a Good-will (Majorly Budget and Mid-size). But the technological changes have proved a better experience for Guest and proved a better loyalty towards the property or brand; also the services have improved and at have been faster than earlier, also it reducing use of paper.

**FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

1. In this study it was found that the hotels surveyed had moved towards technological advancements.
2. However, most of the organizations said they are willing to adopt new trends and invest in software’s, and infrastructure but were thoughtful about return on investment (ROI)
3. Thus, the first hypotheses - There is a significant development and adaptation of technology with Pune Hotels, can be accepted.
4. It was also observed that hotels implementing latest trends and advancements had helped them minimizing the operating cost.
5. Guest retention has become a focal point for every hotel, as observed guests prefer staying with a property which provides luxury, safety and also to a great extent a status symbol, which further leads publicity.

6. Thus the second and third hypotheses can be accepted.

RECOMMENDATION

Irrespective of the type of hotel, it was found that the both the guest and hotel properties benefit with the advancements, however large or small the hotels needs to adopt these trends and meet the demands of consumers, it would also help the properties to sustain in the competitive market. Regular training and up-gradation within the staff has to be done. Today’s Customer is termed as a king and is also well educated of what he wants as stated by the current market survey, top management has to strive and ensure that they meet the demands resulting in profit generations.

REFERENCES

2. Game-Changing Hotel Industry Trends To Tackle in 2016 retrieved from websitehttps://www.hospitalitynet.org
5. Growth and analysis of Tourism and Hospitality in India- IBEF retrieved from https://www.ibef.org/industry/tourism-hospitality-india.aspx
8. Insights into the potential and growth of Indian Hospitality Industry- retrieved from CEO World.biz 2016.

Websites

1. https://www.hotelnewsresource.com
3. https://www.hospitalitynet.org