

Comfort Vs. Efficiency – Do Hoteliers have to Choose One Over the Other?

By Grant Patterson, Product Marketing Manager, INNCOM by Honeywell - 11/21/2019

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Gartner predicts that there will be nearly 20 billion connected devices



Grant Patterson is Product Marketing Manager at INNCOM by Honeywell.

(https://www.gartner.com/imagesrv/books/iot/iotEbook_digital.pdf) in use by 2020. The hospitality industry is following suit, as hoteliers and property managers are increasingly turning to analytics and IoT to improve facility operations and overall guest experience, but more devices can put strain on the hotel staff who maintain them. By monitoring and controlling all building devices from a single point, they can leverage data to get a holistic view of the property – from real-time occupancy and device use to temperature and lighting. This data helps to ensure that the property’s settings are optimized its specific needs and the hotelier is alerted to potential problems before they occur. The saying goes, knowledge is power, and in this case, it can also impact your business. Having knowledge of and reacting to potential issues before they impact guest comfort, can result in a better guest experience and reviews as well as help your staff to manage their workload leading to greater operational efficiency.

Despite the emergence of more technologically advanced hotels, achieving optimal efficiency without compromising guest comfort remains a concern, particularly with the focus on saving energy. There is a popular misconception that hotel energy savings cannot work in tandem with guest convenience and comfort. High-end properties often invest more

money in equipment and software as they understand the benefits of such solutions and can easily justify the capital outlay – they can improve operational efficiency and the guest experience. While economy and mid-scale hotels may often prioritize efficiency to keep costs as low as possible.

Given the ability of smart devices and IoT-based solutions – this should no longer be the case. ‘Smart hotel’ software can help hoteliers manage their properties and make improvements in both operational efficiency and guest comfort. With an on-premise system, someone must be activity looking at software to know when there is an issue which rarely happens as engineers are often out on the hotel floor. With cloud-based guest management systems, engineers can be on the hotel floor and get alerts via their mobile devices to know when there are potential issues. This means they can respond quicker and increase their productivity. For example, cloud-based technologies that support system monitoring and predictive analytics can directly alert the maintenance team when a device, such as an HVAC system, may fail. This information is delivered ahead of time to ensure that the room with a broken system is not made available to guests until the issue is resolved – saving time, cutting costs and, most importantly, preventing guest frustration.

Building management systems and guestroom management systems play a major role in providing hotel managers with the tools they need to improve their day-to-day operations and improve overall guest experience – and it all starts with IoT sensors. For instance, if a room has an issue during a guest’s stay, sensors backed with infrared detection could determine whether a guest is in their room in real time, letting the maintenance team or housekeeping know if they are in the clear to enter to fix the system. Beyond minimizing the guest’s disruption, this may also improve productivity among staffers. Sensors that gauge temperature, motion, proximity, light and smoke can all make a guestroom management system more powerful.

Once a hotelier understands the benefits smart technologies and connected systems, the next step is implementation. Luckily, building management systems and guestroom management systems in hotels are becoming increasingly user-friendly and more automated than ever before and can be integrated for better performance. The output of data collected by IoT sensors is immensely valuable, as management can operationalize insights from advanced analytics without deep technical knowledge. That said, the biggest opportunity for improved overall experience and guest comfort will emerge from identifying where management should limit investment and where it should increase investment.

By focusing on areas for improvement, hotel managers can better “future-proof” their operations while enhancing the guest experience in a more meaningful way. Investing in equipment and software is a way to improve your property’s value. One thing to consider when making investment is scalability – integrating new connected equipment and software can range from a smarter thermostat to a fully networked, highly integrated property. Some properties even take the investment further by integrating their guestroom management system with the property management system (PMS) check-in and check-out information which helps to further reduce the potential of compromising guest comfort.

The rise of consumer expectations, combined with the saturation and maturity of IoT devices, indicates that the time to digitally transform hotel management systems is now. Building management systems that use IoT connectivity can enable hoteliers to gather the insights they need to provide their guests with the most comfortable experience possible. They can also improve day-to-day operations and keep energy consumption at bay – making the future of hotel management a reality today.