

Heard on the Show Floor: HITEC 2019

By **Michal Christine Escobar** - 06/25/2019

During our time at HITEC 2019, HT's Editors made a point to ask the technology vendors they spoke with for predictions on how hospitality technology will evolve in the near future and what new and interesting technologies they saw on display at HITEC. Artificial intelligence, voice command technology, and data/analytics were all major themes that came up repeatedly. Below is a sample of some of the interesting predictions we received and some of the interesting show floor trends they saw on display.

ON HOW TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING

Dr. Ravi Mehrotra, President & Founder, IDeaS

“The time has come for hotels to think differently about optimization as hotels shift to attribute-based pricing and hotels became a commodity. Hotels must be able to solve problems in real-time, understanding that the best answer at that moment is better than the best answer too late.”

Ahmed Youssef (Joe), EVP - Corporate Development & Marketing, Amadeus

Attribute-based shopping is the future of personalization. The CRS (central reservation system) is better able to execute on this as the central system for hotels to have all the necessary guest data integrated and accessible. This will precipitate a move away from the property management system being viewed as the center of the hotel technology ecosystem.

Cam Troutman, VP, Aptech

Within the next year we expect voice-command technology and AI to be so integrated with accounting software that staff members could ask out loud for the program to run predictive analytics and receive immediate results on their computer.



Mark Lewis Brown, CEO, Vertical Booking

As we can see from the rapid adoption of new and more advanced revenue and reservation-related strategies, the hotel industry is evolving, and all of the support technologies must also evolve to suit the market. I anticipate that the CRS will become the single-point database, which hoteliers will use for all revenue and reservations functions, including all PMS functionality (such as guest check-in/check-out, inventory management and financial items).

<https://bit.ly/2X89XNr>

Warren Dehan, President, Maestro PMS

"Everyone talks a lot about AI taking over hospitality, but I'm on the fence as to its real use in the space. However, one way I think it could be really helpful is with guest feedback. I hate filling out survey forms. If we could use AI and perhaps voice-command technology to evolve that feedback experience, that could be really useful."

David Ginn, Vice President, Hospitality Sales, North America, Dormakaba

"Technology is evolving to the point where door locks can now offer an audit trail. That means hotels will be able to see when a guest or staff member unlocked the door, when the handle was turned, and if the door shut securely -- both for entering and exiting the room. This means, if a guest accuses hotel staff of stealing their items - the hotel will have an audit trail to be able to verify who entered the room and when to see if the accusations are legitimate."



Chris Hovanessian, Co-Founder, Whistle

AI/ML as a whole has infinite potential, but still needs work. I believe we will begin to see more dramatic changes in the next year, making AI solutions more viable, especially in regards to conversation. In terms of direct impact, Front Desk operations will see heightened levels of efficiency, as more questions and inquiries can be automated. The biggest impact, however, will be behind the scenes. More workflow automation, predictive analytics, operational efficiencies. A chatbot that can respond to the guest immediately is great, but a system that can respond while processing and fulfilling a guest's needs is exponentially better.

Scott Watson, CMO, M3

"Accounting itself hasn't changed much over the years, but accounting technology has definitely transformed. Over the next six months to one year, I foresee more of a focus on how API feeds in and out of the accounting software rather than an emphasis on the actual accounting software. Procurement, images, payroll and other G/L and G/L related items will come in automatically and financials necessary for analysis and reporting will be exported."

Dave Berger, CEO, Volara

"The hotels that have the best success use technology to drive business outcomes. This drives netpromoter scores and makes staff more efficient. The magic happens technologies integrate. Through our integrations with the likes of Amadeus, for example, we've seen that by hotels using voice technology they are able to take 30% of workload off of staff."