

# Hotel Accounting: Three Trends on the Horizon

By Mardi Ketchum, CFO, Terrapin Investments & Management Corporation - 06/18/2019



From in-room tablets to robotic butlers and virtual concierge services, guest-facing hotel technology trends are evolving faster than ever before. While these tech products and upgrades often get the glory, the behind-the-scenes services and solutions that power the guest experience are evolving just as quickly. Day-to-day processes are becoming smarter, more efficient and more streamlined, saving hotels and property management firms both time and money in the process.

As a full-service hotel management company, Terrapin Investments & Management Corporation owns and manages its assets in addition to Terrapin Hotel Management, a rapidly growing third-party management company. Successfully managing these assets demands cutting-edge adaptable solutions tailored to our industry.

M3, a cloud-based financial platform for the hospitality industry, recently hosted hundreds of hospitality accounting professionals from across the globe at its biannual Partners' Meeting. The event allowed hoteliers to see first-hand how quickly the industry is evolving to help solve real-world issues facing today's hoteliers. During the event's many interactive panel discussions, breakout sessions and keynote speeches, three big-picture trends and opportunities emerged that should be kept at the top of one's mind for 2019 and beyond.

**#1. Smarter, personalized solutions are putting time back into the hands of hoteliers.**

Customized technology that allows properties to work more efficiently in a way that makes sense for them will continue to gain traction in the hospitality accounting industry. Accumulating accurate, easy-to-access data and data trends are crucial to the future of the industry. Tailormade back-end solutions like M3's [Insight](#) enables users to create custom reports with data from the industry's most recognized data providers, along with operating statistics, brand data and proprietary M3 financial and labor data into a personalized, actionable dashboard allowing hoteliers to make real decisions in real time.

With plans to adopt Insight, Terrapin Investments & Management Corporation will benefit greatly from being able to slice and dice data from our property management and financial systems anyway we want in an incredibly fast way. This level of customization can save hours of time previously spent manually exporting data to create various types of reports, allowing managers to spend less time behind a computer and more time in a hotel's lobby interacting with guests.

## **#2. Automated Imaging is changing the way accountants do business.**

While you may have read about AI in relation to robotic butlers providing top-notch service, this type of AI, or automated imaging, helps boost bottom-line results for hoteliers. M3 recently debuted a new electronic imaging solution that relies on Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to extract key data from imported documents and eliminate the need for manual input. When a user uploads a document, the automated invoice processor extracts specific data for reports rather than just scanning the image. Terrapin Investments & Management Corporation is always looking to expand our operations, so solutions like Automated Imaging allow us to scale rapidly. The more a hotelier utilizes this system, the easier it becomes, as the solution learns and stores critical information, significantly speeding up A/P workflow with each use.

## **#3. The Millennial employee is just as important as the millennial guest.**

For an industry jam-packed with technology-based trends, millennial employees play a critical role in helping to identify valuable trends as well as negative trends in need of adjustment. Millennials are the largest segment of the current U.S. workforce, yet they operate in vastly different ways and at different speeds than the generation that preceded them. The next few years will prove to be critical for hospitality-industry employers to harness the potential of employees in this age range or risk getting left behind or over investing in archaic solutions.

At Terrapin Investments & Management Corporation, millennials have taken to cutting-edge tech solutions like M3 because it is intuitive and powerful at the same time. It used to take days to add a new hotel to our system, but we're now able to get up and running in an hour or two through cloud-based tech solutions.

By setting highly specific goals and challenges and reaffirming the importance of millennials' work, employers can maximize productivity and buy-in from the millennials on their payroll. This also contributes to minimizing the turnover from this same set of employees. Further, leadership of this type creates a reliable middle management, which is vital for any company's continued success.

Across industries, companies must keep a finger on the pulse of what's new and, more importantly, what's next. In hotel accounting, the bells and whistles of excessive new technologies take a back seat to real solutions proven to boost bottom lines, which allows hotels to run leaner and more efficient than ever before.