


Chapter 6

Hospitality Reimagined: The Contactless Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

Contactless technology is transforming hotels, making life easier, safer, and less wasteful. Digital keys, QR-code menus, and Apple Pay are now commonplace, making check-ins less annoying. Cloud, NFC, Bluetooth, and RFID technologies are also being used to streamline back-end operations, reducing paperwork and reducing calls at the front desk. AI is also being used in hotels for dynamic pricing and predictive analytics, making guests feel more valued. Touchless technology is also making things safer by reducing the chance of someone swiping your information. The use of technology is also environmentally friendly, saving money and reducing waste. As technology continues to grow, hotels may become even smarter and more efficient.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry serves various services that mainly operate within lodging food and beverage sectors. Throughout years this industry maintained substantial

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dependency on personal contacts between guests and personnel. Throughout history the main elements driving change have consisted of enhanced convenience combined with better comfort and increased efficiency. The hospitality industry fully integrated technology through reservation systems and guest services and in-room technology systems to become more advanced over time. Keycards took the place of metal keys in hotels while travel applications implemented booking and check-in processes. (*My Hotel Line, n.d.*).

The advancement to contactless solutions marks a new major development in technology. The hospitality industry adopts these new technological solutions because consumers demand better safety in addition to hygiene and convenience during the time of COVID-19 and today's global challenges. (*eHotelier, 2020*).

The world rapidly adopted contactless technologies after the COVID-19 pandemic mainly in retail sectors together with hospitality and food service industries. The combination of rising hygiene needs along with social distancing requirements triggered a wider adoption of mobile systems and touch-free payment options and virtual provision of services (Panneerselvam, 2024). Contactless solutions gain popularity in addition to safety reasons because these solutions deliver improved convenience and speed through services that offer tailored experiences to consumers.

Guests made a preference for digital solutions which caused them to avoid traditional check-ins as well as face-to-face encounters and printed menu use. These technologies will persist for future health-safe global dining and travel because they are expected to change traditional guest-service operations. (*BANC, 2024*).

THE RISE OF CONTACTLESS TECHNOLOGY

Contactless technology refers to systems that allow guests to interact with services, access facilities, or make transactions without the need for physical contact. These technologies use various methods of wireless communication, such as Near Field Communication (NFC), Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), QR Codes, and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). Each of these technologies has specific applications, from mobile payments to keyless room entry, all designed to enhance convenience, safety, and efficiency in the hospitality industry. (*Kyco, 2024; Acropolium, n.d.*).

Examples of Contactless Technologies in Hospitality

1. **Mobile Check-In and Check-Out:** Guests can check into hotels or restaurants through a mobile application, which eliminates the need to physically stand in line at the front desk or wait to be seated. This improves efficiency and provides an entirely touch-free experience. This process often involves the guest receiving

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