

How digital hospitality can be utilised to transform guest experiences in Africa

As hospitality providers across the globe embrace digital transformation, the question arises; what do intelligent hotels offer? From guestroom automation to location-based interactions, mobile engagement, hyper-personalisation, APIs and integration - Is customer service excellence possible? Is Africa ready for the "digital hotel"?



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Imagine this scenario: A housekeeper notices that the air conditioner is not working while servicing a guest's room. The fault is immediately logged on a mobile device and a job card raised, maintenance instantly receives an alert and dispatches someone to service the unit.



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Meanwhile, location services pick up that the guest is on his/her way back up to the room from the pool. The guest is immediately contacted with an offer to have a free drink at the bar, while the aircon is repaired. By the time the drink is finished, the bartender has received an alert that the issue is resolved, and he/ she advises the guest that they're all set to return to their room. Too good to be true?

EOH Infor Services recently launched the Infor Hospitality suite of solutions to the African market, with events held in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

At the Johannesburg event, MC KK Diaz opened proceedings by stating that, to be successful, it's essential that businesses connect people to what's important to them. "Modern customers don't look at the product only, they consider the overarching value proposition – what value are you offering, and what will my experience be like?"

Adriaan Rossouw, sales director, EOH Infor Services, Infor's Master Partner in Africa confirmed that customer expectations are changing; and they will continue to change at a rapid pace. "What does it take to turn a vacation into an adventure? It takes hospitality solutions that deliver change and offer customers solutions they didn't even know they needed."

Rossouw confirms that Infor Hospitality will be rolled out across Africa with a strong cloud approach.



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Opportunities for digital transformation

According to Wolfgang Emperger, VP Infor Hospitality EMEA, LATAM and India, the local market is filled with opportunities for digital transformation. "There is much desire in the local market for an innovative alternative from a technology and customer service perspective."

With multi-region, multi-language functionality, and strong mobile functionality, the suite offers hospitality establishment a best in breed solution – even in regions where computer literacy is not as high as mobile access.

Covering property management, performance management, revenue management, asset management, human capital management and more, the industry is set to experience rapid transformation and enhanced customer satisfaction. "In hospitality, we have more information about our customers than in any other industry. It's time to move from traditional hospitality to a digital experience – to the benefit of guests," adds Emperger.

Creation exceptional customer experience

The digital hotel will soon be a reality across the continent, believes Rentia Austin, hospitality executive at EOH Infor Services. "Traditionally, South Africa's tech adoption rate is not high – but this is changing, as the country and continent continue to evolve. The goal is to create exceptional experiences with a customer first, customer last approach."

Manouel Maurant Samper, channel account manager at Infor, agrees with this sentiment. "It's important to remember that cultures and influences from other markets greatly impact African countries. South Africa is completely different from the rest of Africa, and this will be a key strategy consideration."

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