ICT, A KEY DRIVER OF QUALITY SERVICES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

M. M. Wankhede

Arts Commerce and Science College Tukum Chandrapur M.S. India
Corresponding author Email : drmmwankhede@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Rarely one can differ on the point of the importance of ICT today in every span of our life. Hospitality Industry in not an exception, where we are more customers centric and require a lot of ground work for value added services to offer them in today's competitive and ever changing environment. These services can offer only when you have a well designed IT system in place.. This paper examine the technology implemented in hotel industry to improve the business process to satisfy the customer in continuous manner. The study conducted to visit the hotels to identify and assess the implementation of various technology enabled tools and how this adds value to cater the services for customer delight.

INTRODUCTION:

In conventional methods of looking at the customer satisfaction, we were concentrating on Scenic Beauty, Infrastructure, Gardens, Lawn, Pool, Antique pieces and collection of decorated foreign design stuff along with good cuisine and services. But now a day these parameters are obsolete and nobody is concerned about these services because they consider this as the default facilities. Customer are nowadays looking for more informative and value added services not only Online booking, Online Payment but also state of the art business facilities for high profile business gatherings with overhead projector, Slide projector with screen, Satellite communication, Video conferencing, specific Tourist Information, Geological Information etc. As advanced as it is, information technology in the hospitality industry is still going forward. Intelligent booking systems enable rapid and efficient guest feedback, along with

the ability to predict who is likely to use the hotel again and inform them via e-mail or text messages when good deals arrive. Hotels with room service or other guest services can offer their menus online, allowing for quick updates, high-quality photos, and other ways to allow guests to see and order services before they even arrive.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

Objective:

To analyse the impact of ICT on quality based services in hotels.

To analyse the various technology and values offered to the customer.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study carried out is descriptive in nature and based on literature review and interview process of Hotel manager of Nagpur region. Secondary data is collected from the various reports and white papers which describes how ICT technology helps hospitality industry in a big way. Literature Review Customer satisfaction: Excellent service organization intensively studies the key drivers of people who use their products. Key drivers are the needs, wants and expectation that are most important to the customer and they must be part of the organization's knowledge base. The best way to learn these is, to carefully examine customers. Most times, however, management's perception does not represent the customers' point of view, creating a gap between what managers think consumers prefer and what consumers actually want. Adoption of Information Technology in Hospitality Industry: Adoption of Information Technology by the Hospitality industry started in the early 1970 and has been rapidly evolving ever since. (Information and communication technology in Tourism 2010 by Ulrike Gretzel, Rob Law, Matthias Fuchs Page No 27,28). The adoption of technology by the industry has brought a lot of advantages and Challenges. As a general

principle the larger and more complex a hospitality facility (i.e. overnight accommodation, food and beverage outlets, spa treatments, recreational activities etc.), the grater its reliance over automation (Piccoli and Torchio, 2006; Siguaw, Enz & Namasuvayam, 2008). Manager and Operational Services: These are the basic front and back office operation of hotels industry, which requires more accurate planning and efficient implementation of the same which in turn leads to additional customer satisfaction. Integration of business process helps in optimizing the cost and remains economical in this competitive global business. ERP products and its successful implementation lead to better decision making facility along with streamline process chain.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

ERP Basic operation Module and its integration 1. Hotels Front Office Management: This application takes care of front desk operations, namely Guest Reservation (Single / Group), Guest Check-in, Billing (Single/Multi folio), Checkout, Cashiering, Guest Photograph & History. If desired the guest photographs can also be maintained with guest profile. 2. Point of Sale Billing System: The application provides multiple Point-of–Sales (POS) for Billing with Menu item rates, schemes, offers & discounts. The order & billing operations can be operated from Keyboard, Mouse or (and) Touch Screen. It can print orders on remote printer or displays on kitchen terminal for preparation & pickup of ordered items. The systems take care of bill settlement in Cash, Credit Cards, Bill Settlement and provides comprehensive cashier day-book. 3. Telephone Call Billing System: Application uses port for communication with EPABX data. It provides a complete telephone call management system which helps in rendering an impeccable communication service to your guests. The system comprehensive reporting on calls Summary on Extension & Junction etc. 4. Banquet/Conference Management: This

application manages multi-location Banquet points with reservation, function plan, billing & bill settlements. Also takes care of booking of Items, services etc and links with finance, POS and Material management for related postings. 5. Financial Accounting System: This application takes all finance related vouchers as the basic input and maintains General Ledger, A/c Receivable and A/c Payable. Trial Balance, Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss are available on-line from vouchers input as well as provide editing of vouchers from them. The system can also manage Cash flow, Cost center, Profit Center, TDS, Budgets, Auditing and Bank Reconciliation. Lynx internally for importing finance related vouchers from other application modules of the application suite. 6. Material Management System: The application manages all kinds of items including food. It would maintain supplier's rate on items & would take internal indents and generate purchase orders accordingly. 7. Housekeeping System: This application manages Room status control, laundry. Provide information on expected arrivals and departures. 8. Menu Engineering & Food Costing System: This application takes recipe (ingredients) of all saleable menus-items from Point of Sale. Based on recipe of menu-items, the system generates cost sheet with reporting on estimated versus actual consumption of raw materials. It links with POS for Billing and MMS for Inventory. Allows you to define & cost your new proposed new menu items during trials. 9. Human Resource Information System: Taking Personnel information, the system manages employees attendance & leaves. It can capture data from any time-attendance machine for attendance recording. The Payroll module takes care of compensation administration PF, ESI, Bonus, Gratuity, TDS, Leave Encashment and generates all statutory reporting. 10. Assets Management System: This application manages information on multi-location & Assets. It generates Purchase Inquiries, takes quotations from vendors, generates purchase orders and takes deliveries

of assets. Keeps information on asset usage, Maintenance, AMC, Insurance, Consumption of spares etc. The system also has depreciation calculator on Assets. 11. CRM: Piccoli and colleagues (2003) review the risks and benefits of customer relationship management (CRM). This philosophy of intimate customer familiarity can lower marketing expenditures and increase sales through closer relationships and increased satisfaction. a) In-Room Guest Services : Some of the technologies that improve the customer satisfaction are given below. 1. VOIP (Voice over IP): No need of waiting for phone to establish connection and worrying about the bill at the time of enquiry for overseas travelers. With the broadband connection, users can use Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP to stay connected with their families and talk comfortably without thinking about how far or near they are. 2. In Room Pay per View: In room technologies that have appealed to business traveler may not have the same appears to leisure travelers. For example In room high speed data has become a required amenity to woo business travelers while more leisure travelers are carrying laptops. 3. VOD (Video On Demand): This has turned the living room into a video store. It allows guests to select and watch video/audio content on his/hers own comfort. 4. Voice Mail: Phone based services that enable a caller to leave a voice mailbox message. This is a system of conveying a stored telecommunication voice message. Most cell phones have this facility included. Some of the benefit can be enumerated here. 1. Automated attendant: Streamlines efficiency, enabling callers to route their own calls and leave messages without assistance. 2. Call routing: Sends caller to a specific extension or department they want. Callers can easily find an extension using the directory features. 3. Voice Messaging: Creates, sends, receives, forwards, and saves voice message. User can easily manage messages by pressing specific keys. 4. Audio Text: Enables callers to play pre-recorded information on demand as directed by audio

prompts. Perfect for faq's. 5. Call Screening: Requests caller to state their name and company, then announces the calling party by playing the recording to the station user. 6. Message Notification: Users know when a message arrives by any combination of message waiting light, pager, or calling any office. 5. In-Room Safe Technology: It is essentially a metal box designed to be a stronghold against unwanted tampering. The most common types of electronic lock are a keypad which is used in hotel security. Hotel rooms often have electronic safes in the closet or cabinet. You can program these electronic locks by resetting the numbers on the keypad. The ease of resetting an electronic safe is one of its assets. 6. In-Room Control Panel: A low-power/low-bandwidth network to provide control communications with various automation devices in the room such as the Mini bar, HVAC (heat, ventilation, air conditioning), security system and room automation. This network is not intended for communications with guest-owned equipment. 7. In-Room Video Checkout: Television interface enabling express folio review account settlement and checkout.

CONCLUSION:

According to the AH&LA study released on future technology trends in Hospitality. The research analyzes top areas of information technology (IT) most frequently being implemented at hotels, and quantifies increased customer demand motivating hoteliers to enhance their product with new amenities and programs. There is an overwhelming agreement that IT is important for increasing customer satisfaction (82.4 percent), increasing employee efficiency (79.9 percent) and generating revenue (71.3 percent). Wi-Fi services, were, by far, the IT system that guests care about most, according to 82 percent of respondents, Eighty-six percent of responding hotels offered Wi-Fi services, and 20 percent of those not offering it plan to do so within the next five years. After Wi-Fi,

in-room entertainment systems and airline check-in kiosks were cited as important to customers by 48 percent and 38 percent of respondents, respectively. Results of this study indicate hoteliers are critically monitoring and taking action to fulfill their guests' wants and needs as the average consumer gets more tech-savvy"

REFERENCE:

Katerina Berezina, Anil Bilgihan, Cihan Cobanoglu and Fevzi Okumus "The Information Technology (IT) Skills of Hospitality School Graduates as Perceived by Hospitality Professionals"

Ulrike Gretzel, Rob Law, Matthias Fuchs, "Information and communication technology in Tourism 2010" Page No 27,28

White Paper on "Next Generation converged media-setup box Guest room technology convergence" Hotel Technology-Next Generation, www.htng.org.

http://www.ahla.com/pressrelease.aspx?id=22574

A review of Research on Information Technology in the Hospitality Industry, Peter O' Connor, Jamie Murphy.Hosteur, Vol 19 No 1 ISSN 1095 7898 Spring/Summer 2010

http://technology.24wn.com/2010/03/the-benefits-of-haveing-an-electronic-safe

http://www.pcworld.com /article/111042/ a_night_in_the_ hotel_of _the _ future.

http://www.hospitalitynet.org/index.html (Hospitality Net)

http://www.hotelresource.com/ (Hotel Resource for Hospitality Professionals)

http://www.hospitalityresourcecenter.com (Hospitality Industry Resource Center)

http://www.hieac.com/profile.html (Hospitality Education Advisory Committee)

http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JIAHR