

eGuide

How to Solve Labor Challenges & Improve Staff Retention in Hotels with Modern PMS Solution

Hoteliers must find a way to retain the skilled workers who come their way; Technology designed to make employees' lives easier is the answer — and it all starts with the PMS

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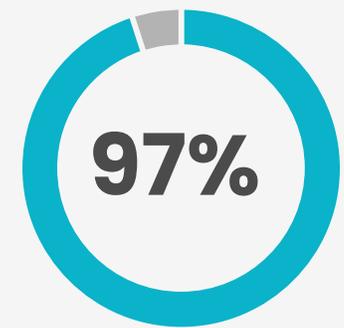


Workers are finding modern PMS technology to be more efficient and easier to use, because it seamlessly connects nearly every area of hotel operations.

Hotel workers, like guests, want to feel engaged with the property. As labor constraints force more responsibility on fewer hotel team members, those on the front lines want to be sure their increased accountability is accompanied by more capabilities. The best way to address these concerns is through new technology, starting with the property management system.

No one said running a hotel had to be easy, but there is no reason the experience must necessarily be challenging. Daily hotel operations have been negatively impacted by the labor crisis and as a result more is expected of hotel workers than ever before, from managing rooms, organizing schedules and even flipping beds if schedules demand it. This is simply the reality of hospitality today, but if hoteliers are to realistically tackle these challenges it will be necessary to equip workers with the tools they need to be successful.

Modern PMS tools provide workers with the ability to tackle tasks more efficiently, relying on fewer individuals to achieve what used to take an entire team in an effective manner. Simply put, when the technology works, so do employees.



According to a new member survey conducted by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), 97% of survey respondents indicated they are experiencing a staffing shortage, 49% severely so. The most critical staffing need is housekeeping, with 58% ranking it as their biggest challenge.

At the recent Maestro User's Conference, guest speaker Larry Mogelonsky, the world's most published hospitality author and co-founder of Hotel Mogel Consulting, said "For years the hospitality industry has been guest-centric in its approach to service and loyalty. While hoteliers must do everything possible to ensure guest satisfaction, it cannot be at the expense of staff. There needs to be a massive paradigm shift in how we operate; employee satisfaction must trump guest satisfaction at all costs. In the end, happy employees can't help but translate to happy guests. This is the most radical change in hospitality today, and it cannot be deployed effectively if independent of technology."

Fast Learner

Hoteliers' goal starting today should be to find new avenues for worker retention, and adopt tools that are efficient, clear, concise and optimized. However, all of these capabilities are for naught if hoteliers fail to make adequate time for training. Onboarding remains a persistent challenge, and PMS providers should ensure new hires can take advantage of e-learning tools and other services in order to get up to speed as quickly as possible while retaining key information.

If a PMS provider is able to offer live chat help services, not AI, then new hospitality team members will have the ability to access instant assistance from a live agent when they need it most and the way they expect it. Staff are more inclined to use a tool that provides quality, consistent support and service, via a mechanism they are universally familiar with, and particularly when it is built directly into the technology they are already using. Live agents are able to provide direct, accurate responses that are more meaningful than what is typically offered by automated chatbots, something that is greatly valued by hotel workers in the midst of training, or even a crisis.

No matter how hotel operators view PMS training, properly delivered it provides value at all levels of hotel operations and hotel leaders should prioritize it up front. Doing so disseminates more knowledge and skills throughout your hotel organization, and allows hotel workers to do more with less, ties their skillset directly to the hotel that taught them, and enables them to freely move throughout departments and grow their career as a hospitality specialist.



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Newer modern technology such as web based and mobile platform-based PMS user interfaces geared towards front line users also require fewer training hours than their static counterparts and leverage existing social trends in mobile technology to provide major benefits to hotel labor and operations. Coupled with sophisticated total property PMS platforms that handle all facets of an operation, this is an important distinction to remember as hotels welcome the most tech savvy class of eligible workers in its history. It's time for the industry to believe in these workers' capabilities and give them the capabilities to use these skills to improve hotel operations holistically.

Hotel technology providers have closely watched the development of consumer technology for ways to leverage these trends in business. Today's consumer market has helped define the rules for what constitutes an efficient way to use an app, and PMS providers have seized on these developments in order to simplify the process of running a hotel, particularly by offering new latitudes in mobility and communications.

Mobile technology's popularity and utility should not be underestimated when applied to the workforce. Travelers have asked for innovations in mobile check-in for nearly a decade, but such technology was only rarely found across the industry until the pandemic made it a necessity. Now, mobile check-in and two-way SMS communications have revolutionized hotel operations to make them leaner and more accessible for smaller teams, and the same trend is now taking part on the operations side of the business.

With employees better able to work on the go, it's also important to consolidate the number of necessary programs and applications they are forced to interact with in order to operate a hotel. Some PMS providers are taking on more

third-party integrations or offering multiple modules stored on a centralized database to make accessing them easier while creating seamless unified guest booking experiences. The more hotels are able to consolidate these tools, the more hotel workers are able to do many things without feeling overwhelmed by the tools around them.

Innovations in hotel technology have unfortunately been developed in a market characterized by high labor compression. The right modern PMS technology offers a tech ecosystem that is more efficient, easier to use with help services at easy reach, and encompasses nearly every area of hotel operations. Even more importantly, these tools have parity with what consumers and workers are already using in their daily lives. The more satisfied these workers, the more hotels can improve retention and focus on improving the guest experience.

About the Author



Warren Dehan is the President of Maestro, the preferred cloud and on-premises PMS solution for independent hotels, luxury resorts, conference centers, vacation rentals, and multi-property groups. Maestro was first to market with a fully integrated Windows PMS and Sales & Catering solution and is continuing that trend with leading edge web and mobile based solutions. Platform and deployment independence present Maestro as an investment that will continue to grow and adapt as new technologies emerge.