Seamless tracking of hotel guest charges.

Enhance the customer experience through ePOS.

Hospitality businesses are looking to high-tech ePOS (Electronic Point of Sale) systems to meet consumer demand for fast, efficient, personalized service. But it's crucial they don't forget the importance of good, old-fashioned human interaction.
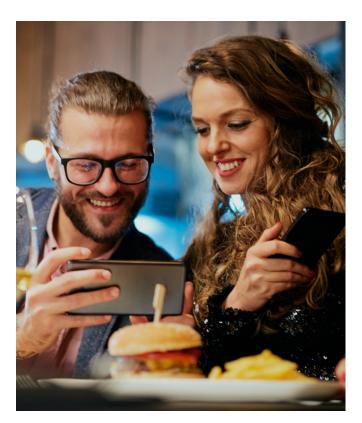
Convenience is king for today's consumers. Waiting at any point during the dining process is one of their biggest bugbears. A recent study by Oracle found that 84% of diners think fast, efficient service is the single most important factor when they visit a restaurant, bar or coffee shop. At the same time, consumers are getting more and more used to personalized service in all aspects of their lives, whether that is series recommendations on Netflix or product suggestions on Amazon. For these reasons, more and more hospitality operators are looking to high-tech ePOS systems to accelerate service in their outlets, and help them deliver the highly personalized service consumers expect.

Hotels – from the largest resort hotels with multiple restaurants and bars to small boutique hotels – ePOS systems handle the challenge of billing the right customer and keeping track of their spend. The integration of use ePOS allows staff to take payment straight away, or they can assign charges to a room, so the customer can pay their total bill, including the cost of their room when they check-out. This way, all customer purchases are kept on one bill, ensuring extras are never missed and revenue is maximized. The general information being collected on occupancy, sales in different areas of the business and staff performance is invaluable to management. Detailed reporting allows drilling down into the performance of different areas of the business from macro to micro.

Tableside ordering and payment

Over the past few years mobile POS devices that waiters can bring to the table have rapidly grown in popularity within restaurants. As staff do not have to run back and forth from the table to the kitchen to deliver orders, they are likely to be more accurate and reach the customer faster. This also allows operators to turn more tables. As the 2018 'Technology at the Table' GO Technology report from Zonal and CGA found, 41% of diners say this enhances their overall experience, over half believe it makes the ordering process quicker and a third think their orders arrive faster. In fact, the GO Technology report found that of those who didn't believe tableside ordering enhanced their experience, two in five thought it impersonal, or that servers with tablets don't interact with them enough. As Zonal's sales and marketing director Clive Consterdine says, "What will stand the test of time is nothing to do with technology, but good old-fashioned human interaction."

Digital Room Service

The ePOS concept also translates to room service settings, where more and more hotels are implementing electronic bedside ordering systems. Guests can be taken through the entire menu digitally, make requests for substitutions and add write-ins. They also can easily book additional services, such as spa appointments or special cleaning requests. The cost benefits can be significant, with hotels reporting reduction in staff expenses, food costs and non-food expenses due to improved overall efficiency.

Ideal for this scenario is a cook and chill system, as the one offered by RATIONAL's combi-steamers. Their Finishing capability means that food can be prepared in advance when there is time to do so - during kitchen staff working hours - and brought to consumption temperature in just a few minutes when the guest's order arrives. This way, high-quality room service can be ensured 24/7 with even unskilled staff taking care of meal preparation easily and safely. Intuitive touch displays, customizable menus and processes along with fast self-cleaning options are another plus.

Personalized experiences

Digital ordering processes, through a fixed kiosk, an in-room tablet or a customer's mobile phone, are a fast-growing trend in the hospitality industry. For hotels to really benefit from mobile POS and self-service kiosks, they must be integrated seamlessly with the operation's main CMS in order to monitor transactions and manage their revenue sources in real-time. That way the information gathered tableside, or through the kiosks, tablets or smartphone apps about customers' dining preferences can be used by hotels to personalize guest experience throughout the entire stay, or to tailor future marketing promotions to each guest, increasing the probability of a return visit. Ordering and payment processes are customer touchpoints and should be considered part of the overall experience, and not as singular interactions. "Hotels are all about the customer journey – not just making a stay as smooth and seamless as possible for the customers, but also keeping track of their movements, requests and expenditure as quickly and discretely as possible. ePOS has become a must-have tool for operators in the digital age. If the use of ePOS is complimented with attentive personal service on other touch points during the stay, best customer satisfaction is ensured," concludes Nico Makowski, RATIONAL Key Account Director Hotels & Marine.

Want to know more?

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