

Parameters to Consider before Implementing a Hotel Management System

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Abstract:- Information and Communication Technology plays a vital role in hotel industry and its importance has dramatically increased over the years.

Hotel industry belongs to the service industry and consists of different units such as restaurants, lodging, etc. Hotel industries is one of the world' s largest and most permeant industries, the industry has exposed itself to the forces of change, especially by the ongoing developments in ICTs.

Hotel management system is a type of management system that facilitates the management of hotel operations and functions; main operations such as front office, sales, planning, and accounting.

This paper identifies parameters that should be considered before designing or purchasing an hotel management system.

Keywords:- Hotel Management System, Customer Relationship Management and Information Communication Technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

The “ hotel business” has been described by so many economists has a unique business which makes it quite different from other business, it is one of the few places where production and consumption occurs simultaneously. In recent years with the explosive growth in the area of Information and communication technology, defining a hotel can be quite intriguing because of the sophisticated services offered by some 5-star hotels around the globe. A hotel in this age has moved from a place meant for consumption of food items, accommodation to scene of activities which may include facilities like cosmetic things, hairdryer, cock tail lounges, radio and TV services, night clubs, mini-theatre, emergence health services, e-libraries/book stall, recognized travel agency, money change, online booking & reservations and safe deposit facilities etc. Some hotel even use information of prospective or existing customers captured in their database during registration on the hotel website to manage clients request on when on their premises. This will involve

customers to login with their user name and password before having access to the numerous services of the hotel. [1].

From the above definition of a hotel, one can deduced that the hotel business has gone evolved through the wildest imaginations. It is now a competitive sector, hence in order to accommodate insatiable desires of a modern day customer driven by various information and communications technology gadgets available to him, a hotel business striving for excellence must move from old-fashioned, paper-based methods that tended to be both cumbersome and inefficient to automated services via use of information and communication technology. This quest for performance and efficiency in the hospitality industry has given rise to the development of a host of systems called Hotel Management Systems. [2]

II. HOTEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Managing a hotel which is a hive of simultaneous numerous activities such as (front office, booking and reservation, banquet, finance, HR, inventory, material management, quality management, security, energy management and housekeeping etc.) manually is a difficult process. This led to the introduction of property management systems or hotel management system that automates a host of repetitive functions. [3]

Hotel management system is a comprehensive software application that automates a hotel operation which includes booking of guest, online reservations, point of sale, telephone, HR and payroll, maintenance management, quality management and other amenities. With the advancement of cloud computing, hotel management systems also covers functionality such as guest-facing features. These include online check-in, room service, in-room controls, guest-staff communication. These new functionalities are mainly used by guests on their own mobile devices or such provided by the hotel in lobbies and/or rooms. [2]

A. Components of Hotel Management Systems:

Hotel management system can include some or all of these components listed in diagram below:

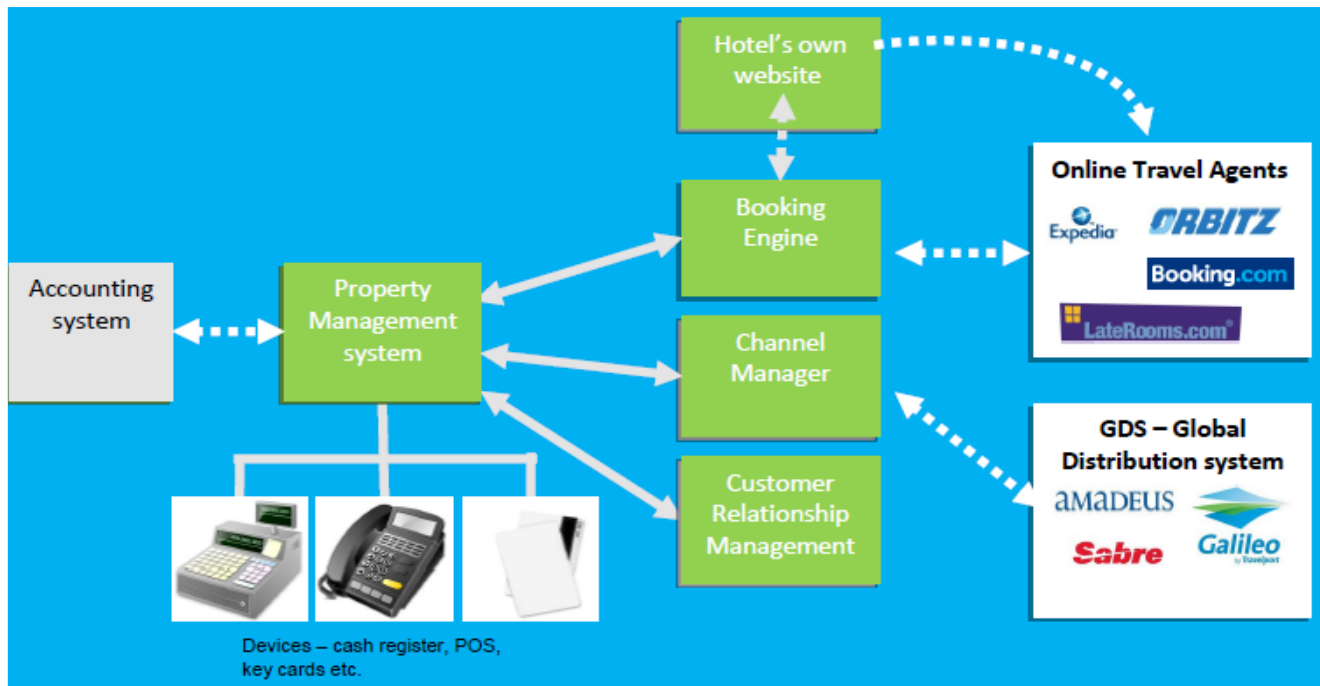


Fig 1:- Components of a Hotel management system

➤ *Property Management System (PMS):*

This includes managing all sales channels from POS, integration of web gateway platforms, and automated booking/allocation of rooms immediately payment has been confirmed. It also holds a database for guest check-in, history from the database. Coordination and control of all physical features of a hotel via automation (door lock, security, room lighting etc.)

➤ *Customer Relationship Management (CRM):*

This involves coordination of all available customer relationship channels such as the hotel website, social media platforms (Facebook, twitter handle). It also includes handling guest communication both prior to and post stay, feedback about customer's experience of various services offered by the hotel via mails or telephone, and finally managing guest history and details.

➤ *Channel Management:*

This is directly responsible for automatic synchronization of other sources, managing distribution and leverage commission, free bookings from other sources or your own website, support for mobile app technology, referral services etc.

➤ *Management Reporting and Business Intelligence:*

This accommodates flexible reporting that is easily tailored to your needs, exporting data directly to your accounting system, integrated business intelligence tools to enable you to manage and utilize your data, forecasting and budgeting, set competitive analysis of rates and reviews. [4].

III. PARAMETERS TO CONSIDER BEFORE DESIGNING OR PURCHASING HOTEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In order to establish a balance between customer satisfactions, profit making on the part of the hotelier and growth of the hotel in terms of patronage/recognition, certain parameters need to be considered before the design and deployment of a hotel management system. They are listed and thus explained below:

A. *Flexibility:*

A good hotel management system must be able to complete the same task, depending on your preferences via several ways, it must be able to plug in to your existing infrastructure and respond to the rapid changes in the hotel market which may include promoting of your hotel via social media and taking bookings from mobile phones. The ability to quickly make certain common changes, such as changing guest cards and customer folio layouts, is particularly important.

B. *Ease to Use:*

Hotel management systems are complex in nature as a result of features embedded in it, a good HMS must be easy to use software, screens should be simple as possible, buttons and menu options must be self-explanatory. A new user should not require extensive training or large help manuals in order to use the system within the shortest possible time. If the members of staff are always getting stuck or confused when using the PMS, then you have chosen the wrong system.

C. Integration:

A good hotel management system is an interactive system that must have the capability to ‘joined-up’ systems that talk to each other. Integration of mobile booking platforms, web gateway payments etc. should be done without hassle.

D. Performance And Reliability:

A system that is periodically slow at the time of high demand or which makes your database vulnerable is bad for business. To maximize efficiency, a robust and tested PMS which is devoid of low rate of failure, poor response time or data loss during periods of heavy usage is the best. It must also have the ability for an off-site system back-up and recovery. [4].

E. Scalability:

It is important that the hotel management system that you choose must be able to expand to meet your needs as your business expands. For example, what happens if you succeed in significantly growing bookings or you acquire another hotel? Some systems are limited to a maximum number of rooms or properties they can adequately manage and may not be able to cope with a significant growth in business. Scalability has to be designed into the system from the start – for example, the software should use modular components that can be easily multiplied.

F. Future Proofing:

Software is one of the fastest moving industries globally because new technologies are launched on daily basis. A reliable and smart hotel management system must be designed and developed on the latest architecture which must have the capabilities to take advantage of upcoming technologies.

G. Training:

An important feature which a good hotel management system must have in order to evaluate your staff in terms of adaptability and usage of the system is an e-learning platform which allows you to test and assess their understanding of the system. [4]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the every hospitality business is to attract customers from far and near, by this way a hotel stays in business to pay staff salaries and expand its growth. Users on the other end are often influenced by the hotel management system being deployed by a hotel for its operations. Factors such as privacy, security of customer’ s data, accessibility of the system, cost, and simplicity but sophistication of hotel management system are the determinant which often aid customer’ s preferences when selecting a hotel. It is noteworthy to say the type of hotel management system which will be preferable for your hotel is largely dependent on your ability to create a balance between your vision, capital and intended customer experience.

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