Smart technologies catering to hospitality

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They say that necessity is the mother of invention. And the modern world seems to prove them right time and again. Just when you think technology has achieved everything it can, changing needs have resulted in demand for newer innovations that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago. Audio Visual (AV) communications technologies, for example, which include sound, video, lighting, display and projection systems, has become part of everyday life and trickled into nearly every sector today.

The hospitality industry is one such example wherein growing expectations from customers in the conference and leisure spaces, as well as in guest rooms, is propelling the need for AV requirements. The world travel and tourism council has indicated that the hospitality industry is set to grow 15 per cent annually. And with 2,00,000 rooms (both luxury and budget) needed in India, the segment is poised for a stupendous growth. The fortune of the AV industry is linked to this industry growth.

Staying ahead of the pack

Now that the hospitality sector is high on the industry scale, every hotel is intent on gaining maximum return on investments. While earlier hotels focused more on sales and occupancies, it has now shifted to maximising room yield.

Hotels in India that have not yet invested in room technologies are bound to find it difficult to compete in the global marketplace – be it a five-star, a boutique or a mid-budget hotel. And with the Indian hospitality industry projected to grow at a rate of 8.8 per cent between 2007 and 2016, India is expected to become the second-fastest growing tourism market in the world. This makes it even more business critical for hotels to invest in state-of-the-art audiovisual systems or conferencing and communication solutions to provide a superior in-room experience and level of comfort. By increasing the environment control and automation in their rooms, hotels are trying to elevate the guest's experience with a view to repeat more business.

Smarter technology solutions such as lighting systems can also lead to dramatic savings on electricity consumption and allow the housekeeping staff to focus on their core task – ensuring guest comfort. Similarly, automation of simple tasks in guest rooms encourages self service allowing greater efficiency of staff time by decreasing the number of requests made of housekeeping and room service departments. And as guests begin to pay attention to the environmental performances of the hotels that they stay in, these technologies help improve it in a very real way as well.

Technology is the key

In hospitality, a customer is always considered a king. And ensuring customer loyalty and retention is increasingly becoming a real challenge for the industry. With these automation and smart tools hotels allow greater control (or management) to a guests' environment and experience than ever before. Whether it is creating the right mood lighting in the guest's room, or ensuring that the music playing includes their favourite songs, or that the volume of the TV is automatically dropped when the phone rings, each of these can now be controlled and even personalised with minimum disruption of a guest's privacy.

Therefore, smart technologies can bring significant quality, consistency and efficiency improvements to management of guest experiences in the hospitality industry. They are being applied not only in smaller hospitality spaces but in larger rooms like restaurants, gyms, spas and so on.

This makes them an important tool for hotels to consider as they aim to innovate and differentiate themselves from their competitors by providing their guests with a unique and delightful experience.

Convenience at your finger tips

With guest rooms, meeting and leisure facilities, public areas and conference suites, the hospitality sector is becoming a prospect for everything from flatscreen TVs and speakers, to digital signage, projectors and control systems. Lighting systems and automation systems bring tangible convenience as well.

For instance why worry about switching on (and off) lights in your hotel quarters, when an intelligent automated system can do it. While every gadget or appliance being designed today is offering an increasing degree of convenience, automation systems raise the intelligence quotient of these devices by enabling them to even coordinate their activities without our intervention.

Getting smart

Like every other sector, the hotel industry is not recession-proof. But by offering futuristic AV solutions, hoteliers in India are beginning to introduce competitive differentiators that can help drive sales and overall profit. Indian hotels can be at par with global market players.

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