Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

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2

Slide 3

No matter where we go or where we look, technology is everywhere today. It makes us more efficient and able to do more in less time.

It is the same inside the hotel industry.

Technology has increased significantly in the last 10 years and continues at an exponential rate.

No matter what size of a lodging property, there will be technology.

The larger the property the more important and complex that technology will need to be.

Slide 4

First, let's take a look at the rooms division of a hotel as a way of organizing the technology.

As we have learned in previous lessons, the main business of a lodging property is selling sleeping rooms. The rooms division is the part of the property that handles all tasks in preparing and selling sleeping rooms.

Sounds simple enough……What kind of technology do you think would be needed to sell sleeping rooms?

Allow the students to answer and record on the white board or an easel if not already completed.

Slide 5

The rooms division has three main purposes:
• to sell rooms
• to help guests while at the property
• to clean the rooms and prepare for the next guest

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

Slide 6

The rooms division is made up of 4 departments:
• Engineering
• Front office
• Housekeeping
• Security

Engineering
For the Engineering department, many technological systems are required, again depending on property size.
Systems such as:
• complicated HVAC (heating and air conditioning) systems with monitoring controls to maintain efficiencies and minimize downtime
• pools systems are also under this department
• systems that control humidity and air quality
• systems to control the vast number of thermostats involved

Housekeeping
What about Housekeeping? What kind of technology do you think they use? Remember, they are responsible for cleaning the entire property, not just guests' rooms.
The housekeeping department has a large need for an inventory system.
• bed linens
• soaps and shampoos
• towels
•wash cloths

Housekeeping is responsible for keeping an accurate count of all of those assets and more at all times.

They also must keep an accurate count of the rooms and the status of each room.
Housekeeping must know:
• how many rooms are occupied
• how many are clean and ready for a guest
• how many are dirty and in need of cleaning
• how many are being cleaned

Security
The technology required to ensure the security of guests of a small property could be simple locks and keys for the main doors as well as guests' doors.
For larger properties, the technology would be extensive:
• alarm systems
• cameras
• electronic identification of employees (badges)
• electronic surveillance
• fire detection systems and more

For a large property with several hundred rooms or more, this is a difficult task without computer assisted technology and specific software.

Refer back to the students' list and check off any they guessed.

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

Slide 7

The Front Office is perhaps where most people think of technology use as this is where guests reserve rooms and check-in and out. The Front Office is responsible for more activities and requires several technologies.

Front Office is divided into 4 or sometimes even more departments in a really large property. In a small property the same activities take place but are done by fewer people. Each function uses technology of some type.

Efficient hotels will perform a bucket check during the guest's stay.

First, let's look at the Reservations Department.
Whether it's the telephone or the internet, a reservation for a hotel room comes through technology. And of course in order to take a reservation, the inventory of available rooms on the requested nights must be known, even for a relatively small property.
This room inventory is handled efficiently through a computerized system.

Second, the Front Desk is often seen as command central - the place that oversees and runs a hotel. It is the first thing that guests see or interact with and as such, will set the mood of the property.
The front desk agent's main duties are:

• to check the guests in and out of the hotel

• greet guests

• assist accounting department with financial tasks such as:

   • guest bill payment by cash, debit, and credit

   • making change

   • sometimes even dealing with foreign monetary exchange

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

The Front Desk agent helps with some light guest services such as:

• answering questions

• guest security, such as:

> • issuing and controlling guest door keys
>
> • guest privacy
>
> • safe deposit boxes behind the front desk
>
> • surveillance
>
> • emergencies

Third, Uniformed Services includes:

• Door Attendants

• Bell Attendants

• Parking and Transportation Staff

• Concierges

They use inventory systems as well to track and maintain uniforms. A large hotel could have to track thousands of uniforms and their state of cleanliness and repair.

The concierge will use the Internet almost non-stop looking up activities, theater times and tickets, maps, and other information for guests.

Fourth, Communications departments have changed quite a bit over the last several years. They handle the telephone system and specialized software to direct communications, handle guest voice mail and messages.
The Communications department even handles viewing of the guest's bill over the in-room television.

This department (or the Marketing department) might also be responsible for the communication via the internet. This involves the property's website, the reservations that come over the Internet, and designing their own tablet and smart phone applications or apps. This department often handles additional communication to guests such as thank you notes or surveys after the stay through email.

Keeping records of the guests' folio, their stay, and their preferences (single or double room, meal purchases, etc.) are put into a database for marketing purposes as well to enhance the guest's next stay. This is part of customer relations management.

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

Slide 8

Prior to computers, hotels managed all of the activities we've talked about, such as room availability, room keys, reservations, inventory and accounting by hand.

The keys and mail for guests were handled by what is known as the Rack System. A "rack" of cubby holes, one for each room, sat behind the front desk where the keys, mail, and messages were kept and color coded tags were used for inventory.
This system is still in used in some very old and small lodging properties as well as some Bed and Breakfast Inns.

Today, most properties are handled through a computer system with specialized software packages known as Property Management Systems. This system allows properties to integrate and work together to provide the best service for a guest while maximizing productivity and revenue for the hotel.

PMS systems handle a variety of tasks depending on the hotel size and the amount of money you want to spend on the system. Most of these software packages come in modules and the property can implement the number of modules they deem appropriate for their hotel. Most franchise properties are mandated to use a particular PMS by the franchisor.

Depending on the vendor, the PMS can handle the following tasks and departments:
• Reservations
• Room inventory
• Room pricing (various rates)

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

• Check-in and check-out
• Recordable locking system - Door key management
• Guest folios
• Credit and debit purchases
• Credit card checking
• Retail purchases (including check and cash)
• Video-on-demand and in-room movies management
• Concierge services
• Accounting
• Telecommunications/voicemail/messaging/call accounting (long distance charges to guests)
• Food and beverage management
• Inventory of all assets (linens, beds, TVs, robes, computers, lamps)
• Banquet and event management
• Human resources (hiring/firing/payroll/training/taxes)
• Building security

In most cases, the PMS will interface with other POS systems such as retail shop systems or restaurant services within the hotel for guest convenience of charging items to their rooms.

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

Slide 9
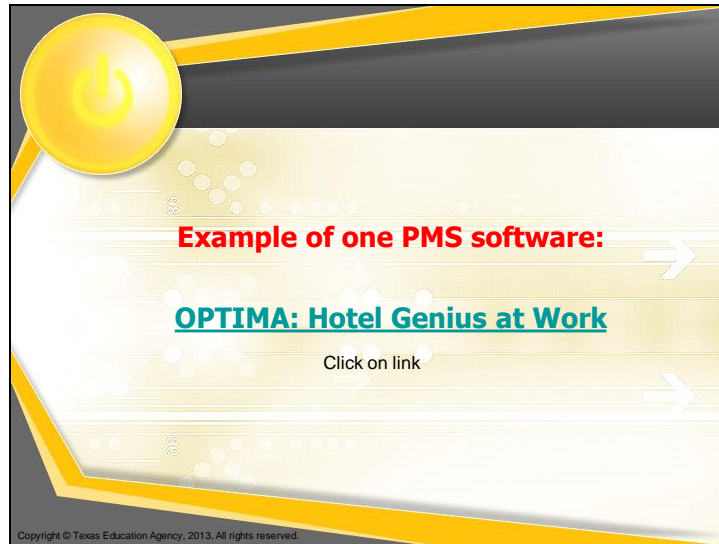
Click on hyperlink <u>OPTIMA: Hotel Genius at Work</u> to view an example of a property management software.

Hotel Management System - Complete Hospitality Software
Hotel Management System HMS - Property Management Software PMS - Hotel Point of Sale POS - Hotel Software - Restaurant Software, professional hoteliers secret.
http://youtu.be/E4kkU4R7U5M

In most cases, the PMS will interface with other point-of-sale or POS systems such as retail shop systems or Spa services within the hotel even if they are not owned by the hotel.

This is for the convenience of the guest so they can charge items to their rooms and pay all charges on one bill when they check-out.

Technically, anything that is not recorded on the bill at the front desk is a separate POS. These point-of-sale systems can be an actual computerized cash register or a part of the PMS with data entered into a computer. It is the responsibility of the Front Desk agent to make sure all items and recorded purchases from all POS are charged/posted to the proper guest's folio.

Be sure to continue to refer back to the list the students made at the beginning.

Slide 11
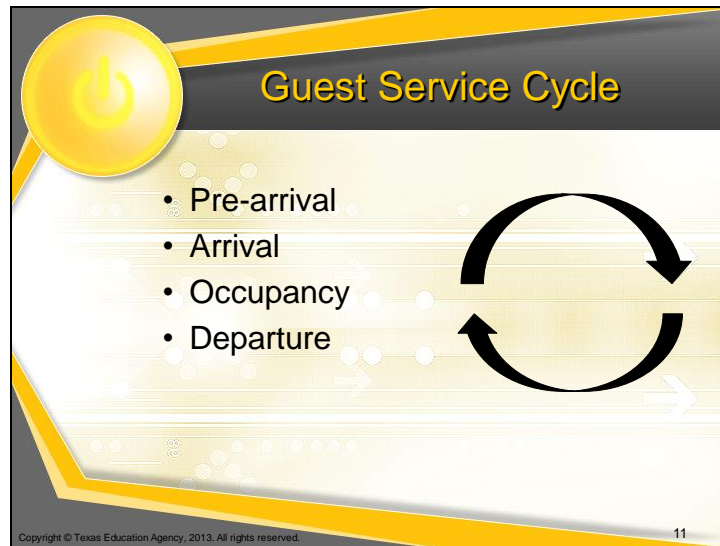
Another way to look at technology as well as activities is by the Guest Service Cycle. There are activities that happen before a guest arrives, upon the arrival of the guest, while the guest is staying on the property known as occupancy, and upon the guest's departure and after (included with departure).

Allow the students to list 3 to 4 activities and at least one technology for each cycle. This is a good way to review the material.

Presentation Notes
Hotel Technology Tools

Slide 12

References and Resources

Images:
- Microsoft Office Clip Art: Used with permission from Microsoft.

Textbooks:
- Reynolds, Johnny Sue. (2010) *Hospitality Services Food & Lodging*. Second Edition. Tinley Park, Illinois: The Goodheart-Willcox Company, Inc.
- Hayes, David K., Ninemeier, Jack D., (2007) Hotel Operations Management, Second Edition, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

YouTube™:
- **Hotel Management System - Complete Hospitality Software**
- Hotel Management System HMS - Property Management Software PMS - Hotel Point of Sale POS - Hotel Software - Restaurant Software, professional hoteliers secret.
- http://youtu.be/E4kkU4R7U5M

12

Hotel Technology Tools and Website Design Challenge