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PMS Innovations Christina Volpe

Innovation is a double-edged sword, as every IT executive knows all too well. What is innovative today runs the risk of being outdated in six months, due to the fast evolutionary nature of technology. So how can operators predict which solutions are truly innovative and which will fall flat by the end of the year? HT sorted through the technology jungle and spoke with leading operators and analysts to bring you the biggest property management innovations that are sure to make an impact industry-wide.

NOVEXSYS: Cost savings options

Last year, NOVEXSYS (www.novexsys.com) launched a multitude of customizable options for both boutique and major hotel brands through its "No New Hardware" and "Software as Service" solutions. Coming off of the two previous solutions, NOVEXSYS extends its reach in 2008 to include the introduction of "No Travel" installations as both a cost saving and environmental option.

Through the "No Travel" installations, training and setup of new system installations are done remotely from NOVEXSYS' central location. As a result, installers do not need to travel to each site, which saves on time and reduces carbon dioxide production. The remote operation allows for flexibility in scheduling installations as well as staff training to fit the needs of the property. Consequently, there is no need to schedule property staff to attend all training classes on a fixed schedule that is driven by the on-site installer's availability.

Gretchen Chuancey, general manager of Boston's Chandler Inn (www.chandlerinn.com), notes that a running problem she has met in her evaluation of property management systems is the difficulty associated with tailoring a system to meet the needs of a limited-service boutique hotel. "We are a boutique hotel with 55 guest rooms in downtown Boston. The ability to create dedicated time and space for training is difficult, but with NOVEXSYS it is all online," says Chuancey. "It has saved us a lot of time and money from a labor standpoint, and we have definitely benefited from the labor and cost savings in IT expenditures."



PMS TREND SPOTTING TIPS

Ever wonder if the current property management system trends are here to stay and where the next big trends are going to come from? If you take away the huge consultant and market research machines that many of the big companies rely on, the answers are actually much simpler than you might think.

Dr. Mark Warner, a clinical professor at New York University's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports, tells us to keep our eyes open and look at what the younger generation is doing.

- **LOOK AT THE TRENDS** out there and then evaluate any new ones as they come down the road. See if it's likely to be a trend of the moment or if it's a trend with value over the long run. Fax machine/phone units were big a few years ago but now with PDA's and the Internet, they are not as important.
- **PAY ATTENTION** to the younger generation and see where they are going from a technology standpoint. Many of those people are

Agilysys: Tailoring a standard

Agilysys' (www.agilysys.com) Lodging Management System has been a system standard for a number of years and the latest version, LMS v.8.0, is slated to launch this fall.

Building upon the previous version, LMS v.8.0 will feature a number of key enhancements. Customizable packages will allow hoteliers to create tailor-made guest packages from existing pre-defined packages by adding or removing components. LMS v.8.0 will also feature updated graphical user interfaces that highlight command line access, buffering capabilities, and the ability to type ahead and view reports on screen. Also available for casinos, an updated interface will include a player card swipe for guest reservation searches, a comp posting reject log, an expanded comp authorizer, player ranking for yield interface and the ability to link player offers to comp/rate plans directly on the rate availability screen.

MSI Solutions: Guest customization and analysis

On the heels of increased customer demand for centralized, single database environments, MSI Solutions (www.msisolutions.com) responded with the launch of The Helm earlier this year. This tool targets a number of functions that allow for cross-property management and increased guest personalization.

Guest profiles are among the key features of The Helm. Any profile can be configured to alert the front desk at check-in to collect a voucher, billing code, or other information specific to an account. This feature is expected to be useful when insuring that bill routing or tax exempt information is collected, or can serve as a reminder of any promotions that might apply to the guest upon

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White Papers



OneSign Eliminates Reservation Bottlenecks and Boosts Productivity Worldwide at Hilton Grand Vacations

2/25/2008

In hospitality, the inability to complete a sale can affect a company's ability to be successful. Through OneSign, Imprivata is making it easier to complete the sales process. Find out how in this

What many of these people are going to be your guests. What technologies are they looking at and what are they buying?

check in.

Warehoused corporate profiles can also be created at the corporate level, whereby changes to a guest's profile made at one property are automatically updated across any properties that run

on The Helm.

Additional property management capabilities include membership and loyalty tracking, centralized billing and reporting, and geographical mapping technology that lends itself to market feeders. Data can be accessed from a single point of administration for hotel level users through a global maintenance of user ID and access controls.

Newmarket: Connecting business leads

Newmarket International's (www.newmarketinc.com) newest release of Delphi with an Interactive Open Network (ION) provides hoteliers with a PMS integrated solution that manages the centralization of business leads with sales and catering systems.

Delphi with ION gives companies direct access to thousands of groups and business meeting planners. Each month Delphi with ION sends 30,000 request for proposals (RFPs) from meeting planners to their customers, and customers who select Delphi with ION are directly connected to those meeting and group booking planners. Channels used by meeting planners that are available with Delphi with ION include Cvent, CVBs, PlanIT Online, Starcite and Worktopia.

Delphi with ION also features a variety of functions. Users can view business dashboards that identify demand and need periods. RFPs, which are directly integrated into the Delphi system, can be configured in an inbox format to show the most important information or consolidated if received from multiple sources. Users can also evaluate two RFPs simultaneously to determine which business is more profitable.

Northwind: Online and mobile services

Northwind's Maestro (www.maestropms.com) speaks to the "one stop shop" Internet booking craze with its launch of Web Connection. Available this fall, Web Connection will give guests the option to book reservations online not only for their hotel room, but also set up dinner and spa appointments as well as create customized packages. Web Connection allows hoteliers to provide all of these services to guests in an effort to keep their business on property.

Maestro Web Connection modules that optimize revenue include two-Way GDS integration, real-time centralized control of all rates and availability, ResWave Internet Booking Engine, ResWave Group Management Controls, online dynamic package element building, condo-timeshare owner account access, fully-integrated real-time yield management for all above-reservation channels, and online table reservations.

Robert Pauselli, director of information technology at the Taboo Resort, Golf & Spa, located in Ontario, Canada, notes that being able to give guests the option to book all of their activities online to create a customizable itinerary is a huge benefit.

"A lot of systems are disjointed and we would like to bring all of that data into a central location. At the end of the day we have an itinerary on what guests did and when they stayed which helps with marketing in the future," states Pauselli. "Bookings have gone up 20 percent since we started using ResWave and we are sitting on the end of our chairs waiting [for Web Connection]."

In addition to Web Connect, Maestro also has plans for an SMS text messaging feature in the works. The SMS functionality will provide both property maintenance and guest communication capabilities. Properties will be able to contact guests via text messaging on mobile phones and other PDA's.

"The text messaging application is probably one of the biggest trends that we will see as well as the integration of Web 2.0," says Dr. Mark Warner, clinical professor at New York University's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports.

Micros: Solutions for all sizes

This fall, MICROS (www.micros.com) is set to release a number of solutions to accommodate both large and independent hoteliers with the release of OPERA V5 and Opera Lite.

Building upon the functionality of the OPERA suite, OPERA V5 features more than 1,000 enhancements to already existing modules as well as the new integrated Business Intelligence Suite and a fully integrated yield management Revenue Management System.

OPERA Lite is a prepackaged solution, complete with hardware and software specifically designed for smaller hotels. Packaged with the promise that it can be implemented in five days, OPERA Lite's key features include a straightforward interface, a core of pre-configured property management features, a streamlined dashboard, and all necessary hardware.

Softbrands: Access anytime, anywhere

Using insights gained through their interaction with the Microsoft Technology Center (MTC) in Irvine, California, SoftBrands (www.softbrands.com) is set to release the Epitome PMS version 4.03 software later this year.

Built upon the Microsoft .NET framework and Microsoft SQL Server 2005, the latest version of Epitome PMS will feature major enhancements for improved guest invoice management and user permissions. Epitome PMS can be accessed anywhere, both on and off site, through Internet Explorer access.

Dr. Warner notes that when creating a simulation of hotel property management systems for a class project at NYU with the .Net framework, remote operators were able to load the

sales process. Find out how in this exclusive white paper.

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system directly onto the NYU server with ease. "We [only] had to create a URL for the hotel and with Internet Explorer students could go right into their hotel and do the configuration to initiate check-ins and check-outs," says Warner. "It is seamless."

An additional innovation that is set for release this summer is the SoftBrands-Passkey interface which will allow group reservation bookings in Passkey to move seamlessly into the Epitome PMS.

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