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Editors

# Digital Transformation of the Hotel Industry


Theories, Practices, and Global Challenges



Springer

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# Preface

Technology has been present in the daily lives of people and organizations for a long time, and its evolution has been constant. This evolution naturally contributes to new responses and solutions to society's challenges. However, it also brings difficulties in keeping the technological context up to date and knowing which will be the most recent and adequate solutions available. It is no longer a question of understanding the need and the advantage of using technological tools but of trying to understand which tools and how they can be used to get the most out of them.

In hospitality, technological evolution has been especially evident, since the introduction of the first equipment, in the nineteenth century, to the use of Artificial Intelligence today. In this context, the concept of Digital Transformation arises, referring to the process of using technology to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the organization, whether in terms of management processes, operationalization, or relationship with customers. In the hotel industry, and in general in the tourism sector, interaction with customers is of great importance, especially as it is a sector of activity in which human contact and interpersonal relationships are of particular importance in the tourist experience and levels of consumer satisfaction. If, on the one hand, technological processes can facilitate and improve the interaction between hotel and customer, on the other hand, they can contribute to creating barriers and making this interaction more difficult. It is, therefore, essential to invest not only in the improvement and evolution of technological processes but also in the study and analysis of the evolution of consumer behaviour and the training and enhancement of human resources so that this interaction is simultaneously simple and effective in your processes.

This book arises precisely from identifying the need to study the context of Digital Transformation in the hotel industry in more depth. It is structured into 13 chapters by 32 authors. An initial order of more theoretical articles follows, based on the review and analysis of the literature about technology and the use of various technological tools in the hotel industry. Then follows a set of articles that deal with communication collected through booking platforms and social networks. Finally, a collection of texts has been presented that focus more on the impact of technologies

on management and leadership processes. The book offers theoretical approaches, case studies, and applied research, with significant territorial coverage, including authors from Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, India, Indonesia, and Mexico.

The first chapter, by Jorge Marques and Rui Pedro Marques, entitled *Trends in the Hospitality Industry: A Global Perspective*, presents a framework on the evolution of the hospitality industry and the prominent trends that have affected this sector, with a particular focus on technological trends. The authors identify a set of technological tools that have recently shaped the hotel landscape.

In the same context, the chapter *Innovative Technology Applications in Hotel Business*, by Ahmet Erdem and Mahmut Barakazi, explores the theme of smart hotels as an innovative concept and identifies the leading technologies currently used in the hotel industry.

Then, the chapter *Does Virtual Hotel Shifting Realities or Just Daydreaming? A Wake-up Call*, by Aniesa Samira Bafadhal and Muhammad Rosyihan Hendrawan, explores the concept of a virtual hotel and how virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) tools can be used in hospitality, mainly in terms of promotion and communication and in terms of interaction with hotel customers.

In the chapter *Selecting Robots to Take Over Tasks in Hospitality Settings: Joining Two Research Fields*, by Klaas Koerten and David Abbink, the role of robots in hospitality is discussed, as what are their possible impacts on the organization, customers, and employees. A literature review on the hospitality robotics categories is carried out, presenting concrete examples of robots currently used in hospitality to perform different functions.

In the chapter *Mapping Research Trends on Smart Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis*, by Suneel Kumar, Varinder Kumar, Isha Kumari Bhatt, and Sanjeev Kumar, a comprehensive analysis is made of the topics that have been studied in smart tourism, which are the most relevant scientific journals in this area, which are the most discussed topics, and which are the most cited authors, among other criteria. This exhaustive work will be important in supporting other researchers who want to work on technology in tourism and who find guiding support for the delimitation of the reference literature.

The next topic, addressed in the chapter *Big Data in Hotel Companies: A Systematic Literature Review*, by Elva Martínez and Alejandro Cruz, deals with the problem associated with the large amounts of information that organizations increasingly must manage. How hotels collect and handle sensitive information, which must be confidential, can be very useful for knowing their target audience and predicting possible future consumer behaviour. At a strategic level, this information management could be significant.

After these first six chapters, four chapters focus on strategic communication through digital platforms. On the one hand, online booking platforms are explored that allow guests to evaluate the hotel service and leave comments to help other guests. On the other hand, social networks are analysed as means of promoting tourism. The first of these four chapters, entitled *Communication Factors to Increase Awareness and Sales in the Hotel Industry Versus Search Platforms*, by Paula

González-Padilla and Francisco Lacárcel, explores the primary communication and tourism promotion strategies through digital channels. This work identifies a set of processes and tools used in digital marketing, especially relevant in hotel management.

Turning to social media platforms, Marília Durão, Medéia Veríssimo, and Michelle Morais, in *Social Media Research in the Hotel Industry: A Bibliometric Analysis*, present a survey of recent research that has been carried out in this area and identify the main digital strategies for hotel businesses.

The next chapter, *Digital Transformation in Hospitality: Identifying Customer Satisfaction Based on Online Guest's Ratings*, by Fotis Kitsios, Maria Kamariotou, Panagiotis Karanikolas, and Evangelos Grigoroudis, addresses the consumer's perspective through online hotel guest's ratings, collected through a booking platform online. This chapter closes an important part of theoretical and conceptual analysis, based mainly on the literature review and the application of bibliometric analysis tools.

From here, a set of chapters based on case study analysis and empirical studies with primary data collection through surveys and interviews are presented. The chapter *Influence of Social Networks on the Choice and Promotion of a Tourist Destination*, by Teresa Pereira, Vânia Costa, and Alexandra Malheiro, once again addresses the issue of social networks. Still, this time explores the influence of social networks on consumer behaviour by applying a survey to tourists who usually use social networks to look for information about tourist destinations.

In the following chapter, *Digital Transformation in the Hotel Industry: Shaping the Challenges and Opportunities by the Case of Five-Star Hotels in Bulgaria*, by Mariya Stankova and Svetoslav Kaleychev, the websites of 87 hotels were analysed to understand the applied effects of Digitalization on the hotels in Bulgaria.

Next, Alexander Lennart Schmidt, in *Changing the Rules of the Hotel Business—The Case of CitizenM's Digital Business Model Disruption*, discusses the issue of digital disruption and how this phenomenon affects business models in hospitality. A case study based on a Dutch hotel group (CitizenM) is presented in this case.

Finally, the book closes with the chapter *Leading Digital Transformation in Tourism and Hospitality* by Maria José Silva, Marília Durão, and Fernando Florim de Lemos, which deals with the issue of strategic leadership and how technological innovation can be related to leadership processes.

Thus, this book could be an essential resource in supporting scientific research in this area, teaching and supporting hotel managers, enabling more informed decision-making, and supported by the technical-scientific knowledge we present here.

Finally, we would like to thank all the authors for their precious contributions to the increase of scientific knowledge in this field and for the collaboration and constant availability that were necessary for the realization of this book. We acknowledge the excellent and valuable work of the Editorial Advisory Board members and the reviewers regarding the improvement of quality, coherence, and

content presentation of chapters. Finally, we also thank Springer for the opportunity to publish this book and for their support throughout the process.

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