

THE BIGGER PICTURE

The quality of in-room entertainment systems is becoming a key factor with guests and hoteliers must keep pace with the advances in modern technology



According to chief executive officer of Quadriga, Roger Taylor, today's hotel guest is becoming more tech-savvy and demanding as TV technology in the home continues to advance, providing not only entertainment in HD and 3D but also a myriad of TV channels, information and connectivity. This provides hoteliers with a challenge, but more importantly, an opportunity.

Choice of TV channels and on-demand entertainment

With the digital switchover in Europe fast approaching its completion, guests already enjoy access to a vast range of TV entertainment at home. This is increasingly reflected in hotels where all guests require easy access to a good selection of TV channels, ideally in their own language. More sophisticated services such as on-demand content including the latest pre-cinema release blockbusters in HD are available in hotels in the higher market segments.

Internet via the TV

As innovations within the consumer TV electronics world evolve, and lines between the TV and laptop blur, these technology changes are undoubtedly influencing guest expectations. Demand for access to internet-based information and entertainment via the TV will increase, reflecting its availability in the home. The delivery of information to the TV about

the hotel itself, the local area, news, travel, traffic and weather are important guest requirements that are reliant upon the internet. However, it is complex for hotels and they will require guidance on the technology and bandwidth challenges.

Accessing content

How guests prefer to access different types of content, whether it is via the TV, laptop, smartphone or tablet, is also rapidly evolving. Increasingly guests are choosing to access their own content in the hotel on portable devices. Connectivity solutions and appropriate bandwidth to support this trend are important for hotels, especially as the cost has to be carefully considered. Being able to then offer guests the ability to view their own content on a big screen is a growing trend.

Ease of access and use

Guests expect to be able to access relevant information quickly and easily. This means hotels need to offer a simple remote control and menu that is totally intuitive and easy to navigate around with the minimum of effort. A level of personalisation is also important. A personalised and tailored 'welcome' message from the hotel general manager can give the right individual touch. With guests expecting the selection of TV channels to be presented in their own language, it is important to select the content in multiple ways and by different genre.

The 3D experience

3D viewing is now available in the home and this is already influencing consumer choices representing a real marketing opportunity for hotels. For example, in a 4-to 5-star hotel, offering an advanced

3D TV experience in premium rooms could create an impressive competitive differentiator, for a relatively small incremental investment.

What does this all mean for the hotelier?

Purchasing TVs is a huge investment and hotels need to ensure the approach and decision is based on two questions:

- Do I need to generate revenue from the TV to help fund the investment?
- What is my typical guest profile and what are they likely to need?

For the luxury property

By using the TV to provide useful information and communicate with guests, hoteliers can not only enhance guest satisfaction, they can also benefit from additional revenue opportunities created by using the TV to promote special offers and hotel facilities.

For the lower priced property

For the lower priced hotel, pay as-you-go TV provides the hotelier with the ability to rent access to the TV, selected features such as HD or offer access to a greater selection of TV channels. In this situation, guests may consider rack rate the only differentiator and are far more likely to be open to the idea of a 'no frills' approach to the in-room TV.

In today's fiercely competitive environment, it is vital that hoteliers understand guest needs and consider their own business objectives as a targeted offering that can drive guest satisfaction and loyalty. It can also turn the TV into a potential vehicle for additional revenue. Providing the right information, entertainment and connectivity packages to effectively support the demands of today's guests will certainly lead to continued success in the future.





IN-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT SOLUTIONS

Quadriga's Sensiq enables hotels to create their own unique communications portal, which allows guests to access valuable information about the hotel and the local area via the TV. Fully customisable to each hotel and brand, it not only encourages greater guest satisfaction, but delivers sales and promotional capabilities to drive revenue opportunities for the hotel.

It is currently being installed at multiple Sofitel properties across Europe and Africa to create a truly customised guest communications portal, which will successfully deliver Sofitel's new 'life is magnifique' brand concept to guests

staying in hotels. This flexibility to fully customise the portal brings many benefits to hotel brands, specifically the ability to communicate seamlessly across its portfolio and to create a specific brand experience in every room.

Roger Taylor of Quadriga comments: "Sofitel's unique luxury brand is fully reflected in the design of their portal and is delivering their desired brand experience into each guest room. This is now being rolled out to individual hotels, incorporating some 2,000 rooms."

SmovieTV from Quadriga enables hotels to offer access to pre-paid TV channels and

it also allows guests to pay for what they want, a model which has been successfully adopted in the airline industry. This can turn the guest TV from an overhead into an operating asset, quickly enhancing guest services to maximise revenue streams for the hotel.

Roger Taylor concludes: "SmovieTV provides hospitality properties with the choice to either use guest TVs as a source of revenue by renting TV access, enhancing the guest experience by offering a wider choice of television channels, or providing access to specific types of TV channel which use capabilities such as HD." >>>

Screen savers

Keeping up-to-date with the latest technology can be a costly business and many hoteliers simply cannot afford to replace in-room TVs every time a new innovation in viewing hits the market. This is where rental really comes into its own, as not only can hotels conserve cash, but they can also keep pace with the constant advances from LED screens and video-on-demand to the latest trend for high definition viewing.

Forbes Hotel TV offers TV rental for the hospitality sector and has an extensive client list that includes Holiday Inn, Best Western and Von Essen hotels. The company was responsible for the installation of the televisions in 70 guest bedrooms at the prestigious Hotel Verta in London and has also been chosen as a preferred supplier for Condé Nast Johansen Hotels. In recent years it has seen greater demand for its IP TV system, which sends free-to-view and/or subscription TV signals

through the hotel's computer network to guests' rooms. This provides them with anything from information about weather and hotel offers to personalised messages, express check out and video-on-demand.

Forbes Hotel TV has invested millions of pounds not only in developing an infrastructure to meet client needs – with six depots across the country – it has also focused on quality, leading brands such as Samsung, Philips, Toshiba and most recently, Loewe. Chairman of the company Malcolm Forbes says: "Loewe is the pinnacle brand for in-room technology for the modern prestigious hotel. The design, engineering and workmanship deliver clarity of picture and depth of sound performance, which is first class." Loewe is a welcome addition to the company's sophisticated portfolio of products and should ensure that its customers continue to set the standards for in-room entertainment.

