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# Heard on the Show Floor: HITEC 2019

**By Michal Christine Escobar (/author-profile/mescobar) - 06/25/2019**

During our time at HITEC 2019, HT's Editors made a point to ask the technology vendors they spoke with for predictions on how hospitality technology will evolve in the near future and what new and interesting technologies they saw on display at HITEC. Artificial intelligence, voice command technology, and data/analytics were all major themes that came up repeatedly. Below is a sample of some of the interesting predictions we received and some of the interesting show floor trends they saw on display.

## ON HOW TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING
### Dr. Ravi Mehrotra, President & Founder, IDeaS

"The time has come for hotels to think differently about optimization as hotels shift to attribute-based pricing and hotels became a commodity. Hotels must be able to solve problems in real-time, understanding that the best answer at that moment is better than the best answer too late."

**Ahmed Youssef (Joe), EVP - Corporate Development & Marketing, Amadeus**

Attribute-based shopping is the future of personalization. The CRS (central reservation system) is better able to execute on this as the central system for hotels to have all the necessary guest data integrated and accessible. This will precipitate a move away from the property management system being viewed as the center of the hotel technology ecosystem.

**Cam Troutman, VP, Aptech**

Within the next year we expect voice-command technology and AI to be so integrated with accounting software that staff members could ask out loud for the program to run predictive analytics and receive immediate results on their computer.

**Mark Lewis Brown, CEO, Vertical Booking**

As we can see from the rapid adoption of new and more advanced revenue and reservation-related strategies, the hotel industry is evolving, and all of the support technologies must also evolve to suit the market. I anticipate that the CRS will become the single-point database, which hoteliers will use for all revenue and reservations functions, including all PMS functionality (such as guest check-in/check-out, inventory management and financial items).

**Warren Dehan, President, Maestro PMS**

"Everyone talks a lot about AI taking over hospitality, but I'm on the fence as to its real use in the space. However, one way I think it could be really helpful is with guest feedback. I hate filling out survey forms. If we could use AI and perhaps voice-command technology to evolve that feedback experience, that could be really useful."

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**David Ginn, Vice President, Hospitality Sales, North America, Dormakaba**

"Technology is evolving to the point where door locks can now offer an audit trail. That means hotels will be able to see when a guest or staff member unlocked the door, when the handle was turned, and if the door shut securely -- both for entering and exiting the room. This means, if a guest accuses hotel staff of stealing their items - the hotel will have an audit trail to be able to verify who entered the room and when to see if the accusations are legitimate."

**Chris Hovanessian, Co-Founder, Whistle**

AI/ML as a whole has infinite potential, but still needs work. I believe we will begin to see more dramatic changes in the next year, making AI solutions more viable, especially in regards to conversation. In terms of direct impact, Front Desk operations will see heightened levels of efficiency, as more questions and inquiries can be automated. The biggest impact, however, will be behind the scenes. More

workflow automation, predictive analytics, operational efficiencies. A chatbot that can respond to the guest immediately is great, but a system that can respond while processing and fulfilling a guest's needs is exponentially better.

**Scott Watson, CMO, M3**

"Accounting itself hasn't changed much over the years, but accounting technology has definitely transformed. Over the next six months to one year, I foresee more of a focus on how API feeds in and out of the accounting software rather than an emphasis on the actual accounting software.  Procurement, images, payroll and other G/L and G/L related items will come in automatically and financials necessary for analysis and reporting will be exported."

**Dave Berger, CEO, Volara**

"The hotels that have the best success use technology to drive business outcomes. This drives netpromoter scores and makes staff more efficient. The magic happens technologies integrate. Through our integrations with the likes of Amadeus, for example, we've seen that by hotels using voice technology they are able to take 30% of workload off of staff."

# ON NEW TECH AND TRENDS SEEN ON THE SHOW FLOOR
**Alexander Wessels, Executive Director – Accounts and Partnerships, Saba Hospitality**

I really liked Stay My Way, a company which allows keyless door openings without changing the existing lock of the hotel. Another trend I noticed is that more and more companies are opening up to a so called "Open API policy." The hospitality industry is still dominated by legacy software providers, but with the change to a more open and collaborative approach, innovation will eventually take over the industry and we will see lots of great startups with new ideas.

**Adria Levtchenko, Co-Founder and CEO, Purple Cloud Technologies**

The tech I found most interesting at the show was an AI-focused company that took large data sets and was able to show you very specific trends and offer advice on how you can operate your organization better. For example, you could ask the question "What if I keep John on the front desk more days a week? Will it help my guest satisfaction scores?" Based on the data set it was pulling from, the AI would be able to predict with some degree of certainty if scores would increase or decrease.

**Juan Carlos Abello, CEO, Nuvola**

I noticed a trend around consolidation in hotel optimization and IoT technology. I saw several incredible and well-thought out platforms, such as a transportation app that was linked to Concierge services, and hotel mapping apps for navigation within the property.

### Roy Kosuge, Chief Commercial Officer, SONIFI

We saw greater trending toward analytics versus prior years. Hospitality industry as a whole still has a way to go to leveraging data and AI more impactfully, but there appears to be a common expectation set across key stakeholders this year that we ought to be making richer and more impactful uses of data beyond the obvious such as bookings.

### Mukund Mohan, Vice President, Product Management, INFOR

The hospitality industry is finally adopting mobility and self-service solutions for guests and staff including mobile housekeeping apps and check-in apps. Business intelligence and analytics was another hot topic for hoteliers at the show. More and more solutions are focused on data-driven decision-making with automated data science.

### Jiten Chavda, Senior Channel Marketing Manager, INNCOM by Honeywell

Customers are becoming more data savvy and want more data and analytics to help improve their hotel operations. This year, we've seen HITEC as a more focused show with customers that know what they need and that are looking for partners that can provide value in bringing data analysis to life.

**Robert Stevenson, CEO, INTELITY**

Two major tech trends stood out to me at the show. The first was the prominence of technology that provides a digital-first experience and helps streamline guest and staff journeys. It's clear that in-room tablets and self-service kiosks are only going to continue to gain traction and popularity within the hospitality sectors. Another popular trend this year was AI, specifically in regards to messaging, and how it can be leveraged to streamline communication both on property and before and after the guest stay.

**Charles Robinson, Global Practice Leader for Hospitality, Avaya**

A major tech trend we're seeing right now is voice control. We've already seen voice-enabled virtual assistants enter the home, and as this technology becomes more widely accepted, we can expect to see it play a greater role in hospitality. Rather than calling the front desk, guests may soon be able to use voice commands to change the TV channel, call for a bellman or order a pizza with their favorite toppings.
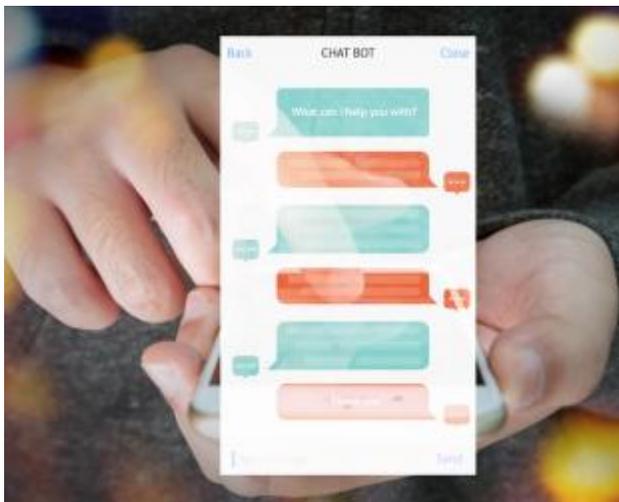
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