



The Future is in The Cloud

Understand why making the move to the
cloud is a no-brainer for today's hotel

Read time - Approx 15 minutes

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Have you got your head in the clouds when it comes to cloud computing? If so, you're not alone

Many hoteliers still express some confusion towards running their Property Management System (PMS) in the infamous 'cloud' – where does all the information go, how is my data stored, is it secure?

Hotels that continue to run their technology on servers on-premise will soon find themselves with an out-of-date tech stack. The future of hotel technology is well and truly in the cloud and is the first choice for forward thinking hoteliers.

Here we give you the reasons why being in the cloud can improve almost every aspect of running a successful hotel business. And, more importantly, how to make the move easily and smoothly, introducing an integrated solution to drive more efficient daily operations, digitised processes and an improved guest experience.

Why Cloud?



Accessibility & Flexibility

You and your staff can log into your system from wherever you are, whenever you like, on whichever device – your choice and at your convenience. You just need a connection to the internet and a web browser.



Automation

By centralising, standardising and automating mundane daily tasks staff can improve the customer service experience with *more GuestTime*.



Scalability

Building or acquiring a new hotel? Integrating your core operational processes with new, niche ones? Scalability is easy with centralized and integrated cloud operations.



Business Intelligence

User-friendly dashboards, reports and analytics can provide real time accessible and centralized data at the touch of a button.



Easy Deployment

Systems are quick and easy to install and train with minimal disruption to your daily business.



Continuously Updated

Your systems can be remotely updated with the latest releases, meaning you're always using the most optimized tech and enjoying a continuous return on your original investment.



Peace of Mind

Cloud solutions are secure, reliable, and fully supported by your PMS provider; allowing you to focus on what matters the most - your guest - rather than IT maintenance and data security.

The evolution: Server to cloud

Many hotels identify their PMS by the large, coffee stained server that occupies quite a large space located either at reception or in the back office.

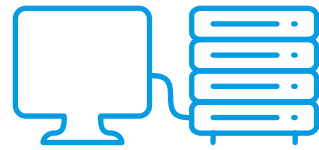
You identify with it as the hardware that houses your files and your data. Why? Because you can physically see it.

However, with many legacy systems now outdated, server-based systems bring headaches and risks, and many are no longer compliant.

At Guestline, we've been there.

We began our journey with a server-based PMS before moving to the cloud in 2003. Over the last 3 years we've completed our own cloud conversion, moving all internal IT to the cloud as we continue to grow internationally, eventually evolving from a private cloud into the award-winning cloud native system that successfully operates thousands of hotels across the globe, now hosted on Microsoft Azure.

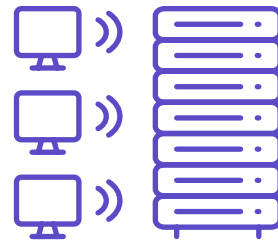




Phase 1

Server-based

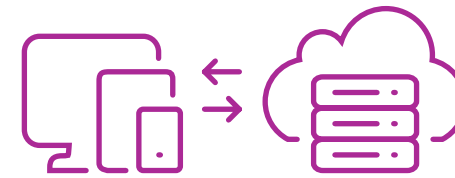
Software provider specific application, which runs in servers located at the hotel.



Phase 2

Server-hosted

Software provider specific application accessible via VPN, which runs in servers located at the software provider's facilities.



Phase 3

Private Cloud

Software provider specific application accessible via url on any web browser and on any device, which runs in data centers located at the software provider's facilities.



Phase 4

Public Cloud

Software provider specific application accessible via url on any web browser and on any device, which runs in outsourced data centers located around the world at the technology provider's facilities (i.e. Microsoft Azure, Amazon AWS, Google Cloud).

← Some cloud-native solutions evolved to app-based solutions with the increased usage of smaller devices such as tablets and smartphones and platforms with the use of API. →



What does 'being in the cloud' mean?

It means that there are specialised data centres all over the world that play host to your data - everything that was once stored on that bulky server on your premises now lives online. You can have peace of mind knowing your data is protected and stored in multiple locations for instant backup in the event of an outage.

How is my data transferred?

Your data isn't just taken and put 'in the cloud'. Advanced applications, interfaces and technology, specifically designed for the cloud, are used to transfer your data, making it perform better. It is more accessible, scalable, agile, it now handles all tasks with ease and above all we securely protect it.

How do I access the data once it is in the cloud?

All you need is an internet connection and a web browser. It's that simple!

Is my data housed by my software provider or a third party?

Cloud solutions can be run directly by your software provider (private cloud) or by technology providers (e.g. Google, Amazon and Microsoft). At Guestline, we have partnered with Microsoft Azure to support Guestline in the management of our technology infrastructure, offering us better support for our customers worldwide, free resources to focus on improving our functionality and a more cost effective and reliable service leveraging the security and scalability of the world's leading cloud technology service provider.

What if I am travelling and have no access to the internet?

No problem! Some of the software providers enable you to access the data offline. At Guestline, you can access Guestline Rezlynx browser which provides a convenient offline mode to access recent key reports from Guestline Rezlynx PMS from check-ins, residents and checkouts to occupancy etc.

What cloud may mean for your business

Choose wisely.

Look for 'best of breed' and choose your system wisely where value outweighs the cost. Then, demand more! The secret is to not hold back, trust the experts and align your timings to best suit your property.

1 Access your solutions from anywhere in the world

For starters, hoteliers can log into their cloud PMS remotely in a secure way from anywhere in the world, on any mobile device or on any browser with an internet connection.

So whether you are at the hotel, attending a meeting, off-premise at a conference, working from home or travelling abroad, the ability to manage your property from almost any place and at any time, frees you and your staff up from the limitations of the desktop-confined software.

Need live access to a report? *Done!*

Need to check housekeeping schedules? *Done!*

Need to check live room availability? *Done!*

Want to check-in a guest from a smartphone? *Easy!*

If needs be, your staff will appreciate the flexibility of being able to work from home and you can sit comfortable knowing you can be agile in a crisis.

Whether you manage a group of hotels or a single property, your PMS seamlessly provides you with real-time visibility of data from all your distribution channels for all properties, from phone reservation systems to OTA's and your direct channel, plus you can coordinate rates, oversee operations, manage inventory, automate procedures and identify opportunities to cross sell and upsell from a central location – with the goal of maximising rates, occupancy and revenue.

All of this is guaranteed by your cloud PMS provider which makes sure its user's login authentication, procedures and tools are secure and its infrastructure is fully optimised and sized, so you can access your systems and load your data in no time, from anywhere.





2 Integrate your own tech ecosystem

One of the more attractive elements of using a cloud-native PMS is the ability to adapt, grow, and integrate with emerging hospitality solutions.

In an industry that is always changing, this kind of automation and flexibility is priceless.

Most cloud solutions have evolved to platforms as they are built on an open structure so that it can easily integrate with other third party software via Application Programming Interfaces (API's), helping you to make viable future technology investments and without limitations to the expansion of your tech ecosystem.

A cloud-native PMS (“platform”) will arm you with the flexibility you need to find the best solutions across your independent property and/or group to support you along your growth path whether you are centralising, standardising or automating data and processes.

With this setup, you can truly build your own tech ecosystem with a range of applications that integrate seamlessly to provide more comprehensive management information, faster reporting, access to live data (availability, rates, restrictions, inventory, reservations and payments) and a transparent view of profitability. Intertwine with a powerful partnership strategy (with your EPoS, Channel Manager, reputation and revenue management etc.) and you have the tools to successfully adapt, forecast, plan, report and personalise your business operations, services and customer relations.

3 Moving to the cloud is easy, with little disruption

If you have been reviewing your current PMS offering, don't be afraid or hold back...

Contrary to belief, implementing a new PMS incurs very little upheaval, it is easy to learn and easy to be trained on. Management teams can sometimes fear that transition but with new technologies and excellent support staff, you can be up and running in no time.

An efficient onboarding process of a new system is very important. If the implementation process isn't intuitive, it can make for high costs and complicated training sessions for employees and management. A cloud PMS eliminates the need for third party trainers and has high rates of positive adoption by staff, old and new.

At Guestline for example, we apply a blended approach in our implementation projects, so we perfectly balance remote and on-premise support and training to adapt to all types of hotel's and staff needs, whilst ensuring systems are customised to a hotel's specific needs, and all employees are up to speed in the fastest way possible.

On top of this, we partner with local universities in the countries that we operate in, so new students are already trained up on our systems when they graduate and start work in a hotel.

We also apply a proven project life cycle to guarantee every single detail is covered, including go live timing to minimise disruption in hotelier's operations. But the support from your provider must not end at go live. At Guestline, you can then access our local support team, 365 days a year, who can log on remotely and answer any further queries.

However, since cloud solutions are constantly being remotely updated and improved, it's imperative to foster a valuable ongoing learning culture to give staff the confidence to boost the guest experience. Guestline's remote ticketing and e-learning platform, Guestline Support Portal, was developed to provide hoteliers with remote and on-the-go accessible product knowledge to equip them with an up-to-the-minute understanding of the various functionalities and benefits of the portfolio, so you can further your own knowledge or learn about a new feature in your own time. Additionally, in 'product tools', we also introduced user notifications so you are kept up to date in real-time and can make the most of the new features as and when they are launched.





4 Gain *more* GuestTime & greater financial rewards

As the beating heart of any property, a PMS effectively automates all important processes at the hotel – a worthy investment with a greater financial return.

Unlike outdated PMS legacy models that require hoteliers to purchase licenses and hardware, cloud-native hotel solutions are a service offering that enables you to add on as many or as few products and features as needed including housekeeping, accounting, front desk, room maintenance and rate management and it also integrates with CRS, C&B, EPoS, IBE and Channel Manager, etc. With cloud technology, upfront costs are essentially to cover the set-up of the solutions, while the license fee is diluted over the contract length and payable monthly or annually to improve your cash flow position.

Plus, cloud-native and integrated solutions eliminates the need for on-premise servers at each property, avoiding human error and improving your stakeholders confidence and trust in your business, not only lowering your overall costs but giving you something even more precious – *more GuestTime*

- » Low maintenance for IT because the infrastructure is with the solutions provider or its technology platform provider not with you, the hotelier
- » No hefty IT and on-premise engineers bills when the server or software needs to be replaced or fixed
- » No unexpected upgrade bills
- » Lower insurance fees
- » Get back that premium space that your legacy server once occupied
- » Easier to interface your tech ecosystem if you want too
- » No technical solution and data security responsibility

Check out Guestline's proven Return on Investment Calculator, where we can provide you with a return across such KPIs as lower cost of ownership, labour efficiencies, improved guest acquisition and enhanced customer service.

5 Safe, protected and compliant

Technology updates

Windows 7 End of Life is the perfect example why cloud solutions won't leave you behind. As they are device, web browser and operating system agnostic, your software providers are always making sure your systems work in the latest, certified and compliant version. Even if they are not, they can easily be updated remotely.

Ensure your current Windows offering is supported and is not running on Windows 7 which is now end of life, leaving you vulnerable to viruses and other emerging security threats i.e. not being PCI-DSS compliant.

Payments

The high-level security standards followed by cloud hotel solutions must also include payment regulations such as PSD2 and the rigid compliance with Level 1 PCI requirements – giving hoteliers peace of mind that all card payments are stored safely and securely.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

GDPR is also a hot topic and has made the need for the safer and cost-effective housing of guest data more important than ever, a concerning topic for hoteliers who consider switching to a cloud PMS since data servers are hosted off premise. But, remember, your data is hosted in an environment that is managed by people whose sole job is to keep it secure with high levels of physical access security, backup power and backup network access. Which in turn brings with it lower insurance fees, system stability and reliability, protection over guest data, better disaster recovery and no risk of hardware being stolen. Can your hotel server offer that level of protection on-premise?

By owning your data in the cloud, back-ups are periodically performed and every action is recorded providing your management team with an audit trail and improved operations.





6 Unleash your innovation power

Being in the cloud is ultimately about the future of your business.

It is the gateway for being able to adopt new innovative technologies in the future such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Machine Learning, which has the power to improve the guest experience and smarten important business processes.

Here's how...

1. An intuitive guest experience

By using machine learning, you can learn what your guest wants so that you can anticipate their actions and serve them effectively with special offers, birthday dinner reminders and booking patterns, enabling you to personalise the guest experience better and build brand loyalty.

2. Personalise the booking process

A cloud-native booking engine can help you personalise the guest experience and improve revenues and ARR by contextualising language, booking process, availability, room upgrades, additions and upsell recommendations.

3. Predict occupancy and much more

By logging and centralizing all the data points in real time, AI can easily analyze trends and predict future events: room demands based on market conditions, guest consumption i.e. local events, seasonal activities, country celebrations etc., monitoring trends and OTA's etc. to help you to drive your rates and keep them in line with competitors.

4. Proactive reputation management

AI can help you learn what the customers are saying about you and competitors. It can monitor social media, review sites to assist you to proactively manage your reputation.

Hotels that are leading the way

Hear from some of your peers who are benefiting
from cloud-native and integrated solutions...

HRH Group

HRH is a group of 8 classic hotels, charming Inns, quality restaurants and quintessential pubs across Yorkshire

HRH Groups includes: The White Hart Hotel, Montpellier House Apartments, The Fat Badger Pub, The Yorkshire Hotel, Guy Fawkes Inn, Lamb & Lion Inn, Marmadukes Hotel and The Black Horse Inn in Kirkby Fleetham, York and Harrogate.

The Challenge:

As a multi-property group with 8 unique sites, each required a system than catered for the demands of the individual property's business, operations and customer profile. Their reservations and EPoS systems were outdated, they required an accessible and centralised system to allow streamlined management of all properties and one that was simple and user-friendly.

The Solution:

Guestline PMS, EPOS, Channel Manager, Websuite

“ Centralised visibility was a priority, all HRH properties' systems can be viewed, availability checked and rooms booked, from one screen. Plus, the automated time saving efficiencies that Guestline Rezlynx PMS provides, offers staff more opportunities to cross sell, maximise revenue, yield operations and effectively manage rates. ”

Simon Cotton - Managing Director, HRH Group





Aviator by Tag

Aviator by Tag is a luxury independent hotel, restaurant, cafe, cocktail bar, conference and wedding venue

Aviator was created by TAG Group as a hotel for elite travellers moving between London and the world's leading destinations.

The Challenge:

A cloud-based product was priority that allowed access from anywhere on and off premise. The limited automation and integration with their old system was time consuming and manual. Reporting was manual and rigid and not flexible. Above all they wanted a technology partner that listened, adjusts and benefits the hotel and staff.

The Solution:

Guestline PMS, EPOS, Channel Manager

“ To sum up we have been absolutely delighted with Guestline, from the installation which was seamless (we were fortunate to have excellent trainers), in terms of operationally we find it a good system to use, commercially we have seen the benefits from it and the support we have received has been fantastic. We would whole-heartedly recommend it. ”

Dominic Osborne - General Manager, Aviator by Tag



St. Pancras Group, London

St Pancras Group Ltd is a collection of 7 unique destinations in one urban location: Kings Cross, London

The eclectic group includes three hotels (including The California London and The Megaro Hotel), a bar, restaurant and two meeting and event spaces.

The Challenge:

As the group expanded and opened new properties, they required a centralised cloud system with easy integration to third party apps. Their previous systems supplier was offering an upgrade that wasn't financially viable or cost effective, prompting the group to review their core operating systems across the group.

The Solution:

Guestline Rezlynx PMS, Guestline Channel Manager, EPoS, Online booking platform, Advanced C&B

“ We don't want our staff heads down in a computer screen. We're all about re-introducing real hospitality and providing a unique guest experience and the Guestline systems allow us to do this by seamlessly taking care of all the processes and automating as much as possible in the background.

Being on the cloud has provided flexible access and a centralised overview of performance. It's certainly delivering ROI. ”

Christian Kaberg - Group Operations Director, St Pancras Hotels





Final note: There isn't a perfect solution

As hoteliers ourselves, we understand concerns around migrating from on premise to the cloud, from centralised to integrated or vice versa.

But, with the right partner, a functionality rich system complimented by the best integrated solutions, an engaged and hospitality minded in-house team and unrivalled support... it is possible.

Meeting the digital demands of the new millennial guest and staff is key.

By watching and learning from other industries i.e. retail and airline, hoteliers can become better educated to guest trends and the need to demand the seamless integration of all digital tools from booking platforms and reputation management to digital marketing and other guest communications with operational systems such as channel manager and PMS.

It doesn't matter if it is now or later, you will have to migrate to the cloud to stay relevant against competitors and to attract new staff who have been trained in cloud solutions and new guests who are expecting to have the same experience as they have in other industries.

Identify what it is you need from a PMS and what your expectations are and above all, be open-minded to new technologies and advancements in the market. The world is your oyster in terms of maximising on rooms, profits, time saving and enhanced employee engagement etc.

Moving to a new PMS is a serious decision and long-term decision (5/7years) and being in cloud is just **one of the criteria** you should consider.

You need a partner with a vision for the future but a proven history that doesn't let you down giving you what matters the most – *more GuestTime*.



From local hero, to global champion

At Guestline, we've been in the 'cloud' for a long time.

Back in the mid 2000's, we predicted the internet was set to become the next BIG THING. We understood it, adopted it and we foresaw the needs of hoteliers. So, in 2003, we leapt into the cloud and have been there ever since, listening, improving and ensuring our PMS and integrations are meeting the needs of hoteliers.

As pioneers of cloud PMS technology...

We are constantly evolving and innovating bringing together best in breed technology and integrations to ensure we deliver award-winning solutions. With a presence in 25 countries across five continents, our range of products include Guestline PMS, CRS, Channel Manager, Direct Booking Manager (DBM), Conference & Banqueting (C&B) and EPoS systems, assisting us in facilitating over 6.3 million bookings for our clients each year.

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