



The PMS Technology Checklist:

Features and functionalities to look for
when seeking a Best in Breed solution

Make your technology work for you

With the challenges presented by Covid-19, now more than ever will be the time to review your hotel technology solutions to create an environment that sets a higher bar of technological excellence moving into the future. Whilst bringing together that culmination of all your team's needs and aspirations, it can be difficult to really know what will deliver the biggest returns for the remainder of this year and beyond. As the future becomes more technologically advanced, now it is time to instil change, embrace it and invest in it.

A hotel Property Management System (PMS) should effectively be the lifeblood of your property, controlling and automating any number of hotel operations. Hotels are now privileged with the option of being able to select the perfect combination of software functionality that complements the property's specific needs, is fully integrated and provides more value for money.

Review your technology

Here we outline a helpful checklist to assist in reviewing your hotel technology solutions.

This allows you to put a strong business case forward to your stakeholders, ensuring department needs are on the table during the review process. And now, for the first time ever, suppliers are offering superb deals and commissions, presenting you with a once in a lifetime opportunity to compile the perfect lifelong tech stack for your property.



1. Have you implemented a technology strategy?

You might be considering moving your property technology to the 'cloud', but have you implemented your IT strategy to reflect this?

Identifying a 3 to 5-year plan is key to understanding how your technology will perform for you and will provide an indication as to when you can expect a return on investment. Given the current pandemic, many elements of the business will have been adjusted, you may now have employees working from home, additional pressures on the kitchen, newly implemented cleaning procedures for house-keeping and many more, putting renewed pressures on the business.

When looking at your technology strategy, it is important not to get overwhelmed. Like other sections of the business, you cannot expect to receive a massive return in year one. Start with getting the basics right as this will be fundamental to the growth of your strategy. It is about finding the right partners, building trust, working together, and choosing the right tender for your brand ethos.

2. Have you recognised the cost of ignoring?

If your technology stack is outdated or simply does not meet your expectations, the cost of ignoring could be critical to the long-term bottom line of the business.

If you are unable to bring it to the table this year because the lobby needs a new carpet, factor in how much it will cost you to not be, for example, capable of selling real time availability. Also, how much are you doubling up on tasks? How labour intensive are your processes? What if your end of life server reaches its end of life and can't be backed up? How does this impact the cost of insurance? If you are not moving your business on, your customers simply cannot move on with you.

3. Have you analysed how you can afford it?

Many hotels have their technology budget and spend in different areas of their profit and loss (P&L).

A good place to start is to analyse all the tools you are using across the business from security, accounting packages, credit card charges, your channel manager, web bookings, marketing tools, point of sale, hardware, wi-fi etc. to clearly understand the monthly and annual costs associated with these. Once you have identified the total cost of your IT across your business, you will begin to understand exactly what you currently spend and what you can afford.


Tendering companies will present costings in different formats and many will have unique service and product offerings. We recommend that you put all tendered costs into your own spreadsheet and multiply them across the period of the contract so that you can see the transparency of the project costs and where these sit within your budget.

Whilst analysing the P&L it is a good idea to look at other areas you might be able to make savings. Are you paying too much travel agency commission? Is your credit card system integrated? Is the team fully trained on all aspects of the business? Simple changes to processes can afford you better charges, reduced costs, improved employee engagement, a lower cost of acquiring new clients and drive better customer care and guest engagement.

How to get your strategy to the boardroom and over the line...

In a bid to engage stakeholders, you will need input from all departments, Accounts, F&B, Revenue, Front Office, Meetings & Events, Housekeeping, Security, Compliance etc.

Contribution from individual department team members who operate the system daily provides an employee voice, helps management to better understand technology requirements and contributes greatly to employee engagement. We also recommend welcoming a guest advocate and a green team member to join for a full 360 view of the business requirements.



Questions to ask your team

What do we need from a PMS?

To access the platform remotely

Customer support with ease of access, 24 / 7, and a local point of contact

One single sign on

Free upgrades

Unlimited licences

Proven ROI

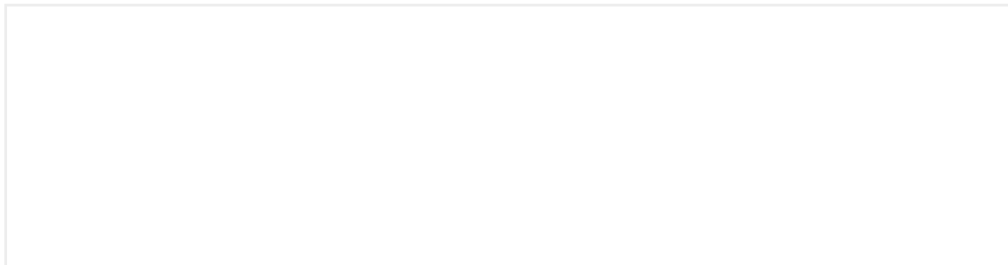
GDPR and PCI compliant

Integration to other tools used across the business

Easy and quick access to reports to make informed decisions

Value for money

A choice of payment options



Sales & Marketing Managers

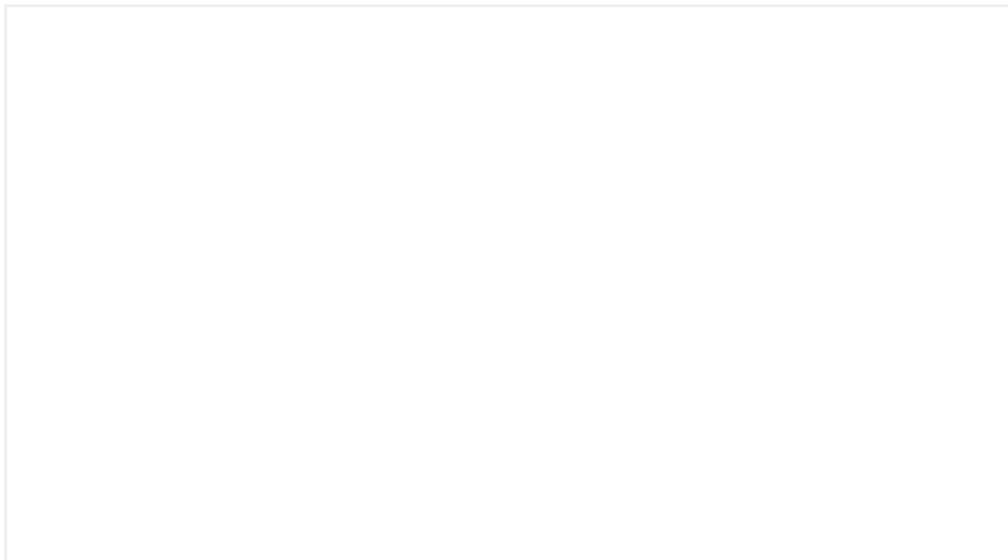
In order of preference...

Guest profiles across the business that match the business needs

Market segments and source codes that can be managed

Integration with a CRM that manages social and guest communications

Ability to manage brand's online reputation in one easy portal with reputation management tool integration with guest profiles



Revenue Managers

In order of preference...

Full integration to OTA's channels and own brand website

Selling real time availability right down to the last room

Handling of payments in a safe and cost effect way whilst reducing charge backs

One resource where all pricing and selling rules are created, delivering occupancy driven rates

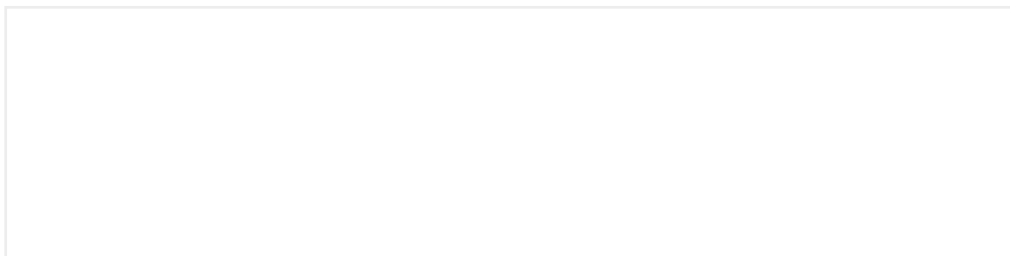
Floating allowances, ceilings & allocations

A clear and transparent way to manage promotions of low yielding business when required

Group and tour management

Integration with events

Integrated forecasting tools



Meetings & Events Teams

In order of preference...

Management of all enquiries in one place – converting enquiries and recording the conversion rate

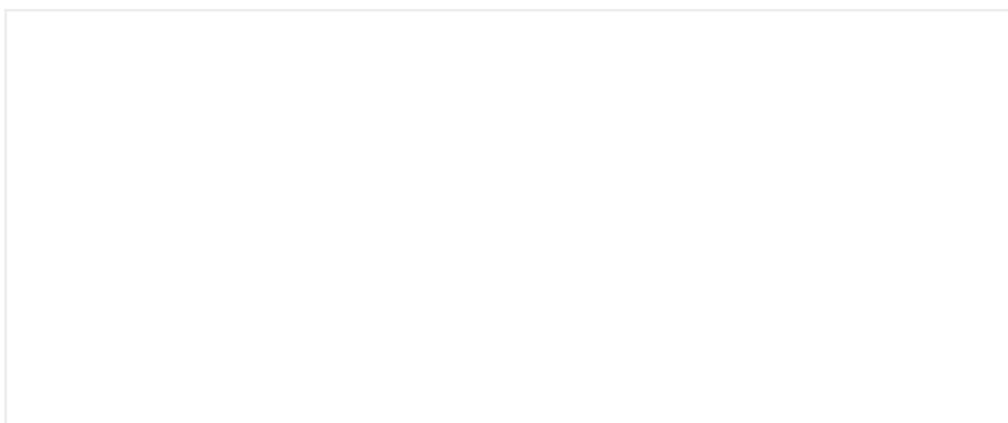
Quick access to rooms and availability

Automated contracts and confirmations

Full pricing of all products integrated, with the ability to easily change prices & add new products

Clear and transparent function sheets – designed for the different department's needs

One place to see the full value of the event and manage the client's expectations



Front Office, Reception & Reservation teams

In order of preference...

Easily train new team members – on-site and through available online training modules

Contactless check in and out

Address look up to access the cleanest profiles with visible guest feedback

Easy billing solutions for guests

Details on the transaction from the point of sale

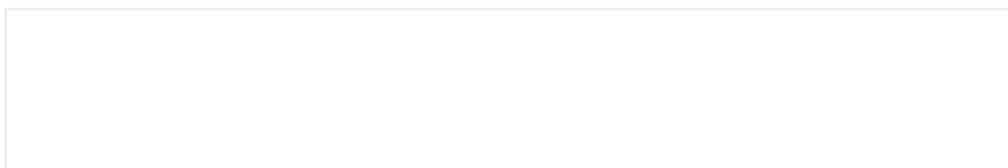
Confidence that the billing is correct

Upselling tools

Automatic guest confirmations and pre stay emails

Good housekeeping tools so that housekeeping is self-sufficient with easy access to maintenance requests

Access to meetings and events for function sheets and out of hours calls



Housekeeping

In order of preference...

Manageable system to build cleaning sheets depending on business needs daily

Tractability and accountability tracked

Extra beds and cots, VIP and guest amenities managed seamlessly

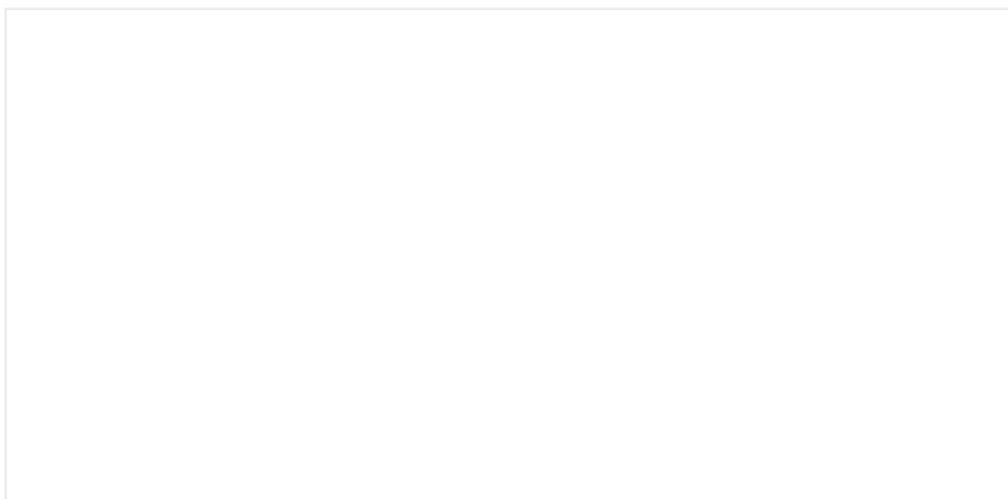
Forecasting rostering tools

An app for ease of use

Rooms checked instantly available at reception

Recorded maintenance requests

Real time status reports



HR Team

In order of preference...

Easy onboarding training for new recruits

Access to a training system, online modules

Training documented and recorded for training records

Employee engagement, all departments working together

Ticks green team's requirements



Finance

In order of preference...

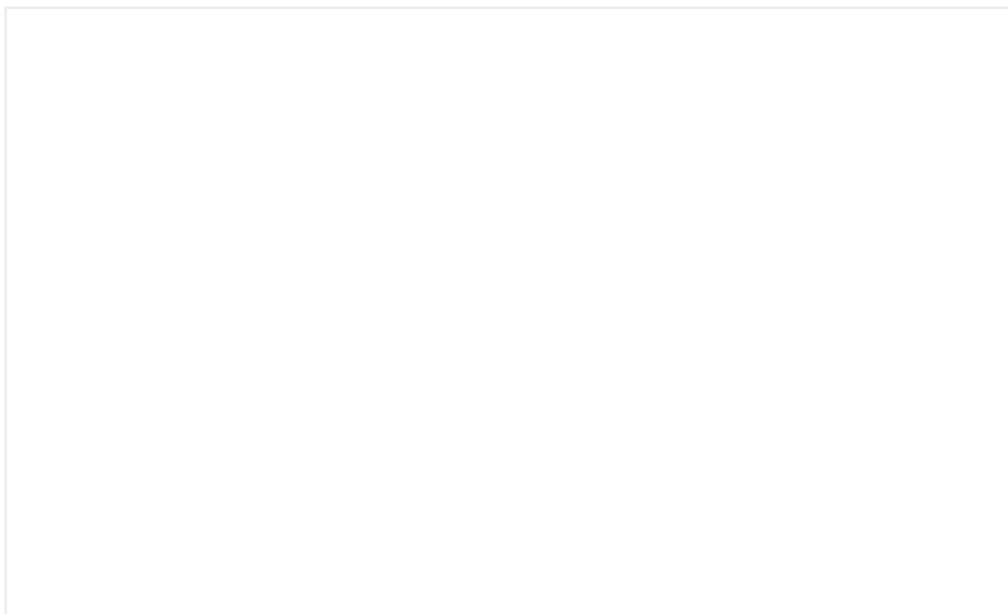
Integrated accounting system with accurate, real-time reporting

Import all revenue from all departments with integrated payments

One payment gateway across the business delivering best rates and reducing charge backs

Good forecasting tools – reporting on total revenue across all departments in one system

Multi property credit approval



F&B Team

In order of preference...

Good interface to point of sale – allowing charges straight to the PMS/Guest bedroom

Floating allowances on inclusive packages

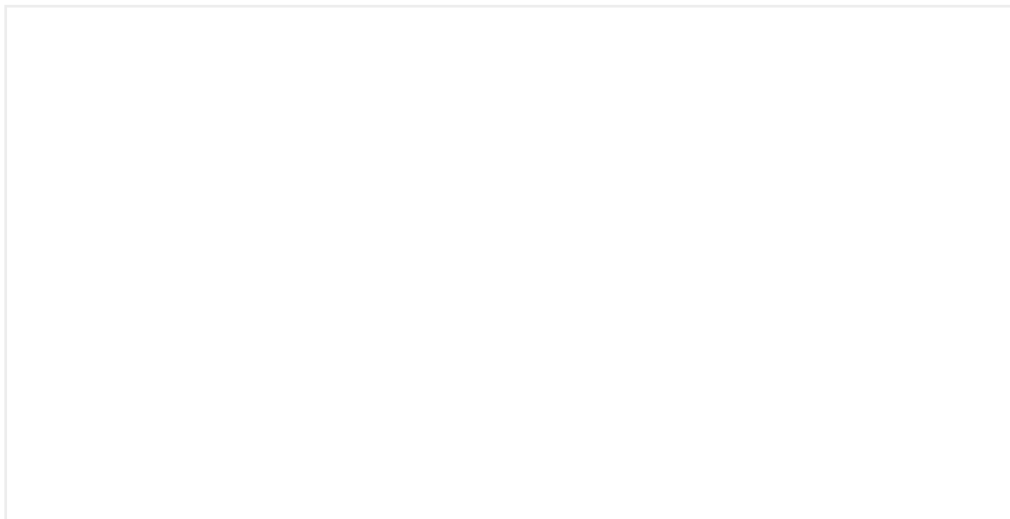
Credit checks on in-house guests

Total end of day integration

Reports for breakfast and dinner guests – displaying times booked for meals

Great function sheets for all venues

Access to the guest profiles to see past stays or reputation feedback & dietary requirements/allergens



Next steps in your PMS journey

Agree a department team leader and an overall project manager

Agree must-haves and desirables required to deliver individual team's needs

Appoint a guest advocate, so that each decision will consider the guest experience

Appoint a green advocate so that your green agenda is included

Pull all individual team's requirements together to agree overall business desirables

Tender three providers and measure against the following:

The company's reputation in the marketplace

Their product offering and product road map

The depth and breadth of its functionality

Customer Service – will they be there when you need them?

Once you have made your final choice, request a site visit, obtain references, and talk to other hoteliers

Choose a PMS that will become an integrated technology solution that positively contributes to the property, team, guest experience and overall, the bottom line

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