



The PMS Technology Checklist:

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

Make your technology work for you

Looking for a new PMS Solution? Why it's time to stop 'making do' and embrace the efficiencies a cloud-based system can bring.

With many legacy PMS systems coming to the 'End of Life' in coming months (meaning providers have taken the decision to cease further investment in upgrades, fixes or bugs) you may be one of hundreds of hotels forced to look for alternative providers. But if like many you are operating with an overstretched team following the turbulence of the last two years, you would be forgiven for thinking there are more pressing issues to deal with.

While there is never an ideal time to embark on a large tech switchover and implementation, when it comes to your PMS, start planning now and it will pay serious dividends further down the line. This is a huge opportunity for your hotel to upgrade and streamline operations. A new PMS solution will enable you to select the perfect combination of software functionality that complements your property's specific needs, is fully integrated and provides more value for money. It really is time to stop 'making do' and embrace the efficiencies and value a cloud-based system can add to your operation.

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. This is 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. Over the last couple of years, operationally, you may have had to make adjustments - you may now have employees working from home, additional pressures on the kitchen, newly implemented cleaning procedures for housekeeping 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 you making the right selection for your property (this sentence was unfinished in the original article).

2. Have you recognised the cost of ignoring?

If all support for your technology stack is due to come to an end, ignoring switching to an alternative solution could prove critical to the long-term bottom line of the business.

If tech investment is challenging this year due to cost implications, you need to think about the costs associated with **not** switching to a new PMS solution. Working with an 'End of Life' tech solution that is not subject to further upgrades and bug fixes will leave your business exposed and at risk. For example, payment gateways without PCI compliance or 3DS2 Security could leave you unable to process payments online. Think about the lost business this could result in. What are the insurance implications? 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



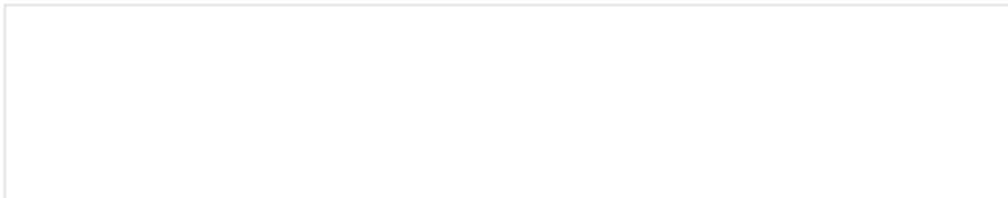
What do we need from a PMS?

- ☐ 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

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Revenue Managers

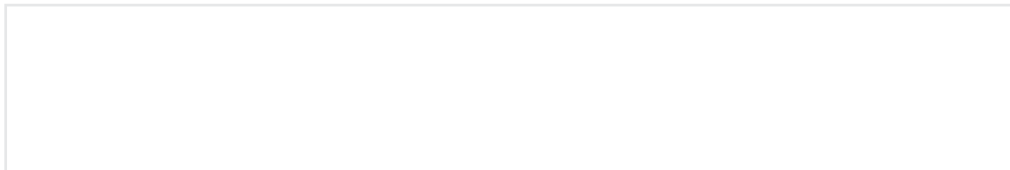
In order of preference...

- ☐ 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

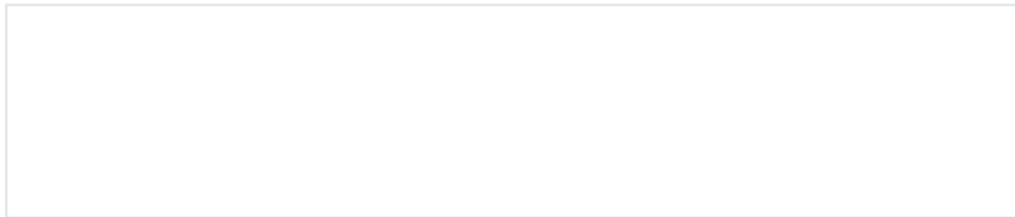
In order of preference...

- ☐ 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

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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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