

The Hospitality Guide to Tech Stack Shopping

10 things to consider when vetting a swap



Breaking out of a tech stack rut is incredibly difficult.

We follow existing tracks within our organizations typically because it's easiest in the moment. Then, over time, those grooves get nice and worn and we accept major flaws, certainly to the detriment of properties we serve.

It's not unlike getting stuck in a mogul field or pothole in a muddy road – in order to escape, we need leverage.

Many resourceful hotels, resorts, vacation rentals, and hotel- casinos are leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to escape the old habit of utilizing underperforming tech and, instead, pivot toward technology stacks that better serve their sales, marketing, and revenue teams (and ultimately their guests.)

But shopping can feel like a daunting task. It's time to first determine exactly what problems you're trying to solve. Time to make a list!

Here are 10 ideas to consider when building your checklist.



1. Paint a specific canvas

Writing down your specific goals and describing them clearly leads to specific, measurable success. For example, you could be looking for a comprehensive view of a guest through lead management that doesn't rely on rearview mirrors, but rather provides a start-to-finish assessment from the very first inquiry (no matter how it's made) through repeat visits. Setting precise goals like this is hard work up front, but vital to achieving the desired outcome you seek.

2. Tidy integrations are key

Tech solutions that integrate with your existing Property Management System (PMS), are key. It's a virtual cable organizer, binding all those loose pieces of electronic spaghetti into one tidy, efficient package. For example, incorporating your existing PMS with a new CRM is vital to keep up with today's fast paced, constantly evolving hospitality landscape. As is making sure the myriad components play nice with each other.



3. Great service moves us to spread the word

Legendary word of mouth is generated when organizations do something incredible as a rule, not an exception. Companies that provide excellent technology backed by people offering robust troubleshooting advice, direct support assistance, personal training and educational resources are worth talking about with your industry peers. Consider what kind of support is on offer, and make sure to avoid “set and forget” systems that only generate radio silence when you need help from an actual human during times of duress.

4. Everybody needs a good coach

Getting on a bus headed to Denver doesn’t make sense if your destination is New York. Enrollment is the idea of aligning your team, so you’re all headed in in the right direction. Great tech creates enrollment by increasing user adoption across departments through ongoing, personalized account support, including call center services, hospitality marketing services and client success advocacy - enhancing every team members’ ability to use your new technology to its fullest. Think of it as having a friendly coach who’s actually concerned about the performance and well-being of each individual player, regardless of their position.



5. The accidental hoarder

System limitations, rather than humans, are the number one cause of hoarded information. Simple databases quickly turn into repositories (silos) that require the manual distribution of information, which means it’s either shared at a snail’s pace, or doesn’t get shared at all. A great Hospitality CRM or reservation sales solution offers a holistic approach to disseminating information, providing reservation sales, marketing, and revenue management teams with the same actionable reporting, data visualization and key performance indicators. All in one place, simultaneously, so not even a second is wasted.

6. Frames are made for breaking

The frames our minds create limit what we see as possible. For example, reservation agents constantly facing the flashing red lights of waiting calls may be discouraged by subsequent high abandonment rates and their lack of ability to effectively handle intense volume. The right solution can increase inbound call conversion by providing your reservation sales team the bandwidth to provide personalized service – reframing their tasks as opportunities for higher performance and providing a glimpse at the possibility of turning the voice channel into a revenue driver for the organization.

7. Ethics, meet digital, digital, meet ethics

Meeting a legal obligation or other requirement is about as uninspiring as it gets as far as business ethics goes. Organizations that get noticed for their commitment to digital ethics, security and privacy are “beyond compliance” focused, as they believe the mission of hospitality is to protect and care for every aspect of the guest and team experience. A robust CRM in the hospitality industry makes security the priority.

8. It’s easier to get married than divorced

Any way you slice it, the process of looking to upgrade your tech stack is about entering into a committed relationship with the provider. It’s important to look at a potential partner through the lens of culture and value alignment. If there’s a void between your mission and theirs, or a lack of synergy amongst each organization’s personalities, you won’t get the best out of the partnership. Make sure there’s a cultural fit before you get married, and look for evidence of empathy and a consultative posture. Breaking up is hard to do, and you certainly don’t want to start over.



9. Drone on about your problems

Interviewing key stakeholders, mapping the customer journey or conducting a S.W.O.T analysis of your competition only partially represent the challenges faced by each layer of your organization. A thoughtful provider considers their impact across the breadth of your teams – including marketing, revenue and reservation sales - and wants to know each group’s pain points in detail. They also pay particular attention to the guest’s experience, both good and bad, from long before the guest arrives to well after they depart. This is the only way a provider can determine how to offer the most integrated and complete solution.

10. It’s expensive to be cheap

Hospitality tech comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and prices. The problem with using “cheaper” as a metric when selecting a platform is cheaper is fast, linear, and easy to do properly. But when it comes to ROI for your organization, cheaper is a short term hit rather than a long-term advantage.



In conclusion, old habits die hard.

You can live on them for a while, but the best way forward involves finding and building new habits that benefit both your teams and the guests you seek to serve. Taking the leap to swap tech during the dynamic of the COVID-19 pandemic is a great opportunity to lever yourself out of an old technology rut.

Have questions regarding shopping for the right solution? Please feel to reach out, we're ready to help.

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