

The technology to lead the hospitality industry out of the pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 is far-reaching; not only has it changed day-to-day life but has also significantly altered the way businesses operate across the globe. The hospitality sector, in particular, has needed to swiftly adapt to the 'new normal', as establishments such as cafes, restaurants and hotels were the first to see closures triggered by the pandemic.

The UK situation

In the UK, for example, it has been estimated that the hospitality industry's lockdown cost the UK economy £30bn alone, while in Spain it has been suggested that almost a third of establishments could face permanent closure. In many countries, small to medium-sized businesses in the hospitality sector have had to rely on financial support from the government to keep themselves afloat. In some cases, businesses have been quick to adapt their products and services they offer – for example, providing take away services or offering home delivery of essential items. However, with restrictions now easing, these businesses face another challenge as they seek to adapt to a post-pandemic way of operating.

Re-opening

As establishments reopen, they have had to rethink basic processes in line with government advice and customer expectations, implementing measures such as social distancing as well as track and trace systems, in an effort to put safety first. It is in this space that innovative technology will have a significant role in supporting the hospitality sector in adapting to a new environment. For example, we have already seen the widespread implementation of devices such as temperature screening cameras, as well as the development of multiple apps and digital tools.

Track and Trace

In the case of track and trace, the premise is simple. By temporarily collecting and storing customers' data, establishments are able to notify them whether they have been exposed to the virus in the event where one or more clients test positive for COVID-19. This process allows those who have frequented a vicinity at a certain date and time to be contacted and therefore take necessary precautions.

Captive Portal

The customisable captive portal allows businesses to create a built-in track and trace option via the Wi-Fi check-in, collecting the necessary customer information easily. It can also be configured to hold customer data for a set period of time too, allowing businesses to make sure that they are meeting government guidelines and GDPR regulations.



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This is why solutions such as modern network management tools are well placed to support track and trace programmes, especially as many of these are already widely used in the hospitality sector. Solutions such as Nuclias enable business owners to not only automate and monitor their network, giving them complete visibility, but also allows them to make the most out of features such as the customisable captive portal and 3rd party integration that can provide Wi-Fi analytics, wayfinding and marketing automation.

3rd Party integrations

In addition, 3rd party integration products such as Fydelia, Stampede and Purple have begun making use of their software features to enable track and trace. Through automatically checking customers in via guest Wi-Fi, this type of software allows establishments to gather personal information as well as to measure and analyse footfall. In this way, businesses can ensure compliance with social distancing regulations, as well as easily gather client information and make contact with them if they need to. Where Wi-Fi is unavailable customers can make use of a QR code, which is also integrated with the 3rd party software.

Key points to consider

There are a number of network management products that can support track and tracing capabilities, and there are some key points to consider when deciding which solution to select:

- Choose a solution that comes with a customisable captive portal, enabling an automatic check-in where customers can input their details
- Select an option that will uphold GDPR compliance for your business, knowing that the data will be stored safely and securely to avoid privacy concerns
- Consider the size of your business when choosing what network management solution would work best for you, to make sure that it will meet the demand
- Go for a solution that supports centralised management as this will alert you to any issues before they become disruptive
- Consider an option that includes analytics and reporting functions to provide a transparent view of your network

Businesses around the globe are steadily adapting to the realities of a post-pandemic world and although for many the future ahead can seem uncertain, there is no shortage of innovative technology that is well placed to uphold the everyday running of businesses. These technologies do not only help to maintain health and safety of customers and staff, but play an important role in mitigating against the spread of the virus.

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