Purposes

Introduction

The Kingsway hall hotel is an elegant four star deluxe hotel situated in the heart of London's convent garden, only a few minutes from waterloo train station. Easy access to London's most popular attractions, spending time in the city has never been easier.

Each of our 170 bedrooms is fully air-conditioned and has broadband access, fax and IDSN Connections.

Spend time shopping at Britain's most fashionable hot spots like convent garden or Oxford Street, invest in culture and visit attractions like the London eye, the British museum or theatre land or dine out in some of the best restaurants that London has to offer. Or if you prefer to take things easy, why not make the most of our fitness centre and relax in our Jacuzzi and steam rooms?

Kingsway hall is also excellently situated if you want to do business in comfort. Choose from one of our nine conference and banqueting suites, each with state-of-art audio visual equipment.

Whether you are here on business or pleasure, Kingsway hall will help you to enjoy your stay in pure elegance.   (This extract was taken from the Kingsway hall hotel website.

The online booking system is simple and friendly and also saves an employee's time.

The hotel's objectives

The hotel should aim for customers with a lot of money so they might go for an expensive suite rather than a simple room. It should also aim for high value customers as they might spend money on extras the hotel might offer. The hotel should offer high service levels to satisfy the customers. This way the customers might return to visit the hotel again maybe bringing along friends and family or passing recommendation around.

Activities for which the hotel uses ICT

- Booking system
- Check in
- Key system
- Yield management
- Guest history
- Restaurant billing
- Minibar
- Building management
- Video (& TV)
- Modem connections
- Telephone

- Check out
- Housekeeping & maintenance
- Toilet auto flush

Detailed description of a booking system

A booking system must make it possible to see which rooms are available and which rooms are not. It should allow the receptionist to put a customer in a room on a date of their choice.
It should be easy to look up, so it must be organised. This means it has to be easy to read and understand and have enough space to make changes and to write information down.
The Hotel Manager said:
"The printed document is well presented and free of legibility issues. It also avoids transcription errors, like incorrect room rate, that sometimes occurred with the manual system. We estimate that the computer printed register saves about 2 minutes for each check in, or 3 hours each day."

A paper based booking system would look like this:

w/c 1/10/07	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	Js 0123	Js 0123	Ad 0124				
2							
3							
4							
5							

You should have a table for each week to make it possible to fit all the required information in the spaces. Also they should be easy to look up.

A guest record card should be made to keep thee information of a customer to save time the next time the customer visits. It should look something like this:

Front side

Customer detail card

Cust. Number: 05328
Name: Mr. Ikhatakajingu Borat
Add: 69 Sousage Rd
Country: Khazakistan
Phone No: 01211 506978
Post Code: COC4 1NE

Back side

Date	Customer Nights	History Rate
10/09	67	$1,000,000
13/12	68	$230,000,000,000
14/09	69	£7.99

A hotel would use softwares such as microsoft access to make it easier to make a booking system.

New Guest

In the case of a new guest who has never visited the hotel before, the recieptionist would have to make a guest record for that guest. They would need to take down all the details. It would be a disadvantage being a new guest because you wouldn't receive any discounts and would take a lot more time at reciption.

Returning guest

In the case of a returning guest who has visited before, the guest record should already have been created. All the details the recieptionist requires should already be on a guest record. It is a lot quicker to check in being a returning guest.

Internet online booking

The Kingsway Hall web site offers online booking. I did a trial by trying to make a booking. The online booking system is very simple and customer friendly. It shows which days are available in which room etc.
It is and advantage to the guest as it allows the guest to enter the information more accurately and more confidently than if they are saying it to a member of staff.
Some times the guest doesn't understand what the field needs to be filled with and they enter incorrect information e.g. they might enter their bank pin in the expiry date field.
The hotel staff doesn't need to do anything but the computer does it for them. It saves a lot of employee time.
The customer might enter the information into the system with no intention of staying at the hotel and the hotel might have an empty room which could have had a guest occupying it. Group bookings make the most money for the hotel, around a third of the hotels business is via group bookings. The Hotel Manager said:
"In the past year, Kingsway Hall has changed its web booking to make it faster and more customer friendly. About 40% of bookings are now received online. However, because of the judgements needed for group bookings, these must be done by staff. Group bookings are about a third of the hotel's business."

Detail Description of Yield Management

The hotel has a lot of expenses. Some of them are:
Wages, payment for food and items etc, council tax, building insurance, contents insurance etc.
The wages are fixed prices; they do not rise or lower under no circumstances
The insurance and the council tax etc. are variable costs which can change frequently around claims and land value.
The hotel would want to fill the hotel rooms at discount to keep figures and statistics high and also to make more money than nothing.

The rack rate is the full and highest rate of a 1 night stay at a hotel.

The target for forward bookings should be to fill all the rooms up as close to the rack rate as possible.
They compare the actuals against the targets and they give discounts to keep up with the targets, if they are far off from their targets then they introduce discounts.
If under the target they introduce discounts to fill in the rooms because as long as they are making more money than the expenses it is better than not making any money at all.
A manager's conclusion would be to introduce tempting offers which will attract more guests, if there are vacancies in the hotel which need filling up.
There would be discounts as a tempting offer when vacancies need filling.
The Hotel Manager said:
"When we had a manual system, someone had to add up the forward bookings for each day for the next 50 days. It took about 5 minutes to add up each day, and the job would take all morning. With this amount of work, it was not practicable to hold a yield management meeting more often than once per week. The computer system produces the information in seconds, and we can adjust our discounts daily. We

estimate that we save about £5000 each week by stopping discounts as soon as they are no longer necessary."

Computer system vs. manual system

The computer system is much better for the hotel respectively. It makes the hotels tasks much quicker and you can save a number of employees time by simply using a computer system. It also has the benefits of space and requires less people to maintain and run the system.

Detail description of the Key system

A manual system of keys isnt very good because of many factors such as:

If a member of hotel staff goes corrupt he may 'steal' the keys and steal from the guest, or even a member of staff with a master key. However a metal key is less likely to snap than a card. Also a mechanical lock is hard to break into without the key whereas a card swiping mechanism is a lot easier to break into.
To get a set of keys made with a master key is very expensive and costs around £600-£700 for a set of 100 keys with a fob. They must be made specially for the master key to fit them. On the other side a card costs a mere 30p and is easy to programme as a master key.
When you have a board for the hotels keys it is possible that a member of staff or even a guest may have accesss to it at certain times. This means that the hotel would have to have extra security for the board.
 When a guest leaves the hotel they leave their keys on the board which has pros and cons: the hotel staff knows when the guest is out so they can sort the room out before the guest returns however anyboddy else can also have access to the room when it is vacant and they can do whatever they want inside.
The Hotel Manager said:
"Thefts from guests give a hotel a bad reputation, and we decided to use a computer system to avoid this."

Keys have large fobs attached to them to encourage guests to leave them at the hotel while they take leave, this is to minimize possibility of loss.
If a criminal finds a key which has the hotel name and room number then the hotel is at risk of theft and other bad intentions.
Most crimes commited in the hotel are inside jobs where staff may give a key card away for free, or even steal from a room himself.
The key card lock for the rooms are equiped by small computers which store information bout room numbers and access codes which are stored on the key.
They use a card swipe system to save space instead of a big bulky machine in which the card is inserted. Also it is good because you can have the swipe info sent to the computer in reception alerting them when the guest leaves the room.

The swipe readers use flash memory so that when there is no power the information is still stored on the card.
A servo is a control system that converts a small mechanical motion into one requiring much greater power.

Information about the room number and the key identity are stored in the magnetic strip.

The computer lock closes and releases the latch to unlock the door.
If a card is lost then the receptionist is only required to change the codes on the door and make a new key for the guest.
If a disgruntled employee steals a master card then all you need to do is change the master code which takes a few seconds.
The hotel has a second card reader in the room for Air conditioning and lighting.
The annual savings of a hotel from using a key system is app. £10,000.
The payback period of this investment is 7.14 years. In the film, the Maintenance Manager said:
"We monitor our energy use every week. The key system saves about £70 in energy costs per room per year, a saving of £10 000 annually."

The points for the key system are outnumbering the points against it. It isn't very expensive compared to what you may be paying for insurance without it.

Detail description of the Mini-bar system

A mini-bar is a fridge or a cupboard containing products a customer might like to buy, such as drinks, snacks, alcohol, food, fruit, chocolate and much more.
In a manual system a member of staff would check every day for items which have been used and add them to the bill.
When the staff add this to a bill it is added to the main bill and deducted from their credit card.
When it is added to the bill whatever is gone from the minibar is taken around the hotel filling these products in. Shrinkage is when a member of staff 'steals' some of the products by taking extras when refilling the minibars.
In the manual system there may be some billing problems such as: an item from the bar may be misplaced and also be added to the bill.
The staff would have to make regular checks to see if the minibars are still working
Computerised minibars has sensors under each product so if you remove the item you have a limited amount of time to replace it before it is added to your bill.
The hotel knows what has been used because when the time limit is over it appears on the main screen at reception.
When it appears on the screen a member of staff is sent round to replace the item.
If a minibar has broken down it appears on the screen alongside the room number and other details.
Shrinkage has become less as the staff is only given what appears on the screen so they can't take extras. The customers opinion on the minibars varies some are satisfied and some are not depending on their experiences.
The hotel manager said:
"Sales from the mini-bars average about £5 per room per night. With 170 rooms, total sales are £300,000 annually. With the old system, we estimated that shrinkage

and unbilled usage together amounted to 10% of sales, or £30,000 per year. The decision to put in a "smart" mini-bar system was based on preventing this loss. There is still some shrinkage, usually caused by guests taking stuff off an unattended trolley, but at about 1% it is small compared to the old system."

Detail description of the Video on Demand system

In the old system videos were played from VCR's. But they used to take up a lot of space and were inconvenient. Also they were very easy to smuggle out of the hotel. They used to have a lot of breakdowns and the only way to find out was checking every VCR in the hotel to see if they were working properly. Also the range of videos was very limited and the cassettes could easily be stolen. It also cost a lot of money to pay for the cassettes.
The viewing times were limited because sometimes the cassettes were distributed and there were no more copies in reception. This means that the customer would have to go away without a movie or even take another movie, and possibly be disappointed.
The Reception manager said:
"Our old system broadcast on eight channels through the room televisions. There was a timetable that showed the times at which films were showing. During an evening, three films would be shown on each channel, so a guest had a choice of 24 films."

In the new system videos are played from a large computer possibly in a small room. If the computer breaks down the staff would know straight away and would be able to fix it as soon as possible. The guest would be able to watch any movie available at any time they like, and there would be no last copies of the movie because there is only one copy of the movie which is streamed through the television in the guest's room. The Reception manager said:
"The server holds almost 200 films, so guests have a much wider choice.
The combination of more choice and immediate viewing has greatly increased the use of the system. Since putting in the VoD system, revenue has increased about threefold, to £400,000 per annum."

Overall the new system is a lot more convenient than the old one. The guest can watch any movie at any time they like.

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