Hotels check-in late with technology

Hoteliers are playing catch up with restaurants, pubs and bars when it comes to adopting technology to drive sales and build loyalty.

According to the latest GO Technology report from Zonal and CGA, which tracks the technology habits of 5,000 UK adult consumers, order and pay apps are a huge untapped revenue opportunity for the hotel sector.

Hotels need to move fast as competition stiffens, not only from local bars and eateries, but from fast growing food delivery services, such as Deliveroo and Uber Eats.

Despite it being the norm and preferred method to book a room using a hotel's own website (67%), this is where the technology journey for guests seems to end.

Three in five (60%) consumers have never used a technology solution to check in to a hotel, although there is demand for this service with nearly half of those surveyed (45%) wanting to see automated check-in in the future.

During their stay, well over half of consumers say they have never used tech to order room service (70%), book activities or excursions (67%), reserve restaurant tables (64%) or pre-order food and drink (63%). These figures contrast sharply with the restaurant and pub sector, where smartphone pre-booking and order-and-pay are now firmly embedded.

These stats also demonstrate how far behind the curve the UK hotel sector is to overseas operators, who are upping the ante when it comes to the guest experience by adopting futuristic tech features such as robot butlers, keyless entry, blockchain reward systems and chatbots as in-room concierge.

Zonal's sales director, Tim Chapman, said: "There is a clear opportunity for hoteliers to use mobile-friendly and in-room technology to facilitate the customer journey, so that the guest experience is as fun, personal and hassle free as possible.

"There are financial gains to be made from additional income generated from on-site food and beverage sales, to activities such as spa treatments and trips. Pre-order and pay has quickly become the norm within hospitality and the research shows that consumers are expecting the same type of service when staying at or visiting a hotel.

"Looking overseas, to Asia in particular, hoteliers are leading the way in using the latest technology to help address staffing shortages and rising costs, from which our domestic operators could take learnings."

GO Technology also identifies that when it comes to room service, more than a quarter (28%) of hotel consumers consider ordering or paying for it to be a challenge, however, among this group, three quarters (73%) think a technology solution to the problem, such as an in-room tablet or phone app, would be an attractive idea.

Karl Chessell, CGA Business Unit Director, Food and Retail said: "Technology is now an integral part of the out of home eating and drinking experience, but so far it has been more conspicuous by its absence in hotels.

Online reservations through hotels' websites, apps and third-party platforms have transformed the way consumers discover and engage with hotel brands, and automation is starting to emerge at check-in. But beyond those first few steps in the customer journey, the hotel experience is generally much lower-tech.

"As GO Technology shows, this presents a huge opportunity for hotels. For restaurants and bars, positive experiences with apps, tablets, order-and-pay and online feedback show the way forward, and there is clearly scope to use technology to grow food and drink sales in hotels. Our data proves that the consumer demand for better use of technology is there: it is up to hotels to meet it and reap the benefits it provides. Bedding in these solutions will build loyalty and drive sales."

To access a copy of the full report, visit INSERT LINK

ENDS

About Zonal:

Zonal is the leading provider of integrated hospitality management solutions to over 16,000 leisure and hospitality businesses across the UK. For 40 years the company has been working closely with clients to enhance the customer experience through market leading technology, experienced people and a partnership approach to business.

About CGA:

CGA is the world's leading business intelligence and strategic consultancy provider for the out of home leisure market; the definitive source of integrated consumer insight and market measurement informing strategies for our clients' growth. We live, love and breathe our industry, harnessing our passion and knowledge to help the market make smarter and more informed decisions. CGA works closely with consumers, retailers, suppliers, trade bodies and government so that our expert consultants can bring every strategic insight to life. To learn more, visit: www.cga.co.uk.

About the data:

Zonal's GO Technology, in conjunction with CGA, is a quarterly survey that tracks the technology habits of 5,000 nationally representative British consumers.

For further information please contact Limegreen Communications:

Jo Mathers: jo@limegreecommunications.com / 07799 662389