

POS/Technology *Restaurant and lodging trends to look for in 2007 and beyond*

An alarm clock that rolls away when you hit the snooze button. A toilet seat that knows you're approaching. Windows that turn clear or opaque at the push of a button. Your guests might be looking for these from you one day soon.

Podcasting for employee training. "Customer relationship management" software. Self-service solutions for restaurants. Your staff and your customers might be expecting these from you sooner than you think.

According to Hospitality Trends, technology in the food-service and hospitality industries has rocketed in the past five years. And there's no deceleration in sight. From chic to sensible, from costly to cost-saving, this year's techno-toys will both distress and delight restaurateurs and hoteliers and their staffs and customers.

The "Jetson" Hotel Room

George Jetson, and Jane, his wife, would feel right at home in GUESTROOM 2010, a futuristic hotel room recently introduced at the Hotel Industry Technology Exposition and Conference in Minneapolis.

In GUESTROOM 2010, you'll find a snuggly bed with no mattress and a shower that cleans itself.

The guest room also offers Gauri Nanda's clever Clocky®, a clock with wheels that disappears when a guest presses the snooze button. Clocky® rolls off the table, falls to the floor and rolls away and hides. When

the alarm goes off the second time, a guest is forced to get up and find the clock to turn it off. Clocky® sells for \$49.99 a piece. The 20,000 spring-loaded-piston bed sells through Ammique out of Bath, England, for a cool 40 grand.

The future's guest room also includes a toilet that senses you approaching and the seat lifts up. And speaking of the need for privacy, the windows in GUESTROOM 2010 will turn clear to opaque and back again at the push of a remote-control button.



The elusive (but effective) "Clocky."



In GUESTROOM 2010, you'll find a snuggly bed with no mattress and a shower that cleans itself.

New Gadgets Are Also Practical and Cost-effective

Here's a list of some of the newest in point-of-service and technology trends.

Aloha

Aloha recently released its 6.0 version of its software. Frequent enhancement releases throughout

the year provide a high return on investment to maintenance customers through functionality that focuses on speed of service, security/audit and operational cost reduction. Maintenance customers also can expect one or more strategic releases that introduce new technology features, such as biometric technology and increased security.

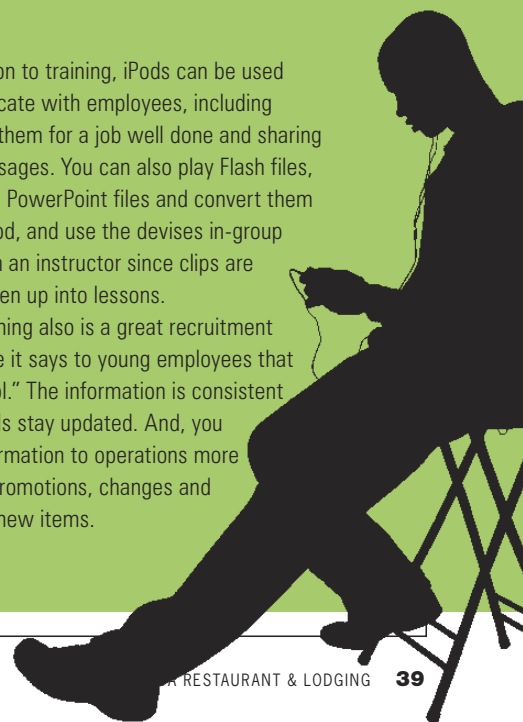
Staff Training on iPods

According to Hospitality Trends, iPod training allows you to modify and create content in short video clips, and present it in a portable, handheld solution. Clips are designed to create interactivity and skill-building validation after each step to ensure staff have gained both knowledge and skill. The benefits to iPod training, include:

- portability
- easy update
- appeals to current generation
- shortens, but strengthens, training time
- enhances productivity
- includes on-demand reference
- available for pre-shift meetings
- uses turnkey scripting; and
- includes filming, editing and loading devices.

In addition to training, iPods can be used to communicate with employees, including recognizing them for a job well done and sharing weekly messages. You can also play Flash files, add audio to PowerPoint files and convert them to play in iPod, and use the devices in-group training with an instructor since clips are already broken up into lessons.

iPod training also is a great recruitment tool because it says to young employees that you are "cool." The information is consistent and materials stay updated. And, you can get information to operations more quickly for promotions, changes and introducing new items.



Upgrades in 6.0 include two powerful new front-of-house reports that allow managers to quickly assess whether employees are taking their breaks. Among other advantages, this helps managers plan and schedule breaks, making it easier for businesses to comply with labor laws and to easily identify employees who have taken breaks for their shift. Other Aloha 6.0 upgrade include:

- enabling operators to configure a single button for all credit card tenders, so that it automatically detects credit card type; and
- allowing you to define color options for substitute items, making it very easy for kitchen staff to identify changes needed for item preparation

Super Sticky Post-it Notes

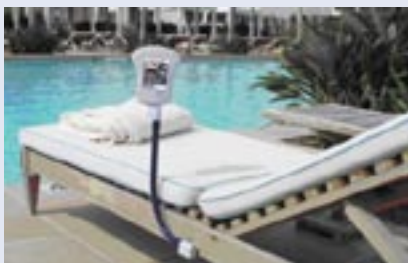
Perfect for coupon advertising. These extra-sticky notes will stick to grease-treated fast food bags, pizza boxes, windshields, doors – most anything. Print your menu or coupons on a Super Sticky Post-it Note, stick them on your to-go bags, and drive your current customers back to your restaurant.

intelliChaise® Personal Ordering System

Brings F&B directly to guests anywhere on property

Tiare Technology's intelliChaise® Personal Ordering System has been declared a future "must have" technology for its ability to enhance the guest experience, generate higher incremental revenues per guest, and provide faster and more efficient service.

The intelliChaise® system works with a hotel's existing point-of-sale (POS) system or can be used as a stand-alone solution and includes guest units and server units, plus central processing equipment, and takes advantage of the versatility of 802.11b (WiFi) networks.



While they relax, the guest's orders are wirelessly transmitted to the kitchen, bar, store, etc.

The guest is provided a guest unit when they arrive at a given location. An attendant secures the device physically by locking it onto the guest's chair, and logically by using the guest's room number and a private PIN code for security and authentication. The guest's orders are wirelessly transmitted to the kitchen, bar, store or other linked location where the orders are either printed or interfaced with the resort's POS system or other application. The server unit simultaneously records critical guest-service information, such as what time a guest ordered his or her last beverage and how he or she likes to have it prepared.



As more and more travellers have them at home, in-room HDTVs will be expected.

Self-service Solutions

According to Restaurant Trends and NextChoice, a recently released survey showed that almost two-thirds of 100 top restaurants executives in North America have tested or are testing self-service solutions, with many preparing to install these solutions in mid-2007.

"The growing surge in self-service pilots and deployments shown by this – and other – surveys will make 2007 the year of self-service in the food-service industry, said Michael Welts, president and CEO of NextChoice, in an article online at Restaurant Trends. "I think we've reached the tipping point and

will see a number of large-scale self-service deployments [in 2007]."

Self-service technology solutions, such as NextChoice, offers restaurants and hotels advantages such as kiosk, drive-thru and Internet ordering; call-center ordering (in which a call center takes an order and immediately sends it to the kitchen); tabletop ordering; and mobile ordering.

Each solution is designed to increase customer satisfaction, revenue and decrease operational costs.

High Definition Television (HDTV)

More and more travelers have it in their homes and more and more, they're expecting it when they travel,



too. According to Hospitality Trends, the hotel industry's perception of HDTV has changed in the last three years, from a "maybe someday" idea to a mainstream issue. For more and more hoteliers, HDTV is becoming a guest room requirement.

Hospitality Trends recommends that to ensure the most cost effective and trouble-free HDTV conversion, hoteliers should work with an in-room entertainment partner that:

- delivers the full range of HD programming (broadcast, premium satellite and early release video-on-demand) to meet consumers' expectations
- works with leading commercial HD television manufacturers to ensure compatibility of their displays with the provider's in-room entertainment system;
- produces customer references regarding the provider's ability to install, service and support an HDTV solution;
- offers consulting to help hoteliers make the right decisions ahead of their HD migration, and project management to keep all the stakeholders on the same page and ensure the right pieces get to the right place, at the right time.

Customer Relationship Software

New customer relationship management (CRM) tools allow hotels and restaurants with regular customers to gather guest preference information from various systems at property level and distribute them throughout the company. So you can know what your guests like, right away. No questions asked.

Radio Frequency Identification

The hospitality industry has found innovative ways to use new radio frequency identification (RFID) technology – from helping guests find each other at a beach resort to letting them pay for a meal. This

technology is gaining traction with hotels and resorts because of its cashless payment systems that can be used on-site and, more and more often, off-site as well.

Another key capability of this offering is location-based services, where groups of individuals can be found instantly at a property, simultaneously allowing for more freedom and security in these safety-conscious times.

"Imagine taking a group of seven 12-year-olds poolside for a birthday party," said Bill Frizzell, an industry technology strategist for Microsoft Worldwide Hospitality Team. With RFIDs, "You can go to any information kiosk and instantly find where all of the kids you are responsible for are, and what activities and payments they have made, using their RFID bracelet."

The "Information Hub"

Until now, computer applications that handled property management, food and beverage, and sales and catering functions often couldn't communicate with another very easily.

In the past, achieving a working level of integration among property-level systems meant hospitality organizations had to create specific interfaces among them, Frizzell said. But those interfaces were not usually flexible, and it made them very fragile.

However, by implementing an "Information Hub" at the property level, all systems and applications that need to share data report that data in an open format, based on industry standards, to the hub. The hub is then responsible for routing the information to the

various systems and orchestrating the intended business processes. In effect, the hub streamlines the exchange of data, reducing the number of integration interfaces from 90 to 10.

Other Technology Tips

According to Chris Hartman, managing director of HVS Technology Strategies, some lower-tech options to offer guests include:

- in-room printing capability, primarily black-and-white to print boarding passes, directions, etc.
- loaner laptops
- USB memory and other peripheral device sales
- technology concierge for business and upscale properties

It surely will be at least another three years – and probably longer – before any properties start investing

in \$40,000 spring-less mattresses for their guest rooms, but just around the corner guests will expect to see high-definition TVs with elaborate in-room entertainment systems, and easier ways to pay for the things they want to buy.

And it will be even sooner when your staff members will expect self-service technology solutions in your restaurants to improve customer service, behind-the-scenes "information hub" software management systems to improve customer satisfaction, and iPod training to improve productivity and performance.

Now, if I could just find that darn Clocky® and lie down for a little mattress-less nap ...

Karen Thurston Chavez, CAE, owns Sixth Generation Communications and is a freelance writer in Tallahassee.

DirectTouchPOS.com

Do It Yourself and Save!

\$4,995.00

3 YEAR WARRANTY

INCLUDES CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

- 2 15" LCD Touchscreen Monitors
- 2 PC's with Hard Drives & Mag Readers
- 2 Thermal Receipt Printers with Cutters
- Remote Printer & Electronic Cash Drawer
- 4-port Hub, Keyboard, Mouse & CD Drive
- POS Software with Mercury CC Processing
- 3-Year Manufacturer's H/W Warranty
- 3-Year Free 800# Technical Phone Support

Just need a cash register? Visit directretailpos.com
1-877-313-6950 directtouchpos.com