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## How automation in hospitality improves customer service and business productivity

By Aaron Belton, head of global hospitality at DocMX

 by **PATRICK O'DONNELL** — Thursday, 17 December 2020, 14:10 in [Advice](#) Reading Time: 4min read

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Following news of the COVID-19 vaccine, we are finally seeing a little light at the end of the tunnel. However, there are still many hurdles to overcome; the biggest challenge for the **hospitality industry** is reopening all that the pandemic shut down, and future-proofing operations against further risks in years to come.

As we emerge from the other side of this pandemic, we are in a time of contemplation and reflection. **Hotel** owners and operators are presented with the opportunity to reinvent, respond to the unpredictable, restructure operations and become more agile. To reopen and outsmart uncertainty, it requires a process of reinvention.

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Nobody would have thought it, but 2020 has given hospitality operations the chance to build and invest in technologies that will aid them in the event of any future crises. It is time for outdated practices to be replaced through automation to reduce costs, streamline long-term capabilities and become more environmentally responsible. This should be at the forefront of every hospitality leader's plans.

### Connectivity and collaboration guarantee efficiency

However, simply making existing individual processes electronic is not enough. In a typical hospitality organisation, digital transformation is all too often hindered by separate systems in individual departments, with almost no connectivity and communication between them all. This typically involves **Property** Management Systems, F&B, Sales & Events systems, Housekeeping, Payroll, HR processes, general paperwork, and emails. There is a need for better collaboration to solve problems faster, irrespective of the information origin.

Connected processes within operations equals efficiency. A streamlined digital process will enable once-time-poor staff to have more face time with customers, delivering a 5-star service, as well as having greater capacity for value-added work rather than menial administrative tasks. Finance Directors will in turn be freed up from incessant administration to focus more on big-picture planning, protecting the hotel against risks and planning for growth.

We have seen first-hand how this transition to automated operations has enabled hospitality groups to collaborate more efficiently, with systems across departments, properties and even countries working as one. **Hilton** Sydney's senior executives were able to free up time typically wasted on admin tasks by using the DocMX platform, automating daily transactions and critical audit processes inherent in all hospitality environments. A multitude of reports from varying systems, emails, or print-outs were automatically captured, sent for review and approved in a single easy to use dashboard, thus enabling seamless collaboration between Night Managers, Department Heads, Directors of Finance and General Managers. This resulted in significant time savings, improved and standardised compliance and reduced overheads.

### Invest to reap great savings now, and in years to come

Digital transformation is often seen as costly and complex and a hindrance for teams that are already low on resources or perhaps lack some computer proficiency, but it does not have to be this way. Hospitality reinvention with DocMX cloud solutions is cost-neutral and easy to implement, within weeks in most cases. Further success utilising the **technology** was experienced by Four Points, Darling Harbour, Sydney, who saw a 90% savings in print and paper usage with off-site storage costs virtually eliminated for now and for the future. The expensive practice of leasing copiers for up to five years for tasks that can be automated and virtually removed has been reduced by over 75%. There is now an opportunity to banish the mentality of "we've always done things this way".

### How automation will aid the sector to recover and protect for the future

Utilising automation and AI technology guarantees efficiencies and financial savings when processing operational tasks such as Night Audit, Income Audit, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Human Resources, Sales and Events and even Food and Beverage administration. Our experience has shown that digitisation of these operations can facilitate clustering and sharing of valuable resources, easily and in a location-independent environment: current DocMX projects have resulted in one auditing role to manage up to three properties, two Accounts Payable roles processing up to five properties, and two Account Receivable roles managing up to five properties. This automation allows hotel groups to ring fence much needed resources and reduce expenditure to help them through recovery.

Returning to full operations simply will not happen overnight. It will take fresh thinking and strategic planning to overcome the worst crisis to ever hit the industry. Many hospitality organisations will look to leverage the traditional and historically successful operating models – which have been extremely lucrative over many years – and perhaps question how it is possible to justify the **investment** in new technologies now. But now is the time to invest in the future to reap great benefits and savings for many years to come. Organisations need to change the status quo and invest in new and disruptive technology, to do more with less and boost productivity while the industry recovers slowly, but with confidence and renewed energy for a positive future.

DocMX technology is simple and agile, moulded around any organisation's current systems and policies, allowing owners and operators to respond and move quickly.

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