

The role of reservation services in tourism

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Abstract: A hotel reservation system is a software solution that enables business owners to automate the process of accepting and managing bookings. A good hotel booking system serves as a centralised platform that allows guests to make reservations for rooms, amenities, and services. Meanwhile, an online reservation system also provides hoteliers with a streamlined way to handle reservations, availability, pricing, and guest information.

Keywords: Tourism, Accommodation, Reception, Reservation, Booking.

Introduction. There are several types of hotel reservation systems that can suit different businesses best. Options span from motel reservation systems to central reservation systems, each with its own pros and cons depending on the characteristics and needs of your business. The most common type of system today is an online reservation system. These cloud-based software solutions typically offer the greatest functionality, allowing guests to book online and reservations, communication, and payments to be automated or managed remotely. Web-based hotel reservation software allows your reservation system to grow and adapt according to your business's needs. Tourism managers are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of their organization's tourism services. They oversee all aspects of the business, from marketing and sales to customer service and employee training.

The role of reservation department is not limited to making reservation. It also maintains records of the hotel occupancy, which helps in planning sales and marketing strategies.

Importance of reservation for guests:

- Ensures room on arrival – A guest who makes prior reservation is ensured of the required type of room and number of rooms for his entire stay in the city. This saves him from the difficulty of finding accommodation on arrival especially during peak seasons when most of the hotels are full.
- Budgeting – As the guest is informed about the tariff of room reserved at time of booking, he is able to budget his holiday or tour, taking in account the amount he spends on his stay, food, entertainment etc.
- He is able to plan his holiday or tour without worrying about the basic needs of accommodation and food.
- Other facilities – The guest is ensured of certain facilities offered by the hotel which can be confirmed by making the reservation e.g. iron and ironing board on loan basis, laundry services in hotel, Wi-Fi, tea and coffee maker, kids' zone, provision of babysitter, etc.
- A business traveler is also able to give the hotel address to his associates for any meetings, correspondence transfers to and from the hotel.

Importance for the hotel:

- Prior reservation gives the hotel an indication of the level of business likely to be encountered during any particular period. The reservation manager knows the amount of business ensured during that period from the confirmed reservations.
- Gives the first impression of the hotel to the guest.
- Sells the main product of hotel (accommodation).

- Generate customers for other departments.
- Provide important management information to the guest.
- Reservation department updates the room availability record and thus maximize the revenue generated from room booking.
- Reservation department prepares the housekeeping and front desk for arrival by communicating the arrival details taken at the time of reservation.
- Reservation department helps in planning the distribution of the staff at the front desk-the roster for the staff can be prepared according to the number of confirmed reservation for the day.
- Reservation department provides reservation data to the finance department, which forecast the volume of business on the basis of confirmed reservation.
- It generates the customer for the hotel-first time customer as well as repeat customer-by handling the reservation queries and request politely.
- It maintains the hotel occupancy record, which helps the management to plan business strategies-change in room rates, renovation of rooms, expansion program and opening a new unit in the city.

Sources of Reservation

A hotel receives reservation requests from different sources like direct guests, central reservation system, travel agencies, etc.

1. Direct Reservation or Property Direct – When a hotel receives a reservation request directly from a guest without any mediator, it is termed as direct reservation. An individual or group can contact the hotel directly. Modes of Reservation Written Mode (Letter, Fax, Telex, E-mail) Verbal Mode (In person, Telephone)

2. Travel Agents and Tour Operator – Travel Agents are intermediary retail agents who sell rooms, airline seats and other products and services to the travelers. On the other hand, Tour Operators are wholesalers who purchase the rooms, airline seats and other travel products from the various principle suppliers and form a package and finally sell the packages to a travel agent. Many guests make reservations through a travel agent or a tour operator. The agent will normally take a pre-payment from the guests and send a confirmation to the hotel, and issue a TAV (Travel Agent Voucher) on its behalf. Travel agents generally receive a commission for their services to the guest, or to the hotel or both.

3. Companies and Corporate Houses – They may have special contracted rates, assigned to them on the basis of volume of business they provide. Since these companies also provide bulk business to the hotels, the hotel may decide to offer low rates.

4. Corporate Travel Departments – Most corporate organizations have a separate travel department consisting of hired professional who arrange and cater for the travel and accommodation requirements of the employees.

5. Hotel Sales and Marketing – Most of the hospitality properties have sales representatives who approach various market segments and combine their efforts of selling products and services offered by a hotel, thus generating a large amount of revenue for the hotel.

6. Intersell Agencies – These are multiple product handlers, i.e. they deal with multiple products, such as hotel reservations, car rentals, travel arrangements, airline reservations and so on. Intersell agencies such as Make My Trip, Yatra.com are rich source of reservation to the hotels.

7. Central Reservation System (CRS) – CRS is a computer based reservation system, which enables a prospective guest to make reservations in any of the properties of a single chain. The CRS office deals with direct guests, corporate houses, travel agents and so on by means of toll free telephone numbers. Equipped with the necessary communication equipment, the CRS office works 7 days a week and 24 hours a day. They have accurate and up-to-date information of the number of rooms available for

the day of the member hotels, thereby, assisting the guests to make reservations in more than one hotel through a CRS. In case rooms are not available, the reservationists can direct the reservation to the other member hotel.

8. Global Distribution System (GDS) - It is a world-wide computerized reservation network, and is used as a single point of access for reserving hotel rooms, airline seats, car rentals and various other travel related services by travel agents, large corporations and online reservation sites.

The travel reservation system is designed to automate your booking processes. It allows technology to take control of various aspects of booking, improving the processes and allowing the user to devote time and attention to the business.

24/7 Booking: With technology at the helm, your business is always open. Reservations and bookings are handled easily by the system, without full-time supervision or manual supervision. Because your travel business is open at all times, customers can easily book a tour or travel package without having to physically come to your office. They can access your service at anytime, anywhere.

Efficiency: The use of a travel reservation system automates a number of the tasks associated with managing reservations, such as adding and updating information, adding prices, availability, and generating reports. The main benefit of this type of system is that it can save time and reduce the risk of errors. This frees up the travel company owner and their staff to focus on other aspects of the business.

Ease of use: Customers can easily browse and book travel options online with a travel reservation system. The reservation process is quick and easy. They can view available dates, rates, and amenities online and make reservations without the hassle of calling or visiting a physical location. As a result, customers will have a better overall experience.

Boosted profits: Travel reservation systems help businesses increase revenue by simplifying the booking and payment process for customers. Additionally, it is easy to create, market, and sell different types of travel packages online. You can sell dynamic or semi-dynamic travel packages to your customers easily. Along with convenience, multiple payment options, and 24/7 booking availability, it is easier to reach a wider audience and make more sales.

Stay Organized: Online booking systems store all the business information that travel agents will require. This includes details of the organization, customer information, income, disclaimers, forms, billings, inventory, staff, partners, etc. All you need to do is log in and access the system to get the information you need. You can conduct your business in a more organized manner.

Conclusion. Travel trends are continuing to show that customers prefer to book online. Between laptops and smart devices, it is easier than ever for consumers to shop around and book online. With convenience being important to 90 per cent of consumers, you don't want to get left behind. In today's digital age, an online reservation system is essential for staying competitive. A hotel booking system enables you to set seasonal rates and automate rate adjustments. This ensures that your pricing remains competitive and reflects the demand and market conditions throughout the year, without you having to worry about making adjustments manually.

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