

The Hotel Yearbook 2023
The Uncertainty New Normal



HY8



**Tapping into the
Power of
Technology and
Automation to Beat
Back Uncertainty
in Hotel Workforce
Management**

Corey McCarthy

Chief Marketing Office (CMO), Unifocus

Synopsis

The hotel industry is facing a labor crisis, with high turnover rates and increased wages making it difficult to attract and retain staff. To address this challenge, hoteliers are looking for ways to automate as many processes as possible to reduce labor costs and workloads for staff, allowing them to focus on providing high-quality guest experiences. Automation can be used for tasks such as check-in and check-out, room cleaning, scheduling, and task management. These tools help to optimize operations, ensure sufficient staffing, and assign tasks to staff members with the appropriate skill set. This can help to maintain high-performance standards and take the uncertainty out of task management.

Uncertainty has become the new normal in the hotel industry. With the ongoing labor crisis, hotels are struggling to attract and retain staff. While most industries have been impacted by a lack of available employees, hotel industry turnover rates continue to stand out as among the highest and are almost double that of the national average. This is causing a spike in wages and making it difficult for hotels to maintain their usual level of service.

With strong demand trend lines, hotels are looking for ways to optimize their operations for performance. To be successful, hoteliers need to find a way to effectively offset the impact of a smaller, more expensive, workforce on service quality and response times while addressing guest's increasing expectations.

AUTOMATION: REDEFINING THE GUEST AND STAFF HOTEL EXPERIENCE

Uncertainty combined with increased wages and a limited supply of workers has made it even harder to attract and retain staff. For remaining employees, fewer team members to rely on means more tasks that fall on their shoulders. The growing list of responsibilities are causing higher employee burnout rates which are causing dips in service quality and lower productivity levels.

To address this challenge and avoid toxic environments that increase churn, hoteliers are looking for ways to automate as much as possible. Finding activities and processes that technology helps reduce the operations headcount required while balancing high quality guest experiences. For example, hotels are using self-service kiosks for check-in and check-out, as well as implementing automated room cleaning systems. By automating these processes, hoteliers are optimizing and completing the tasks at hand with 25% less staff to keep labor costs down. Automating as many processes reduces workloads, allowing staff to pay more attention to detail and ultimately, a more sustainable work experience able to attract and retain skilled staff.

Strengthening back of house efficiencies, is arguably the most impactful change that hoteliers can make in overcoming uncertainty over business performance. Workforce automation platforms play a critical role in evolving beyond manual processes that are prone to errors and delays. Using automated scheduling tools as an example, hotels can ensure that departments are sufficiently staffed regardless of shifts in service demand levels.

By automatically assigning the right number of employees to a specific shift or service area, these tools offer a smarter, more cost-effective approach to keeping service quality high and in line with guest expectations.

TAKING THE UNCERTAINTY OUT OF TASK MANAGEMENT

Another way that hotels are addressing the labor crisis is by bringing automation into daily task process management. By streamlining and optimizing operations using automated task management tools, hoteliers are finding that the issue is HOW individual tasks are assigned and managed, not necessarily a lack of staff.

Operations management technology assigns and tracks guest requests and hotel operations automatically to ensure that tasks are fairly distributed with balanced workloads to maintain

realistic assignment completion goals. Dynamic task assignments automatically reshuffle the order of task completion priority as daily priorities evolve over the course of a shift or work day. When it comes to quality of service, these tools also ensure that tasks are assigned to staff members with the appropriate skillset, allowing managers to maintain high performance standards with little to no effort.

In addition to guest requests, adaptive task management tools boost performance and completion times for all hotel departments. From housekeeping and maintenance responsibilities to following up on service incident reports, employees supported by modern task management tools have visibility into available staff to pick up tasks. Instead of running back-and-forth to the back office or tracking down other team members to find out which tasks still need to be completed, a quick glance at their personal device is all that's needed to view the real-time status of what they should do next. This not only translates into more time being spent actually performing tasks and increasing productivity as a result, but is also a welcome reduction in stress for your various employee teams by streamlining the equation.

INTRODUCING THE ADVANTAGES OF AUTOMATION TO STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

Thanks to their frequent contact with guests, frontline employees are in the best position to understand which experiences guests value and which offerings can be improved to live up to current expectations. Staff experience, workplace conditions and business performance ultimately influences the quality of guest experiences, making this a critical source of information to maintain and grow a successful business.

Automated pulse engagement survey tools can streamline what used to be a time consuming annual process. Managers can select from a drop-down list of questions in order to easily customize a survey template according to whatever metrics they wish to analyze. These surveys can then be instantly shared with staff and made accessible via their personal device, increasing engagement rates and ensuring more accurate performance insights without having to wait a year.

Empowering managers with the ability to effortlessly identify any patterns pointing to a need to revise operations can uncover efficiencies and needs they wouldn't have been aware of otherwise. Gauging guest sentiment as well as how employees view current work conditions is a proven and effective means of defending against uncertainty to ensure efficient management of hotel services and workforce resources.

IMMUNIZING YOUR HOTEL BUSINESS AGAINST THE UNEXPECTED

While uncertainty has become the new normal for the hotel industry, workforce management tools make it possible for managers to make informed decisions and develop forecasts highlighting the best way forward. By leveraging the power of new technologies and automation, today's hotel businesses can readily adapt to change no matter what the future may bring and stay competitive in today's ever-changing hotel industry.



Corey McCarthy — Chief Marketing Office (CMO), Unifocus

Corey McCarthy, CMO at Unifocus, has more than twenty years' experience growing brands in the media, tech and hospitality industries. With her role at Unifocus, Corey is tasked with bringing exciting advances in workforce management to the industry to help hoteliers increase staff productivity, retention, higher service quality and profitability. In her former life, Corey was the VP of Marketing for a global workforce communication platform that was awarded the Hottest Technology by ALIS and also won the TechOvation Award from HTNG. For many years, Corey was at the helm of her own firm where she worked with companies ranging from hotel franchise brands, technology, design, investment banking and retail firms that resulted in numerous mergers and acquisitions. Corey earned her MBA in 2010 from St. Mary's College of California where she honored in Marketing, Business Strategy and Organizational Behavior Management.

UniFocus — unifocus.com

Based in Dallas, UniFocus serves hospitality, casino and resort operations in the U.S. and overseas. UniFocus offers full-service operational analysis, management and staff training, financial and labor management applications, as well as staff, meeting planner and guest satisfaction measurement programs, along with a unique mystery evaluation system that can link service standard attainment to guest and employee perceptions. The resulting database allows UniFocus to uniquely correlate and benchmark each client's performance to their particular competitive markets. Enhanced reporting capabilities allow hospitality executives to have a "total picture" overview of their operations, set strategic actions and gain asset value. UniFocus is a Preferred Vendor of The Leading Hotels of the World®, a Microsoft® Certified Partner, an affinity partner of the International Association of Conference Centers, a business partner of the International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, and an allied member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association.



BirchStreet Pay Solution

Tired of writing checks? Worried about rampant check or credit card fraud? Want someone else to handle all of your supplier payments for you?

BirchStreet Pay is the smarter way to pay.

**Built to simplify
and centralize**

**Elevate compliance
to new heights**

80%+
reduction in
payment costs

\$5,000+
overall savings
from compliance
improvements

40%
reduction in
paper checks

100%
of your payments
handled by
BirchStreet Pay

Email sales@birchstreet.net or visit birchstreetsystems.com