

# THE OPEN HOTEL TECH STACK AND Personalizing The Guest Journey

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 apaleo

# Introduction

Hotel chains as well as independent hotels need to be agile and constantly be on the lookout for ways to stay ahead of their competition. In addition, hotel guests expectations are constantly changing and they are demanding a more personalized approach, that recognizes them as individuals. Hotels can no longer rely on traditional means to stay ahead of the curve and need to turn to technology to help them move faster and adapt to their clients' needs.

Legacy systems (particularly PMS) are all too often unable to keep up with the required changes and remain proprietary / closed systems; unable to share vital data between systems. Hotels need to demand openness and flexibility, to starting with a modern PMS that uses a connectivity layer (APIs) and is capable to share guest data with a CRM so that a guest personalization can be achieved across the entire guest journey.

This white paper explores the evolution of the customers expectations, the drivers behind them, and how hoteliers can turn these demands into an advantage for the hotel. We explain the importance of technology and why it is fundamental to use an Open Hotel Tech Stack. That in turn, allows Hoteliers to personalize communication with their guests and to truly loyalize them for life.



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# Chapter 1

## WHY DOES PERSONALIZATION MATTER?

Today, more and more things are emphasizing the importance of personalization; from the overall forces of the hotel industry to the actual hotel guests themselves.

The trends pushing for more personalization are coming from a variety of industry forces and customer insights that include:

- 1 The **COMMODITIZATION** of the hospitality industry;
- 2 The growing **FRAGMENTATION** of guest preferences;
- 3 The increase of **COMPETITION**;
- 4 More demanding **CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS**;
- 5 **POSITIVE ATTITUDES**, coming from guests concerning personalization.

## COMMODITIZATION

**68%** *travelers see little to no difference between hotel chains*  
**>60%** *of consumers responding considered two or more hotels when shopping for accommodations*

The concept of guest loyalty is being lost in the mix and pricing is becoming one of the primary drivers for travelers' purchasing decision (besides location). Hotels are becoming more and more everyday commodities, like kleenex or soda. That is why personalization can be a real game changer, which enables hotels to "sell on value" rather than "sell on rate".

## COMPETITION

The number of hotels continues to increase worldwide. According to the "European Chains & Hotels Report 2019", across 12 major European markets, in 2018 alone, there were 686 new hotels added, equating to 73,802 rooms, which is over a 4% growth.

Major hotel chains are not only adding new properties to their portfolios but also launching new sub-brands in efforts to address the increase in traveler diversity but also the emphasis on guests' preferences, and attempting to cover more segments of the market. Adding additional layers to the already fierce competition in the lodging industry is increasing the visibility of alternative accommodations; such as aparthotels and short-term rentals, like Airbnb, which has completely redefined the market place.

## FRAGMENTATION

The number of people traveling globally is dramatically increasing and also becoming more heterogeneous. By 2020, it is estimated that 320 million international trips will be made by youth travelers each year, which is a staggering 47% increase from 217 million in 2013. Thanks to the overall global economic recovery, more people, from a wider range of social, geographic and economic origins are able to travel, resulting in an increase in diverse interest groups and the number of traveler segments.

This evolution in guest diversity gives hoteliers a great opportunity to design specific offerings that are more sophisticated and unique. The more sensitive and creative a hotel is, the more likely that they'll be able to win guest intimacy and their loyalty.

## GUEST EXPECTATIONS

Today's global consumers are exposed to leading-edge services on a daily basis. Over time, these experiences are translated into expectations that include a clear trend towards personalization. A decade ago, someone would have been surprised to be addressed by his / her first name by a hotel's chatbot. Today, it would be even more surprising if it doesn't happen that way, since those basic personalization elements are becoming the new standards. On the other hand, today's customers are constantly investigating new products and pricing, reading reviews, and thereby becoming more and more demanding. Again, the question is no longer "to personalize or not?", but "how to do a better job of personalization than the competitors".

## PERSONALIZATION IS EMBRACED BY GUESTS

According to a study by IBM, over 70% of hotel guests surveyed report having positive experiences with personalization.

In another study conducted by Google and Phocuswright, nearly 6 out of 10 U.S. travelers said that brands should tailor information based on their personal preferences or past behaviors. This study also showed that with more personalization, 76% of U.S. travelers would be likely or extremely likely to sign up for the brand's loyalty program, and 36% would pay more in return for receiving more tailored information and experiences.

“The question is no longer “to personalize or not,” but “how to do a better job of personalization than the competitors.”



# PERSONALIZATION is the NEW LOYALTY

Some 40 years ago, hotels loyalty programs were started by copying the ones airlines had implemented at that time and have since then, mostly stayed the same. They continue to rely on the classic “points-for-rewards membership” programs. These programs seemed to work for awhile but today, they have become far too generic and are having difficulties differentiating themselves from all of the other ones. Plus hotel guests are getting smarter and have higher expectations and more stringent demands.

Today, building real guest loyalty or emotional brand attachment is not simply about implementing a classical loyalty program. Hotel companies, especially small and medium chains, need to adopt and take a much wider view of the loyalty concept.

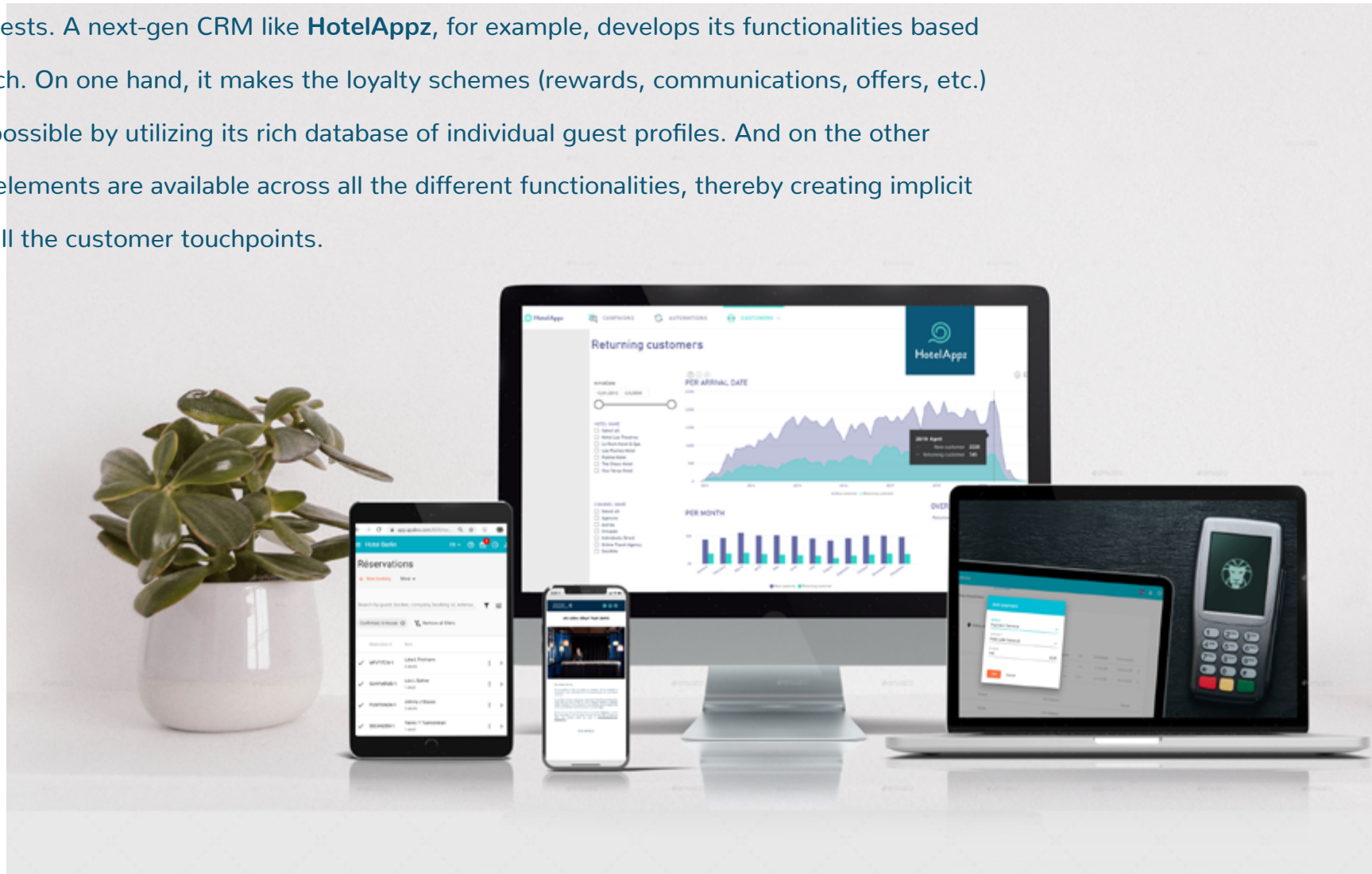
Customer feedback, coming from many sources, as well as research from Deloitte Consulting and Marriott Hotels shows that hotel guests, including high frequency travelers, rate experience more important than traditional rewards. This insight suggests that beyond the loyalty schemes, hotels can turn their guests’ experience, across their entire journey, into implicit loyalty. In other words, focus on giving their guests a memorable experience across their entire journey (pre, during & post stay) and making their guests want to come back while loyalizing their guests.



“ Hotel guests, including high frequency travelers, rate **experience more important than traditional rewards.** ”

## Hoteliers are not alone in this endeavor.

Market-conscious tech providers stay ahead of the curve and facilitate hotels providing them with disruptive solutions, that help distinguish individual guests data that then, in turn can be acted on, exploiting the guests' unique interests. A next-gen CRM like **HotelAppz**, for example, develops its functionalities based on a holistic approach. On one hand, it makes the loyalty schemes (rewards, communications, offers, etc.) as personalized as possible by utilizing its rich database of individual guest profiles. And on the other hand, personalized elements are available across all the different functionalities, thereby creating implicit loyalty throughout all the customer touchpoints.





## Chapter 2

# HOTELS' PAIN POINTS

## How technology can alleviate them

Personalized experiences can only be achieved by knowing guests individually and comprehensively. In order to achieve that depth of knowledge, hotels need to make sure they are on top of their guest data.



Personalized experiences can only be achieved by knowing guests individually and comprehensively. In order to achieve that depth of knowledge, hotels need to make sure they are on top of their guest data.

According to a survey by Travel Technology Europe in 2018 among hoteliers and travel companies, when asked: "What challenges are you faced with when implementing personalisation?", the findings were as follows:

- 51% Having accurate customer data
- 44% Getting the right mix of marketing and IT
- 44% Identifying customers at the right times
- 35% Building links between products
- 32% Privacy and compliance challenges
- 15% Overcoming company silos
- 5% Don't face any challenges

These results imply that hotels are struggling to have the right data, when & where they want it, to be able to create concrete actionable marketing communications. This shows that they could use some help from technology solutions, to manage their data better.

In particular when using guest data for personalization; whereby it is essential to have a strong CRM (Customer Relationship Management) that can push and pull data from the PMS (Property Management System) and other systems.

# Major friction gets in the way of personalization & HOW A CRM CAN SOLVE IT

“My GUEST DATA  
seems to be  
EVERYWHERE.

I've got a lot of data  
in my PMS but it's  
a nightmare to extract it,  
let alone use it.

Plus I'd love to include lots  
of other data sources  
(golf, spa, restaurant, etc.)  
but I don't know how.”

*Jean - Hotel Manager*

Hotels often feel like they have all of this information at hand but still struggle to turn it into knowledge. It's simply because the data sits in silos. And, data snippets standing alone don't give the big picture, nor can they be used to trigger relevant actions.



That's why hoteliers need technologies to bring those discrete clues together into one single place.

CRM SYSTEMS LIKE **HOTELAPPZ** EXIST TO FILL IN THIS GAP, AND OPEN PLATFORMS LIKE **APALEO** HELP WITH THE FLOW OF GUEST DATA.

When added into the hotels' existing tech stack, HotelAppz is designed to have multiple connections with other hotels' systems, especially with the PMS as one of the core hotels' technologies.

In addition to the PMS, HotelAppz can also connect to the hotels' website, social media, chatbot, e-Reputation, channel manager, etc. Once connected, the data goes through a 'cleansing' process with a data aggregation process that consists of de-duplication, spelling-error cleansing, and standardization. Once the data is 'clean', it will be housed in the database as comprehensive guest profiles that effectively portray each individual with their personal preferences as well as the contexts around their stay.



## What makes a CRM's database unique from the other databases that can be found in other hotel systems?

1. A CRM database is designed to handle lots of diverse data.
2. All the data is specific to the individual guest.
3. The database should be an open, meaning data can be automatically imported and more importantly shared, with a PMS (and other systems) to facilitate sharing data.
4. It's actionable data. Meaning that all of the data can / should be able to be used for very targeted, personalized marketing/ communication activities.

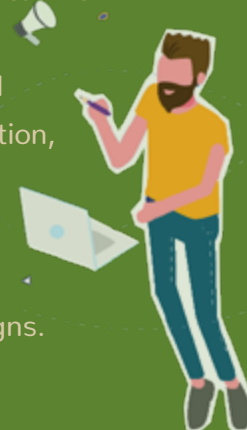
CRM's centralized data hub can be used by a variety of groups within a hotel:

### FRONT DESK STAFF



Receptionists can use the PMS (apaleo) to look up a booking and see the guest data profile (coming from HotelAppz) in order to be prepared for arriving guests. The receptionist can easily see an overview about the guest, see a photo of him/her to make their welcome as warm as possible.

### MARKETING / CRM TEAM



The CRM's database is a core tool for the Marketing Team, that uses the functionality of email marketing, marketing automation, loyalty management, BI, to get ideas, create strategies, implement and track personalized marketing campaigns.

### HOTEL MANAGERS



They use the CRM system to keep control over marketing / CRM activities. More importantly, they can access up-to-date reports created automatically, that offer valuable insights for decision making.



Because data is dispersed across multiple hotel systems, it makes it fundamental to have connectivity between systems in order to obtain a complete guest profile. This has become a real pain point for many hotels and in most cases, it is due to legacy systems (especially traditional PMSs) that were built as 'all in one', closed systems. These old-school technologies were born prior to the evolvement of new customer expectations and are no longer capable of fulfilling the needs of personalization and exchanging data to enhance the customer experience.

## Savvy hotels are moving to cloud-based systems.

But even then, some self-claimed cloud systems do not offer sufficient integrabilities when a new technology needs to be plugged into hotels' tech stack.

The limitations can exist in two dimensions:

(1) THE RANGE OF CONNECTIONS and (2) THE LEVEL OF CONNECTIVITY.

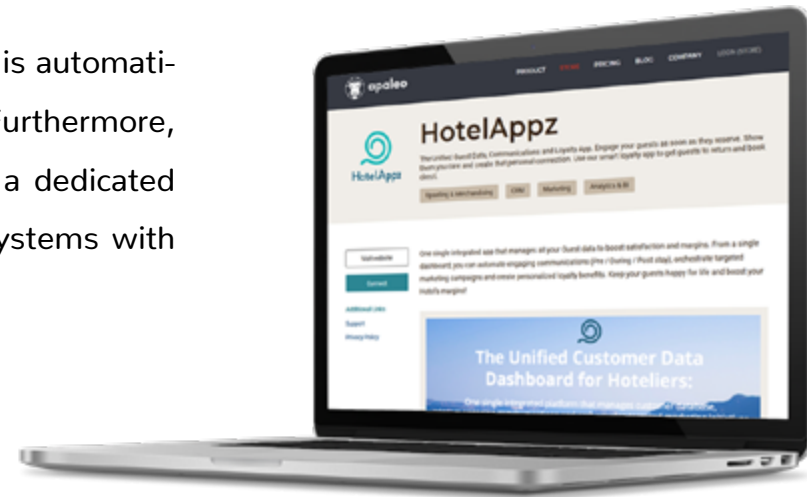
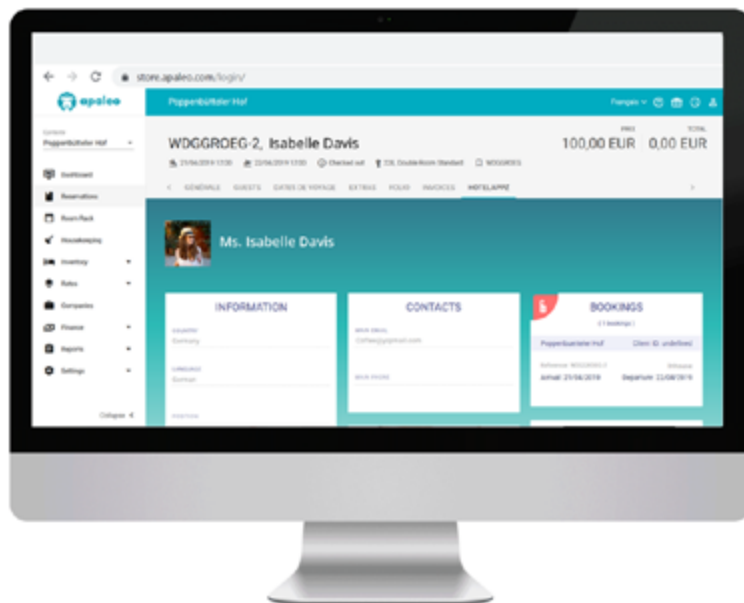
“Our systems do not talk to each other.”



For example, some CRM systems enable only the minimum amount of integration with a PMS and refuse to open its data to other platforms like channel managers, e-reputation, chatbot, etc. Meanwhile, the levels of connections are sometimes not necessarily deep enough and far from ideal “two-way integrations.”

## The integration between HotelAppz (the CRM) & apaleo (the PMS)

A hotel can be up and running in a couple of hours and the data is automatically synchronized and deduplicated between the two systems. Furthermore, thanks to the deep two-way integration, HotelAppz appears in a dedicated iframe inside apaleo's platform, where users can access both systems with only one tab opened on their computers.



apaleo's users can connect to HotelAppz directly from the marketplace located on apaleo's platform, very similar to getting mobile apps from an app store. The on-boarding process is quick and easy, with no additional cost or lengthy waiting time.

It's easily assumed that personalized offers at scale mean multiplied efforts and investments. It is not necessarily true, especially with the help of marketing automation. The concept of marketing automation is that first, you determine a generic framework for the types of actions you want to generate, then you add in personal information, which is variable, so that the outcome is different for every individual.



Implementing personalization requires  
a lot of time, manpower, & money.  
We don't have enough resources.



A CRM which incorporates a well designed marketing automation solution can help deliver personalized experiences, especially communications on digital space, in a larger scale with better consistency and efficiency. **Targeted marketing emails produce 30% more opens and 50% more click-throughs than undifferentiated campaigns.** It's important to note that email has been the most powerful tool for online marketing with 3x higher conversion rates than social media. This is also the preferred channel of consumers, when receiving promotions, especially Millennials.

Thus a major task of personalization could be taken over by the CRM and hotels shouldn't feel overwhelmed by the number of emails that needs to be sent or the variety of offerings to be crafted.

The following chart explains the multiple touch points that a hotel can use to personalize the guest's experience across their entire customer journey.



## EMAIL SENDING ACROSS CUSTOMER JOURNEY

### pre-stay

#### ⚙️ REVERSATION INFORMATION

*(PMS dependent):* Booking confirmation, cancellation / modification, online check-in

#### ⚙️ UPSELL & UPGRADE emails

⚙️ INSPIRATIONAL emails: Pre-stay questionnaires, local tips (activities, must-see destinations, transportation advice, etc.)

### on-property

#### ⚙️ Welcome notes

#### ⚙️ Upsell emails

⚙️ Updates  
Announcements  
In-house activities

### post-stay

#### ⚙️ Thank you email

#### ⚙️ Satisfaction survey

#### ⚙️ Loyalty points earned

⚙️ Discount offers for the next direct booking



Automated



One-time campaign

always-on

⚙️ LOYALTY COMMUNICATIONS: enrolment invitation, enrollment confirmation, points earned

/ burned notification, etc.

⚙️ BONDING EMAILS: happy birthday, stay anniversary, newsletters

● PROMOTIONS: flash sales, seasonal sales, personalized offers, etc.

# Privacy & Compliance challenges

Personalization, by definition, means using personal data to enrich communication which implies that a hotel needs to respect the consent of its customers to use their personal data or not. That's why regulations like GDPR, in essence, is not necessarily an impediment to personalization, but is actually a good practice / constructive move. Failing to comply with it is not just about law, but it's also harmful for hotels' customer relations.

GDPR was put into place in May 2018 to protect the personal data of European citizens . Any hotel or company must respect this law and allow individuals to opt-in or opt-out regarding the use of their own data and related communication from that company. Even today, hotels are still struggling to manage this process.

**It is vital for hotels to implement IT solutions  
that help them manage these legal obligations.**



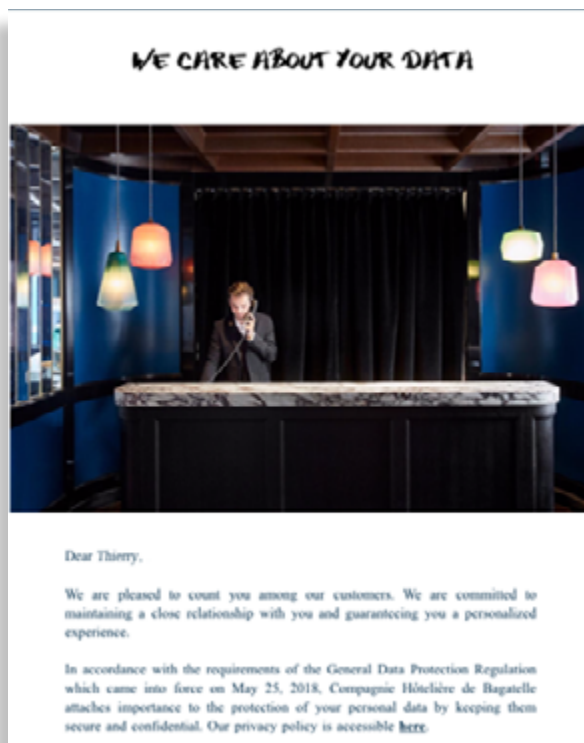


For example, HotelAppz has a double opt-in tool that is integrated into its email marketing function. Everytime someone registers to receive mailings or newsletters, through the hotel’s website, HotelAppz will automatically send an email to that person’s email, on behalf of the hotel, to verify that it is indeed that person’s email. As a part of this process, the guest can decide if their data can be used by the hotel (and HotelAppz as well). They can also manage their mailing preferences or even unsubscribe from the mailing list, as part of that process. Thanks to this double opt-in solution, HotelAppz helps its hotel clients to have a “clean” database in which all the contacts are happy to receive personalized communication.

In addition, HotelAppz has a complete built-in GDPR log that registers every opt-in or opt-out movement by an individual guest. A hotel can use this log to assure they have a total traceability on the most current status of any guest.

Not only is the hotel protected from the law, but it also shows their clients that they have total control over the guests choices.

GDPR LOG	
<b>OPT-OUT</b>	22/07/2019 15:33
Latest news and offers	
HotelAppz platform	Thao Vu
<b>OPT-IN</b>	22/07/2019 10:35
Latest news and offers	
HotelAppz platform	Thao Vu
<b>OPT-OUT</b>	19/07/2019 18:19
Latest news and offers	
HotelAppz platform	Thao Vu
<b>OPT-IN</b>	14/07/2019 20:36
Latest news and offers	
HotelAppz platform	N/A
<b>OPT-OUT</b>	12/07/2019 19:17



# Chapter 3

## THE NEW WAY OF THINKING



A hotel's technology has long been a blocker in the digital guest journey – from personalization to innovation. The heart of the problem lies with legacy PMSs, which are closed systems that make it difficult and costly to connect other systems, like a CRM. Rather, these PMSs build an exhaustive feature set for an out-of-the-box solution, resulting in bulky, difficult to use, and slow systems that are full of partially-executed features. The new school of thought is lean, fast, and ultra-connected, allowing the PMS to focus on its core competencies (inventory, rates, accounting and invoicing, payments) and 3rd party systems like a CRM to focus on their core competencies rather than on developing integrations. This approach allows all technology providers to truly innovate, giving hotels new possibilities when it comes to their tech stack and the freedom to customize, test, and tinker as little or as often as desired.

# **BULKY** Monoliths

Monolithic architecture refers to the traditional approach of building software as a whole - one, interdependent and often large component (CMSWire). If you need to scale up, you must duplicate the whole system with more machines. Adding new features or functionality can impact the entire system because deployment must be done as a whole.

This is how legacy systems are built.

VS.

# **LEAN** Microservices

Contrast that with a microservices architecture, where an application is developed with many small services that can be independently built, tested, deployed and maintained. These services can even be built in different programming languages. This structure allows developers to “segment and isolate sections of a software, resulting in, ‘little software components [that] talk to each other via APIs, [which can be] scaled independently,’” says [John] Rector, [Co-found of DialPad].



New solutions function more like the micro-services model, building a sturdy and savvy core PMS that uses public, open, two-way APIs to connect to the apps and services that a hotel or chain needs.

Adopting a micro-services model means that hotels have the central system (the PMS) and then either develop their own applications or use an application already developed on the open API. Either way, hotels only use what they need.

Some hotels need food and beverage applications, revenue management, upsell, reputation management, CRM, distribution, housekeeping and maintenance, sales and catering, and spa management and some only need one or two of these. Even better, hotels get to choose which apps they like (i.e., two apps may do the same fundamental thing, but based on user interface or functionality, one might be preferable to another). By embracing the microservices model hotels will find many benefits, including:

## Freed up development efforts

Developers don't need to waste time working on problems that have already been solved.

## Speedy deployment

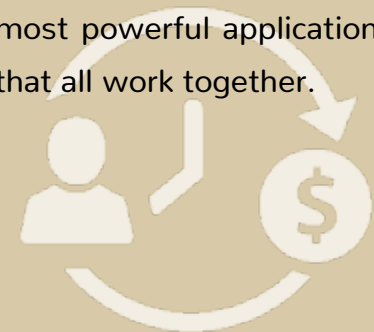
Microservices, according to ButterCMS CEO Jake Lu-metta, "allow for fast, independent delivery of individual parts within a larger integrated system." And they are easier to "recompose and reconfigure."

## Less risk

If there are problems with a microservice, it doesn't affect the entire system, only the application with the problem. For hotels, this means problems are easily fixed without affecting the core PMS.

## A better product

Perhaps the biggest gain for hoteliers is that their technology stack becomes stronger and more tailored for their business - they can pick the best, newest and most powerful applications that all work together.



# The new development cycle

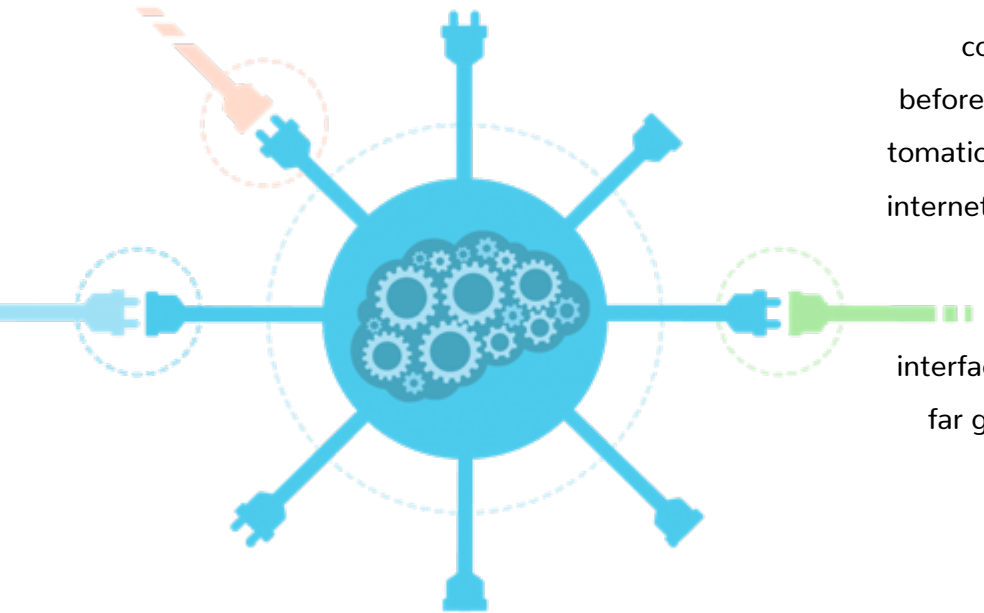
Cloud-based systems make the microservices model possible, but not all are created equal. Even some modern, cloud-based PMSs aren't developed in a way that makes connectivity as easy and painless as it should be.

The good news for hoteliers is that a new generation of property management system is disrupting the old models, allowing hotels to update their processes. The new model has re-thought the entire way that a property management system is developed to make it simple and quick to connect data from the PMS and CRM.

## It begins with **an API first approach**. **But first, what is an API?**

API stands for Application Programming Interface, and it allows systems to communicate with each other much more intelligently than has ever been possible before. APIs make our lives easier on a daily basis without us even realizing it, from automatically reminding us to complete that travel booking we started earlier to telling our internet browser to show the news when you want to see what's going on in the world.

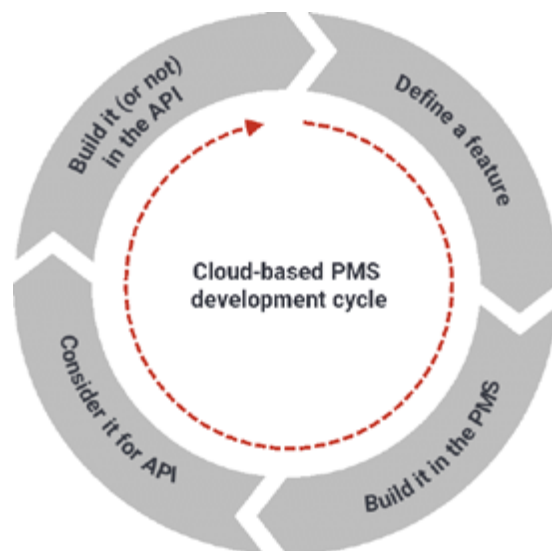
For hotels, well-designed APIs represent a quantum leap forward from older interfacing methods, allowing vendors to connect to other systems with minimal effort, far greater stability and much richer integration, all with the ultimate benefit of vastly improving the guest experience and increasing efficiencies across the business through streamlined processes and automation.





## The cloud-based PMS development cycle

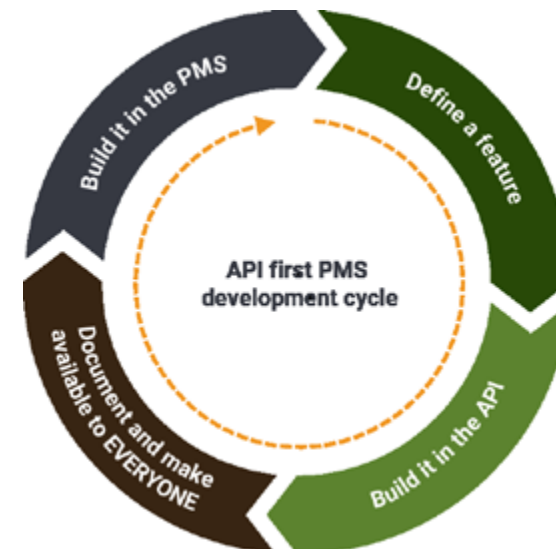
Cloud-based PMSs that offer an open API have started to make connectivity easier in the last few years, but still face issues because of the way their systems are built – with the PMS first, then the API later. The development cycle looks like this:



On the surface, it sounds logical. And, for some hotels it may work. But the API is fundamental to a hotel’s ability to integrate with anything. With the PMS coming first, then the API later, hotels run the risk that key data points required to personalize guest communication via the CRM are not available or that custom developments are required in order to access those pieces of data, costing both time and money.

## The new API first approach

The new approach turns things upside down. It starts with the API, then the PMS is built on top of it. Here’s how that product development cycle looks:



By putting the API front and center, the process of connecting any and all systems to your PMS is drastically simplified. It makes automatic interfacing a reality (a couple of clicks, no humans/engineers needed). It enables deeper and more seamless integrations. It simplifies set up and workflows for users. And it radically reduces the effort and time needed to develop the integration in the first place.

When starting with the API first, the PMS can guarantee that everything - every single piece of data - in the PMS is also completely available, accessible and integrate-able.

This ensures that hotels never face a situation where a connected system can't make use of every single feature in the PMS. And, best of all, this new approach allows PMS vendors to drop all the frustrating costs traditionally associated with integrations (services, support fees, time spent waiting).

With this setup, hotels can truly build their own ecosystem with a range of applications that integrate seamlessly with all the other systems like the CRM, allowing for real time communication with guests, hyper-personalization, and improved processes throughout the entire guest journey.





# Chapter 4

# PERSONALIZATION

## in practice

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Today's digital transformation has radically re-defined the concept of **hotel guest journey**. Instead of starting from the point of check-in, even earlier than the moment they book, it **actually begins when the first idea of travelling comes in their mind**. And technically it should never end.

Along with the expanding customer journey, their behaviors and the touchpoints they go through are sophisticated and keep evolving.

This means **hotels have more room to work on customer relationships, but also more efforts required**.

To bring the vision of personalization to life with concrete actions, hoteliers need to:

Address **ALL THE TOUCHPOINTS** throughout the entire guest journey

Ensure the **CONSISTENCY & RELEVANCE** across the touchpoints

Get involved & ensure **HARMONY** between technologies and human touch

In this chapter we are going to see where each related factor stands along the entire guest journey, suggestions for actions that can be made at every single touchpoint, with some concrete real-life examples from hotel chains.



# PRE-BOOKING

Personalization in this stage of the guest journey is mainly to engage with the potential guest and maximize conversations. The opportunities can be found at two types of touchpoints, that correspond with the two phases of the customer acquisition process.



## touchpoints

## objectives

## actions

### Paid channels

(Google Ads,  
Social media ads,  
remarketing, OTAs,...)

Win guests' attention, engage discussion, get them to switch to hotel owned channels

- >> Analyze CRM data & BI to optimize targeted ads
- >> Create guest personas (characteristics, demographics, travel preferences, etc.) to personalize targeting ads

### Hotel owned channels

(Website,  
social media,  
chatbot,...)

Get them to book  
Start capturing user data (contact, basic info,...)

- >> Personalize UX/UI (language, device, etc.)
- >> Deliver personalized recommendations
- >> Personalize conversations via chatbot
- >> Push sign-up form, use embedded cookies,... - CRM can help by automating mailing, double opt-in to ensure GDPR compliance, aggregating gained data
- >> Differentiate communication with 1st time visitors and returning guests. Use CRM/PMS data to make distinction.
- >> Establish 2-way connectivity between CRM & hotel website to ensure smart personalized recommendations.



# PRE-ARRIVAL

Now that you have the booking, in this phase, hoteliers need to prepare for the guests stay and build strong relations. It is very important, at this point to distinguish repeat guests from the new ones. Use your CRM to segment them out (1st time guest - repeat guest - VIP, for example). When it comes to repeat guests, make them feel remembered and recognized. Eliminate the need for them to communicate their details or preferences every time they book and simply say "welcome back". You need to know your guests' and adapt communication accordingly.

## touchpoints

## objectives

## actions



**Email**  
**Others**  
(applications, questionnaires messaging, etc.)

- >> Start engaging guests, set the tone for their upcoming stay
- >> Build up knowledge about guests to prepare for personalization in the next phases
- >> Give guests the opportunity to personalize their upcoming stay

- >> CRM helps automate and personalize the sending of:
  - confirmation emails
  - cancellation emails
  - modification emails
  - online check-in emails
  - pre-stay questionnaires
  - pre-stay tips
  - pre-stay upselling / upgrade recommendations
- >> CRM aggregates newly acquired data, builds up guest profiles and starts using that data for personalized communication, analytics, etc.

# ON-PROPERTY

Once the guest has checked in, it is now time to engage them during their stay to enhance their hotel experience and to make it as memorable as possible. Hotels need to provide useful information, special 'during-stay' offers (for the restaurant / bar / spa / etc), things-to-do options, and personalized communication that is adapted to the individual guests.



## touchpoints

## objectives

## actions

**Front desk**

**In room**

**Amenities**

**Interactions  
with staff**

- >> Turn knowledge into delightful guest experiences
- >> Increase revenue

- >> Hotel staff uses guest profiles in CRM to recognize guests (VIP, repeat, etc) & call them by name and remember their unique attributes
- >> Based on guest preferences - set up their room to offer tailor made services and personalized treatment.
- >> Use 'implicit loyalty to surprise repeat guests that will enhance their in-stay experience.
- >> Make use of guests' activities on social media to have more ideas for surprising guests
- >> Implement innovative technologies (AI, facial recognition, guest-facing apps, smart in-room control apps,...)

# POST-STAY

.....

In the post-stay phase, it is extremely important to build a long term relationship with the guest and to loyalize the customer as much as possible. It is much easier to keep an existing client than having to go out and find new ones. In the phase, hotels need to resolve any guest issues and ensure that the guests communicate the most favorable opinions as possible.

## touchpoints

## objectives

## actions



Email

Loyalty program

Social media Adverts

- >> Get guests' feedback
- >> Loyalize guests
- >> Make sure repeat guests book direct
- >> Maintain customer relationship and get them to return

- >> Use CRM to automate the post-stay mailing scheme: sending customer satisfaction email, thank-you email,... and aggregate the guest data back onto the CRM database
- >> Incentivize direct booking: special offers for direct booking for their next stays
- >> Automate the personalized email scheme: Happy Birthday email, (one)-year reminder, personalized promotions, offers,...
- >> Personalize the communication for loyalty program: enrolment invitation, enrolment confirmation, point earned/ burnt notification
- >> Personalize the loyalty rewards/ offerings
- >> Use data from CRM database to make sure the ads that target existing guests are relevant and "remember" them

# dream big

The new possibilities with connected systems

With free flowing data between systems, hotels have the possibility to dream big when crafting the guest journey and personalizing communications that will be perfectly tailored to fit every aspect of their guests.

To optimize the guest journey, hotels should first pause to think about your business objectives, demographics, and the foundation of your business to determine the smartest next steps. For example, does your hotel cater to business travelers? Families? Millennial/Gen-Z?

Here are a few scenarios and how the new approach of using technology can cater to it:



You're a hotel chain that caters to business travelers, and Mark, the frequent business traveler stays at your hotel 15-20 times a year. He doesn't want to wait in lines, and he certainly doesn't want to have to give his details to someone each and every time he visits. Imagine if...

MARK  
THE BUSINESSMAN

*His entire check in / check out were automated, using his phone, so he checks in prior to arrival, using his phone to unlock the door, orders room service on his phone, so that he can go directly to his room and leave as he pleases...*

*Inside his favorite room (he likes the corner room, on the top floor, that's really quiet, and has a nice view of the park), he finds a personalized gift and note from the General Manager of the hotel, welcoming him back.*

*He also finds a voucher for a couple of free drinks in the hotel bar, to celebrate his 10th stay in the hotel this year.*

*Your in-room smart devices stored his favorite settings for the lights and air conditioning...*

*His mini-bar preferences were stored, and the room pre-stocked with his favorite items...*

*After checkout, his invoice was automatically emailed to him, with all his details and corporate profile...*

*After his stay, email communication offers some specific deal for his favorite dinner at your restaurant for his next stay along with the possibility to upgrade to a suite on his next stay for free.*





THE SMITHS

Or, say you operate a hotel in a destination that is family oriented. The Johnsons booked their big annual vacation at your hotel and they want to make sure that there are enough activities for their kids. They want their big vacation to go as smoothly as possible since they put a big portion of the family budget towards this vacation and they really need a real vacation. Imagine if...

*Before their stay, you suggest two connecting rooms that are next to the pool, which is sure to please the children while making it easy for the parents to manage their kids. You know in advance that they have two young kids, so a kid corner is crafted in their chosen room with their kids' favorite colors and full of stuff like toys, comics, board games, etc.*

*You know the family loves to do activities together, so you send them suggestions on where to go and what to do that are nearby the hotel. Everything they may need is covered, even where to find their kids' favourite ice-cream, contacts for baby carriage rental at the major attractions.*



*Some random funny moments of their family at your hotel are captured (with their permission) and suggested social media posts which can also be attached to the thank-you letter after their stay.*

*In their post-stay communication, you send them a survey that asks specific questions about their family stay.*



What if you operate a limited service hotel that caters to budget travelers? Louise is backpacking through Europe and decides to crash at your hotel for a night. She's not picky – just wants a cheap, clean, and comfy place to stay for the night.

Imagine if...

*You send her a pre-stay email so that she can pre-check in, get her electronic room key, along with a list of good local restaurants that would fit a backpackers budget.*

*Since she's traveling on a Europass, the arrival/departure times can not be precise, so as part of the pre-stay information, she has all the information required to arrive at midnight or at any other time of the night.*

*You connect to her via INSTAGRAM, follow her trip and offer useful advice when she asks for it. You know that she is a very active social media user and has tens of thousands of followers, so you want to be sure she's going to have good things to share with her 'friends' after her stay.*

...or better yet, you automate everything, [go staffless](#), and pass the personnel savings on to her!



LOUISE THE BACKPACKER

How about if you operate five upscale, high-touch properties? Your guests expect to be treated like royalty. Gina and Enrique have a room booked for their anniversary. They are spending a small fortune and will throw budget out the window for their celebration. Imagine if...

*Prior to their stay, you sent an upsell email to offer them a special deal on a suite.*

*When they enter their room, there is a special gift with an elegant handwritten note wishing them a Happy Anniversary.*

*In addition to the gift, you include a special discount on a couple spa package and you include a bottle of champagne.*

*Offer each of them opportunities to surprise the other with additional services like booking a special table in the restaurant and a special offer on the gourmet menu.*

*Whatever services they use, the experience is always special for the couple and when you send them the post stay survey, it asks only about the services they used; which guarantee positive feedback that can be shared on social media.*



# Conclusion

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As consumers, technology has changed the way that we interact with brands. We expect authentic, personalized experiences. Hotel guests are no different. Their expectations have changed and will continue to evolve. Hotels must adapt to this change to keep their businesses running. In order to deliver the best experiences to guests, the right technology must be put into place. Legacy systems (particularly legacy PMSs) simply won't cut it because they don't allow data to flow freely, and they don't allow hotels to select from best-in-breed technology. True personalization begins with an open platform approach. Hotels must find a PMS that begins with the connectivity layer (APIs) first, then builds a system around it. This allows for the most seamless integration between PMS, CRM, and any other system that the hotel could want to work with. Once systems are set up, hoteliers have the freedom to craft completely personalized experience that are unique to their hotel or brand.





# ABOUT



HotelAppz is a next-gen hospitality-specific Guest Data Hub; which is much more than just a CRM & email marketing system. HotelAppz provides hotel marketing teams with an open, easy to implement Guest CRM, using big data to personalize and automate communications with customers, saving time and money.

Its central guest data hub automates deduplication, segmentation and provides core multi-channel messaging functions to manage 100% of the digital guest journey. HotelAppz has a deep 2-way integration with apaleo (and other PMS) and guarantees openness to specialized third party apps so hotels are free to create their optimal tech stack. It also offers a central cockpit (BI) to manage GDPR compliance and track marketing efficiency with easy-to-use reporting.

HotelAppz provides hoteliers a powerful way to use their guest data for all of their communication and guest management needs, covering the entire guest journey. By using HotelAppz loyalty solution, hotels can personalize communication, develop their own 'Implicit Loyalty' strategies, while getting their clients to book direct, and to be loyalized for life. Learn more at [www.hotelappz.com](http://www.hotelappz.com).



Hotels need the right technology and systems to manage all the complexities of their business. At the core of these systems is the property management system (PMS), which manages hotel inventory and reservations, rates, accounting, invoicing and payments, and more. Then there are all the additional systems like CRM, CRS, upselling, review monitoring, distribution and channel management, forecasting, business intelligence reporting, and so forth. Hoteliers rely on all these tools yet struggle because many of them don't integrate.

apaleo's PMS platform connects all these systems quickly and seamlessly. As the first PMS which is purely based on a fully open 2-way API, hotels can grant applications access to all the information stored in apaleo, as well as allow them to write back data to the PMS. apaleo's public API allows hoteliers to innovate without major risks, integration hassles, long wait times and hidden fees. Developers and software vendors can easily connect to apaleo, and hotels can even develop their own, custom apps with ease. Applications are housed in the apaleo Store, opening the possibilities for hotels to connect to pre-integrated, innovative apps - guest facing or staff facing - with one click. Learn more at [www.apaleo.com](http://www.apaleo.com).