



**Operations Management in Hospitality**

**Assignment 4**

**CHANDRA KALA KARKI**

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## **Creative Use of Technology to Improve Customer Experience**

In today's experience-driven economy, technology is no longer just a tool, it's a storyteller, a concierge, and a bridge between brands and people. Across industries, businesses are creatively using technology not only to streamline operations but to craft emotionally resonant, personalized, and memorable customer experiences.

### **Retail: Augmented Reality and AI-Powered Personalization**

Retailers are blending the digital and physical world to create immersive shopping journeys. IKEA's "IKEA Place" app uses augmented reality (AR) to let customers visualize furniture in their homes before purchasing. This not only reduces returns but also builds confidence and excitement in the buying process (Timify, 2023).

Meanwhile, fashion brands like H&M and Sephora use smart mirrors and virtual try-on tools in-store, allowing customers to experiment with styles without changing clothes. Online, AI-driven recommendation engines like those used by Amazon analyze browsing behavior, purchase history, and even time of day to suggest products that feel intuitively right (Peer to Peer Marketing, 2023).

### **Healthcare: Empathy Through Digital Touchpoints**

In healthcare, technology is making care more accessible and emotionally intelligent. Telemedicine platforms like Babylon Health use AI to triage symptoms and connect patients with doctors, reducing waiting times and improving access. Wearables such as the Apple Watch and

Fitbit track health metrics and offer personalized wellness nudges, empowering users to take charge of their health (CallMiner, 2023).

Virtual reality (VR) is also being used for pain management and mental health therapy. For example, VR headsets can immerse patients in calming environments during chemotherapy or guide them through mindfulness exercises, blending clinical care with emotional support.

### **Entertainment: Personalized and Interactive Storytelling**

Streaming platforms like Netflix and Spotify use predictive algorithms to curate content that aligns with individual tastes, creating a sense of being seen and understood. Interactive experiences such as Netflix's "Bandersnatch" or video games like "Detroit: Become Human" allow users to shape narratives, deepening emotional engagement (Mondo, 2023).

Even AI-generated content is gaining traction. Music platforms now use generative AI to compose background scores tailored to a listener's mood or activity, offering hyper-personalized entertainment.

### **Hospitality: Seamless and Warm Service**

The hospitality industry is embracing technology to deliver both efficiency and warmth. Hotels like Marriott and Hilton offer smart rooms with voice-activated controls, personalized lighting, and entertainment systems. Guests can check in via facial recognition or mobile apps, skipping queues while still receiving a personalized welcome (Forbes, 2025).

Chatbots and virtual concierges provide 24/7 assistance, from room service to local recommendations. When designed with empathy, these tools don't replace human staff, they extend their reach and responsiveness.

### **Automotive: Emotionally Intelligent Mobility**

Even the automotive industry is getting personal. Mercedes-Benz's MBUX system teaches driver preferences, adjusts climate and music, and responds to emotional cues like stress. Subscription-based car services like Porsche Drive offer flexibility and variety, aligning with modern desires for freedom and personalization.

### **The Double-Edged Sword: Drawbacks of Over-Reliance on Technology in Hospitality**

Technology has become a cornerstone of modern hospitality, enabling smoother operations, faster service, and personalized guest experiences. From mobile check-ins to AI-powered concierges, the digital transformation of hotels and restaurants is undeniable. But as the industry leans further into automation, it risks losing something essential: human warmth that defines true hospitality.

### **The Promise of Technology in Hospitality**

At its best, technology solves operational headaches and enhances guest satisfaction. Mobile apps streamline bookings, digital keys eliminate front desk queues, and chatbots provide instant answers. Behind the scenes, property management systems (PMS) optimize housekeeping schedules, while data analytics help tailor services to guest preferences (IvyPanda, 2023).

Moreover, technology can amplify the “hospitalableness” of a brand. For example, a hotel that remembers a guest’s favorite pillow or breakfast order thanks to CRM systems can make them feel genuinely cared for. When used thoughtfully, tech becomes a silent partner in delivering personalized, heartfelt service.

## **The Drawbacks of Over-Reliance**

However, when technology becomes the main act instead of a supporting role, several issues arise.

### **1. Loss of Human Touch**

Hospitality is, at its core, a human-centered industry. Over-automation such as replacing front desk staff with kiosks or relying solely on chatbots can make guests feel like transactions rather than people. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and spontaneous gestures are difficult to replicate with code (Emerald Publishing, 2023).

### **2. Privacy and Ethical Concerns**

Facial recognition, behavioral tracking, and data-driven personalization raise serious privacy questions. Guests may feel surveilled rather than served, especially if data collection isn’t transparent. A breach of this trust such as a data leak can damage a brand’s reputation irreparably (Hotel News Resource, 2023).

### **3. Staff Deskilling and Alienation**

As systems become more automated, frontline staff may lose opportunities to develop soft skills or make meaningful connections with guests. Worse, they may feel sidelined or undertrained, leading to disengagement and higher turnover. Technology should empower staff, not replace their intuition and creativity.

### **4. Tech Fatigue and Accessibility Barriers**

Not all guests are tech-savvy. Older adults, international travelers, or those with disabilities may find digital interfaces confusing or inaccessible. Over-digitization can alienate these groups, creating friction where there should be ease (Breaking Travel News, 2023).

### **5. Homogenization of Experience**

When every hotel uses the same tech stack, same app, same chatbot, same smart room controls experiences become indistinguishable. The charm of hospitality lies in its uniqueness. Over-reliance on standardized tech can dilute a brand’s identity and emotional resonance.

## Finding the Balance

The key is not to reject technology but to use it in service of human connection. Here's how hospitality organizations can strike that balance:

- **Design for empathy:** Ensure digital tools are intuitive, inclusive, and optional.
- **Train staff as tech-human hybrids:** Equip them to use technology while still leading with warmth and emotional intelligence.
- **Be transparent about data:** Let guests know what's collected, why, and how it benefits them.
- **Celebrate human moments:** Encourage staff to surprise and delight guests in ways no algorithm can predict.

## Conclusion

Technology should be the stagehand, not the star. In hospitality, the magic happens in the moments of genuine connection, a smile at check-in, a handwritten note, a remembered preference. When technology supports these moments rather than replaces them, it becomes a powerful ally in delivering true hospitableness.

## References

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