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# **Harmonizing Hospitality: An In-Dependent Analysis of Current Developments in the Hospitality Sector and Their Prospects for Further Development and Innovation**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The hospitality industry has experienced notable transformations in recent times, primarily attributable to technological breakthroughs. Modern hospitality management is now completely reliant on technology, which has an impact on both business procedures and curricula at Kolkata's hotel management schools. This research article talks about the recent trends in the accommodation and food and beverage area of the hospitality industry. Research has shown that the spending patterns of people are changing every day. Hotels are incorporating many transformations after analyzing the financial conditions of the individuals. The spending patterns of the rich segment of the society is also changing and people are depending more on the new day technology. So, keeping in mind the requirements of the guests, the hospitality industry in India is looking globally for the recent modern trends for overall development and to cater the needs of individual customers. In modern times, a lot of hotels provide free or inexpensive lodging, higher pay, and shortened work days during busy times. To inspire employees and promote people up the business ladder, they also fund training initiatives. Encouraging guests and their choice to return are two benefits of empowered staff members; they also draw in new hires and contribute to the development of a unified, superior group. Not enticing customers, but finding and keeping employees has been the industry's largest difficulty over the last two years. No time has been better for newcomers to the business to bargain for improved working conditions and compensation than now, as many hotel groups have started to address this issue. The impact of technology on hotel management programs and how it is changing the business are discussed in this article.

**Keywords:** Trends, Hospitality, Spending Patterns, Customers

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## **1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- Determine and assess the most recent advances and trends in the hotel industry, taking into account evolving market dynamics, customer preferences, and technology breakthroughs.
- Investigate how technological advancements like mobile, Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence are affecting industry competitiveness, guest experiences, and hospitality operations.
- Determine prospective avenues for additional innovation and development in the hotel industry, such as ways to enhance visitor engagement and loyalty, diversify revenue streams, and make use of emerging technologies.
- Provide a thorough examination of recent advancements, potential futures, and strategic imperatives for harmonizing hospitality in a dynamic and competitive market context.

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## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present research paper is mostly based on secondary data sources. Secondary data were collected through various sources such as Website reports, hotels brochures, etc. Secondary Data was also collected for this paper from Reports of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India 2024, Statistical Handbook of India, and other related information has been collected from the policy papers as well as research papers published in various journals. All collected data was analyzed with the help of trend line analysis. The data is also collected from research journals, magazines & internet websites.

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### 3. INTRODUCTION

As the Hospitality Industry is competitive, businesses need to keep themselves updated with the latest craze to avoid being left behind. Keeping pace with the hospitality Industry will ensure that the customers will receive an experience that they want and expect. Research has also shown that the wants and needs of hospitality clients have also changed due to the recent pandemic. So, a lot of new tendencies has been observed in the hospitality industry which we must be aware of. The word "Trend" tells us about the change or shift in behavior of a more generalized situation. Successful Hospitality organizations are always keeping up with the latest hospitality trends which includes everything from efforts in marketing, accepting new technologies and acknowledging to global events. The rise in the use of technology has led to a tendency where machine learning is used much frequently, and artificial intelligence technology is deployed for customer service purposes. Many hospitality organizations are using virtual reality technology to promote their products. On the contrary, non-fulfillment to keep up with the present hospitality movement will give the best possible chance to the rival organizations to target clients and offer them the services they want. So, welcoming the latest trend became so vital in the hospitality industry.

Hospitality Industry in India comprises hotels, airlines, resorts, film cities, motels, boatels, flotel, railways, cruise lines and restaurants. The future of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry is always linked in India. Hospitality Industry has seen its highest growth in India with the influx of foreign tourists as well as increase in domestic Tourism and it has become the leading players globally. As far as the modern trends in Rooms Division Management and food and beverages are concerned, there are multiple updates that are incorporated into reality by all-star categorized and unclassified hotels in India. Facilities such as Room service apps, wine on demand, Personalized experiences from social media messages, High-Definition Voice controlled & Touch screen Thermostats, Appless Hotel Staff video chat, Service Robots, smart bathrooms, Interactive TVs, in room Tablets, Smart energy management, Maintenance Artificial Intelligence, Green Linens, Air filter systems, Location based recommendations which was a distant dream few years ago is now becoming a reality. Not only technological upgrades, but the Hospitality sector especially hotels are nowadays concentrating on sustainability. The "Green Concept" is gaining popularity in hotels. Lot of star category hotels are incorporating concepts like dedicated single lady floor (Also known as Eva Floor), use of low emissive glasses in exterior walls, stylish interiors, use of more vibrant colors in guest rooms, comfortable mattress, personal Jacuzzi in guest rooms and so on.

The recent research shows that many hospitality organizations are relying on the design trends which includes new concepts in flower arrangements with minimal flowers and more foliage and dried arrangement. Even Vertical gardens are used in front of the house areas of hotels as a mark of sustainability. More extravagant entrance features are emerging in the hotel market which includes large green walls, indoor waterfalls, large chandeliers, and multimedia stations. Guest rooms of the Hotels in India are having Creative offices for business travelers, interesting looking TV panels and an extra sofa next to the king-sized bed. color explosions and eclectic decor mixes are also seen which are appealing to guests wanting to experience unique accommodation. Focus is also given on Think waterfall showers, oversized bathtubs, his & hers sinks, giant towels, beauty items and plenty of space in guest washrooms. More emphasis is given to focus on local art. Both domestic and International Tourists travel to remote areas of India just to get a taste of local culture and traditions. The foreign tourists also appreciate the local customs and traditions of India. Small sculptures and photography to large-scale installations are done in hotel and resort guest rooms, integrating an art project into the image of the hotel could be an easy way to success.

It has also been observed that since the pandemic period, a lot of technology overload in the hospitality sector has been observed. The Hospitality Industry in India is embracing new technologies which is helping to keep the businesses more efficient and assisting to improve the overall customer experiences. New hotels are offering the possibility of adjusting lighting, air conditioning and even window blinds through smart devices like smartphones, smart watches which often turns out to be a good business approach. Another trend is placing personal computer tablets at check-in time for printing boarding passes, as well as for ensuring other self-helping processes requiring online connection. Wood additions, inspired decorating items, carpets, curtains, a fireplace, a television set, and the possibility to play guest's favorite music is adding up to a memorable stay for the clients. Rather than merely adjusting to the pandemic-driven shift toward touchless encounters, embracing contactless technologies means rethinking the hospitality experience to suit contemporary tourists. By cutting down on wait times and in-person interactions, contactless services streamline the visitor experience. Guests may navigate the hospitality experience with ease thanks to voice or tablet control, digital keys, and mobile check-in. Hotel employees may keep in continual communication with guests during their stay, promptly attend to their demands, and offer customized services thanks to other widely used apps like WhatsApp. Additionally, it improves service delivery and lessens the strain on a limited workforce by streamlining processes by eliminating the need for in-person encounters and human error. Hospitality businesses should prioritize data privacy and security in line with contactless services, putting strong security measures in place to shield visitor information from online attacks. Centralizing information at all times for management and staff is at the core of technological innovation. A first, but crucial, step is to migrate to a totally cloud-based system. Enhancing all hotel departments, this allows for real-time sharing, improved service orientation, and personalization of the client experience. Robotic technologies optimize workflows and boost productivity in back-of-house operations like housekeeping and food and beverage outlets, lowering the need for staffing and enabling management to respond to issues in real-time and with accountability. For Example, these systems are utilized in the Henn-na Hotels in Japan. The hospitality organizations are focusing more on hygiene, cleanliness, safety, and local markets. Companies are also focusing on ecology friendly solutions keeping in mind the climate change concerns.

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### 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The growing emphasis on sustainability is one of the most significant developments in the hospitality industry. Growing awareness of how decisions affect the environment has made consumers more inclined to support companies that share their commitment to sustainability. Using renewable energy, cutting waste, and sourcing sustainable products are just a few of the ways that hospitality firms need to find ways to lessen their impact on the

environment. Technology's ascent is another significant trend. Every facet of the hospitality sector, including marketing and guest services as well as reservations and check-in, uses technology. To give their customers a smooth and delightful experience, businesses must adopt technology.

**A. Ramgade and A. Kumar (2021)**, it is highlighted that Smart hotels are those hotels which make use of devices that connect the Internet to communicate and interact with each other. It is also called the Internet of Things (IoT) with the help of (IoT) even normal devices or appliances that are used on a daily basis can be used for effective communication. It is also said that one of the most important technological trends that the hotel industry has seen in recent times is the emergence and rise of smart technology. Implementation of modern technology in the hotels is advantageous to the guest as well as the hotels. It has been observed that modern technology is very effective in improving financial results and in achieving customer satisfaction especially in today's competitive world. This paper tries to explain what a smart hotel is and why technology is becoming so important in today's time and how it is influencing the Hospitality Industry Globally.

**Wenjie Cai, Shahper Richter, Brad McKenna (2018)** discussion was done about Three themes about technology use emerged: types of processing, organizational use, and users. Among various types of technology processing, interactive and online are largely addressed in the tourism and hospitality literature. The organizational use theme explores how the competitive and strategic use of technology provides management support for organizations. There was a large amount of research focused on direct users, such as individual characteristics, user attitudes, and user behavior. In this Research paper, discussion was done around the theme of use, in which it was found that research has been widely conducted in both organizational and individual levels with focuses in certain areas.

**Prasanna Kansakar, Arslan Munir, and Neda Shabani, (2019)**, it is highlighted that the leisure and hospitality industry is one of the driving forces of the global economy. The widespread adoption of new technologies in this industry over recent years has fundamentally reshaped the way in which services are provided and received. In this paper, exploration of some of the state-of-the-art technologies currently employed in the hospitality industry and how they are improving guest experiences and changing the hospitality service platform. It was also envisioned that some potential future hospitality services we can expect as the Internet of things (IoT) technology keeps growing. It was recognized that the technological backbone of many hospitality establishments needs to be overhauled in order to facilitate the changing landscape of technology in the modern world. Discussion of some fundamental challenges that need to be overcome to institute a lasting futureproof solution for the hospitality industry was done.

**Dider Bhuian, (2021)** highlighted in his research that to study the correlation between customer satisfaction and service quality in the hotel business. It also outlines the significance of understanding customer satisfaction and how customers distinguish service delivery. Customers have changed prospects based on their consideration of service or product quality. This factor is an indication that a customer determines the quality of service in the hotel industry. Also, the five-dimensional aspects of service quality (empathy, reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, and service assurance) impact service quality and customer satisfaction. The research work empirically studied the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction in Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrköping, Sweden.

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## 5. THE MODERN DAY LATEST TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES USED IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

There are few hospitality trends that have accelerated since the pandemic and presently they are sticking around.

### **Sustainability & Eco-Tourism**

In the contemporary landscape of hospitality, a paradigm shift towards sustainability is palpable, with eco-friendly practices increasingly becoming the norm. There is a burgeoning expectation among consumers for accommodation providers to prioritize environmental consciousness. From eliminating plastic straws to implementing automated lighting systems that conserve energy, establishments are recalibrating their operations to minimize their ecological footprint. Concurrently, various initiatives are underway to curtail carbon emissions, reflecting a broader societal trend towards eco-awareness among travelers. In response, hotels are urged to embrace strategies aimed at achieving carbon neutrality, aligning with the evolving preferences of environmentally conscious guests.

### **Minimalism and Natural Design**

The global trend towards minimalism in the realm of accommodations is gaining traction, fostering spaces characterized by clean aesthetics and uncluttered simplicity. Departing from conventional decor, many establishments opt for painted walls over wallpaper and integrate elements of nature such as indoor foliage. This departure signifies a yearning to escape the urban milieu and reconnect with the serenity of the natural world, enhancing guest experiences and potentially fostering loyalty through favorable online feedback.

### **Changes to Food and Beverage**

A discernible shift is underway within the hospitality industry, particularly in the domain of food and beverage services, towards offering healthier alternatives. This transformation mirrors evolving consumer preferences towards more conscientious consumption habits. Restaurants are overhauling their menus to incorporate options catering to diverse dietary needs, including gluten-free, dairy-free, low-fat, vegetarian, vegan, and organic choices. This trend extends beyond dining establishments to encompass hotels, catering services, and vacation destinations, with an emphasis on providing healthier room service options and beverages.

### **Smart Technology**

The integration of smart technology is increasingly indispensable for enhancing guest experiences and operational efficiency within the hospitality sector. Advanced booking systems streamline reservation processes, enhancing guest satisfaction and optimizing staff productivity. Innovations such as STAAH's Direct Booking engine facilitate real-time rate displays from multiple channels, fostering transparency and accessibility for potential guests. Furthermore, the adoption of chatbots, robotics, and artificial intelligence enhances guest interactions by providing personalized recommendations and on-demand services. Emerging technologies such as facial recognition and Internet of Things connectivity in hotel rooms offer guests greater customization options, heralding transformative changes in the industry.

### **Personalization for Returning Guests**

Hotels are placing a growing emphasis on personalized services as a means to cultivate customer loyalty and elevate guest satisfaction. Leveraging data analytics and GPS technology, establishments tailor experiences for returning guests, offering familiar services and personalized greetings upon arrival. Additionally, the integration of smart devices enables guests to access entertainment platforms using their own accounts, enhancing the customization and convenience of their stay. This focus on personalization not only fosters stronger guest relationships but also contributes to a more memorable and enjoyable hospitality experience.

### **Safety and Hygiene**

Hospitality trends are related to hygiene and safety which has gained its importance from the emergence of COVID pandemic. Presently in different hospitality outlets different measures like wearing of masks, using of hand gel, and other protective equipment and other social distancing rules are respected. Hospitality corporates are explaining these updates to their prospective clients and attracting clients for prospective bookings.

### **Touchless Remittance**

This is the most prominent trend in the entire hospitality industry which deals with reducing the friction and touchless monetary transactions are the best example for this. Not only does this help to save the time of the valuable customers, but it also encourages maintaining hygiene. It is convenient to handle digital payments rather than cash and many clients feel comfortable to use this method, so nowadays this is a necessity and no longer a luxury.

### **Control of Voice and Voice Search**

It is a common trend in today's world to use voice search for searching hospitality destinations rather than typing in browsers. Hospitality organizations are always trying to capture these clients by well structuring their web page and website so that all the features that the client is looking for is found as soon as the voice search is done. Apart from this, voice control is also becoming famous especially in hotels all over India. International brands like JW Marriott, Hilton, Novotel, Sheraton are providing this service in their guest rooms. With the help of this technology, smart speakers can answer the queries of guests and even respond to them by turning on/off lights, devices and so on.

### **Improved food and Beverage deliveries at home**

Since the time the COVID-19 pandemic has struck, many restaurants and establishments are offering food and beverages at the residence of the clients and trying to give them the restaurant dining experience in their home. So, the restaurants are accepting telephone and online orders and offering the contactless and touchless services to the guests. Restaurants are offering extra things along with food like providing candles, free food, and Quick Response codes with Spotify playlists.

### **Robots in Hospitality Sector**

Many hotels and hospitality outlets have started using robots for greeting and welcoming guests. Some star category hotels in India are also considering this option as viable as this option helps to deliver contactless services and reduces the manpower costs.

### **Impending Trends of Hospitality Industry in India**

**Chat bots** is a prominent hospitality trend which is becoming very popular at a fast pace. It helps to link customer service even at the time when human personnel are not available. If required, the chat bots can even collect the necessary information and pass it to the human representatives. The benefits that the hospitality industry is getting is that chat bots can give answers to basic queries of clients regarding accommodation, rooms, food and beverage and all allied areas.

**The VR Tours** or virtual reality tours are the most exciting and promising upcoming trend in the hospitality rooms management sector. This facility helps the potential customers to experience the accommodation and restaurant facilities virtually from the comfort of their homes and this Internet based feature is designed in such a manner by the companies that it is easily accessible from multi devices, even without the Virtual Reality devices.

**Check-in Services through Mobile** is another big upcoming helpful development particularly in the accommodation and rooms management sector especially related to hotels and resorts. Many Indian star category hotels are doing research to include this facility in their system. Hotels and resorts are developing apps and QR codes that the clients are downloading in their smartphones and using this technology to do a contactless fast convenient check-in and checkout from hotels. Hotels are providing downloadable app links in their websites from where the guests can use this facility.

**Use of Facial Recognition Technology** is an emerging upcoming trend in India. Hoteliers are seriously considering the use of biometrics and face recognition especially keeping in mind the safety and security aspects. In India, star category hotels are planning to implement this technology to open

or close guest rooms. Not only that, but the hospitality Industry in India also wants to implement this technology for hotel check-in and check-out purposes. Complete Seamless purchases within the hospitality Industry will be the future that will be authenticated by touch.

**Use of AI or Artificial Intelligence in the Hospitality Industry** concept is about to boom in the hospitality industry in India. Customers always expect smooth interaction with accurate responses within the industry. For example, in rooms division management, clients have multiple queries regarding the guest room costs, discounts, facilities offered, complimentary services, pick up and drop facility availability and so on. To facilitate this, the role of chatbots and artificial Intelligence is coming into play. The simple queries of the clients are understood by the chatbots and answered rapidly meanwhile data analysis tasks are handled by AI.

**Utilization of IOT in the hospitality Industry** is again a remarkable upgrade that will very soon be implemented in the hospitality industry all around India. IOT means Internet of Things that involves internet connection extension to everyday use objects, appliances, and devices. Basically, this facility helps to transform an unintelligent device to a smart device which can be semi or fully autonomous that can collect data, interact, and communicate over the internet.

**Highlighting the Local Experience** is a new trend in the hospitality and Tourism sector which is appreciated by domestic and foreign travelers in our country. Lot of foreigners come to India to experience the local customs, culture and traditions and enjoy the local experience. Businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry are respecting this need of the travelers and providing facilities like farmhouse accommodation like Airbnb. Travel agents and tour operators are helping the hospitality and tourism Industry regarding the same.

**Sustainable Developments** is the most happening development that is taking place in the accommodation sector of the hospitality industry because clients nowadays are very much concerned about sustainability. They are focused on understanding that the businesses they are dealing with are following the ethics or not. Since sustainability promotes ecology friendliness, it has become the most noticeable development. For this reason, the accommodation sector is providing sustainable materials like bed sheets and towels, using lights and smart heating in rooms and public areas, and promoting vegan and vegetarian meals.

**The upcoming concept of Smart Hotels** is an emerging trend that works with the help of internet enabled devices that are capable of transferring data to other devices. The devices that were used use the concept of "Internet of Things" or IOT and is gaining popularity as smart hubs and smart speakers are becoming renowned consumer products. Smart hotels in India are allowing guests to control the HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Condition), Voice command speaker, switching on or off television set, control the brightness of bulbs and similar activities.

Also, Facilities like **augmented reality** are becoming a reality in hotels and guests are getting the benefits of interactive tourist information maps within the hotel.

Apart from the above upgradation in the hospitality Industry, focus on mobile Technology and improvements in Digital marketing is also very much noticeable. The introduction of the 5G network in India will also boost the hospitality economy of our country. Since most guests who stay in star category hotels are using smartphones, with the help of high-speed internet they are booking the guest rooms and restaurants of a hotel. The Indian hospitality industry has also introduced two versions' websites for guests, one is mobile friendly another is optimized for desktop and laptops which makes it easier for guests to do bookings.

Another most important upcoming trend in the hospitality industry is the **metaverse** which uses a combination of technology like augmented reality and virtual reality which can coincide with non-fungible token technology that results in creating interactive virtual worlds.

**Gourmet experiences: Prioritizing sensations, authenticity, and experiences** is a rapid trend in the young generation. Today's experiential eating has taken on new forms due to the growing desire to engage with the food rather than just consume it. Today's hotels must provide a variety of dining alternatives to satisfy a wide spectrum of clientele. Done well, however, this can turn a hotel into a culinary destination where the restaurant is the focal point of the experience rather than merely an add-on. For instance, the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz in Switzerland is a popular destination for foodies on the road. It has seven restaurants, three bars, a bistro, a café, and a sushi takeout area in addition to numerous Michelin stars and Gault Millau points. Digitalization and off-premise dining represent a final noteworthy movement in the food industry. Even if since the pandemic people have gone back to dining in restaurants, a sizable percentage of them combine on- and off-premise meals. Takeaways are no longer just for fast food; they can also be used for traditional and even fine dining, thus restaurants that want to grow must appeal to this customer base. This means that in addition to creating suitable, imaginative, high-quality packaging and streamlining delivery or collection procedures to be simple and affordable without competing with traditional delivery platforms, restaurants must reorganize their workflows and operations to accommodate in-house diners and delivery.

Figure 1. Use of 5 latest trends in Hospitality Industry





Figure 2. State of the Art

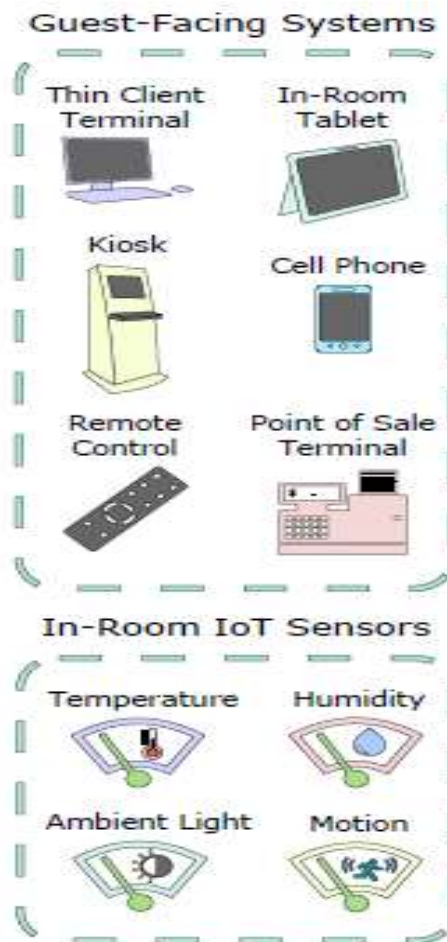


Figure 3. Hospitality Services



## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the exploration of the hospitality sector's current state and its trajectory towards innovation, this analysis has embarked on an independent journey. Navigating through the dynamic landscape of hospitality, the essay has uncovered insights into its complexities, challenges, and potential for growth. The goal remains to achieve harmony within the industry, where service excellence and guest experience intersect, amidst changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. At the core of hospitality lies the aspiration to craft memorable guest experiences, extending beyond mere accommodations to immersive journeys enriched with local culture and personalized services. Experiential travel emerges as a prominent trend, urging hotels and resorts to innovate by weaving authentic narratives that resonate deeply with guests. From bespoke culinary adventures to curated cultural immersions, opportunities for innovation abound, promising a more engaging and fulfilling travel landscape. Technology stands as a transformative force within hospitality, revolutionizing operations and guest interactions alike. Mobile apps, AI, and data analytics empower hoteliers to personalize services, optimize operations, and anticipate guest needs effectively. Contactless procedures and virtual concierge services have not only enhanced convenience but also addressed health concerns, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, ethical considerations loom large, prompting the industry to navigate the delicate balance between leveraging technology and preserving human connection. Sustainability emerges as another critical pillar reshaping hospitality, driven by growing environmental consciousness among travelers. Hotels and resorts are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, from eco-friendly design to community engagement initiatives, to minimize their ecological footprint and foster positive social impact. Moreover, the pandemic has accelerated the industry's digital transformation, emphasizing the importance of agility and innovation in navigating unforeseen challenges. Looking forward, the hospitality sector must continue to evolve and innovate to meet the evolving needs of travelers. By embracing sustainability, leveraging technology responsibly, and prioritizing ethical practices, the industry can create transformative experiences while contributing positively to society. Collaboration, creativity, and a commitment to excellence will be essential in shaping a future where hospitality thrives in harmony with its guests, communities, and the environment. As we chart the course ahead, let us remain steadfast in our pursuit of excellence and empathy, ensuring that hospitality continues to inspire, connect, and enrich the lives of all who encounter it. The hospitality industry thus can rightly be considered as the rapidly growing and evolving area which is the largest service industry in the world. It has identified that a lot many changes have occurred in the expectations and taste of guests and hospitality organizations are relying more on the use of technology to offer their clients unique guest experiences. Even training is imparted to the hospitality professionals about how to use the latest technology in the industry and how to impart best experiences to the guest during their stay.

With the help of training, it is becoming easier for the staff to communicate with the guest, solve their problems and provide a home away from home experience to the guest. Thus, it can be rightly concluded that today's hospitality industry is moving more towards improving guest experience using technology for bringing in revenue and guest satisfactions.

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