

Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence: A New Era of Direct Selling and Hyper-Personalization in hotels

The hospitality landscape, traditionally reliant on personal touch and guest experiences, now sits at the brink of a transformative era. With intermediaries like OTAs (Booking.com & Expedia.com) narrowing profit margins, hotels are increasingly looking to technology, especially Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to regain the direct connection with their guests and drive profitability. Here's how these technologies are rewriting the rules of hotel marketing:

Digital Twins: Offering a Three-Dimensional Experience

A digital twin is a virtual representation of a physical object or system. In the hotel industry, a digital twin can model an entire hotel – from its rooms and amenities to its utilities and services. Every aspect of the hotel's operation can be virtually mapped, monitored, and analyzed in real-time.

- **Virtual Tours, Real Choices:** As soon as a guest lands on a hotel's website, they're no longer limited to static images or reviews. The digital twin offers a comprehensive, interactive tour of the property. This experience, akin to virtual reality but more immersive, lets them "walk" through the hallways, "view" the vistas from room windows, and "experience" the ambiance of the hotel's facilities.
- **Tailored Room Selection:** The guesswork in choosing a room based on a brief description and a couple of images is eliminated. Using the digital twin, guests can opt for a specific room based on its location, view, size, or proximity to the hotel's amenities. This level of granularity in selection ensures that guest expectations are met, if not exceeded.
- **Dynamic Room Pricing:** No two rooms are entirely alike, even within the same category. Leveraging the detailed visualization offered by digital twins, hoteliers can price rooms based on unique attributes. For instance, a room with a balcony

overlooking the sea can be priced slightly higher than its counterpart that offers a city view.

Artificial Intelligence: Crafting Personalized Experiences

Where does Artificial Intelligence come in? AI acts as the brain behind the digital twin, analyzing the vast amounts of data collected and providing actionable insights.

- **Anticipating Guest Preferences:** If artificial intelligence, based on the user's website browsing behavior or by correlating the user to a specific audience type, determines that a user has a preference for a certain view or attributes, the reservation process becomes tailored. It offers rooms, products, and services that align with their preferences, thus enhancing conversion and satisfaction. For instance, it might present them with a selection of room views or recommend quiet rooms, rooms with a specific layout, or those located in a particular part of the hotel, showcasing the building and facade in the process.
- **Personalized Itineraries:** Beyond room selection, AI can craft a tailored itinerary for guests. If a guest has shown interest in wellness activities, AI might suggest yoga sessions, spa treatments, or detox menus that the hotel offers.

The Profitability Angle

The synergy of Digital Twins and AI can catalyze this transformation, setting hotels on a direct path to enhanced financial outcomes. Let's explore the underlying mechanisms that make this fusion a potent tool for hoteliers.

- **Reduced Intermediary Dependence:** The immersive experience provided by digital twins, coupled with the tailored recommendations from AI, offers a compelling reason for guests to book directly with hotels. This reduces the dependence on OTAs, thereby cutting down commission costs.
- **Increased Ancillary Revenue:** Beyond the room, Digital Twins showcase the hotel's plethora of offerings. Guests can virtually reserve a sun lounger by the pool, book spa slots, or even select a table at the restaurant. This visual and

interactive approach to ancillary sales encourages guests to spend more, often indulging in services they might have overlooked in a traditional booking system..Coupled with AI's recommendations, guests are more likely to indulge, boosting the hotel's ancillary revenue.

- **Enhanced Guest Loyalty:** A personalized experience, right from booking to the actual stay, ensures guests feel valued. This not only increases the chances of them returning but also makes them brand ambassadors, leading to word-of-mouth marketing.

Conclusion

In a world where personalization is becoming the norm, the amalgamation of Digital Twins and AI in hospitality offers a fresh, technologically advanced approach. By giving guests an experience that's both immersive and tailored, hotels are not only ensuring guest satisfaction but are also moving the needle on profitability. It's clear that the future of hotel sales & marketing lies at this intersection of technology and personal touch.

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