

**F&B : FAST FORWARDING DIGITAL MATURITY**

As the industry prepares for a comeback after the second wave, restaurants are fundamentally re-imagining how they do business – digitally and through technology – to keep their operations running smoothly, improve the bottom line, and continue serving guests.

Commenting on the digital advancement of the domestic industry, Ashish Tulsian, Co-Founder and CEO, POSist Technologies, said, “The restaurant industry as a whole around the world has been somewhat slow to adopt technologies. Nevertheless, in our experience of providing technology to 9,000 restaurants in over 35 countries, India has been quite ahead of many developed nations when it comes to embracing technology. Having said that, the entire ecosystem of F&B has transformed rapidly, where restaurants have their own QR codes, websites & apps, aggregators are taking orders, logistics companies are delivering them, payment wallets and coupon companies are collecting payments, and the entire world is learning to ace the new normal of dining at once. The world has truly leveled when it comes to running a hospitality business and India is adopting it with the rest of the world.”

While commenting on digital native businesses, Tulsian said that cloud-based restaurant technologies are cost-effective, since software enhances the efficiency of restaurants in the long term.

He informed that strong technical support is essential for restaurants to automate their Front Of House (FOH) and Back Of House (BOH) and achieve maximum flexibility in the new normal. Although the costs might seem significant at the outset, it allows restaurants to increase online orders, optimise takeaway/delivery menus, ensure smooth delivery integrations, and other perks which deliver a good ROI in the long term. In the same manner, deploying inventory management software allows restaurants to save a lot of cost by helping them control wastage and avoid pilferage.

Right now, the economies of running a restaurant business are being completely rewritten. “Traditionally, technology in restaurants was considered as good to have. However, in a new setup where restaurants are increasingly relying on food deliveries to open up new revenue opportunities and reduce reliance on dine-ins, technology is going to be a major investment. Businesses today are focusing on long-term goals rather than short-term ones and the new normal is forcing them to onboard new technologies and digital processes. Automation is becoming key to the hospitality industry, as it helps them attain efficiency in processes and delight guests as well,” he said.

**THE ROI CONUNDRUM**

The ROI of technology implementation at hospitality properties is being measured not only in monetary terms, but also through guest satisfaction, carbon footprints, and staff confidence.

“These technologies bring confidence to team members and the guests who are opting to stay, dine in or use our hotel services. We have seen our guests complimenting the technologies used along with varied hygiene processes implemented.



**Varun Balwani**  
Commercial Director, FCS  
Computer Systems - India, Nepal,  
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**Ashish Tulsian**  
Co-Founder and CEO  
POSist Technologies

Technology has helped us to build confidence, ease operations, and build a repeat guest ratio which has helped in increasing the revenues. Instant payment gateways have reduced the credit cycle enhancing the cash flow churn. We have experienced an enhanced margin growth which has been critical in pandemic times. The use of a digital environment has helped reduce the carbon footprint at the hotel in line with the sustainable business goals of the hotel”, said Kandhari.

Informing about the efficiency of the technologies being implemented, Balwani pointed out that, there is almost 100% customer retention after the technology products have been deployed. Timeliness, which is a major factor contributing towards guest experience, has been witnessed to increase multi-fold through the correct adoption of technology. Technology can also help reduce losses due to allowances and poor experiences by more than 85%. In one of our case studies, we found that, within the first year of investment, the hotel had re-gained almost twice the total investment spent on our products.

Sharing his thoughts, Verma said, “While measuring an exact ROI for individual technological initiatives is a challenge, I must state that our guests have certainly recognised and appreciated the changes in the hotel. This is seen in their positive feedback and excellent reviews.”

**CHALLENGES OF USING TRENDING TECHNOLOGIES**

Though these trending technologies make it uncomplicated and easier to function as an organisation, a few

challenges emerge, such as security concerns regarding guest’s data.

“Since we live in the world of the internet, security especially is a great concern for everyone. It is crucial to be careful, and take steps to prevent any data or security breaches. FCS develops and deploys its products with multiple levels of security protocols in place. We have a dedicated team which ensures high-end quality while assuring total privacy of our database,” Balwani informed.

As a best practice, all digital interactions with guests should be reinforced through robust security technology and privacy protection along with adherence to government regulations. Verma stated, “Hotel networks and databases should be equipped with all necessary solutions to secure guest devices, in-room technology, and all IoT devices on the hotel network. Hotel networks need to be highly secured in order to avoid any data breach as multiple Point-Of-Sale (POS) touchpoints and an even larger number of smart devices will be on this network. Hotels must establish practical ‘electronic policies’ and ‘technology strategies’ to add stronger protocols to their technology amenities.”

Sharing her point of view, on riding the technology wave within secure perimeters, Kandhari opined, “We do not see any challenges, rather these technological initiatives with their benefits have got ingrained in our business. These are here to stay. Data management & privacy protection are at the forefront of the operations and as a company, we have strict compliances to ensure we protect the same through IT protocols.” ■

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