Technologies that will enhance hotel experience in 2018

As we look forward to closing the year, Jumia Travel takes a keen look at emerging and growing hotel technologies that will shape the new year.

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Voice adaptation – anyone home?

Voice is no doubt an ongoing craze across various industries - think of Siri, Alexa, Cortana and the rest. The little complications of accents, privacy and communication barriers notwithstanding, incorporating of voice-focused devices in hotels will ease operations as guests get hands-free answers to their queries without reaching for their phones.

Virtual reality – seeing is believing!

Think innovation and inspiration. VR can have an endless list of possibilities.

On top of providing "real time" entertainment and insight, VR can be incorporated into marketing concepts to woo potential guests with real recordings of the hotel and destination. Hotels are also adapting VR as part of in-room entertainment by creating experiences that respond to guest needs, for instance, Best Western North America has created 360-degree photos for its properties using Google's Street View technology. On the other hand, Marriott Hotels & Resorts offers their guests Vroom Service on request, thereby upscaling their in-room experience.

Artificial Intelligence, think "Connie" of The Hilton

The Chatbot and the robots are in to stay – perhaps a godsend to customer service crisis' that stakeholders in the hospitality industry are all so familiar with. On top of easing operations, AI comes with the advantage of data gathering, compilation and analysis, thereby providing almost error-free customer insight. Bearing in mind that human interaction is an integral part of the service industry, the big question developers will probably be grappling with is where to draw the line.

Upscale conferencing facilities

The MICE industry is a big deal right now, generating over $30bn globally per annum. For hosting, catering and accommodation purposes, the hotel sector plays a vital role in the growth and sustenance of meetings, incentives and

conferencing activities. Basics include power backup systems, high-density Wi-Fi, AV, up-to-date display technology and furniture. A keen look at a location's proximity to attractions and interaction with nature on issues such as energy conservation will take lead in this frontier.

Mobile apps in the hospitality sector

The hotel sector is fluid and mobile, in a period where everything is possible within a hand's reach. To create a seamless process between different faculties that include reservation, check-in, concierge, room service and much more. This can be developed as a once-off download for loyal customers or customised for guests as they check in. On top of the functional front, apps can also play a significant role in driving reviews and bolstering ancillary revenues by making the products readily accessible.

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