

# Sustaining hospitality: Embracing the Industrial Revolution 4.0

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29 Mar 2018

The hospitality sector is facing challenges unlike any other industry, with markets developing, economies fluctuating and consumer preferences evolving. If hospitality businesses don't grow apace, they'll have obsolescence built into them. It's essential that the tourism industry embraces the Industrial Revolution 4.0 to accommodate the digital advances that will make sustainability a reality.



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The digital revolution used to mean just your website. That's all. While your website is central to much of the activity your brand will experience, there's more to it than that. Industry giants are able to operate with more agility, achieving more in shorter periods, so how can smaller companies remain competitive?

## There's an app for that

Your customers have, by and large, shifted to mobile devices when conducting business, from researching to booking and then paying. It's a no-brainer that your site must be mobile-friendly (and that you offer Wi-Fi access at hotels and other tourism-related businesses). Your visitors need a seamless approach that allows them to do what they want to do on one platform.

Companies have gone app-crazy, but do apps add the value you want them to provide? You could spend vast amounts on app development only to have limited uptake from a market that is saturated with apps. Do the research into the demand and what app development can do for you, and the anticipated ROI before you dive into the app space. Maybe there is far better technology that already exists that can be adapted according to the needs that will save you on development costs.

Great platforms provide great data that, in turn, produce valuable insights that allow for more personalised service. Ultimately, you want to be able to provide seamless business services across channels from one platform so that visitors can get what they want with little inconvenience, saving them time.

## Make it easier for your guests

There are many hospitality businesses that are short-sighted when it comes to accepting payment options. For example, offering Visa or Mastercard as the only options (or EFT, for that matter), can limit you. China-based UnionPay is the largest card payment organisation (debit and credit cards combined) in the world, based on payment transactions, schemes and number of cards issued, before the two card payment companies mentioned previously. Yet, many companies haven't tapped into its network potential. Given that Chinese travellers will prioritise establishments that accept it, it again makes sense to add it to your bouquet of payment options.

Looking to more progressive payment options, adopting a variety of payment options can allow for greater fluidity in transacting for visitors.

## Be resource wise

Energy-wise and water-wise buildings are the way forward – but too often businesses are sticking to decades-old approaches to developments that see outmoded practices that don't acknowledge the essential role of sustainable tourism in ensuring business longevity.

Alternative water and energy supplies should be considered as part of the scenario planning for developers: what if the local water supply dries up, or the national power grid has hiccups – all too common an occurrence on the continent. Have you built these considerations into your businesses so that visitors aren't inconvenienced?

Your IT team is no longer a few people tucked away in an office, IT touches every aspect of your business, and it's only through a strategy that recognises this and incorporates IT input across the board that sustainable hospitality can be achieved.

## ABOUT ENVER DUMINY

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