

RSVN System Overview

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Beginnings

I had the pleasure of working at a small island Resort for several years. It was a newly opening Resort so I was lucky to be a part of it's initial evolution. Originally, I was brought on board to install the computer network and create computer applications which would help the staff keep things organized. My job expanded and I eventually became familiar with all facets of resort operations and saw it through periods of great success and several natural disasters which changed the Resort into an emergency shelter with semi-permanent residents. Our General Manager was a Hotel genius with many years of experience. She was my guide and by merging her ideas we created the first iteration of this application. It turned out better than I could have imagined. The paperwork avalanche was tamed and we were able to keep track of reservations and occupancy. We were able to make smart managerial decisions, it was very useful and served us well at the time.

The current version in development will have some advanced features, while integrating with modular programming tools, it will be a more powerful and easily maintained application for modern stakeholders.

In essence,, the RSVN System is for any entity who operates an accommodation small or large, Hotel, B&B, Inn, Motel, Resort, Dormitory, Apartment Complex etc.

RSVN is an organizational tool which allows staff and managers to maintain the integrity of their accommodation operation by being able to quickly visualize situations and have confidence in the accuracy of the data. In this overview we will use 'the Hotel' as the property, with the understanding that we can customize the application for just about any accommodation.

Part I

Accommodations Overview

The Hotel business, at times, can appear to be controlled chaos. As with any customer driven service industry there are many moving parts that make a successful operation. The RSVN System is a tool to help reduce errors and help in providing good service. The RSVN system focuses in on providing support for the following aspects of accommodations.

- Room Inventory Management
- Guest and Reservation Management
- Revenue Management
- Staff Management

Room Inventory Management

The fundamental unit in the Hotel business is the room. It is a perishable product which expires every day. If at all possible, we try to keep every room filled every day. We must know what rooms we have, and be able to organize them. Most properties have one or more buildings or some way of room organization. The building for some may be a Wing, Section or a Building Name or any other description may be possible. Once the building divisions are established we should have a unique number or letter for each room.

Room Type

Similar rooms should be grouped into a room type. Several or all rooms in a building can be of a certain type i.e., Deluxe or Standard. These rooms can have variations with different bed arrangements so sub types like Deluxe01 Deluxe02. Once the type has been established, the room rates can be applied.

Room Rates

Once each room type is assessed a rack rate. The rack rate is the maximum rate for that type of room. All rooms of a particular class will have the same rack rate. This is the basis on which a room daily charge will be developed by the Revenue Manager.

Guest Contact and Reservation Management

Guest Contact Information

All guests should have their contact information on file before their stay. This important information should be handled securely and organized for easy search, retrieval and audit. We must be able to easily search and access the records of their stay.

Reservations

Room Reservations are the records of the revenue generated, and the guide and scheduler of all activities. In these modern times reservations can come from many places; online websites, tour agencies, booking portal sites, as well as being entered manually at the front-desk. Guests reserve a room or rooms for a specific period. The reservation will be the founding document of the final invoice we present for payment. It should show all charges and payments.

When we make a reservation we need to know what rooms are available during that time period. We need to know the state of the hotel at any point in time or during any span of time. This allows management to make the best decisions on room selection, occupancy and availability. Once again, the critical information is knowing at what state the occupancy of the hotel is at any given time frame. Once the time of the occupancy has passed, the reservation and any information attached, represents a permanent read-only record which should be archived accordingly. The rate infrastructure can be dynamic but the charges assigned to each archived reservations are fixed and they can be used to reconcile the Hotel income for the year.

Revenue Management

Seasons

The Revenue Management of a property is a science. The Revenue Manager must forecast the value of a room during certain periods of the year. The idea of seasons comes to mind. We vary the price as supply and demand changes the market value throughout the year, so that we can get the most profit and keep the rooms filled. The job of the Revenue Manager is to forecast when to raise or lower the room cost. This is a data science so the better the data, the more accurate a forecast can be made.

Looking at the calendar for a year, we can imagine the Christmas and New Year Holiday Season as well as the summer season for the our locale. The slow tourist seasons and the high seasons are pretty well defined as they follow global vacation trends. Other factors should be taken into account which are specific to a locale.

Season Calendar

The season calendar gives the Revenue Manager an overall snapshot of the year where he can carve out as many seasons and special periods to adjust the overall income of the property. The season calendar should be an easy to use tool that gives immediate feedback on the results of the forecast.

Season Rate

Once we have determined the dates now we determine the amount of discount we apply to the room. Using the room rack rate as our maximum we can adjust the seasonal rate as a discount of the rack rate. For instance High Summer season can be 80% of rack Rate, Christmas season could possibly be less at 75%, the low season could be 50%. There is almost no constraints on the way that a revenue manager sets up their property. It is a function of the location and type of accommodation.

Yearly Trending

Most of the decisions a Revenue Manager will make will depend on past performance of the property and/or similar properties in the area or locale. It would also be beneficial to know the total estimated for the year and the actual revenue for that year. This trending helps to make the estimates and forecasting more accurate.

Staff Management

Staff management can be a daily struggle. The bottom line is that the rooms must be fully operational, cleaned and ready for the next guest to occupy them. If a property deals in tour group travel and block reservations, staff management can be even more challenged. Rooms must be dependably cleaned and repaired on time. Staffing is critical for housekeepers and maintenance staff. Information and communication is essential. People are assigned to clean, someone may need to do a final inspection and the information must get back to the front desk or whoever manages the reservation check ins in a timely fashion.

Staff Task Information

Scheduling is important and the feedback from staff doing the work is equally valuable. There has to be a manager keeping an eye on the staffing level as well as the work being assigned. The more visual guidance we can provide for scheduling, the more accurately the manager can assign tasks.

Housekeeping

Housekeepers must be assigned their rooms and they must let the front desk know when the room is ready for occupancy. There has to be an adequate

workforce to accomplish the daily chores. Here again the more visual the better.

Maintenance

The maintenance of rooms must be done before the cleaning can complete. Ideally, a problem is discovered upon checkout and a maintenance staff member is dispatched, once repairs are completed, the cleaning can begin. If the repair cannot be done and the room is marked Out Of Commission, adjustments may have to be made up the reservation chain. Information must move quickly and in real-time.