

## ONLINE COVERAGE

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### 4 Ways Unified Communications Can Help in a Labor Shortage

*By Roopa Misra, Orion Senior Vice President*

The demand for leisure travel is back in force, with analysts predicting that travel will soon exceed pre-pandemic levels. This is undoubtedly welcome news for the travel industry. Yet, hospitality operations are stretched thin, covering this surge in demand while battling an ongoing labor shortage. A recent American & Hotel Lodging Association survey shows that 97 percent of hoteliers are experiencing a staffing shortage.

Experienced hospitality workers are seeking higher-paying, less-stressful occupations. This talent drain complicates the industry's post-pandemic recovery and leaves management short-staffed, limiting restaurant hours, and fielding new inexperienced and untrained applicants. From housekeeping to restaurant staff, hoteliers struggle to maintain their service standards with limited or untrained staff.

#### Unified Communications for Frontline Hospitality Operations

Hoteliers urgently need to address their industry's workforce crisis. High turnover means inexperienced staff and more room for error. It's times like these that should inspire innovation and reinvention. Digital transformation offers new opportunities to hospitality operations struggling to staff their properties and train new team members while maintaining high service levels. One area in particular that hoteliers can focus on for immediate impact and results: unified communications.

UC has traditionally been reserved for desked or knowledge workers, but now is the time to connect the entire hospitality workforce with intelligent tools that help them do more with less. Hospitality operations need UC solutions specifically designed for the realities of dynamic, on-the-go work in frontline enterprises. This means any unified communications solution adopted must be voice-first, or push-to-talk.

#### Transforming Hospitality Operations with PTT 2.0

Voice-first platforms enable frontline hospitality teams to work more efficiently, effectively, and



safely. PTT 2.0 starts with the basic ability to securely communicate 1:1 or in groups via voice, text, image or video. Playback and message logs mean team members never miss a communication if they're heads-up with guests.

PTT 2.0 enables staff to connect over any smart device, over any network, and at any range or distance. This solves the major pitfalls of form, function and range inherent in the legacy land mobile radios that many hospitality operations still rely on. PTT 2.0 ties together voice over Internet protocol and LMR radios so all communications are connected, enabling hotel operations to augment current communication solutions as they begin a transformation path to a next-generation platform.

Innovative PTT 2.0 voice platforms don't stop here, though. They layer location intelligence and mapping to provide operational visibility for managers who no longer have to search the property to find team members. Voice AI bots deliver off-the-shelf solutions like bidirectional voice-to-voice language translation that dramatically improves productivity and safety and voice checklists that voice automates lists and digitally archive responses instead of relying on paper and clipboard. And system integrations connect the entire workforce from front to back with critical hospitality systems—revolutionizing how the frontline workforce operates.

Here are four ways frontline unified communications and PTT 2.0 transform frontline operations and provide immediate relief for hospitality teams struggling to meet staffing needs:

### **1: Enhance Guest Experience**

Hoteliers must provide the highest levels of service at all times, despite growing employee turnover resulting in new or inexperienced staff. When hospitality operations bridge the chasm between backend systems and frontline workers, they instantly empower every staff member to make decisions more quickly to meet guest expectations. Even new team members can solve problems independently by using voice to query backend systems to retrieve urgent, detailed, or critical information.

PTT 2.0 employs voice AI bots that help staff provide exceptional experiences from the moment guests arrive on property. Voice bots support actions like announcing guest arrivals at the gates, starting a workflow that alerts bellhop staff to prepare for an impending arrival, alerting the concierge to prepare for the guest's arrival, and sharing customized guest information or requests so the experience matches expectations.

Integrations give access to enterprise systems via voice commands. With voice-driven communications, staff access critical corporate systems like Knowcross, HotSOS, and Alice, all while remaining heads up and engaged with guests. Staff easily reference guest preferences or provide enhanced experiences to celebrate anniversaries or birthdays.

### **2: Improve Staff and Cross-Departmental Communication**

Hospitality communications are often hindered by range and structural barriers when teams are dispersed across large properties or dense building structures like boiler rooms or basements. The inability to reach teams in real time drives a breakdown in communication and productivity, often

resulting in managers searching properties for the staff they need to speak with. A spill in the lobby should be addressed immediately—not in the 30 minutes it can take to track down a member of the housekeeping staff.

PTT 2.0 runs over both Wi-Fi and LTE, eliminating range limitations on large properties and supporting better cross-departmental communication between teams spread across properties with multiple buildings and facilities like pools, golf courses, marinas, racket sports, and more. Building barriers are no longer an issue either. Wi-Fi connectivity means teams operating in basements or rooms with limited LTE service are always within reach.

Teams gain flexibility in how they communicate as well. Where radios require users to actively monitor for communications relevant to their operational functions, PTT 2.0 platforms support direct messaging, group and all-call communications. Staff quickly connect 1:1 or in team-oriented groups, keeping communications relevant to each participant. Employees are connected to their teams and empowered with information to serve customers. All call ensures teams act in unison during major events or urgent situations.

### **3: Gain Operational Oversight**

Rapid growth in hiring new staff means management must be more vigilant in overseeing new team members operating independently throughout the property. With a unified communications PTT 2.0 platform in place, hospitality leaders gain a complete view of operations in real-time and increase oversight and accountability.

Voice-driven workflows driven by voice AI bots automate everyday checklists like cleaning, maintenance or safety procedures. Management are assured all tasks are completed in the assigned or correct order and archival features enable review and analysis for improvement.

Managers see exactly where each team member is through mapping and location-based intelligence, ensuring teams are operating productively and safely. Staff location visibility improves decision making when deploying staff members to provide assistance where needed. Indoor location tracking with x-, y- and z-axis assists teams operating in multistory buildings.

PTT 2.0 with advanced location information also reinforces hoteliers' commitment to safety with voice-activated emergency workflows triggered by words like "Help-Help." Once triggered, the closest security and management personnel are deployed for immediate assistance. Staff members like housekeeping often operate alone—now team members and managers know staff in need will receive quick backup in a crisis.

### **4: Support Multilingual Teams with Bidirectional Speech-to-Speech Language Translation**

Hospitality staff often face barriers with teams and new staff members that speak multiple languages. PTT 2.0 uses Voice AI Bots to bring all the possibilities of instant, bidirectional speech-to-speech language translation to multilingual frontline teams, automatically translating communications into the receiver's native language.

Language translation supports hoteliers as they expand hiring into new labor pools to meet the staffing shortage. Voice AI bots eliminate language barriers and miscommunications, ensuring all staff members are productive, safe and trained in their native language. Managers can hire the best available staff during this prolonged labor shortage—regardless of their native language.

### **Transform Hospitality Operations with Unified Communications PTT 2.0**

Unified communications PTT 2.0 offers hospitality leaders the opportunity to transform their frontline communications, gain greater operational control and improve their guest experience. New team members and inexperienced staff are swiftly operational and effective with the ability to access information to solve problems on the go.

Real-time language translation and voice-first multimedia communications engage team members and enable them to communicate and participate in teams more effectively. Ultimately, teams perform at higher levels of productivity and safety giving hospitality leaders the support they need during this ongoing labor shortage.