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**JOBS REPORT 2021**

**POST-  
PANDEMIC  
RESOLVE**



**Inside Look:** PMO of the Year



**Project  
Management  
Institute.**



## Do Not Disturb

**The road to recovery** for the hotel sector is a long one. Travel screeched to a halt in the early months of the pandemic, with the average occupancy rate of hotels in mainland China falling to 7 percent in early February, according to STR. The data and analytics firm also reported that rates dipped below 30 percent in Europe in March. Rates were under 15 percent for luxury hotels in the U.S. during early May, typically a busy tourism period, according to McKinsey & Co.

Still, the sector has been abuzz with projects—from health and safety upgrades to the completion of new builds that had already been launched. Marriott alone opened more than 160 properties in 2020, and Hilton opened 60 hotels during the second quarter of the year. The bulk of these projects began two to five years before the pandemic hit, and many sponsors calculate that opening them to a lukewarm reception is still better than keeping them closed and enduring costly delays.

“I’m very optimistic that once these vaccines get distributed, people’s perceptions around travel are going to change toward the positive,” Zachary Sears, a senior economist at Tourism Economics, told CNBC.

### No Reservations

As hotels continue to welcome guests, projects to improve health and safety protocols have become essential. In April, Hilton debuted CleanStay, a program to upgrade its sanitation. Marriott rolled out electrostatic sprayers with hospital-grade disinfectants. Choice Hotels established training for its franchisees and introduced on-demand housekeeping, prepackaged breakfast, hand-sanitizing stations and furniture arrangements that promote social distancing.

Technology, particularly that which can reduce the need for hotel staff and guests to interact, is proving valuable in widespread safety efforts. Demand has surged for products such as Intelity’s contactless guest services platform, which makes it possible for guests to use their mobile phones



to message staff, order room service and unlock their rooms.

“Many hotels have known that they would eventually need a mobile app, but thought they could



**“It’s obvious technology that enables contactless service is skyrocketing among travelers during the COVID era.”**

—Ira Dworkin, Intelity, Los Angeles, California, USA

put it off for a few more years,” says Ira Dworkin, CTO for Intelity, Los Angeles, California, USA. “Now they’re asking us, ‘How soon can we get it running?’”

Project metrics—from number of users to revenue generated by in-room dining—are easy to track. For example, The George, a boutique hotel in Montclair, New Jersey, USA, that uses the Intelity platform, saw mobile check-in requests increase fivefold in 2020.

“With everything that we’ve seen and heard, it’s obvious technology that enables contactless service is skyrocketing among travelers during the COVID era,” Dworkin says.

### Checking Out

From ozone generators to ultraviolet light instruments to mobile apps, the opportunities for project investment seem endless. Assessing which initiatives to add to the portfolio requires a keen eye for ROI.

The challenge is particularly acute for projects with large outlay costs that hotels may need years to recover. Tourism spending is not likely to return to pre-crisis levels until 2024, according to McKinsey.

“We probably will see, for the industry, more hotels that never reopen after this crisis than we have under prior crises,” Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson said in November. “How many fewer and how long [that is the case] depends a little on the shape of the recovery, which we obviously can’t know for certain yet.”



### Room Service

While some hoteliers are focused on ways to resuscitate their existing model, others are launching projects that allow them to pivot in the face of uncertainty.

**CHECK, PLEASE**  
Stadt hotel in Lidköping, Sweden converted guest quarters into self-contained, pop-up restaurants in June. Each of the property’s 67 rooms could host guests for a private dining experience.



**REMOTE WORK**  
Homeoffice im Hotel began offering hotel rooms as office spaces in May, with rooms in locations across Germany available for daily or weekly rental.



**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
Four Seasons Hotel New York reopened in April exclusively to doctors, nurses and other medical professionals and adopted policies to ensure their safety: minimized staff interactions, no restaurant dining and reduced hotel capacity to prevent overcrowding.

