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**Is the Art of the Front Desk Agent Being Overlooked?**

*Is the hotel industry accommodating the technology requests for the sake of customer service?*

**VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON** (July 2013) – An announcement from Marriott International this week has made us question if *the art of the front desk agent is being overlooked?* Marriott Hotels will soon roll-out mobile check-in at 325 hotels in the U.S. and Canada, and already has for 31 Marriott Hotels in their brand. [According to USA Today](#) all Marriott Reward members will be eligible for the service, which will be available for check in after 4pm the day before their arrival. Once their room is ready, they'll get an automatic notification. Because their credit card is stored in their profile, all that is needed is to grab a pre-programmed key from the mobile check-in desk and head to their room. Easy. No need to talk to anyone. According to the article this is what the travelers in Generation X and Y have asked for – kudos to Marriott International for asking the question *and* listening.

A recent [thinktravel report by Google](#) outlined that booking online was the most dominant channel for hotel guests and only 1 in 6 bookings were happening over the phone or in person. With so much of the booking transaction happening without the hotel's direct interaction, why would we discourage interaction when guests arrive? Is giving them the option of booking their room, checking in, ordering room service, checking out and posting a review – all without engaging in any form of customer service – really what we want in the hospitality industry? Obviously as a technology provider, at [CoHo](#) we recognize the importance of technology and moving forward with the advancements that our guests demand. Especially with the next generation that seemingly have their smart phones glued to their thumbs. However, maybe there is a way to engage the guest, orient them to the hotel, and outline the amenities and services available – all while providing the mobile check-in services being requested? Potentially a “wandering” desk agent using the increasingly popular “desk-less” model, available to welcome the mobile guests. Potentially giving them what they are asking for *and* customer service!

The front desk agent position is many times the first and last face that is seen at a hotel. Even with mobile check-in, it may be important to have them engage in the process somehow. Imagine a guest that checks-in and out, has a struggle of some kind and has no opportunity to resolve it before they walk out through the doors. Where will they go to resolve it? You guessed it – their favorite travel review site. On the positive side, generally when you read positive reviews they surround customer service experience. In our opinion just a little customer engagement can solve a lot; even when they aren't asking for it.

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### **About CoHo•Res**

CoHo•Res offers an electronic distribution platform connecting hotels to the entire world utilizing the Global Distribution System (GDS), Internet Distribution System (IDS) and a superior Booking Engine. Using next generation seamless technology, CoHo's platform currently supports over 4,000 hotels worldwide. CoHo is owned by CoHo•Services, a full service hotel and restaurant management company. The company's website ([www.cohores.com](http://www.cohores.com)) contains more information.

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