

# The Forgotten Revenue Channel

*Pros & Cons of Outsourcing Your Call Center*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- With a looming economic downturn and the slowing of the economy, US hoteliers may be facing tough times. According to the U.S. Travel Association's latest [Travel Trends Index](#) (TTI), travel experiences its worst performance since September 2018.

Furthermore, [U.S. Travel Economic Overview for August 2019](#) states that

"Following the slowdown of the overall economy, the travel industry is also showing some signs of slowing. Both hotel occupancy and Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) reported declines in June and a recently updated forecast revised RevPAR to slow even further in 2020 and occupancy to be basically flat."

In this questionable environment, hoteliers must find new ways of attracting guests and driving revenue through their direct channels.

There are no easy solutions here, and a multi-pronged approach is almost certainly needed. But outsourcing your hotel's call center may be part of the solution. Let's look at why.

## MORE TIME TO DRIVE MORE BOOKINGS

A hectic front desk can't realistically be expected to deal with every incoming guest call effectively. Calls to discuss room preferences, dining options, or special requests aren't always easy to handle with a quick response. In contrast, outsourcing your call center means customers can speak to a team of experts with the time and desire to help.

The benefits here extend beyond creating a more welcoming first impression. For instance, when a potential customer calls your hotel with a complex booking request, they'll receive the advice



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and reassurance they need to, not only be inspired, but book their hotel stay with you.

## ENGAGE WITH GUESTS EARLIER

An [outsourced call center](#) means your hotel never misses a call. This matters for more than the reasons stated above.

Yes, it creates more opportunities to build rapport with guests before they arrive. But these calls can also lead to more upsell and cross-sell opportunities, since there's more time to really get to know each customer.

According to Raul Vega at LEVEL 5 Hospitality, "Any insights gleaned can also be used to personalize pre-arrival emails. With more pre-booking data available, you can promote the amenities and experiences that a specific person will find most desirable. Instead of leaving revenue on the table, you can maximize every booking by engaging with guests earlier."

## ENHANCED ON-PROPERTY EXPERIENCE

An outsourced call center means the guests at your property receive more attention. Without having to constantly answer calls, your front desk team can engage in more face-to-face interactions — from recommending a great local restaurant to helping a family book a day trip.

Service issues and requests can be resolved more quickly too.

Needless to say, this can all have a major impact on the guest experience, their future loyalty, and your hotel's reputation management.

## WHY SHOULD YOU KEEP YOUR CALL CENTER IN-HOUSE?

There are certain barriers that prevent hotels from outsourcing their call center. But are some of the common concerns misplaced?

Naturally, outsourcing your call center requires a financial investment. However, training your own employees in a specialized role is not without cost, especially when training temporary staff to fill gaps during peak periods.

Doug Kenned, President Kennedy Training Network says, "Today's reservations agents and front desk staff are required to convey (and often to defend) the most complex rate structures and availability restrictions in the history of the lodging industry to the most educated callers our industry has ever faced."

At the same time, most revenue and marketing managers are spending the majority of their time focusing on online distribution channels, making "voice" reservations the forgotten channel. The

result is that today's agents and front desk staff struggle along on their own and do their best to defend some very direct and often harsh lines of questioning."

In addition, a lot of major call centers sell additional services and offload their heavy overheads to the hotel. In contrast, a call center that is exclusively focused on providing voice reservations will have inclusive pricing, and never pass along fees like this to their customers.

For some, the hesitancy to outsource might be based on fear of the unknown: will an external team understand and care about my business as much as my own staff? Not only do a lot of call center agents love their job, a specialist in hospitality is trained to ask insightful questions that really help them uncover the unique needs of travelers.

The lodging sector may be facing a difficult period in the new year. While outsourcing your call center alone isn't a silver bullet, it can play a pivotal role within your hotels' direct channel.

This is one in a series of essays by John Smallwood, CEO of Travel Outlook Premium Reservations Call Center about voice reservations, the second most profitable revenue channel.

In addition to the unique use of world-class call center technology, Travel Outlook is the only call center certified by Kennedy Training Network, the hotel industry's best source for sales training and guest service excellence. Its luxury call team is tested by Forbes and Kennedy each month. Travel Outlook's clients include many of the world's finest hotels and resorts.

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