



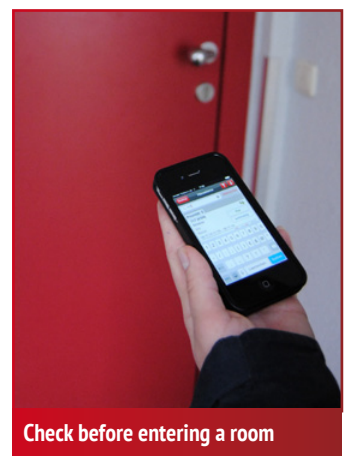
protel Housekeeping App in SI-SUITES Hotel in Stuttgart, Germany

The facility manager says: Got it already!

Housekeeping App helps SI-SUITES' housekeeping and maintenance teams stay quick on their toes

After a quick glance at her housekeeping app to make sure that nobody has checked into the room, Jasmina Baur, head of housekeeping, still knocks on the hotel room's door twice and calls out „housekeeping“ before opening it. The knock and announcement simply have become a matter of habit over the years. For the past few months, Jasmina Baur and her team have been using the protel Housekeeping App at the SI-SUITES in Stuttgart, Germany, which places all of the necessary room information right at their fingertips. Because the hotel's 192 rooms are located in four separate buildings, covering long distances is part of every-day work for Housekeeping. However, „a quick peek at the app to see if the guest has already checked out saves us tons of time because we no longer have to run back and forth to the front desk located in the main building,“ she says. Jasmina Baur quickly got the hang of working with the iPhone and likes to use the additional information and functions assisting her with her daily work.

Through its integration in the protel hotel management system, the app guarantees the direct exchange of information between the housekeeping, front desk, and facility maintenance teams. Room status, maintenance tasks, lost & found objects, minibar consumption, special guest wishes, room moves, as well as arrival and departure information can all be accessed, created, and edited by staff members of all teams on their personal mobile devices. The app immediately syncs the information with the hotel management software as soon as Housekeeping for example changes the status of a room to „clean“.





Thomas Behrendt, MD SI-SUITES

„The protel House-keeping app allows our teams to collaborate even more efficiently.“

***Thomas Behrendt,
managing director, SI-SUITES***

Thomas Behrendt, managing director of SI-SUITES did not want to keep this speedy exchange of information from his employees. „When the manager asked me if I wanted to use the app, I immediately said yes“, says Sergio Montagner, maintenance manager. For the past eight years, he has been responsible for the minor and major maintenance and repair jobs as well as construction sites throughout the hotel. He says that he bears little relation to smartphones, but that he likes being no longer chained to his PC. „I am always on the go. I am just not a pen pusher - I don't like working at a desk“, he says strongly favoring the mobile solution. Anyone accompanying him for a while during his daily errands will be quick to agree with him. Sergio Montagner coordinates the various repair teams during renovations, manages the spare parts and furniture inventories, while taking on small repairs throughout the hotel. He really doesn't have any time to sit around.

Smooth introduction

Front office manager, Anja Neumeister accompanied the introduction of the app to the hotel. She says that it was very important for her to know that the app can effectively support her colleagues in their everyday work around the hotel. „The phase-in of the app went well,“ she says. „Because the app is so easy to understand, I only needed to take the key points from the help in the app and summarize them for the team“, explains Anja Neumeister. Since then, the hotel's two housekeepers, two repairmen, and the hotel's facility manager work with the app on a daily basis. The repairman, José Gálvez Gaona has only been using the app for the past three days. „I've still got to get used to it, but the fact that I no longer have to constantly call or go to the front desk is already a

great help,“ he says. The front office manager adds, „the reception employees are also benefiting from it. Before we started using the app, the housekeeping and maintenance teams always had to contact us and ask if a room was occupied.“ Now time is saved on both sides because they are able to find out this information by themselves. In addition to that, she said that the front desk employees can now see if a room has already been cleaned and is ready for an early check-in.

Creating a great guest experience

The time saved can be used to offer individual services for the various guests staying at the SI-SUITES. International business travelers staying at the hotel during the week are replaced by weekend tourists visiting Stuttgart or attending the many musicals the city has to offer. About a third of the guests are long-term guests who often develop a rather friendly relationship with the hotel's employees. It is this guest-mix which is most appealing to many of the employees, says Anja Neumeister. There have been many wonderful encounters again and again throughout the years. For example, a family got used to allowing their baby to crawl behind the front desk while they went to have breakfast. It therefore came as no surprise that the parents also invited the hotel employees to their baby's birthday party.

The individually designed rooms and suites reflect that SI-SUITES is dedicated to meeting the wishes and desires of every guest – large or small. For families, there are Kids-Suites equipped with a separate children's room, play couch, and an extra low sink for the hotel's little guests; there are also thematic rooms and suites such as lady rooms, musical suites as well as lavish classic and executive suites where guests can feel at home. The different kinds of suites for the many kinds of guests lead to many explicit demands being directed towards housekeeping.

For example, children staying at SI-SUITES receive a personal welcoming gift suited for their age group. The housekeeping team receives a trace generated by the reception employees



Welcoming gifts for kids

describing which welcoming gift is to be placed in which suite. Traces are little tasks or reminders which can be sent to the various departments in the hotel by means of the hotel software. In the app, housekeeping can then access all of the housekeeping traces for that respective day. As soon as the children's welcoming gifts have been placed in the appropriate suite, housekeeping can use the app to set the trace to „done“. Previously, the traces list had to be printed out and picked up in the front office in the morning. Later, housekeeping came back with the checked-off list, and the changed statuses then needed to be manually transferred into the hotel software. By using the app, traces can not only be taken care of, but additional traces can now also be immediately issued throughout the day without the front desk having to constantly consult with the employees. „The traces allow you to keep your eye on what has already been taken care of,“ says Zeljka Schubert of housekeeping. “This reduces the possible overlapping of information within the team, and the front desk is immediately informed about which tasks have already been completed,“ she says.

There is nothing lost that cannot be found

Every drawer and wardrobe is carefully scrutinized by housekeeping when inspecting the rooms. Did one of the little guests forget a toy? Jasmina Baur and Zeljka Schubert inspect about 20 to 30 rooms on a daily basis. Anything that had been overseen by the cleaning crew will definitely be discovered by their meticulous eye. They use their iPhones to take a picture of the forgotten item and a Lost & Found entry is generated in the app. Anja Neumeister, front office manager, especially likes this function. Previously, when something had been found, a short description of the object needed to be jotted down on slip of paper. „Now all we need to do is take a picture of it,“ she says. Pictures, which are available in the app and in the protel hotel management system at the front office, are especially helpful.

She goes on to say that the images play an equally vital role with maintenance tasks. Instead of having to look for the dead light bulb, the photo will instantly show which light fixture needs a new bulb. According to Sergio Montagner, there is another advantage. „The photographs enable me to see exactly which room fixture needs replacing or repair and let me go to the room with the

appropriate equipment in hand. This saves me an extra trip. Now, I also receive an email when a new maintenance task has been created, which is really great and I can now react even quicker,“ says Montagner.



Spotted and reported ...



... identified and replaced

The speed at which protel's Messenger notification now allows him to react still amazes his colleague Zeljka Schubert to no end. Checking the lamps and drawers in a room, she enters a missing light bulb as a maintenance task. Only a few minutes later, on her way to the next room, she meets Sergio Montagner coming out of the elevator with the new light bulb in hand. When he receives a new maintenance notification and the app informs him that the room has not yet been occupied, he tries to make the repairs as quickly as possible so that a pristine room awaits the next guest. For Sergio Montagner, the small repairs are just as important as the major renovation work currently being done at the hotel. „Only satisfied guests will return to stay in the new rooms we are furnishing at the moment“, he says.

The future is mobile

The hotel is also investing in improving its Internet service. Even though Wi-Fi is available everywhere throughout the hotel, SI-SUITES is already making new plans for the future. „We are participating in a project called Future Hotel where we are particularly interested in automatic check-in and check-out, opening doors and managing room controls by means of an app,“ explains Thomas Behrendt, the hotel's managing director. These topics will be researched and discussed together with larger hotel chains and Fraunhofer who are all participating in this project. In the future, if SI-SUITES guests are to be able to control the lights and blinds, as well as the temperature of their rooms by means of a mobile app, the Wi-Fi infra-

structure will need to be enhanced. The positive experiences made with protel Housekeeping are just the beginning for additional mobile solutions planned for the hotel in the future.



Since hoga-data, protel's partner, acquired the hotel seven years ago,

SI-SUITES has continually expanded its hotel management system with add-on modules, interfaces, and apps. In order to reap the advantages gained from the available technology and to connect new features and products into the hotel's procedures most effectively, SI-SUITES and protel are in regular contact. The good cooperation is beneficial for both parties. „We have received very valuable feedback from Mr. Behrendt and Ms. Neumeister,“ says Christian Weis, director of product management at protel. “This has enabled protel to find the right solutions for SI-SUITES. In return have gathered many constructive suggestions for further developing our products,“ he says. „The communication with our clients and their own perspective towards new technologies is always incredibly useful to us. We are looking forward to implementing new innovative projects together with SI-SUITES,“ explains Christian Weis.

Always on the top of things

There are still additional options for using the Housekeeping app. Because the minibar is stocked by an outsourced company, the feature for booking the consumption from the minibar has not yet been utilized. This is, however, due to change soon, putting an end to the unpopular task of copying lists of consumed items from a slip of paper to the hotel management software. Instead, upon being entered in the app, consumed items will then be directly booked to the guest's invoice, thereby shortening the check-out procedure. All of these seemingly minor changes via automatic notifications, transmissions to the hotel software, and descriptions with photos, etc., result in major improvements in the everyday workings of the hotel. Even Thomas Behrendt uses the Housekeeping app every now and then. „I find it really useful when I can spontaneously show additional suites when giving tours to business clients. The app allows me to quickly check if the room is vacant,“ explains Thomas Behrendt.

All of the hotel's employees are very eager about applying

the technology to fit their own needs. „While I am still at home, I can already check to see which tasks have to be done,“ Jasmina Baur casually says. She can look at the status of the rooms and traces and is completely informed about what needs to be done before arriving at work and start her daily rounds at SI-SUITES.



Front office manager Anja Neumeister (on the right) and the SI-SUITES team

Apartment House SI Betriebs GmbH

Plieninger Straße 101-107
70567 Stuttgart

info@si-suites.de

T: +49 (0) 711/72 78 50

F: +49 (0) 711/72 78 78 555



SI-SUITES

Talk hotel business with us today!

protel hotelsoftware GmbH

Europaplatz 8
44269 Dortmund, Germany

info@protel.net

T: +49 231 915 93 0

F: +49 231 915 93 999



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