

Summary

OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">With travellers becoming more technologically savvy, Accor looked at ways to enhance service delivery by helping guests find the information they need more quickly and saving precious time while travellingThe chance to tap on Monscierge, a mobile concierge service that provides weather forecasts, flight updates and local tips, on both Android and iPhone device
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hotel worked with Monscierge to customise the content and interface for Ibis BencoolenQuick facts:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 18 months to roll out the implementation on Monscierge in Ibis Bencoolen✓ Estimated project cost of S\$13,000
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide unique selling point through this offering, improving guest experience through the provision of info 24/7Creation of a positive, engaging platform that is scalable, reliable, and cost-effectiveCost savings of since launch (Jan 2014): S\$1,800Reduced wait time for guests as they can find information without waiting for concierge to be availableTime saved for employees who are freed up from attending to requests (taken care of by Monscierge)

OPPORTUNITY

SEEKING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO SHARE ACCURATE, RELEVANT INFORMATION

According to Ibis, 73% of front desk questions are regarding local recommendations and information such as weather and flight information (for guests' current or future destinations). This means that front desk receptionists are often tied up answering such questions from guests. This has also led to wait times where guests end up waiting for an agent to be freed up to serve them.

"Whether on business or pleasure, we know that people's time is extremely precious especially when they want to experience as much as possible whilst away," said Karelle Lamouche, Ibis' Vice President of Marketing.

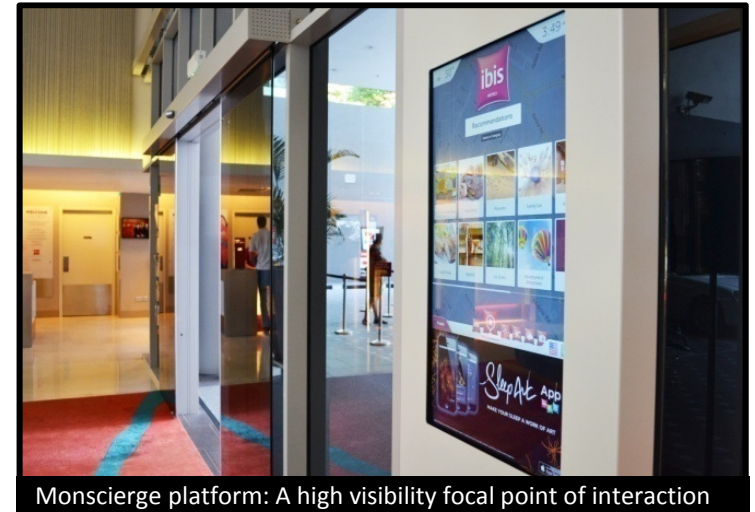
Ibis Bencoolen turned to innovation in technologies to seek a suitable solution such that guests can access easy self-help and that employees have a better tool to interact with guests and provide timely and accurate information. This takes into consideration the level of tech-savviness in today's guests.

During the Hospitality Industry Technology Exposition and Conference (HITEC) 2013, Accor announced partnering with hospitality technology group Monscierge, with aims to change behavioural patterns of guests and staff, creating new methods of guest-to-property engagement. This led to the launch of the Novotel Virtual Concierge, that was adapted for Ibis Bencoolen.

Since 20 January 2014, Ibis Bencoolen has rolled out the intelligent virtual concierge with Monscierge, a high visibility focal point where staff and guests can interact or guests can simply find their own information 24/7. The Virtual Concierge, was launched globally by Novotel in June 2013, is available on a screen in the lobby. The four connection points with guests are configured for optimal use:

1. **Planning** – Using a mobile platform to offer local recommendations/offers; reaching international guests using multilingual applications.
2. **Traveling & Pre-arrival check-in** – Connecting with guests via SMS messaging on arrival day for last minute requests, assistance and information. Pre-arrival coordination can be completed, saving time during the actual arrival process.
3. **Staying** – During the stay, guest have access to hotel information, services, and travel information, both onsite and off, using mobile devices.
4. **Checking out/end of journey** – Guests can perform check-out as well as keep access of their local favourites; they can also send digital postcards and messages to contacts.

The application continues to service the guests' departures with access to travel information and local recommendations that exists worldwide for future trip planning.



Monscierge platform: A high visibility focal point of interaction

Key Steps

- **Reviewing the role of technology in the hotel:** The hotel was looking into innovating its concierge service model to work under a lean front office team and most importantly, to personalise recommendations based on local languages to enhance guest experience.
- **Identifying a suitable vendor that meets the hotel's needs:** Ibis Bencoolen selects its partner very carefully; given that Monscierge is a leading expert in this field with many featured properties including hotels under the Accor group (the Novotel brand), it gives extra assurance on the partnership.
- **Customising software for the hotel:** Once the solution was determined, the GM and Front Office Manager worked to customise the solution to provide relevant information with local touches, without overwhelming the guests. There were content partners that the hotel identified and worked with to provide a variety of information.
- **Installing hardware:** There was a need for new hardware to maximise the guest interface; minimal drilling and wiring work was required and this was completed over a few days with minimal guest disruption.
- **Obtaining management and employee buy-in:** Accor had to educate employees on Monscierge and how it will enhance guest experience. At the property level, training was rolled out to ensure employees knew how to leverage this new tool and guide guests in using it.

Key Success Factors

- **A service quality committee driving this change:** There was a dedicated task force involved in integrating the Monscierge solution with the hotel's current systems and in installing the necessary hardware. The process of collecting feedback and improving the system was undertaken by the committee to ensure follow-through and coordination with the vendor.
- **Employee communication and education:** As part of launching this new technology, employees were educated on the benefits of learning how to use the Monscierge interface. Their familiarity and buy-in was key in getting the guests to interact with the technology.
- **Management being open to change and new innovation:** While most hotels are hesitant to move away from the traditional concierge desk manned by a human staff, Ibis Bencoolen has embraced the change by focusing on what the customers truly need (i.e. timely, accurate info) and finding innovative ways to meet those needs, instead of holding onto what has been common practice over the years.

Project period: The process of implementing this solution took about 18 months; completed in Jan 2014.

Estimated cost: Ibis Bencoolen spent approximately S\$13,000 to implement the Monscierge solution (software and hardware).

RESULTS

FASTER, MORE INTUITIVE SERVICE FOR HOTEL GUESTS

- **Enhanced service offering through technology:** With Monscierge, guests who may prefer to help themselves instead of engaging hotel employees to find out information may do so with convenience and ease. This also allows accurate information to be delivered to guests without having to worry if all employees have been fully updated on any changes/new events happening in town. While employee interaction with guest still remains a key touch-point, Monscierge serves as an enabling tool such that employees have up-to-date information at their fingertips.
- **High level of adoption by guests and high level of touches:** As of April 2014, there has been a total of ~750 guests per month who used the service provided by Monscierge; popular uses (as tracked by number of touches/interactions) include searching for information on the locale, directions, flight details etc.
- **Time saved for employees; waiting time reduced for guests:** Waiting time for guest to get information is reduced with the use of Monscierge, especially when reception desk agents are attending to other guests. There is also time saved for reception staff who are now not required to assist with all of these requests. Time saved per month as of March and April 2014 are 1,651 minutes and 1,352 minutes respectively; the corresponding amount saved approximates at S\$191 and S\$156. Cumulative cost savings from January to April 2014 was about S\$1,800, but there were more intangible benefits yet to be quantified, such as enhanced service offerings through the reduction in wait time for guests, as well as richer, more updated content that enriches the guests' local experience.