**Prior to the implementation of the Micros-Citibank Payment Gateway solution, front office staff are required to do numerous process manually as follows:**

**Check in:** Front office staff are required to manually calculate the pre-authorization amounts required for each guest’s stay and also manually key in guest credit card information into the Opera Property Management System (PMS).

**Check-out:** Front office staff are required to manually cancel and refund unused pre-authorization amounts to guest.

**End-of-shift:** In addition, as the above check-in and check-out procedures are done manually, to ensure no errors, front office staff are also required to perform end-of-shift verification to reconcile the payments and pre-authorization amounts made during their shift.

A review was conducted to improve the check-in process for both hotels, a process review of credit card and pre-authorisation amount were highlighted as areas of potential improvement.

Automating the pre-authorisation will impact the check in, check out process and time spent for each agent closing their cashier at the end of a shift.

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**Summary**

**OPPORTUNITY**

A process review of credit card and pre-authorisation of credit card amount was highlighted as an area of potential improvement when a review was carried out to improve the check-in process. This includes the knock-on effects of pre-authorisation amount that has impacted the check-out process and time spent for each agent closing their cashier at the end of a shift.

**ACTION**

Micros Payment Gateway (MPG) automates several areas: calculating the preauthorisation amount needed for each hotel stay transaction, automatically updating the preauthorisation amount when a guest consumes more than calculated, facilitates quicker payment on check-out and cancelling the pre-authorisation amount when the guest has departed (normally a manual scanning and faxing process).

**RESULTS**

- Baseline for the average Check In and Check Out Combined: 494 seconds
- Time savings at each hotel: Swissotel The Stamford - 351 seconds (28.9% improvement)
  - Fairmont Singapore – 394 seconds (20% improvement)
- The average cashier closing timing was also reduced at each hotel from a baseline of 20 minutes:
  - Swissotel the Stamford – take an average 15 minutes (25% improvement)
  - Fairmont Singapore – take an average of 13 minutes (35% improvement)
Discussing this with various credit card bank merchant, the opportunity of credit card payment gateways using Property Management software interfaces arose.

This Payment Gateway would result in automating several areas:
- Calculating the preauthorisation amount needed for each hotel stay transaction, reducing the guesswork by agents on the desk during check in.
- Automatically updating the preauthorisation amount when a guest spends beyond the calculated, pre-authorised amount on the card.
- The holding amount also results in facilitating quicker payment upon checkout.
- By making the charging more automated, the closing of credit transactions component of a Front Office Agent’s cashier would become more straightforward.
- Cancelling the pre-authorisation amount when the guest has departed (normally a manual scanning and faxing process) reduces manning required for this highly administrative process.
Key Success Factors

- Credit card merchant bank had the available technology, knowhow and experience to implement
- Availability of Property Management System consultants to implement
- Coordination with Finance and Front Office Teams with IT to ensure training and familiarisation of new systems take place
- Conscientious attendance by all end users of training to familiarise themselves in the change of system and process
- Strong communication lines with the Credit card merchant bank, PMS consultant, IT and end users to troubleshoot.

**Project period:** 1 month planning, 2 months implementation, 3 months review and stabilisation

**Estimated cost:** S$40,000

### RESULTS

**IMPROVEMENT OF PROCESS TIMES FOR FRONT OFFICE AGENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swissotel the Stamford</th>
<th>Fairmont Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline 1:</strong> Average Check In and Check Out Combined: 494 seconds</td>
<td><strong>Baseline 1:</strong> Average Check In and Check Out Combined: 494 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Swissotel the Stamford improved time to 351 seconds (28.9% improvement)</td>
<td>- Fairmont improved time to 394 seconds (20% improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With an average of 173 Credit Card Transactions at Checkout for Swissotel, this saving equates to:</td>
<td>With an average of 84 Credit card transactions for Fairmont and 173 for Swissotel, this saving equates to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swissotel Baseline: 494 X 173 = 85,462 seconds</td>
<td>Fairmont Baseline: 494 X 84 = 41,496 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swissotel Improved Timing: 351 X 173 = 60,723 seconds</td>
<td>Fairmont Improved Timing 394 X 84 = 33,096 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference: 24,739 seconds per day / 6 hours &amp; 52 mins of man-hours savings a day</td>
<td>Difference: 8400 seconds per day or 2 hours &amp; 20 mins of man-hours savings a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Baseline 2:** Average cashier closing timing: 20 minutes | **Baseline 2:** Average cashier closing timing: 20 minutes |
| Swissotel improved time to 15 minutes (25% improvement) per Front Officer Agent | Fairmont improved time to 13 minutes (35% improvement) per Front Office Agent |