

## MANAGING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY – RESPONSE TO GROWING CONSUMER PREFERENCES

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The emergence of smartphones and tablet devices and their burgeoning annual growth worldwide opens the question of exploiting their convenience in various industries. It would be erroneous to ignore the fact that new generations of consumers are standing on the doorstep of our destination. One of the innovation capabilities which mobile devices can possess is Near Field Communication (NFC), a wireless connectivity technology that enables the exchange of data between compatible electronic devices. The main objective of this paper is to propose a model for enhancing hotel service quality and customer experience by using several simple and highly secure solutions offered by NFC technology, the implementation of which has a great deal of potential.

**Methodology** – To develop and propose a conceptual model of NFC - Innovative technology in the hotel industry and expose possible relationships between innovation management and the hotel industry, particular attention is paid to exploring the appropriate theoretical background. Furthermore, to obtain qualitative data from the targeted tourist destination, i.e., Opatija Region hotel enterprises, a semi-structured interview was conducted with hotel general managers, or the management representatives they indicated in the hotel's location.

**Findings** – The results of the research reveal deficiency in the innovation activity of hotels in past three years with regard to the propulsive and dynamic technological environment and to boosting consumer demand. Research confirms the possibility and willingness of the managerial structure to implement NFC innovative technology which can potentially enhance productivity and future hotel business performance. While higher levels of customer satisfaction and competitive advantage driven by proposed innovative technology were recognised, several constraints to implementation were emphasised as well.

**Contribution** – This paper outlines a novel concept of product/service innovation supported by smartphone or tablet devices capabilities. A more holistic approach to Near Field Communication technology and its possibilities reveals great potential for implementation in the hotel industry, as well as interactive usability with various stakeholders in a destination. This paper also contributes to the understanding of innovation and innovation types in hospitality management and highlights the importance of high-quality customer service encouraged by innovative efforts. This conceptual model of NFC - innovative technology can be used as a platform for future strategies and destination management plans.

**Keywords** Near Field Communication (NFC), innovation management, hotel industry, mobile devices

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