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Simplify the Transition to Mobile Access

INDIANAPOLIS, July 19, 2021 – Transitioning to mobile access solutions for hotel properties is becoming the norm to meet the expectations of tech savvy travelers. Understanding how to upgrade technology and the implementation process can be mystifying to many independent hoteliers.

Mobile access strategy development uses a well-defined, three-step approach based on these fundamental questions:

1. What do guests want?
2. Is the infrastructure mobile-ready?
3. Is the mobile key integration partner positioned to meet customer needs?

Understand the Guests

"The ideal mobile access guest is a frequent business traveler who wants to bypass the front desk check-in process," said David Ginn, Vice President, Hospitality Sales at dormakaba Americas. "Typically, they are already mobile power users."

Tech-savvy guests appreciate a property that is a technology innovator because they:

- Have a high comfort level with smartphone use for purchases and an endless variety of apps.
- Opt to do things on their own.
- Prefer mobile booking, check-in/check-out and are prepared for mobile room keys.
- Are prime customers for revenue-generating amenities and services such as guest loyalty programs, room service, restaurant reservations, and spa visits.

Ginn further explains, that limited-service properties usually appeal to budget-conscious guests, typically not as concerned with amenities.

"These guests may not put a high value on a property's advanced technology," said Ginn. "RFID (radio frequency identification) door locks and key cards will simplify and enhance the guest experience while providing a platform for future mobile access implementation."

Mobile-Ready Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes a property's network (wireless and cable), property management system (PMS) and other property software applications. It also includes the staff required to establish an efficient mobile-ready property.

Questions that property managers and door and hardware professionals may consider before implementing mobile access are:

- Does the hotel have RFID BLE (Bluetooth low energy) door locks?
- Is the PMS mobile-ready?
- Do have access to an established loyalty program?
- Is the hotel staff trained? A marketing program for guests and a training program for staff are required.

Integration App Vendor

Major hotel brand franchisors provide their properties with mobile app-based programs and functionality. Independent hotels must rely on third-party app integration partners to package the functions and services (including secure mobile door keys) that a property wants to include in its mobile app.

The app experience must mirror or exceed a property's website or in-person guest experience. A property may consider asking the following key questions to potential integration partners:

- Does the app interface with the PMS for reservations, secure mobile key creation and room inventory notification from the preferred guest door lock provider?
- Will the app communicate with property systems for room booking, check-in/check-out, room service, housekeeping, in-room televisions and light and temperature controls?
- Does the app have flexibility to show frequently updated room rates, amenity and dining special offers?
- Can the integrator partner securely collaborate with the lock provider to deliver encrypted mobile keys?
- How does the app maintain and update the property's guest database with stay statistics (length, frequency, season) and where guest dollars are spent?
- What safeguards are in place for secure interface with the property's operations platform?

Security First

Shifting to a mobile access environment requires a corresponding shift in a hotel's approach to security. Under existing keycard systems, the hotel controls, and is responsible for, all security aspects including cards and activation procedures. Mobile keys change this.

In the mobile world, security extends to off-property entities. For example, when a property checks in a guest, the mobile access provider generates an encrypted mobile key credential. That credential, or key, moves through the app provider's platform to be delivered over a mobile carrier's network to a smartphone owned by the guest.

With multiple third-party systems involved, it is essential to closely examine security measures and responsibilities throughout the process.

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About dormakaba

dormakaba is one of the top three companies in the global market for access and security solutions. With strong brands such as Dorma and Kaba in our portfolio, we are a single source for products, solutions, and services related to doors and secure access to buildings and rooms. With around 16,000 employees and numerous cooperation partners, we are active in over 130 countries. dormakaba is headquartered in Rümlang (Zurich/Switzerland) and generates an annual turnover of over CHF 2 billion.

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