



DISTRIBUTION WITH A DIFFERENCE

A good central reservation system should increase occupancies, push up rates and get your product information in front of the right audience. Web-based technology makes this possible in real time.

A central reservation system quite simply places your product and prices in front of your market. It maximises occupancies at the highest rate by presenting live inventory and rates to clients and allowing for secure online payments in real time.

As the latest generation of central reservation systems, eRes® is the engine that powers up your marketing portal. Without it, your website is simply a digital brochure rather than a transactional tool.

HTI has 65 groups using its eRes® system, including the major hotel groups across Africa. Its motto is: "Judge us by the companies we keep."

Dieter Holle, GM of Tourvest Inbound Operations Solutions says you have properties on the one side and international tour operators on the other: as the middleman he is able to put them together via eRes® being integrated into their TourPlan reservations system.

"Your margin is always under threat, so you need to develop better work processes – i.e. automation – which we achieve with eRes®. It creates greater efficiencies across the entire system and it happens in real time. Our consultants can immediately see availability at the hotel. There are no emails going backwards and forwards and the booking is confirmed in one go. What would have taken 15 minutes now takes two minutes," Holle explains.

"You cannot have travel web related technology in the market these days without live inventory. Our focus is on overseas large-scale agents. They are able to integrate with Tourvest Inbound Operation's system and this really gains in value with 'live' inventory available via it. It is all about link-

ing up information – you get your availability and rates out to more tour operators and agents with eRes®," says Holle.

Bryan Mulliner, strategic development and revenue director at Protea Hospitality Group, says of their choice to use eRes®: "We went through a lengthy evaluation process to provide a distribution platform that would allow our guests to book on the channel of their choice in real time. To conclude a reservation, they need real time connectivity on a booking engine that once they have made the reservation, it is confirmed and delivered to the hotel at the same time."

He goes on to explain: "Ultimately we chose eRes® because it met our distribution requirements and it gave us a Rand-based distribution cost – this was key for us. All the other platforms were potentially going to be dollar-based. It is more than a central reservation system for us – it is our inventory distribution platform."

Mulliner says benefits include: guests have a wider choice of places that they can find Protea Hotels inventory and Protea Hotels have a cost effective way to distribute their inventory across multiple channels at the same time.

"The more that you can get your inventory exposed, the easier it is to book. It also allows us to be able to revenue manage across channels."

Nic Griffin, CEO of The Thornybush Collection, says: "We looked at what other successful players were using, because that to us was an indication of the effectiveness and the adequacy of the system. We saw that eRes® was clearly becoming the market leader. We met with the people who operate and run the business and were impressed

by the level of participation and expertise from the management team. They are way ahead of the rest of the pack as far as the South African scene is concerned."

The Thornybush Collection consists of seven different types of game lodges, each with their own degree of individualism. One is an exclusive use lodge and the others book out suites. This means a degree of flexibility is required in the central reservations system to meet the needs of all seven lodges, explains Griffin.

Customers can either come through to The Thornybush Collection call centre or book directly online.

"The other important thing, in my view, when you're linking into technology, is the percentage of downtime, and that is minimal. The eRes® system is almost 100% up when we need to use it and management is very accessible when we do require assistance," he adds.

André Richards, MD of eRes® Development at HTI, sums up:

fact file

Hospitality Technology International (HTI) is the leading developer of software systems in Africa, servicing 12 countries across the continent. They produce programmes designed specifically for the hospitality industry.

The various systems include: eRes® central reservations system; GroupView relationship, marketing and loyalty programme; Apex and eResOrbit property management systems; and PlusPoint point of sale and stock control system.

All of HTI's systems are integrated, easy to use and backed up by ongoing service, support and training. HTI is a local company operating at international standards.

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"eRes® crystallises how you focus on your market, where your customers come from and how to improve your revPAR."

