

The Connected Hotel

From Cost Center to Competitive Edge: AI and Managed Connectivity in Hospitality



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→ The state of AI readiness in the hospitality industry

48%

of hotels rank improving guest experience as their number 1 digital transformation priority.



42%

cite shortage of digital skills as their top barrier to AI execution.



39%

of hoteliers who have adopted edge computing say their top benefit is support for AI/GenAI initiatives.



Source: IDC Syndicated Survey 2026: Retail Technologies and Business Processes Trends; hotel respondents



AI at the property level: How hotels are rewiring ROI

Hotels are navigating a paradox. Global brands are posting record profits, yet at the individual property level, AI adoption often adds cost before cutting it. The talent to deploy advanced AI applications is scarce, the data to feed it is siloed, and the network to run it is often unmanaged. AI is reshaping every layer of the hotel experience from dynamic pricing and guest personalization to frontline workforce

scheduling and unified communications, but AI only works when the network underneath it is fast, secure, and intelligently managed. Managed network services, combining SD-WAN, managed Wi-Fi, cybersecurity, and unified communications, give hotel operators the infrastructure to turn their AI ambitions into measurable ROI, without adding IT headcount.

AI imperatives must overcome persistent execution gaps

Hotel operators broadly accept that AI investment is necessary. The harder question is how to execute well. In addition to the issues of talent shortages to manage and deploy AI, operational data often sits in disconnected systems, and many properties are running network infrastructure that was never designed for the data volumes and latency demands AI requires. Real-time data access is the basic requirement for AI to function at scale, and it depends on a high-performance managed network. Many hotels are most exposed on exactly that point, still running aging IP infrastructure that has not kept pace with their broader technology ambitions.

AI investment is accelerating with or without the infrastructure to support it

Despite barriers such as cost and a lack of digital talent, hotel operators remain committed to investing in AI, with 40% of hotels already investing in agentic AI, while the 58% of those haven't are saying they plan to. One of the key risks hoteliers face in this race to adopt agentic AI is that every AI workload runs on the network, and investment inherently outpaces the network and security infrastructure required to support it while protecting guest data. These AI investments require connectivity, security, and managed infrastructure to deliver on their promises.

Record profits at the brand, rising costs at the property

Global hotel brands are posting record profits, but property-level operators are working through a different set of pressures. AI adoption, still in the early stages at most properties, is often adding

to operating expenses before reducing them, leaving many operators with legitimate questions about near-term value. Labor efficiency is where that tension is sharpest: More than a third of hotel operators (34%) cite high labor costs from limited task automation as an urgent operational challenge, and the pressure to deliver attentive, personalized service with small teams is not easing. AI's ROI case in hospitality is, at its core, a labor story, and it only becomes measurable when the managed network and unified communications infrastructure are in place to support it.

Security is not an opt-out when AI meets guest data

As hotels add AI, IoT devices, smart cameras, and guest-facing digital touchpoints, the attack surface grows. Security investment is accelerating, but many properties lack the enterprise-grade managed security posture required for integrated systems. Hotel technology ecosystems require integrated, managed security frameworks across their networks. Hotels are not deploying technology in isolation; they're building integrated property environments that include guest Wi-Fi, staff communications, smart building sensors, security cameras, and property management system integration, all running on the same network. The hotel network is supporting not only guest engagement initiatives but also employee experience and operations. Nearly half of hotels (45%) expect connectivity investments to improve worker productivity and collaboration, and 43% expect them to improve the customer experience. This ubiquitous network connection requires that security is non-negotiable and not an area for uncertainty; hotels are increasingly leaning on service partners to bolster their security postures. IDC data shows that 39% of hotels plan to invest in managed security services.

Message from the sponsor



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