At HITEC, revenue management tools focused on diversification

BY NICOLE CARLINO

LOS ANGELES—At this year's Hospitality Industry Technology Exposition and Conference (HITEC), held at the Los Angeles Convention Center here, revenue-minded companies focused on diversification—whether that's through segmentation or expansion of potential markets.

Stacie Bushaw, sales representative for NAVIS, a reservation sales system, marketing automation, data analysis and CRM provider, noted that data is critical to generating and managing revenue. "The core of our products is Narrowcast, which is a reservation sales solution and it is designed to help independent hotels drive more direct business through the voice channel… We're the infrastructure that helps them maximize and optimize the efficiency of their agents—delivering data and analytics on calls." Bushaw noted that NAVIS captures data on all callers regardless of whether they book. "Right now, hotels are recording book data in their property management systems, but data on people that had interest but didn't book, they're writing on a piece of scratch paper that eventually gets put in the trash. We help automate that, which allows us to provide them with an immense amount of data for revenue management strategies, for targeted remarketing, for concierge call backs to shoppers."

With the emphasis on data, the company launched its Reach data marketing CRM solution at HITEC. "The newest product we're launching here is called Reach. It is a one-to-one CRM platform that allows on-site marketing directors and marketing managers to actually access, clean hygiene data to be able to do targeted one-to-one marketing to individuals," said Bushaw. Reach enables hotel and resort operators to combine information from multiple systems to create effective revenue-generating email campaigns and verify results in real time, according to the company. Reach captures guest information and lead data, cleans and de-dupes the names, removes pre-bookings and automatically groups people into households. NAVIS provides email templates or operators may create their own campaign formats.

"It's installed in a number of properties already," said Jason Ring, Reach specialist. "Right now, in the hospitality industry, service platforms and email service providers are a really big business. It's the icing on the cake, it's not the thing; the thing is data warehousing. If you can clean data and keep it stored in a clean environment, then you can do anything you want to it." Ring noted that Reach focuses on segmentation, creating profiles for guests so the hotel can utilize effective revenue strategies. "You add one layer of segmentation and open rate for emails climbs from typically 23% to 35%," he said. "So we just kept taking it further and further, until our lists would literally go from 300,000 to 200 people and the open rates were in the 70% range. More segmentation works better, so we said let's go as far as we possibly can." He noted that the properties that have already installed the solution paid for the system in the first 30 days of the whole year. "It's all found money from then on," he said.

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SiteMinder

Cendyn/ONE also emphasized the importance of using data to target specific individuals as part of a revenue strategy, introducing the Data Intelligence platform and methodology at the show. The newly launched subsidiary of Cendyn provides a fully integrated cloud-based software and services platform and offers a single integrated view of guest history, value, behavior, desire, intent and engagement. Cendyn/ONE allows marketers to capture, store and analyze a hotel or brand's unique data, and the company's team of data integration, analysis and optimization experts combine first and third party data sources to create dynamically generated, one-to-one marketing across all digital channels, according to the company.

Sceptre Hospitality Resources (SHR) also offered a sneak peek at WAYV, a new location services app scheduled for release later this year. The app can be configured to offer services and special offers based on the guest's location in relation to the hotel, which can lead to increased revenue, said the company. With the guest's permission, WAYV will know when the guest arrives at key locations defined by the hotel. These place events will trigger notifications on the guest's phone, offering upgrades and other offers. Using geofencing and iBeacon technology, the hotel can define and configure these locations and offerings.

Meanwhile, Sydney-based SiteMinder used HITEC to further advance the launch of its U.S. operation. The company, which is in 136 countries and has roughly 13,000 hotel customers, recently opened an office in Dallas. Mike Ford, co-founder and CEO, noted that up until now, the company's focus was on Asia-Pacific and Europe. "With Dallas, we're going to have the sales and support capacity here, so it's going to ramp up," he said. "Our initial office has a capacity of about 60 people so we aim to have a serious sales and support operation here. In terms of customer goals, I would like to see the U.S. making up at least 20% of our revenue within the next 12 months. At the moment it's probably split more about 5% from the U.S. and 55% from Europe and the rest from Asia-Pacific. I anticipate we'll probably be much more significant than 20% within the next couple of years. We aim to be very aggressive in the U.S.

"We've been working with a lot of technology partners with distribution in the U.S. for quite some time, but it's good to have a presence here and we're now engaging with the hoteliers more directly," he continued. "We provide two major benefits: exposure to guests and more revenue, and also streamlining their business process and reducing the cost of acquisition because they no longer have to have 20 people handling reservations." He noted that the SiteMinder platform, in addition to connecting to outside channels, can help hotels advance direct bookings in platforms like Google Hotel Finder, change rates and connect bookings to the PMS seamlessly, as well as handle currency conversion, among other solutions. **HB**