The Best Practice Series - White Paper 1

From Digital Tool to Operating Model

How a clear champion, distributed expertise and continuous governance improve hotel operations

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Hotel MSSNGR

Executive Summary

A digital guest platform can publish information, accept requests and make services bookable. Those functions matter, but they do not determine whether the platform improves the hotel operation. What matters is whether the organisation has changed the way it works around the technology.

A durable operating model begins with a clear champion. In this paper, the champion is the person who owns Hotel MSSNGR in the hotel's day-to-day operation: setting direction, coordinating standards and protecting the overall guest journey. That person does not remain the sole operator. Knowledge is deliberately distributed to the teams closest to the content and the guest need, whose experts maintain their own areas within shared rules.

Distributing responsibility reduces the internal handovers that slow routine communication. Teams no longer need to pass every update through another department before it reaches the guest. They can act within agreed standards, resolve simple needs through digital self-service, and use shared governance to address exceptions. Routine requests take less staff time, leaving more time for conversations and decisions that require human attention.

The paper explains how hotels can turn a digital tool into an operating model. It covers the champion's role, distributed expertise, adoption, governance, efficiency and the balance between self-service and personal service. The conclusion is: technology creates durable value when responsibility is explicit, capability is shared, and the guest environment is treated as a living operational product.

This paper is based on a real operating case at a specific hotel. At the hotel's request, the property is not named and identifying details have been removed. The operating practices and lessons presented here remain grounded in that hotel's experience[1].

[1]Internal implementation information supplied by Hotel MSSNGR for this paper.

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Introduction: Why Digital Tools Need Operating Models

Many digital projects are evaluated at launch. The platform is configured, content is uploaded, employees are trained and the project is considered complete. Yet the moment of launch is only the beginning. Hotel information changes constantly. Services evolve, opening times move, seasonal offers appear, teams change and guest questions reveal gaps that were not visible during implementation.

Without an operating model, the platform gradually becomes less useful. Content grows without being curated. One person accumulates knowledge that others cannot access. Departments continue to depend on central teams for routine updates. Employees stop trusting the information, and guests return to telephone calls, printed material or repeated questions at the desk.

A sustainable digital guest journey depends on management choices about who may decide, who maintains which information, how standards are enforced and how the organisation learns from usage. The technology becomes valuable when those choices remove friction from everyday work.

1 A Champion Comes Before Adoption

A hotel cannot expect consistent use of a digital guest platform if no one is clearly accountable for its performance. The champion's role is broader than holding access rights. The champion defines the purpose of the platform, establishes the initial structure, aligns departments and decides what a good guest experience should look like.

A strong champion also needs practical authority. If every content change, process adjustment or service decision requires a long approval chain, the platform will always lag behind the operation. The champion should be able to resolve routine questions, set quality standards and bring unresolved trade-offs to the appropriate leadership forum. Illustration 1 shows this relationship schematically.



Illustration 1: An accountable internal champion gives adoption a clear starting point before the platform becomes routine.

The champion should not control every detail; the role is to keep the whole environment coherent. The champion gives the organisation a point of accountability; the role should not create a new bottleneck.

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“Appoint one responsible person and keep everything actively up to date.”[2]

— Hotel manager, translated and edited for clarity

The management question

Can one person explain what the platform is expected to achieve, who is responsible for each operating area and how success is assessed? If the answer is unclear, adoption problems are usually symptoms of a governance problem rather than a training problem.

2 A Champion Should Build Capability Not Dependency

During implementation, concentrated knowledge is useful. A central champion learns the system, creates the first content and understands how the pieces fit together. The risk appears when this concentration becomes permanent. The platform may work, but only as long as one person is available to maintain it.

The more mature model treats the champion as a capability builder. Knowledge moves outward to the people who understand each service and process. The central champion becomes a coach, quality supervisor and connection to the technology provider. Departmental contributors become confident enough to maintain their own areas within shared rules. Illustration 2 shows this relationship schematically.

A champion builds lasting capability by spreading knowledge, protecting shared standards and helping departments operate confidently without depending on one person.

[2]Interview with an anonymised hotel manager, conducted by Konstantin Schlüter in October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

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Illustration 2: The champion strengthens the hotel by distributing capability while protecting shared standards and a coherent guest experience.

Success is not measured by how many tasks pass through the champion. The model is stronger when the organisation can operate reliably without constant intervention from that person. Illustration 3 shows the intended relationship: the champion holds the standards and connects teams, while departmental experts remain responsible for their own operating areas.

3 Distributed Expertise Reduces Internal Handoffs

Traditional hotel communication often crosses several departmental boundaries before it reaches the guest. An operating team knows that information has changed, but another team controls the publication channel. A third person may need to adjust a booking process or confirm availability. Each handoff creates delay, duplicated work and the possibility of inconsistency.

Distributed responsibility shortens that route. The teams closest to the service can update relevant information, manage bookable capacity and respond to recurring questions directly. A shared platform then becomes both a guest channel and an internal coordination layer.

The objective is not decentralisation without control. Each contributor needs a defined scope, a common content standard and a clear escalation route. Within those boundaries, autonomy allows the organisation to move faster while preserving a consistent guest experience.

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In practice, responsibility can be divided as follows.

Responsibility	Responsible role	Evidence of control
Purpose and standards	Central champion	Clear objectives, decision rights and quality rules
Service content	Departmental subject matter experts	Accurate current information and named accountability
Daily process	The team delivering the service	Defined steps, handovers and exception handling
Adoption	Department leaders	Use embedded in onboarding routines and coaching
Performance	Central champion with leadership	Regular review of usage, efficiency and guest outcomes

Table 1: A clear champion and distributed responsibility keep Hotel MSSNGR coherent.



Illustration 3: The champion holds shared standards while capability moves outward to departmental experts.

> **“Every department can now act independently and no longer needs another department in order to communicate with guests.”[3]**
>
> *— Hotel manager, translated and edited for clarity*

[3]Anonymised hotel-manager interview, October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

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4 Governance Keeps the Guest Environment Useful

Digital content is not a one-time asset. Information accumulates, services change and an environment that once felt simple can become difficult to navigate. Continuous governance prevents that decay.

The organisation needs a regular rhythm for reviewing questions, correcting errors and prioritising improvements. Urgent issues should be resolved when they arise; broader decisions can be handled through the established management cadence. Both paths need to be explicit. Employees should know what they can fix immediately and what requires wider agreement. Illustration 4 shows this relationship schematically.

Keep the guest environment useful through clear ownership, timely corrections and deliberate removal of information that no longer serves the stay.



Illustration 4: Clear ownership, regular review and purposeful removal keep the digital guest environment useful and current.

Governance should also include purposeful removal. More content is not automatically more useful. Teams need to ask whether information still reflects the operation, whether guests can find the next step and whether older material is obscuring what matters now. Curation is part of service quality.

Three governance disciplines

- Current content. Each operating area is responsible for accuracy and timely updates.
- Consistent experience. The central champion protects tone, structure, usability and brand standards.
- Continuous improvement. Usage patterns, employee feedback and guest questions become a managed improvement backlog.

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5 Efficiency Is Capacity, Not Only Cost Reduction

Operational efficiency is often discussed as a headcount or cost question. In guest service, a more useful measure is capacity. Can the hotel handle a growing volume of information, requests and bookable experiences without increasing manual coordination at the same rate?

A digital guest platform creates capacity when it takes over repeatable work. Guests can find routine information, understand available options and complete straightforward requests without waiting for an employee to recreate the same explanation. Teams spend less time maintaining parallel documents, answering repeated questions and transferring information between departments.

One of the largest efficiency gains comes from Hotel MSSNGR's CMS feeding multiple channels from one maintained source. The same service information, activity or offer can supply the guest app, web app, screens and selected print outputs without being recreated channel by channel. A single correction can therefore update every connected touchpoint. For hotels with broad, frequently changing content, this removes substantial duplicate entry, version checking and rework while reducing the risk of inconsistent information. Illustration 5 shows the operating logic: one maintained source distributes the same approved information across connected outputs.

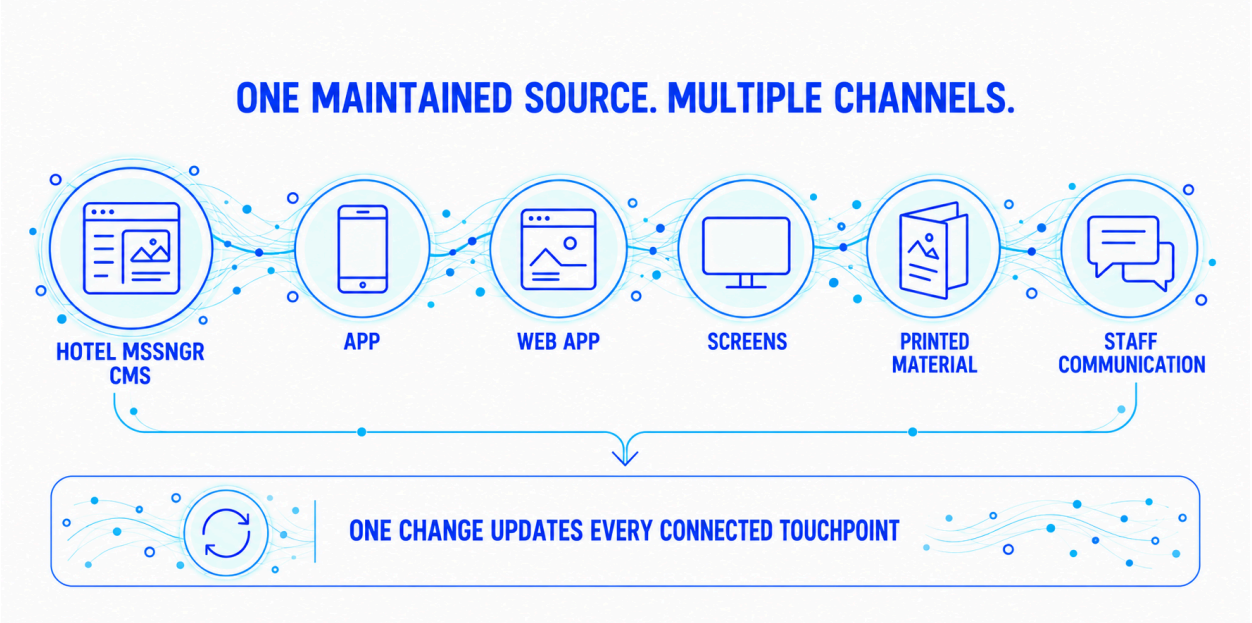


Illustration 5: One maintained CMS source feeds every connected guest and staff channel.

The benefit depends on where the saved time goes: faster issue resolution, more thoughtful recommendations and more attention to guests whose needs are complex or personal. The aim is to separate routine administration from genuine hospitality, not to remove service.

Measures that reveal operational value

- Time required to publish or correct guest information across connected channels
- Number of manual handoffs and duplicate channel updates needed for routine changes

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- Volume of repeated questions and simple service requests handled by employees
- Share of relevant services with a named person responsible for content and process
- Speed from identified issue to corrected guest experience
- Employee confidence in using the platform as part of daily work

“The workload has increased, but we still manage it in the same amount of time.”[4]

— Hotel manager, translated and edited for clarity

6 Digital Self-Service Can Make Hospitality More Personal

Digital and personal service are often presented as alternatives. In practice, they can reinforce each other. Guests who prefer independence can explore information and complete simple tasks at their own pace. Employees remain available when judgement, reassurance or a relationship matters.

The distinction should be based on the nature of the need. Standard information, clear choices and uncomplicated requests are well suited to self-service. Emotionally sensitive situations, complex decisions and service recovery require a person. The platform should make the first category easy so employees have more capacity for the second.

The same operating model can accommodate different guest preferences. Some guests want to plan quietly before arrival. Others will ask an employee even when a digital route is available. A coherent operating model supports both without forcing teams to maintain separate versions of the truth. Illustration 6 shows the complementarity: digital self-service, employee conversation and service fulfilment are routes through one process, not competing service models.

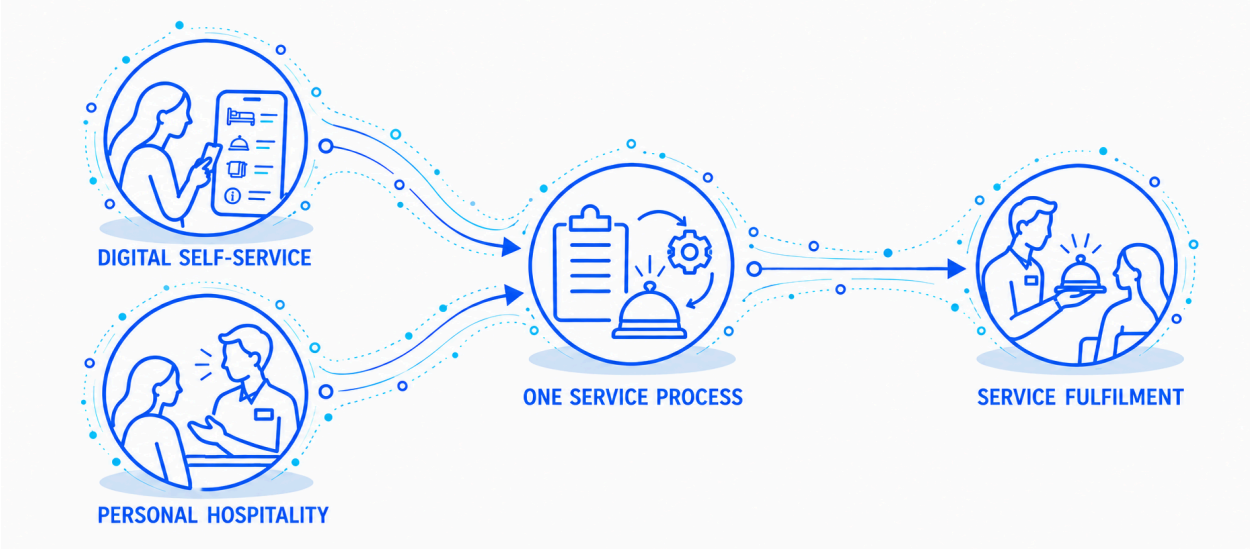


Illustration 6: Digital self-service and personal hospitality converge into one service process before fulfilment.

[4]Anonymised hotel-manager interview, October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

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“It actually becomes more personal because we have an app.”[5]

— Hotel manager, translated and edited for clarity

7 Adoption Must Be Designed Into the Journey

Guests do not use a platform simply because it exists. They use it when the hotel makes it visible, relevant and useful at the moments when a decision needs to be made. Adoption therefore depends on the complete guest journey, not on a single launch message.

The digital environment should appear naturally across pre-arrival communication, arrival and conversations during the stay. Employees need to understand the benefit well enough to recommend it confidently. The next step must be obvious: read the information, make a request, reserve a service or adjust a plan. Illustration 7 shows this relationship schematically.

Adoption grows through useful moments in the journey: guests and colleagues need to see the benefit and recognise a clear next step.



Illustration 7: Adoption develops through useful moments across the journey, supported by colleagues who understand the next step.

Employees adopt the platform when it reduces friction in their own work. Training should begin with the operating problem, not the feature list. Teams need to see what becomes easier, what responsibility they now hold and how their contribution affects the guest experience.

[5]Anonymised hotel-manager interview, October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

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8 An Operating Model for Hotel Leaders

Hotels can build the model in five stages. The sequence matters because technology cannot compensate for unclear responsibility. Illustration 8 shows this relationship schematically.

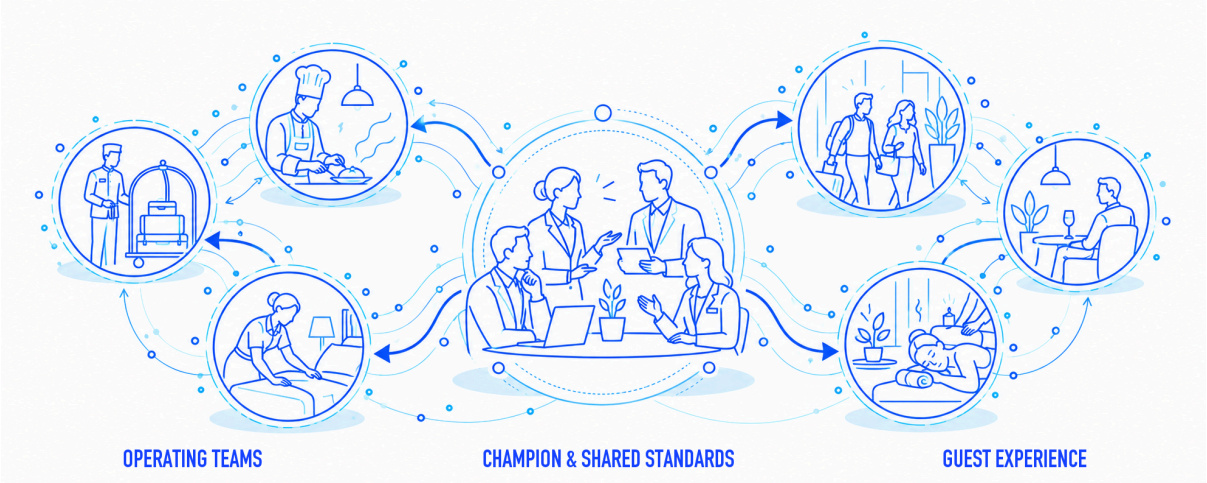


Illustration 8: A repeatable operating model connects ownership, distributed expertise, useful content and learning from the guest journey.

1. Define the purpose. State the operational problems the platform should solve and the guest decisions it should support.
2. Appoint an empowered champion. Give one person day-to-day accountability for the environment together with clear decision rights and leadership support.
3. Distribute expertise. Assign responsibility for content and processes to the teams closest to each service while retaining central standards.
4. Embed governance. Create routines for urgent corrections, quality review, prioritisation and periodic simplification.
5. Measure capacity and experience. Track reductions in manual work alongside adoption, service quality and the ability to handle growing demand.

The model should become less dependent on its original champion as it matures. Documentation, onboarding, deputy roles and shared decision rules are not administrative extras. They are evidence that the organisation has converted individual knowledge into institutional capability.

“Keep questioning whether the product is still right for the future, or only for everyday operations. The goal should be the future.”[6]

— Hotel manager, translated and edited for clarity

[6]Anonymised hotel-manager interview, October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

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Key Findings

1. Technology becomes an operating model only when the champion's accountability, decision rights and routines are explicit.
2. A central champion should establish direction and standards then distribute knowledge to departmental experts.
3. Distributed expertise reduces internal handoffs while keeping accountability close to the service.
4. Governance must include both rapid correction and regular review because content and processes deteriorate without attention.
5. Operational value appears as capacity: one CMS change can feed several channels while employees handle more work with less repeated explanation, coordination and administration.
6. Self-service strengthens personal hospitality when routine work moves to the platform and employees focus on needs that require judgement and connection.
7. Adoption grows when the platform is embedded in real guest decisions and real employee workflows.
8. The mature test is resilience: the model continues to work even when the original champion is not involved in every task.

About the Author

Konstantin Schlüter is CEO and co-founder of Hotel MSSNGR, a guest-experience platform for luxury hotels, resorts and hospitality groups.

For more than a decade, he has worked with independent hotels, resort destinations and international groups on digital guest journeys and guest-experience strategy. His focus is the link between commercial strategy, operations and long-term guest value.

I would love to hear your thoughts and experiences. You can reach me at kfs@hotel-mssngr.com.

Endnotes

1. Internal implementation information supplied by Hotel MSSNGR for this paper.

2. Interview with an anonymised hotel manager, conducted by Konstantin Schlüter in October 2026; translated and edited for clarity.

About The Best Practice Series

The Best Practice Series examines how hospitality economics is moving beyond the room. Revenue Management remains the foundation; the series explores how guest revenue, digital engagement, operations, data and technology can be managed across the stay and the wider guest relationship.

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Each paper addresses one part of the progression from Revenue Management to Guest Revenue Management, Guest Value Management and ultimately Guest Profit Contribution. The series is written for owners, operators, asset managers and hospitality leaders.

Published papers

The Total Guest Value Series - White Paper 1 - From Rooms to Relationships (August 2026)

The Total Guest Value Series - White Paper 2 - The Digital Guest Economy (October 2026)

The Total Guest Value Series - White Paper 3 - The Guest Journey Revenue Framework (November 2026)

A Hotel MSSNGR Perspective - The Hotel MSSNGR Guest Communication Matrix (October 2026)

A Hotel MSSNGR Perspective - You Sold the Room — Who's Selling the Stay? (November 2026)

A Hotel MSSNGR Perspective - Booked, Arrived, Returned — and Still Unknown (November 2026)

A Hotel MSSNGR Perspective - Before the Guest Leaves in Silence (November 2026)

About Hotel MSSNGR

Hotel MSSNGR is a guest-experience platform for hospitality. It connects pre-arrival communication, personalised services, activity booking, digital concierge, guest messaging, content management and post-stay engagement in one environment.

The platform links guest communication with operational workflows and content, helping hotels make digital service more relevant while reducing fragmented administration. Luxury hotels, family resorts, and hospitality groups use it across multiple markets.

Learn more at www.hotel-mssngr.com

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