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## Hospitality in IR4.0

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### Live&Learn

DRONE delivery, facial recognition for check-ins and check-outs, cashless transactions, virtual tours, cooking and a robot service crew – these are just some of the technological progressions made in the past decade, accelerated further during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many of what was once considered optional services have now become necessities for those travelling or booking a hotel.

Consequently, the change in guest expectations and the evolution of technologies may impact how the various types and categories of hotels are managed.

Operating in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) means having to do business in a highly competitive environment.

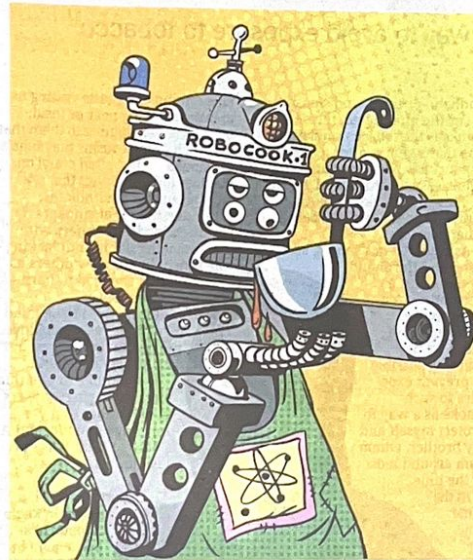
Those in the hospitality industry, particularly hoteliers, may need to invest or find ways to meet the needs of guests while generating revenue as IR4.0 encompasses every facet of life.

This necessitates the use of new technologies and organisational systems. To respond to the IR4.0 needs, companies may be required to optimise existing systems and processes while integrating new transformations – be it technical, economical, human or social.

In today's hospitality landscape, IR4.0 could entail the modernisation of tools used by the industry; the digitalisation of practices adopted; a call to rethink strategies and business models; technologicalisation allowing for greater pro-

# Hospitality in IR4.0

### Grads must keep up with guest expectations, evolving technologies in post-pandemic world



**IR4.0 in the kitchen:** Covid-19 has led to the acceleration of technological progressions in the hospitality industry. – 123rf.com

ductivity; cybersecurity; enhancing traceability and the quality of systems, products and processes in use; a transformation of the organisation; the readjustment of employee roles; and opportunities to increase the competitiveness of

a company.

IR4.0, technology, automation and robotisation may sound scary or worrying, but the technology used in hospitality offers a variety of solutions aiming to enhance the working conditions

of employees or improve the global experience of customers.

Over the years, companies within the hospitality industry that had been willing to adopt technology in their practices were greatly rewarded with a competitive edge over their rivals.

Augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of things are becoming commonplace with certain industries already planning to embrace 6G technologies.

The evolution of technology, however, has led to concerns that the livelihoods of those in the travel and hospitality industry would be under threat.

But the inclusion of technology does not mean making a role redundant. What it entails is the reorganisation of tasks and duties.

To keep up with the changes, it is essential for companies to assess the transformation required, to identify how tasks and responsibilities are to be redistributed, to rethink competencies, and to explore future opportunities.

Hospitality education and the hospitality industry follow different temporalities. By the time tertiary students complete their studies, some discipline-specific skills and knowledge might become obsolete or no longer favoured by the industry.

Embracing technology is an essential part of the learning experience. The curriculum must include access to technology and be flexible enough to allow learners to acquire trans-

disciplinary skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, entrepreneurialism and communication, and social competencies, as the workplace readiness of our graduates is at stake.

Pedagogies must also evolve in order to support and stay aligned with the fast pace of the professional world. For instance, real-world projects, co-delivery by professionals, shared grants with industry and educational institutions, and the sharing of technological resources like tools, software and equipment would enhance the learning experience and increase the professional readiness of learners.

This will also add meaning to what is learnt while positively impacting the industry.

Many of today's trends will become more pronounced in the near future. Business sustainability, waste and water management, and environmental protection will be very relevant as we progress.

Changes in technology, the hospitality industry, as well as customer needs are being amplified as the world moves into the Covid-19 endemic phase.

It is a wonderful opportunity for education providers to embrace these emerging trends to develop future graduates in line with industry needs.

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