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# Hospitality App Boosts Housekeeper Productivity, Hotel Profits

BY SASHA BANKS-LOUIE

*Fed up with recurring staff scheduling conflicts and delays getting hotel guest rooms cleaned, Virginie Lafon, the head of housekeeping at France's legendary Hôtel le Negresco, set out to fix these problems when she designed the cloud-based mobile app 1Check.*

Lafon founded 1Check, part of the Oracle Startup Cloud Accelerator program, in 2014 while working as the head of housekeeping at the Radisson Blu hotel in Nice, France. Her vision was to create an application to help hotel housekeeping staff work more efficiently and help hotel managers make more immediate and informed decisions about how to increase hotel profitability.

## Real-Time Room Check

At the start of each shift, housekeepers log into the 1Check app from their mobile phones to view the schedule of rooms they need to clean. After clicking on a digital hotel map to see which part of the building they'll be working in, they can double-click on individual room icons to verify guest check-in times and special cleaning instructions.

Before entering the rooms, housekeepers wave their phones in front of near-field communication tags mounted on the room doors and the front of their cleaning carts.

The app uses that data to indicate which rooms are being serviced, estimate how long it will take to clean them, and approximate when they'll be available for occupancy. After finishing a room, the housekeeper checks out using the tag on the front door and clicks on the room icon in 1Check to confirm the room is ready for inspection. Housekeeping managers also can receive alerts via phone when rooms have been cleaned.

"Hotel operations are no longer black boxes, controlled by the front desk," says company vice president of marketing, Stephane Chauffriat. "Housekeepers can now use 1Check to inform the front desk precisely when rooms will be ready for guests to check into them."

1Check claims its customers are seeing 7 percent to 8 percent increases in productivity per housekeeper, and improved overall housekeeping efficiency of around 35 percent annually.

One productivity gain comes from allowing employees to do tasks such as getting their work schedule, requesting a television repair tech, confirming a room inspection, or responding to a guest service request from their mobile phone instead of walking to make the request in person or to find a house phone.

"A typical housekeeper could walk up to seven miles per shift," Chauffriat says. But with 1Check, "staff can reduce the distance they walk during a shift to a single mile."

## Stability Matters

The 1Check app is built on an open source LAMP stack—Linux operating system, Apache web server, **MySQL** database, and PHP application software. The stack offered a low-cost, easy-to-deploy architecture, but 1Check had struggled with stability. For example, if the server running the database in a local data center crashed, "we'd have to contact an administrator who had to reboot the machine or restore a backup," says company CTO, Ludovic Timbert.

That kind of downtime doesn't fly in an industry that never shuts down. "Our customers operate on a 24/7 schedule," Timbert says. "We need our app to always be available."

To improve its reliability, 1Check now uses the replication and clustering features of **Oracle MySQL Cloud Services**, so its database runs as a virtual server in the cloud instead of on one physical server in a rented data center. By running on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, "we can monitor our PHP application in real-time, migrate all of the day-to-day workloads, and then run them reliably and at scale," Timbert adds.

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1Check's app is being used in 150 hotels and resorts throughout France. And the company is looking to expand into Chile, the US, Belgium, Italy, and Spain. Although 1Check's app was developed as a hospitality management tool, the company is also exploring new markets such as hospitals and nursing homes, campsites, cruise ships, and passenger airplanes.

Having crafted technology, processes, and rules needed to meet the standards of 5-star hotels, "these can easily be adapted for any type of environment where cleaning, maintenance, and quality control are expected," Chauffriat says.

To support its expansion strategy, 1Check is migrating its PHP modules into Oracle Container Cloud Service. Using Docker containers as cloud services, 1Check will be able to more quickly introduce new features, add new customers, and deploy its app anywhere in the world, without requiring manual administration or local, physical machines.

## Better Measures

Another key feature of the 1Check app is its analytics dashboard that shows executives what the average cleaning and turnaround times are for each room. Prebuilt and configurable reports help executives calculate the real cost of rooms by analyzing labor, energy consumption, and maintenance data. At most hotels, "these analytics don't exist by room today," Chauffriat says. "They only exist at the end of the month as an average for all of the rooms in the hotel."

Rooms with consistently long turnaround times might indicate a need for upgrades, or a change in staff training.

Hospitality brands are vulnerable, Chauffriat says, because reputations can be built or ruined by any bad experience—especially when that experience is amplified on social media.

"This is why 1Check's room analytics are so important," Chauffriat says. "We can help hotels understand why a customer was unhappy. And we can inform them of what needs to be done to prevent the dissatisfaction in the future."

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