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Hospitality Technology Reveals 2011 Visionary Award Winners

Choice Hotels International, Galt House Hotel, Morgans Hotel Group and Royal Caribbean, Honored for Innovation at Annual Hotel Tech Forum

APRIL 21, 2011, RANDOLPH, N.J. — Each year, *Hospitality Technology* (*HT*) magazine presents a select group of lodging companies with its Visionary Awards. These awards honor hotel companies for their outstanding vision and achievement in delivering technological excellence. Winning companies are chosen based on their vision and execution; consideration is given to size, resources and individual market segment benchmarks to ensure that companies from across the industry are recognized for their efforts. The 2011 Visionary Awards go to: Choice Hotels International, Galt House Hotel, Morgans Hotel Group and Royal Caribbean.

Visionary Awards were presented in two categories: infrastructure and back-office technology, and customer-facing/in-room technology. Winners were judged by *HT* editorial staff on a basis of innovation, thought leadership, execution, and forward-thinking vision, and announced at the [Hotel Technology Forum](#) on Thursday, April 21, 2011. The Forum, held April 20-22 at the Mandarin Oriental in Las Vegas, Nev., is an invitation-only event that brings senior-level hotel executives from high-growth hotel companies together to share strategic insights and tactical analyses for leveraging next-generation hotel technologies and practices.

The 2011 Visionary Award Winners

Choice Hotels International was chosen as an **Infrastructure and Back-office Technology Innovator** for its development of a web-based, propriety property management system. The system, which leverages technologies from Dell, EMC, [Microsoft](#) and [Oracle](#), was developed out of the need to reduce the total cost of ownership of traditional PMS technology. In a few short years, the choiceADVANTAGE PMS has helped franchisees to collectively save significant costs, and the company has begun overseas deployment. “We are extremely proud of the efforts of so many of our associates who played an instrumental role in developing, enhancing and deploying our choiceADVANTAGE property management system to over 4,000 Choice-brand hotels worldwide,” said Todd Davis, chief technology officer, Choice Hotels International.

The 1,300-room **Galt House Hotel** was also selected as an **Infrastructure and Back-office Technology Innovator**. The hotel worked with [Passkey](#), [Cendyn](#), [EZYield](#), [Easy RMS](#), [Infor/Softbrands](#) and [Newmarket International](#) to plan, engineer, and implement a comprehensive project that has transformed its revenue management, sales and CRM capabilities. The project has allowed Galt House to eliminate manual processes for updating rates and availability both online and in its PMS, develop targeted group e-mail campaigns, and streamline the reservation process for both group and leisure guests, among others. What’s more, the technology partnerships that were formed on this project resulted in the development of Passkey’s Availability, Rates and Inventory tool, a solution jointly designed by EZYield and Passkey that was publically released in October 2010. “The Galt House put a team together in late 2008 that spent two years upgrading, enhancing, and supplementing our use of technology to support the sales effort,” said Ron

Strecker, CFO for Al J. Schneider, Galt House's parent company. "This project has already shown an improvement in higher revenues and lower costs that have paid for the initial investment many times over."

The 12-property **Morgans Hotel Group** was chosen as a **Customer-facing/In-room Technology Innovator** for the deployment of an in-room virtual concierge system at its Royalton property in New York City. The concierge solution, provided by **Intelity**, enables guests to listen to music, order food, request wake-up calls, browse area attractions and more via in-room iPads. Morgans also partnered with **FeedMagnet** to aggregate social media content, and **RCRD LBL** to fine-tune the solution's music player and 'sleep sounds' application. To ensure that the solution reflected Morgans' brand identity, both the application concepts and the design of the iPad buttons were created by its marketing and creative teams. Since its September 2010 launch, 1,279 meals have been ordered using the iPads, for a total of \$20,205 in food and beverage revenue. "We are thrilled to be recognized for this virtual extension of our commitment to providing a dynamic and innovative guest experience at our hotels," says Kim Walker, senior vice president of marketing and creative director for Morgans Hotel Group. "We have since expanded an enhanced version of our Intelity in-room iPad Program to our newest hotel, Mondrian SoHo, and look forward to offering it throughout our portfolio."

Royal Caribbean International was chosen as a **Customer-facing/In-room Technology Innovator**; the company needed a highly interactive and intuitive way to help guide guests and share information about the wide variety of offerings onboard the cruise line's largest and newest cruise ships, *Oasis of the Seas* and *Allure of the Seas*. The digital signage solution, designed by **Four Winds Interactive**, consists of a network of digital signage displays and touchscreens that enable guests to obtain directions, gauge real-time dining options, learn about the day's events and activities, and find answers to common questions. Behind the scenes, the network allows Royal Caribbean to create a number of cost-saving efficiencies, ranging from minimizing demand for guest services and concierge staff, to streamlining restaurant operations. A sophisticated data integration between Royal Caribbean's back-end systems and its digital displays has resulted in reduced lines and wait times, and increased guest satisfaction. "Effectively communicating the diverse choice of entertainment and activities available to our guests and guiding them onboard our Oasis-class ships, all the while making the process highly intuitive, is quite a challenge. Thanks to our partnership with Four Winds, we've really hit this one out of the park - it's been a great success with our guests," said Santiago Abraham, VP of IT Global Business Solutions at Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.

Past Breakthrough Award Winners Include:

- CityCenter (2010)
- Courtyard by Marriott (2010)
- JHM Hotels Group (2010)
- InterContinental Hotels Group (2009)
- Harrah's Entertainment (2009)
- Hyatt Place (2009)
- Thayer Lodging Group (2009)
- MTM Luxury Lodging (2008)
- The Peninsula Hotels (2008)
- Fairmont Hotels & Resorts (2008)
- Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group (2007)
- Ginn Resorts (2007)
- Hilton Hotels Corporation (2007)
- Rosewood Hotels & Resorts (2006)
- Harrah's Entertainment (2006)
- MGM Mirage (2006)
- Wyndham International (2005)
- Sea Island Company (2005)
- Marriott International (2005)
- Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group (2005)
- Hyatt International (2005)

About Hospitality Technology

Hospitality Technology (HT) is the only publication dedicated to covering the role of information technology in improving business performance for hotel and restaurant operators. The *Hospitality Technology* editorial portfolio includes: a print publication that publishes nine times annually and reaches more than 16,000 hospitality industry executives, three networking and educational events (MURTEC, Hotel Technology Forum and Restaurant Executive Summit), a comprehensive website, e-newsletters, web seminars, and several exclusive annual reports and studies. Visit *Hospitality Technology* online at www.htmagazine.com. *Hospitality Technology* is published by media company Edgell Communications, headquartered in Randolph, N.J.

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