

info CITO

Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec

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Technologies

ADVERTORIAL

Does your reservation system really meet your property's needs?

Many hoteliers wonder whether their current property management system is really efficient. Others decide to enquire about a PMS for the first time.

When it comes time to choose the right software, there are many factors to consider. Among the most important ones are the need for immediate customer recognition, rapid retrieval of guest reservations or folios, and reducing the number of mouse-clicks needed to operate the PMS. Additional crucial elements to consider are the integration of your other software packages, telephone system and Internet reservations. Financial and operational reporting have become essential management tools and must be taken into account as well. One of the most important criteria in selecting a PMS is the level of after-sales customer support available from the software provider. This should include answers to your questions as well as functionality and interface upgrades. An investment worth its weight in gold!

We are all aware that hotel bookings made over the Internet are gaining in popularity. In order to better manage all reservations, **a two-way Internet-booking engine is ideal**. This will allow Internet users to reserve directly through your property management system on available dates, with your programmed rates and room types. Each booking will automatically deduct one available room from your property's real-time inventory. Integrating the Internet-reservation engine with your property management system will save both time and money since these reservations are **not** commissionable!

I would be pleased to provide you with a full demonstration, or simply answer any questions that you may have regarding your property's needs. Being an hotelier myself, I fully understand the situations that hotel managers and employees face every day. I invite you to visit our Website at www.mingus.biz and discover why Hotello is gaining in popularity so rapidly in Quebec, as well as elsewhere in the world!

Normand Latreille, Vice-President
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Hotello



New hotel and B&B classification grids

Message from the Executive Director

The new classification grids for hotel establishments and B&Bs, which were submitted to the Minister of Tourism in fall 2005, have now received final approval from the Department.

To help operators prepare for the introduction of these new grids, scheduled for early 2008, the CITQ is launching an information tour in a number of Quebec regions. Over the coming weeks, representatives from our Operator Relations Department and I will be holding information sessions on the main changes made to the classification grids for hotel establishments and B&Bs.

The program for this information tour, prepared in co-operation with CITQ member associations and several regional tourism associations, can be consulted on the CITQ Website or ordered by calling the number below.

The new classification grids for hotel establishments and B&Bs were developed in consultation with many operators, different industry representatives and, for the first time, customers themselves. The proposed changes are intended both to meet the needs expressed by operators and to reflect the constant evolution of the industry and customers' expectations.

The introduction of these new classification criteria should not be cause for concern, however. Our tests have shown that the new grids are not expected to result in any major changes in the current classifications of hotel establishments and B&Bs. Preliminary studies have shown that no establishments are likely to lose stars or suns because of the new grids, and only elite establishments will reach the top level of 5 stars or 5 suns. Any establishments that lose stars or suns in the next classification tour would probably have done so even with the existing grids.

I hope to see many of you at these information sessions to be held over the next few months, and my colleagues and I will be happy to answer all your questions.

Michel Rheault

Mark the dates on your calendar today! Consult the schedule on-line, at www.citq.info, or call us at 450 679-3737 or 1 866 499-0550, ext 221.

PLEASE NOTE

The CITQ is not responsible in any way for the information in our contributors' advertorials and advertisements, and they are in no way to be considered endorsements. Although these articles and advertisements are intended to provide you with useful information on operating tourist accommodation establishments, we recommend that you shop around and make the appropriate comparisons before choosing a product or service.

info CITO

WELL-MAINTAINED FURNITURE – AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

Keeping your furniture in good condition is one of the main challenges of managing a tourism accommodation establishment and an important consideration in classification. Regular inspection and prompt attention by experts if you note any problems are certainly the best ways of keeping your furniture in top shape. Before you reach that point, though, some basic preventive measures and simple rules will help you avoid many problems.

MAINTAINING wooden furniture

Both solid wood and veneer, whether it is stained or natural, is likely to fade when exposed to sunlight. This means that you should take care not to leave any objects or placemats on new furniture for the first few months, since they could create unevenly coloured patches. This also applies for furniture that has been refinished with a new coat of varnish or lacquer.



In addition, you should never:

- place furniture near a heat source;
- drench it with water;
- leave water sitting on it for any length of time;
- use steel wool, scouring powder or scouring pads;
- clean it with solvents (acetone or nail polish remover);
- apply wax or furniture polish every week;
- leave a damp container sitting on it. The water will leave a white mark that is very difficult to remove from a waxed wood surface, and impossible to remove from certain kinds of varnish.

For regular maintenance, you are best to:

- use a dry, soft, non-abrasive wool or cotton cloth to rub off fingerprints and other marks;
- use a spray product that collects dust without leaving a film, then wipe with a dry cloth (always follow the instructions on the label);
- wipe quickly with a cloth dipped in soapy water, rinse with a damp cloth and then wipe dry with a chamois-type cloth.

For cleaning, you are best to:

- always carefully dust furniture before cleaning it or removing any stains;
- always place the cleaning or stain removal product on the cloth, and not directly on the surface;
- always rub with the grain;
- regularly remove built-up wax.

Source: "Entretien des meubles en bois," 2007, *Guide du consommateur ameublement.com*, on-line, http://www.ameublement.com/guide_consommateur, consulted July 5, 2007.

CARING for upholstery

To keep upholstery in good condition, it should be vacuumed regularly with a soft furniture brush attachment. For removing stains and cleaning fabric that has not been treated with a stain repellent, it is best to turn to cleaning professionals.



If you prefer to tackle the problem yourself, make sure that you identify the best treatment for the type of stain you wish to remove and the type of material to be cleaned. Keep in mind the following basic rules:

- remove as much of the dirt or stain as possible, by gently scraping and brushing off dried mud, wax, modelling clay, etc., scraping off sticky materials like jam or mustard, and soaking up liquids with a cloth;
- place the stain removal product on a white cotton cloth, never directly on the surface to be cleaned;
- blot up the stain removal product, if possible placing a cloth underneath the surface to be cleaned;
- rinse thoroughly with a wet cloth after removing the stain, except for fabrics with water-sensitive dyes;
- dry with a clean, dry cloth.

Remember!

Always test the cleaning product first, on a hidden part of the furniture.

Source: "Entretien des textiles," 2007, *Guide du consommateur ameublement.com*, on-line, http://www.ameublement.com/guide_consommateur, consulted July 5, 2007.

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CONSIDERATION IN CLASSIFICATION

Furniture quality will soon be classified in hotel establishments and bed & breakfast establishments

When the new classification grids for hotel establishments and B&Bs come into effect, classifiers will evaluate the quality of an establishment's furniture, as shown below.

- LEVEL 5 High-end pieces with good quality upholstery
Matching wood pieces or restored older pieces
Excellent harmony in all furnishings
- LEVEL 4 Unrestored old pieces, made of unmatched wood or of similar quality
Harmony in all furnishings
- LEVEL 3 High-quality, matching laminate or melamine pieces or of similar quality
- LEVEL 2 Matching melamine pieces or of similar quality
- LEVEL 1 Unmatched melamine pieces or of similar quality
- LEVEL 0 Plastic pieces or of similar quality

Source : Hotels establishments and Bed and Breakfasts Classification Guide, 2006 Edition.

ADVICE FROM CLASSIFIERS

Although work surfaces 60 x 122 cm (24 x 48 inches) in size are an acceptable minimum, larger surfaces offer visitors greater comfort, giving them room for a computer, telephone, lamp, papers and so on. Make sure not to clutter the work surface with a coffeemaker, cups, water carafe or other items not used for work.



A turntable under the television will not only avoid scratches on the furniture, but also mean greater viewing comfort for visitors. Similarly, placing the water carafe and coffeemaker on trays, rather than directly on the furniture, will help avoid white marks and raised veneer.

The CITQ is to handle "Ecomarina" certification for the AMQ



Left to right: Yves Bourque of the CITQ, Anne-Marie Roy of the AMQ, Karine Gendron of the CITQ, Stewart Fast of Terra Choice and Isabelle Tiberi of the CITQ, at a training session on the Ecomarina program

The Association maritime du Québec (AMQ) has given the CITQ the mandate of handling its Ecomarina voluntary certification program. Inspired by the *Clean Marine* program successfully introduced by the *Ontario Marine Operators Association*, the Quebec program suggests over 200 "green" practices covering all aspects of marina operation, from waste management to docks, property and boat maintenance.



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Insurance

ADVERTORIAL

**Closing up for the season?
Some things to keep in mind**

For many owners of cottages, inns, B&Bs and other summer residences, fall means it's time to close up for the winter.

Unfortunately, some of them don't know that many insurance policies contain conditions to be respected in this situation. It is very important to check your policy and see whether your coverage could be voided if certain conditions are not met.

The most frequent cases concern damage caused by freezing pipes. Did you know that most insurance policies exclude damage caused by freezing if the building has been vacant for 96 hours (4 days) or more? Protect yourself by having someone visit the building and make sure the heating system is operating properly. Since this can be difficult or even impossible in some cases, it is often better to shut off the water supply and drain the pipes.

If there is a sump nearby, it is a good idea to provide a mechanical pump or back-up battery, to prevent water damage in the event of a power failure and for peace of mind.

Other painful but true story

In a previous column we listed some examples of claims submitted to insurers. Here is another one:

In late 2006, a man toppled over the railing of the mezzanine in a tourist home and broke several bones. Although the owners of the establishment did not seem to be responsible in any way, the guest sued them. The insurance company stepped in and arranged the owners' defence, covering the legal costs as well. The case was recently settled out of court for close to \$50,000.

Aside from all the stress caused by the incident, the owners would have suffered serious financial consequences if they had not had insurance, since they would have been obliged to assume their own defence and cover the huge costs involved.

Jean-François Trudel, Vice-President, Operations
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Answers
to your questions

Can a secretary (writing desk) with drawers be considered a dresser?

YES... A dresser is a piece of furniture other than a bedside table, in which visitors can keep clothing or other items. A desk with drawers can be considered both a dresser and a work table.

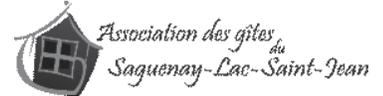
Can a shelf attached to the wall be considered a bedside table?

NO... A bedside table is a small piece of furniture near the head of the bed, with a flat horizontal surface, and may also contain one or two drawers and open or closed compartments. It is generally used to hold a lamp, telephone or alarm clock.

The CITQ welcomes a new member

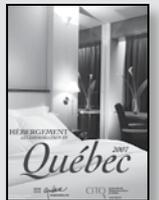
On June 7, the CITQ Board of Directors unanimously voted in favour of accepting a sixteenth member. The Association des gîtes touristiques du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean is the fifth B&B association to join the CITQ.

For details on membership criteria, see www.citq.info/partenaires.



ACCOMMODATION IN QUÉBEC

Make sure your establishment is properly listed in the next edition of *Accommodation in Québec*. Check that the information in your file is correct, and remember to return the forms you will be receiving shortly for this purpose to Tourisme Québec.



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Administrator of the official accommodation classification program



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No discrimination is intended.
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