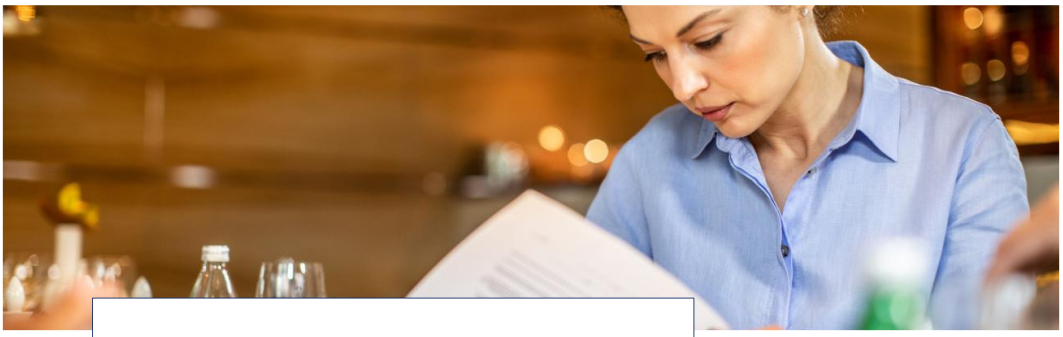
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Three Key Risk Areas Your Infection Prevention Platform Needs to Address

RJ Frasca, Vice President of Product and Marketing, EBI Inc. 11/2/2020

Many hospitality businesses have undertaken an assortment of pandemic response measures to insulate employees from infection risks and to maintain a safe and healthy work environment for staff. The changes you can see include requiring face masks for employees, new sanitizing procedures, physical distancing reminders, installing plexiglass shields to protect employees and guests, and adjusted operating times for on-site amenities and restaurants/bars. There are also changes you can't see, such as a hotel's employee health mitigation response where sick employees are advised or required to stay home.

However, there may not be consistency among all these efforts. A coordinated technological health and safety umbrella can help. This provides staff with a centralized resource for policies, alerts, tracking, and incident response. For leadership, a unified program provides greater consistency in monitoring risks, faster awareness of incidents, and real-time visibility into operations and compliance with safe practices.

This can be achieved by using supplemental apps and devices to further enhance existing health and safety measures that help employees avoid the risks of exposure and unsafe interactions. These tools track the movements of employees in the hotel, helping management identify risky circumstances, and provide valuable insight for contact tracing.

Three Keys to Hotel Safety

The most effective infection prevention platforms at hotels address risks in three key areas: **screening**, **monitoring**, and **analysis**. Here is how a comprehensive return-to-work technology platform addresses the risks and helps hotels achieve maximum efficiency.

SCREENING

Just as preventative medicine is more cost-effective than treating a diagnosed illness, so is investing in screening tools for employees rather than dealing with an infection outbreak.

By using a multitiered process that screens an employee before they depart for the hotel, these risks can be prevented, and the facility is assured employees are well. From the comfort of home, for example, an employee can log into an app on their mobile device and respond to questions created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to screen for signs of infection. The system can also require a body temperature self-check, using a smart thermometer that transmits temperature to a mobile device. If a question response or elevated temperature suggests an infection risk, the app can automatically notify the employee's human resource manager, and will advise the at-risk individual on next steps to receive a medical diagnosis, potentially through a telehealth function within the app.

Those who pass this first stage are free to come to the property, where their cleared status for that day is established in the app and accessible to screeners at the hotel's employee entry checkpoints. To speed up check-in, the app can issue a scannable QR code. At the point of entry, an automated scanner will check them in and once again take the employee's temperature. The scanner will also ensure they are wearing their required Personal Protective Equipment, such as a mask.

Hotels may also choose to implement thermal temperature scanning for guests upon arrival.

MONITORING

Security cameras, spot checks, and self-regulating can only do so much to ensure people follow mask wearing requirements and practice social distancing. Technology may be needed to bolster risk-mitigation efforts. Solutions like motion-activated occupancy counters and thermal cameras that detect body temperature are certainly helpful but work best when combined with a full range of proactive resources.

Distance monitoring and contact tracing of employees enables management to detect

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Distance monitoring and contact tracing of employees enables management to detect potential and existing risks more effectively and quickly reduces the likelihood of exposing other employees or guests. Distance monitoring of employees not only informs management who may be at risk based on location but identifies the exact location and duration of any exposures. This location alignment assists leadership in contacting those at risk and carrying out proper sanitation measures.

Wearable devices continually track employees' movements, recording the distance and duration of interactions – and alert employees in real-time when they are at increased risk. If organizations use a centralized dashboard, this data is captured and stored for employers to analyze foot traffic density and change space configurations, if needed.

If an outbreak does happen, these recorded encounters are highly valuable in contact tracing to assist with notifying those who may need to quarantine or be tested.

ANALYSIS

Software that not only records pandemic-related activity but also helps management make sense of collected data with dashboards and real-time tracking is particularly useful in identifying high-risk times or areas within properties. Managers can identify and correct problems in real-time to better protect employees and guests. For example, if analysis shows too many close-proximity encounters are occurring in a hallway or stairwell, the hotel can decide to circulate traffic one-way or reconfigure the space to allow more room for physical distancing.

With its high turnover rates, the hospitality industry is particularly in need of a comprehensive risk mitigation solution. Moreover, leaders need an end-to-end digital framework that adheres to local and national safety standards and mitigates the risks of a COVID-19 outbreak.

A centralized platform powered by smart technology can elevate a hotel's health and safety response and provide a safer environment for guests, vendors, and staff. The best systems work tirelessly to identify risk factors before individuals arrive, at their point of entry, and throughout their stay while giving management the tools to see the bigger picture and respond effectively.

About the Author

RJ Frasca joined EBI in 2018. RJ brings over 20 years of marketing and product experience and has worked with numerous high-profile companies such as Yahoo, Microsoft, Time Warner, and Verizon on various marketing campaigns. He has extensive experience in digital marketing, product management, and community management, and is a well-known and respected social media strategist and thought leader. RJ's responsibilities at EBI include strategic oversight of all marketing initiatives.

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