

WHITEPAPER

# The mobile key knocks on the hotel industry's door



In collaboration with

ASSA ABLOY   **Onity**   SALTO



**Barceló**  
HOTEL GROUP





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## INTRODUCTION

### OUR VISION AT STAY

# The mobile key, a growing trend that enhances the guest experience from the check-in



**Augusto Guitard**  
Product Owner

The mobile key has become one of the most popular hotel industry trends since the pandemic. As we will show in this document, it has numerous benefits for both large chains and small hotels. By using this technology, guests can access their rooms in a practical, safe, comfortable, and almost "magical" way from their smartphones. Also, by eliminating plastic from the equation, it is consistent with the more eco-friendly environmental policies being implemented by most hotels.

As a result, STAY partners with the leading suppliers to make this tool available to our clients, speeding up and simplifying the installation process. As a client recently pointed out, «hoteliers cannot ask guests to download two apps for different purposes».

Every day at STAY, we strive to develop a complete operating system to help our clients, the hotels, deliver the best guest experience. Our best guarantee is their success stories, which are also our success stories.

A few years ago, it seemed like the mobile key was the future. As it turns out, the future is already here. In the pages of this document, we wanted to gather everything you need to know about the mobile key: how it works, how to implement it, how it benefits hoteliers and guests, and global statistics on its main usage trends. As well as testimonials from suppliers who are experts in the field. And, lastly, success stories of prestigious chains.

Hopefully, it will provide you with the information you need to continue offering the best guest experience to your guests.

Mobile keys are a  
"wow" experience.  
They bring comfort  
and a sense of  
state-of-the-art  
to guests



## The mobile key: what is it?

A mobile key is a digitally encrypted "key" that allows guests to access rooms during their stay. When the guest is located close to the door lock in his room, the smartphone transmits that key via the application in which it is stored. As a result, the guest uses his smartphone as a key.

With the digitization of the sector, the preference for contactless experiences, and the commitment to sustainability and efficiency, the mobile key has become a booming trend in the hotel industry.

The system also has a very powerful wow effect: customers can access their room immediately after arriving at the hotel, opening the door with their smartphones, thus eliminating the need to visit the reception. Guests are positively surprised and perceive a state-of-the-art sensation from the first moment, which will last throughout their stay at the hotel.

It is efficient, safe, convenient, surprising, and avant-garde.





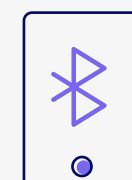
## Contactless technology types



### RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION (RFID) TECHNOLOGY

In hotels, radio frequency identification (RFID) technology offers more features than conventional plastic cards. They have a programmable RFID chip, so you can insert much more information and grant access to different areas. They also offer payment options, something that is very convenient in certain types of hotels, such as resorts.

Contactless technology can also be encapsulated in a variety of different formats, some of which are very creative. **However, it is not a mobile key, but a contactless technology.**



### BLUETOOTH SYSTEM

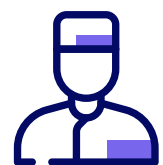
Bluetooth/Low Energy **is the most widely used mobile key system today.** With these locks, guests can send encrypted signals from their devices. The door lock in your room acts as a receiver for the signal. Providers encrypt information so that a mobile key can only be used by one person and cannot be transferred to another. In other words, **mobile keys cannot be hacked or cloned** thanks to Bluetooth technology combined with encryption systems in smartphones.



### NEAR FIELD COMMUNICATION (NFC)

An RFID system basically uses 3 components: the tag, the antenna, and the reader. The tag is normally attached to an object. It contains a unique identification. The antenna detects the tag, via the magnetic fields it creates. The reader receives tag information and manipulates the information. Smartphones can be used as RFID tags. **Currently, this system is mainly used for virtual credit or debit cards,** but hotels are already incorporating it into mobile key solutions.





## Pros for hotels

### Eco-sustainability

About **65%** of guests prefer hotels that **care for the environment**. Using the mobile key, we can limit the consumption of plastic in this area.

### Wow effect

When it comes to hotels, first impressions are everything. It is almost "magical" how the key operates. The **guest is pleasantly surprised** right at the beginning.



## Pros for guests

### Comfortable

When the key is carried on the mobile device, **the guest can mentally disconnect**. You don't have to remember to pick it up every time you go out of the room.

### There is little chance of losing it

Quite often, **plastic keys are lost**. The same **cannot be said for smartphones**.

### Getting rid of degaussing

Plastic keys have a maximum life of **8 guests** (due to demagnetization and loss). This problem is avoided with the mobile key.

### Operational efficiency

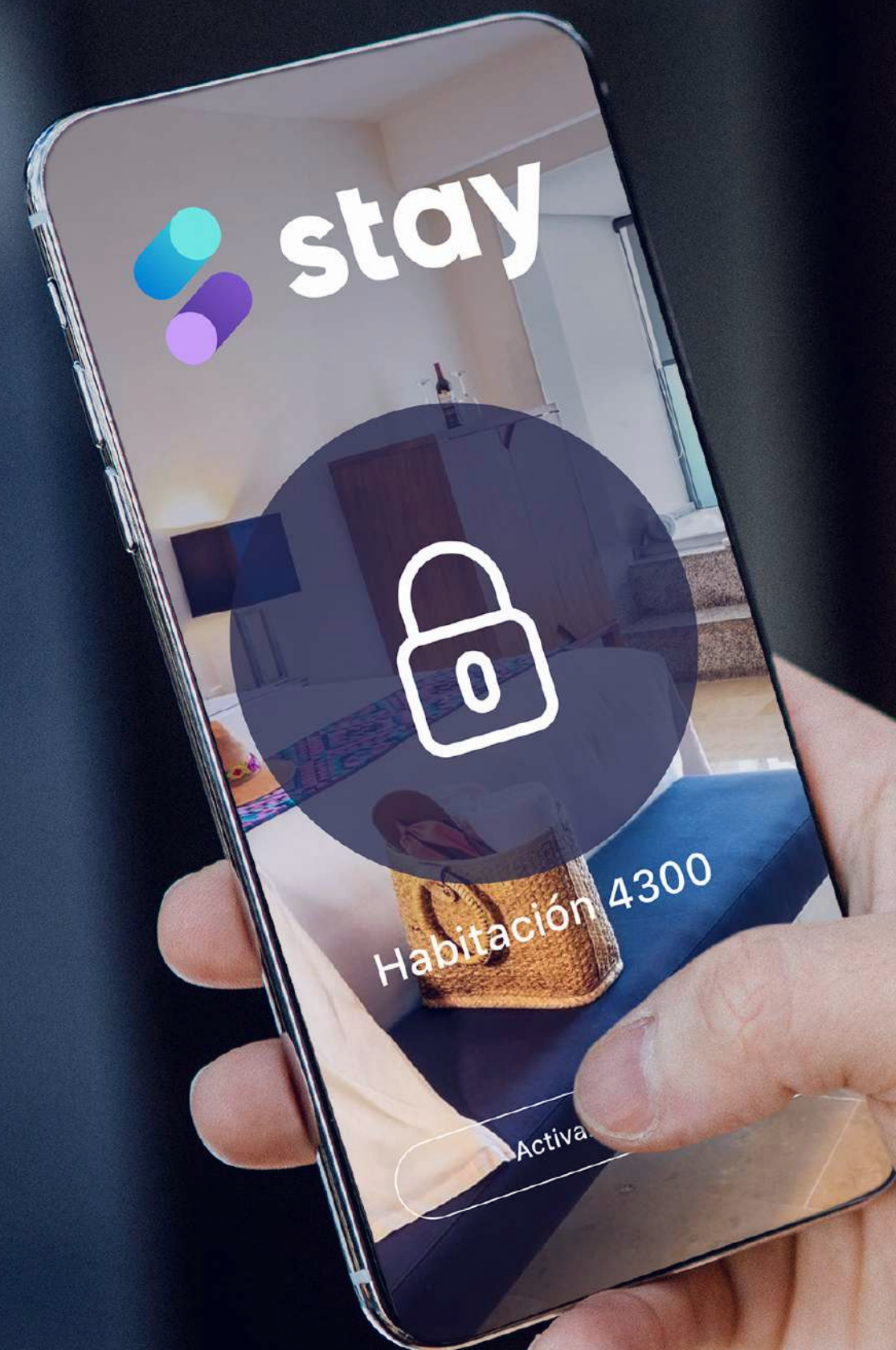
**Check-in times are reduced** and all those processes that **require updating a stay**, such as changing the room or the check-out date, are **simplified**.

### Guest Experience

With a mobile key integrated into the hotel app, **guests can also book services, chat with hotel staff, etc.**, enjoying a much more complete experience.

### A convenient solution

In order to extend your stay or even change rooms, **you no longer have to walk to the reception**.







## The mobile key: Interesting facts and figures



HOTEL CHAINS INDEPENDENT HOTELS

It is an **upward trend** in **all types of hotels**



46%

Of travelers consider it to be **an important solution** when choosing accommodation



1.000 \$

Can be saved if lost or demagnetized plastic keys **are avoided**



71%

Of guests say they would **stay there again** in a hotel with self service technology



84%

Of guests **would repeat the experience after using a mobile key**, and hotels that implement this technology tend to **receive a 7% higher score** compared to those that don't



76%

Of guests consider their **smartphone** the most useful **travel companion**



65%

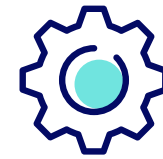
Of guests are **willing to pay more** for the same room if it offers **modern technology**



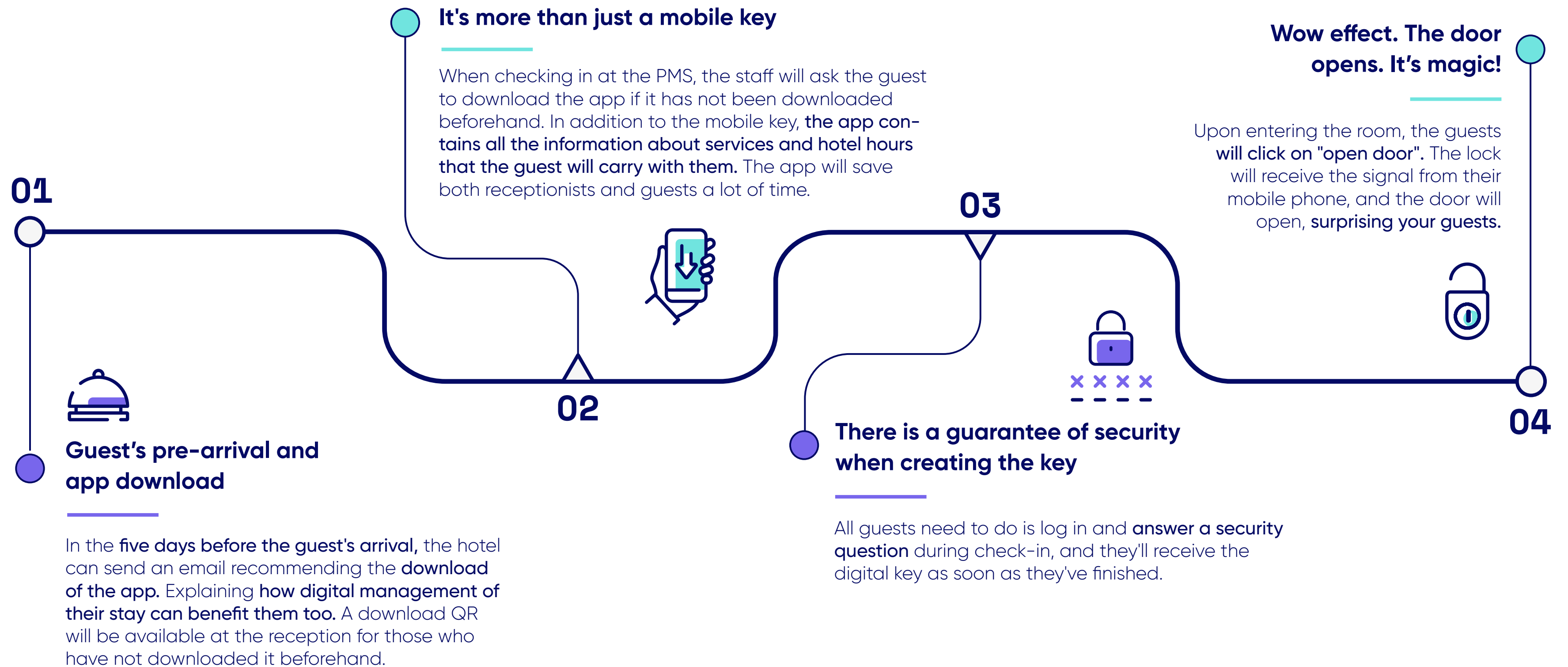
73%

Of professionals believe this technology **will become increasingly important** in the hotel industry

\*Sources: HotelTechReport, Openkey, The Telegraph, McKinsey, New York University (NYU).

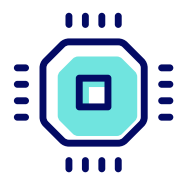


## Customer Journey



You can request a demo to learn the technical details of implementing a mobile key in your hotel –it depends on your PMS and the key provider.

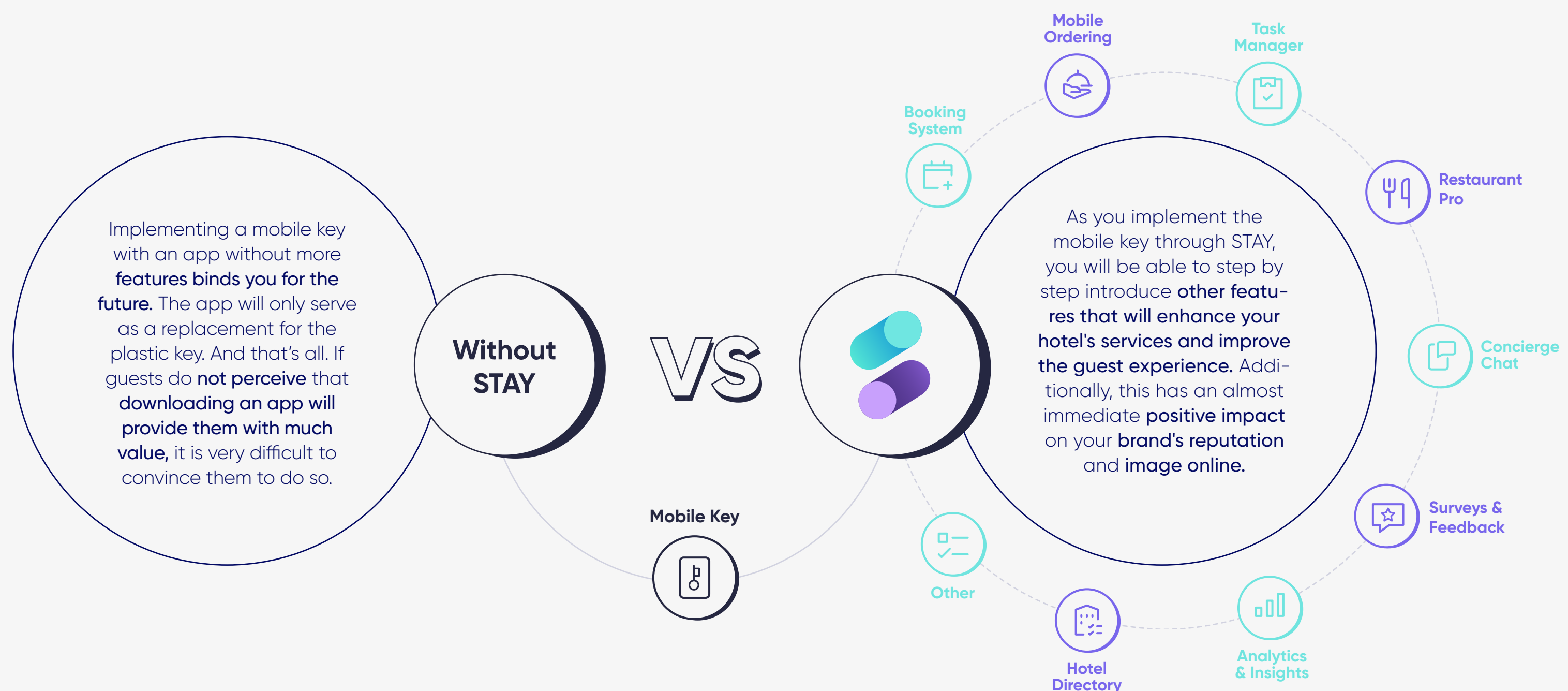
[Learn more](#)



## Why should I install the mobile key with STAY?

It is always necessary for guests to download an app in order to use the mobile key. If its only function is to open the door of the room, you will force the guest to occupy valuable memory space on their phone. However, if the mobile key were **integrated** within the hotel's native app created by STAY, the guests would perceive it as **more useful**. Aside from

opening the door to your room, they will be able to request **Room Service**, book a restaurant or spa, **report an incident**, chat with the staff, request **amenities**, check out the hotel's activity schedule, etc., among many other things.





# Success stories

The prestigious international chains Barceló and Vincci have successfully implemented mobile keys. Both brands explain how this technology has worked for them



**"The mobile key is modern, practical, and surprising; we implemented it to make life easier for guests"**



**Alvaro Montalvo**

Project Manager Innovation  
**Barceló Hoteles**



Barceló Hotels is one of the world's most prestigious hotel chains. There is no question that these brands' hotels are hors categorie among those who have stayed at them. In order to stay on top of technological advances, they always keep an eye on them. Barceló has gradually implemented the mobile key in several of its hotels as part of this line of work.

Hotel check-ins are always an important aspect of their strategy. It is the first impression that sets the tone for the rest of the stay. Among the hotels that have implemented the mobile key, guests say it makes life easier and is fascinating. What is your opinion on this digital tool? Can you explain why you have been a step ahead of everyone else? Is it an example of the wow factor?

There is no doubt that mobile keys have a component of surprise. In particular, we notice it at check-in. They perceive this technology as modern, practical, and surprising when you tell them about it. In my opinion, it is an example of innovation that places Barceló at the forefront of the industry.

We have received very positive feedback from our guests in all the hotels where we have implemented it. I believe that Covid is responsible for this positive attitude towards mobile keys. The mere act of touching a doorknob generated panic during the first months of the pandemic, and we learned to adapt almost intuitively. Whatever the case, our guests have appreciated these types of initiatives. In fact, as I said, the mobile key serves a practical purpose among many others. In reality, the

smartphone is merely a support for storing the card information, but for practical purposes, the smartphone itself becomes the card, the room key.

**What advantages would you emphasize if you had to convince a colleague that this type of key is appropriate for hotels at the forefront?**

There are many benefits associated with it. Fundamentally, we will think about the guest. Their comfort is our priority. Imagine a daily scenario at the hotel: let's say the client wants to stay one more day. Until the mobile key was introduced, an extension of a guest's stay had to be requested physically, usually at the front desk. Because the key is programmed for a particular day and hour, let's say that it would work until Sunday at 12. It was not possible to update the guests key without physically visiting the front desk, despite their phone request to, let's say, extend their stay from Sunday to Monday.

It is now possible to upgrade a mobile key without queuing or moving from your bed. The same applies to late checkouts. Sunday morning, it's eleven o'clock, and the guest still has one hour to stay at the hotel. He suddenly decides he needs to spend a few more hours in the room because he's exhausted. The plastic

key system forces your guests to go through the awkward process of going to the reception. Imagine a resort with reception located 300 meters from your room. It may seem like a small matter, but think of how much trouble it could cause. Guests can now update their keys whenever they want, no matter where they are.

As a result, it is very comfortable for guests, and anyone who has experienced degaussing, losing a key, etc., soon realizes its benefits. You rarely lose your smartphone because you always carry it with you. From the point of view of the hotel, in addition to saving on plastic and being more sustainable, it helps to streamline processes because, with the right strategy, you save time at check-in.

In addition, the guests carry all the information on their smartphones, hoteliers make their lives easier for their customers. Meanwhile, the system records all of the guest's actions, giving your staff peace of mind. You can find out who has accessed a room or area when something happens.

**"The customer is amazed at how simple it is to use the mobile key, and it is aligned with sustainability"**

**According to several providers, many hotels already have their locks ready to install the mobile key, but they are unaware of this.**

That's right. The locks that are installed beforehand also play a role when it comes to suppliers at Barceló. There are some which require specific hardware. As a result, we rely on that provider's technology to implement the mobile key. Anyhow, we're noticing that providers are developing modules to adapt to this technology. We would like to standardize everything at Barceló. In some cases, as far as today is concerned, this is not possible, so we have to work step by step, talking to all the providers.

**Can you tell me how important it is for Barceló to have all the guest experience features contained in one app, i.e. STAY?**

No other way would work. We are able to offer our guests a better guest experience through STAY's digital tools. As part of our reception work, Barceló provides information on how to easily make the most of our app. We encourage the guest to download the app in order to have a better experience.

However, to convince guests and ensure they receive a high-quality service, we must provi-



## SUCCESS STORIES THE VISION OF BARCELÓ AND VINCCI, 2 INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED HOTEL CHAINS

de everything they need under one app: Room Service, communication, digitization of services, mobile key... We cannot force guests to download two apps for different tasks. It is important to make the guest's stay as comfortable and easy as possible.

By centralizing everything within one application, the guest perceives the benefits of our innovations. Therefore, the integration of mobile key providers and other services with STAY is essential. The reason is that if we have to tell customers: "on the one hand, download this app for Room Service and chat with staff", and on the other hand, "download this other app for the mobile key", they won't listen.

**"The guest perceives our innovations through the app created with STAY. But none of this would be possible without integrating all the functionalities in the same app"**

**In general, what are three concepts you would use to define STAY?**

The three pillars of comfort, sustainability, and innovation. Because our clients will access all

our services through their smartphones, convenience is fundamental.

From hotel information, schedules, or services... to requesting guest feedback in real time, as well as the implementation of communication channels to allow guests to interact with the staff instantly. As well as the advantages of the mobile key.

We are committed to sustainability, and STAY helps us reduce the amount of paper and plastic we use. And last but not least, innovation.

In Barceló's strategy, it is one of the cornerstones. By taking all this into account, we tailor the strategy to each type of hotel to persuade guests to download the app. For example, we have a hotel in Barcelona, the Barceló Sants, completely set in space. Our reception speech has been altered here to allow the guest to participate in that space mission, to be a pioneer within our orbital station, as well as to utilize the mobile key, which is one of our latest innovations. With the app, the customer experience is undoubtedly enhanced and the level of satisfaction is extremely high.

**Sustainability is booming these days, as you mentioned...**

Clearly, Barceló is a chain that cares about the environment. Therefore, mobile key technology reduces plastic consumption. Despite this, we remain fully prepared to serve customers who prefer the traditional plastic key system. There is, however, an ecological and economic cost associated with demagnetization and card loss.

Plastic consumption is reduced as a result of the implementation of the mobile key. Using STAY's functions, Barceló also saves a great deal of paper. We strive to care for the environment every day, and the digitization of services helps us to do so.

## "The mobile key is aligned with two of our chain's pillars: innovation and technology"



**Aixa Rodríguez**

Head of Marketing and Communications at **Vincci Hoteles**



The first thing that comes to mind when a regular traveler hears about Vincci Hotels are the concepts of modernity, avant-garde, and innovation. Taking advantage of the mobile key, Vincci is further enhancing the functionality of its hotels. This technology seems tailored to the chain's brand image.

In the world of hospitality, Vincci Hotels stand for technology, modernity, avant-garde... Indeed, you were among the first to introduce the digital key. Based on the months you've used it, how would you rate this innovation? Is there a reason why you were the first to use this technology? Does it have a wow factor?

We have always been committed to technology at Vincci Hotels. One of the foundational pillars of the chain has always been innovation, which incorporates the latest technological advances into every aspect of the business, allowing us to adapt to and anticipate, in some cases, the needs of our guests who are often looking for a way to solve any management issue using their smartphones.

Mobile key implementation is another step in our roadmap. There are some guests who may be skeptical at times, but the majority of our clients appreciate having their key stored in their mobile device. Because they can easily lose their plastic key cards, forget them, or have to replace them if they get demagnetized. Likewise, they are aware that by reducing plastic usage during their stay, they contribute to the environment.



**While creating its native app through STAY, what did Vincci look for?**

During our guests' stay, the Vincci App is essential. This is intended to ensure that communication between the client and the hotel's staff is as smooth as possible during the stay. In other words, it's a concierge app.

Its goal is to ensure that guests are comfortable throughout their stay, even before they arrive.

In addition to providing a valuable repository of information about the hotel, our app also allows guests to interact with the hotel, making direct reservations at the points of sale, scheduling events, and, most importantly, being able to communicate directly with the hotel 24 hours a day.

**At Vincci Consulado in Bilbao, I was told that mobile keys are widely accepted even by non-digital natives. Does that apply to the rest of the chain as well? Is it still possible to get a traditional key if you want one?**

Most guests are happy to have this option. Every now and then there is a guest who does not feel comfortable with this option and prefers to use a conventional plastic key. Our team has them ready, they are compatible. The re-

ceptionists at our hotels, however, will explain all the benefits of the mobile key technology during check-in. It is usually understood by the guest, so everything usually goes smoothly.

As a result of the pandemic, almost all segments of the population have adopted technology, which undoubtedly favors our implementation of technological projects right now.

**"The pandemic has accelerated the use of technology in almost all segments of the population, also in hotels"**

**Large companies value sustainability, and the hotel industry is no exception. How does the mobile key contribute to Vincci's environmental goals?**

Since the launch of our Vincci App, we have gradually eliminated paper and plastic. We were all surprised by the arrival of the pandemic. But we got ahead of ourselves, and our guests were already familiar with our Vincci. The pandemic, however, meant a takeoff, especially in terms of its use and acceptance by guests. Our hotel chain, as you mentioned, is

committed to sustainable tourism, and digitization of some processes contributes to this goal.

**How difficult was it to implement the mobile key? I mean from a technical standpoint. Do you consider it to have been an agile process?**

Every implementation has its own level of complexity. It is clear to us at Vincci Hotels that the initial period and the start-up were not extremely laborious, and it was certainly worth the effort.

**What is your assessment of STAY's effort to integrate with other digital guest experience solutions and to provide many features within one app? How long did it take your staff to learn how to use it?**

Integrations greatly simplify the implementation of the app and mobile key. It is always necessary to make technical adjustments until everything works properly and is incorporated into the hotel's normal operation. However, we can assure you that everything went smoothly for our staff. The app has become part of our employees' daily routines after they quickly adapted to its operation.

# Mobile key providers

In response to the growing trend that is revolutionizing hotel access, STAY has integrated the world's leading mobile key providers into its app



## SUPPLIERS

LEADING INDUSTRY THINKERS SHARE  
THEIR THOUGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

"The mobile key has a magical effect that amazes the guest and creates a memorable stay at the hotel from the very beginning"



**José Salvador Valle**  
General Manager for Spain  
& Portugal at Assa Abloy

**ASSA ABLOY**

The Assa Abloy Group is a global leader in access control, locks, doors, and related products... With a market share of 50%, the Stockholm-based company dominates the global market. In terms of quality, safety, and product development, they are at the forefront.

There is no doubt that mobile keys are one of the wow experiences of the moment. Is it likely that they will eventually become the new normal in the hotel industry?

Currently, the mobile key is a magic formula within guest experience apps. At STAY, you know how many benefits these kinds of apps can provide to hotels. The mobile key is a small part of them, but it greatly enhances downloads.

It is something magical because it allows you to do something in the digital world and provoke a physical reaction. This amazes the guest and creates a memorable stay at the hotel from the very beginning.

In other words: there is no doubt in the minds of all hotels that they will require the mobile key in the medium term. Nevertheless, when it comes to implementation, there is some reluctance, which is why penetration is still low. I'm not just talking about small hotels here. Not all large hotels have made the switch. I find it curious in two ways:

- STAY is ready to offer its customers the

mobile key, which solves the dilemma of installing it.

- Many hotels already have the technology installed in their locks and are unaware of it.

From my perspective as a supplier, I believe that the one who hits first hits twice.

Dissemination of technology was our strategy. Many customers have the technology installed in their physical locks—those that require plastic cards—and are unaware of it. We did it this way because we knew the mobile key would eventually arrive. And now, it has arrived, with several chains ahead of the rest. Several of our clients would only need to pay the mobile key fee and the cloud technology fee. They already have the hardware.

**Guests who are used to the traditional plastic key system... will they accept the change?**

Several chains have implemented it with very high penetration and satisfaction rates. I think that answers the question. It is a common pro-

blem in many hotels that there is no definition of who is going to use it. There is no doubt that they will need it, but they have certain fears about it.

From both Assa Abloy and STAY, everything works perfectly. However, especially in the early stages, a strategy is needed at the hotel's reception. In a few seconds and in a very didactic manner, you need to explain to the guest how it works and what extra functionalities can be enjoyed. Upon hearing how simple it is, the customer will be amazed. Using the right strategy—and STAY knows how to advise hotels—it will be a success.

**“The customer is amazed at how simple it is to use the mobile key, and it is aligned with sustainability”**

However, there are other hotels with low penetration as a result of the strategy's failure. Taking advantage of this tool does not depend on Assa Abloy or STAY, but on the hotel that uses it. As an example, Vincci places a QR code at the front desk, and employees politely ask guests to scan it and download the app. Their surprise is evident as they receive an ex-

planation of how the mobile key works, which is quite simple. They will tell you more about how well it is working.

I want to conclude with an idea that I want to highlight. Sooner or later, hotels will have to implement mobile keys. They already have the technology. They must, however, believe and go with determination. Particularly in urban hotels.

### **Is the mobile key sustainable? The plastic waste is reduced by tons...**

Currently, every human being with a minimal level of concern has an interest in the environment. Several studies in international markets indicate that sustainability plays an important role in a guest's decision to book a hotel; I have not read them, but my perception is the same.

A lot of hotel chains are very aware. Paper and plastic elimination is central to the 2030 agenda that we have proposed as a society as anyone who has a certain ecological sensitivity understands.

In regards to the mobile key, it is not only about its use but also about its extraction. Every year, we transport tons of plastic. Add to that the increase in costs from China, the energy consumption from transportation, and so on... A

curious fact is that all manufacturers import this plastic from China.

In practice, a plastic card is useful for 7-8 guests. I tell you why:

There is a 10-year guarantee on the card's information retention. However, it won't last longer than 15 days in a vacation hotel. In a city hotel, the duration will be even shorter. The guest takes it in and out of his pocket, loses it... This is where the data comes from. As a result, hotels are paying a relatively high price, which is greatly reduced with the mobile key. Not entirely, since hotels that have implemented the mobile key still use plastic keys for customers who prefer the traditional method. As of today, at least.

### **Your division deals with hoteliers on a daily basis. But what are the mobile keys' benefits for the guest?**

Plastic keys are common to lose, which is why cards with a 10-year memory retention guarantee are so short-lived. I assure you, however, that you will not lose your smartphone often.

Would you like to check out late on Sunday at 3:00 pm? If you're using the plastic card, they can approve it over the phone, but it needs to



be updated through reception because it's programmed until 12 and it will become inactive. The mobile key allows the hotel's staff to update it without you leaving bed. By using the mobile key through a guest app such as STAY, all the service offering and information will be available on the guest's smartphone. Comfortable, practical, modern, and safe.



Through the mobile key, the offline system becomes "semi-online". We started with this model in Las Vegas, you can figure out the needs of 5,000-room hotels. Aside from the two benefits listed above, you can also request a room change or shorten your stay from your mobile device. From the check-in, the guest is given the impression of modernity.

Moreover, there are many other factors that contribute to the success of hotels. Some countries

have legal requirements related to client identification. The hotel has full control over how the mobile key is used. You can deactivate the key, for example, if your client is conflicting and you don't want them to enter the room again.

### **In terms of technology, potential hacks, etc., is the mobile key safe?**

It is completely safe. Assa Abloy uses SEOS technology. Due to its constant mutation, it is completely safe. Here is an example to illustrate what I mean. Imagine that we share a room. Your mobile credential is completely different from mine, and it also mutates within the geographical container of the device. Even though we both have access to the same room.

Binary codes are often easy to hack. Nevertheless, we are using a system that is safe, insurmountable, and unbreakable. The SEOS technology was assessed by an external cybersecurity audit commissioned by STAY itself, in order to demonstrate its effectiveness.

**"The mobile key technology is completely safe and insurmountable"**

### **In your opinion, what is the natural evolution of mobile key technology?**

Currently, two types of Bluetooth are coexisting: Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) and Near Field Communication (NFC). Although the NFC system is perfect, neither Apple nor Android have found a way to monetize it. Those of our clients who already use BLE technology are technically prepared to switch to NFC as soon as possible, as their locks allow it.

## SUPPLIERS

LEADING INDUSTRY THINKERS SHARE  
THEIR THOUGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

**"The youngest users are digital natives, and the mobile key is completely natural for them; the rest of the customers are already used to using smartphones"**



**Javier Juan**

Product Integration Manager  
for Africa & Middle East at Onity

**Onity**

Onity is a technology solutions company with over two decades of experience in the hotel sector. With a sales network covering more than 115 countries worldwide, this giant is a global player, with a total of 18 offices located in 5 continents.

There is no doubt that mobile keys are one of the wow experiences of the moment. Is it likely that they will eventually become the new normal in the hotel industry?

DirectKey is an affordable, secure, and easy-to-use solution that can improve the guest experience at hotels of any size. As we understand, the mobile opening is already the new normal. Hotels are aware of its advantages and how it can be used to improve customer service, differentiate themselves technologically, and improve sustainability. It is up to each hotel to decide whether to implement this solution as a strategy to stand out.

The mobile key system can also be integrated with the hotel's guest app, strengthening customer relationships. By integrating DirectKey with their PMS system, hotels can offer online check-in, allowing their customers to bypass reception when they arrive at the property, going straight to their rooms. This is an excellent option for maintaining social distancing guidelines and reducing touchpoints.

Guests who are used to the traditional plastic key system... will they accept the change

The youngest users are digital natives, and the mobile key is completely natural for them; the rest of the customers are already used to using smartphones since they use them for many other daily tasks.

Anyhow, mobile keys are an additional option that enables us to offer tailored solutions for each guest. The card key system can still be used by customers who prefer it. In fact, both systems can be used for a single room.

**Is the mobile key sustainable? The plastic waste is reduced by tons...**

The market has only recently begun implementing this technology, which is extremely new.

At this time, the objectives of the hotels that implement it are more aligned with the advantages listed above. That is digitization, differentiation, and improvement of the guest experience.





At the moment, the reduction of plastic in cards is a secondary goal. There will be a significant difference when mobile keys replace plastic cards in the long run, but since this is still an additional option, it is too soon to quantify it.

**How does a hotel implement the mobile key? Is it a long process? The reason I ask this is because everyone is afraid of change...**

DirectKey is a mobile access tool that is suitable for use by any hotel. Depending on the needs of each hotel, it can be implemented using different formulas:

- Onity DirectKey App: the "ready-to-use" solution that incorporates the mobile key functionality without additional system development.

- Mobile key integration with hotel guest experience app: in each hotel's native app, this functionality will be one of many.
- Partnering with third parties: to provide added value to hotels through mobile access without requiring large investments.

DirectKey works with both new and existing Onity locks. Adding the DirectKey module to existing Onity locks will save time and installation costs while maximizing the equipment's lifespan:

- Doors do not need to be drilled
- Maintains certification in fire safety
- Take advantage of the existing lock for great savings
- Easy and fast
- Almost no downtime for the hotel during the process. There should be no noise, dust, or disturbances among customers

For maximum security and to avoid problems that may arise when working with two systems (duplicate audit trail, lack of functionality, loss of certifications, conflicts in the coverage of guaran-

tees, etc.), the lock and the digital key module should be supplied by the same supplier.

By managing credentials through DirectKey, operational expenses can be reduced. It allows staff to spend more time serving customers by reducing the time it takes to handle the traditional plastic key system at the front desk.

**"It allows staff to spend more time serving customers by reducing the time it takes to handle the traditional plastic key system at the front desk"**

The Bluetooth module itself is a low-cost solution, and the digital key does come with a monthly fee, but it eliminates the expense of useless cards that customers throw away.

**"The digital key saves time to guests and staff, and also money because it eliminates the expense of useless cards that customers throw away"**

**Your division deals with hoteliers on a daily basis. But what are the mobile keys' benefits for the guest?**

I will summarize it briefly:

#### Benefits for the guest

Check-in queues should be reduced at the reception.

The lock can be activated without touching it with the smartphone, allowing access from a convenient distance.

Key credentials are completely secure and remain on the mobile device throughout the stay.

Through the hotel app, the mobile key provides a contactless and effective access experience.

Plastic cards can be used simultaneously with it. As a result, customers have a better experience.

The benefits extend beyond the guest as well:

#### Benefits for the hotel

This system allows you to easily configure access hours.

As a result of its improved efficiency, the hotel makes better use of its resources.

Using Bluetooth® technology, the locks can be

programmed with the mobile in a comfortable manner.

Increased loyalty is a result of the hotel app.

There is a transition from offline to online system, allowing, for example, the cancellation of a customer's key immediately.

There are no investments or payments to third parties required to implement Bluetooth Technology, which is available in all smartphones.

Additionally, the additional encryption optimizes security, not to mention that updates are very quick.

#### In terms of technology, potential hacks, etc., is the mobile key safe?

Onity's DirectKey system allows customers to download their keys securely to their smartphones. AES data encryption of 128 bits is used to encrypt digital key credentials, providing an additional layer of security to the lock system's own functions. Additionally, your phone comes with its own security features such as PINs, passwords, facial recognition, etc.

**There is no doubt that mobile keys are one of the wow experiences of the moment. Is it likely that they will eventually become the new normal in the hotel industry?**

The technology that is being implemented in the hotel industry is very new and has a lot to offer before it evolves into a new concept, as I mentioned in the interview earlier. As I see it, its different forms of application will logically produce a natural evolution, but we will only see it over the medium term.

#### Would you be able to provide us with an example of a hotel or tourist accommodation that has worked with you successfully?

I could provide you with many examples, but I'd rather talk about something more global: statistics. DirectKey™ technology from Onity is a pioneering platform in mobile accreditation. The company launched the DirectKey system for major hotel brands in 2015, and the technology has now been installed in more than 5,000 hotels and 900,000 rooms globally. Onity's mobile unlock credentials have been used to open doors more than 100 million times since DirectKey launched in 2015.

**"Since 2015, our clients' guests have opened doors more than 100 million times"**



As a result of the technology used to open the room lock through guests' smartphones, the phone can be connected to other devices in the room, allowing for new online functionalities, increasing efficiency in the room and reducing network duplication. Additionally, it allows the hotel to tailor its services to the preferences of each client. That is, ensuring their needs are met in a personalized way, thereby improving their stay. The implementation of this technology has resulted in numerous success stories for hotels that have adopted it.

## SUPPLIERS

LEADING INDUSTRY THINKERS SHARE  
THEIR THOUGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

“For any type of hotel to succeed in this area, they must offer both physical and mobile keys to guests”



**Marta Zubiaurre**  
Hospitality Key Account  
Manager at EMEA Salto

**SALTO**

As a global leader in access control systems, Salto has equipped more than 2 million doors in 90 countries since it was founded in 2001.

There is no doubt that mobile keys are one of the wow experiences of the moment. Is it likely that they will eventually become the new normal in the hotel industry?

Mobile keys are the new normal. COVID has accelerated the process.

The hotel industry is experiencing growing trends. As an example, entering your room with minimal personal interaction. Digitizing all service offerings so they are available on guests' smartphones. Or accessing different areas of the hotel without a companion.

The mobile key is an essential component of a hotel's or organization's digital transformation strategy. People who are working on implementing this transformation should not focus on investing in technology, but on integrating technology into the value chain of customers. SALTO Systems, a young and technologically developed company without a technological legacy that hinders the use of mobile keys, is able to help companies progress by providing analytics, real-time transactions, and digital experiences. The legacy should not prevent many

hotels from undergoing this transformation, as it does in many organizations.

Guests who are used to the traditional plastic key system... will they accept the change?

A hotel's accommodation and service, along with the profile of its guests, play an important role in its success. The mobile key fits very well with the needs and demands of the so-called digital natives because the majority of guests of this type of accommodation are young people between the ages of 20 and 35. Other types of accommodations where guests wish to do a digital detox will still require a physical key. For any type of hotel to succeed in this area, they must offer both physical and mobile keys to guests. They complement each other.

For this reason, SALTO offers a variety of possibilities, including plastic, wood, and paper keys for eco-friendly properties, mobile keys, etc., allowing the hotel to get to know its guests better and better understand their needs and demands. In short, access control enables a property, regardless of the type of accommodation, to offer guests all the options to select,

combine, and use the credential which suits them best.

### Is the mobile key sustainable? The plastic waste is reduced by tons...

Mobile keys must be part of a corporate strategy, starting with a physical key coexisting with a digital one, a PIN code, facial recognition, etc.



**“Mobile keys must be part of a corporate strategy”**

The guest can combine and use different access methods based on the context. When you go to the pool or aquapark, for example, you don't want to carry your smartphone with you. Physical access credentials are often pre-

ferred in these two situations. Another type of tourism is digital detox, where one wants to completely disconnect from their phones. Having said that, regarding the environment:

Sustainability is one of SALTO's top priorities:

- We can offer plastic-free cards made from sustainable materials
- We have a zero-emission factory

We have transformed SALTO Systems into a more sustainable business model to address the impact of our environmental and social activities, as well as the main challenges facing the access control and security industry. Through its responsible corporate policies, SALTO contributes to the achievement of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) through a proactive response to social problems. Additionally, the company promotes a variety of sustainability and efficiency measures in production, distribution, and after-sales services.

### Your division deals with hoteliers on a daily basis. But what are the mobile keys' benefits for the guest?

Our goal is to create a comfortable, reliable, and safe environment for hoteliers and guests

alike. Offering new services on the go and making sure our clients' service offerings meet the constantly changing expectations of their guests.

### In terms of technology, potential hacks, etc., is the mobile key safe?

Encryption and security must go hand in hand. We are talking about Bluetooth technology (low power consumption and secure) as well as NFC technology linked to smartphones. Mobile payments are currently its most popular field of application.

It is impossible to prevent vulnerabilities in different communication technologies. As technology advances, it is becoming easier and easier to use technologies like NFC with confidence and peace of mind.

Salto uses Bluetooth to communicate between the reader and the mobile device (which contains the user's credentials). To securely transmit user credentials to the reader, the SALTO property protocol is being used, as well as AES128 encryption in CBC mode, CMAC authentication, and anti-replay. Private information and sensitive data are protected using AES (Advanced Encryption Standard).

# Do you want to know how to implement the mobile key in your hotel?

Contact us, and one of our product experts will let  
you know how to do it with STAY

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