

Coming to a smartphone near you: Personalized experiences

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Say *au revoir* to the concierge. The proliferation of technology focused on finding the best tickets, the hottest restaurants or the next flight out of town may mean it's time to bid adieu to the concierge and other traditional service information gatekeepers, according to new research.

Face-to-face interactions with front desk clerks and concierges are not essential for personalized service, and increasingly these encounters are being substituted with Smartphone apps and other automated service systems, according to a study in the current edition of the *Journal of Service Research*.

[Business travelers](#) who frequent the same hotels time and again may develop personal relationships with certain concierges over time, but a "smart digital assistant" app can provide consistent personalized recommendations for every customer, every time, no matter where they are, the researchers report.

"Recognizing that person-to-person interactions and information systems are substitutes for each other helps managers and service designers make better decisions about the investments needed to collect, store, and process information about customers and interactions," says Professor Robert J. Glushko of the University of California, Berkeley, a co-author of the new study.

Service providers can collect information about customer preferences through methods such as [customer satisfaction](#) forms and tracking

"likes" on Facebook or other social media. But automated service systems and applications can capture both explicit and implicit feedback, and do it in the most complete and effective way possible. Already, service systems can record customers' choices, track navigation or record web browsing behavior. Almost instantaneously, these systems can exploit that information to personalize future recommendations.

"Imagine an app that combines TripIt, TripAdvisor, Yelp, and a [personal assistant](#), all into one," explains Boston College Accenture Professor of Marketing and *Journal of Service Research* editor Katherine Lemon. "These types of applications have the power to re-shape the service landscape across multiple industries."

Co-authors Glushko and Karen Joy Nomorosa, a senior semantic analyst at Rearden Commerce, Inc., envision an app that personalizes customer experiences by developing personalized systems that integrate across all service platforms, from hotels, to dining, to booking flights.

Of course, there are still customers who enjoy the "lazy chatty conversation with a bank teller or hotel front desk clerk," Nomorosa points out, but "for every customer who enjoys a lazy chat, there is surely someone who wants a minimalist information-driven experience."

Provided by Boston College

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