

## Don't Furlough Hotel Staff, Furlough Hotel TV Channels



At the end of March 2020 a large portion the world is on lockdown. The Coronavirus pandemic is a huge challenge for the hospitality industry. Huge numbers of employees suddenly find themselves laid off or furloughed, with all hotels seeking a way to reduce expenditure.

Hotel operators can often feel cornered into making decisions that impact the lives of their staff, in an attempt to preserve their business. A situation that I'm sure, no one wishes to find themselves in. With the situation advancing at a rapid rate, how we react under pressure is key. I might have one suggestion, regarding technology, that can help.

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*A Hospitality technology blog by RoomNet. Every week we cover topics such as IPTV, Apple TV, content casting, Mirroring, OTT apps and of course content. We aim to give you all the information you need on giving your guest the ultimate experience through innovative technology.*

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## Free To Air Isn't Always Free

When designing and deploying Hotel TV systems, it has been common for the brief of the TV channel line up to be "Whatever is Free To Air". This is interesting, considering that just because a channel is broadcast free to air, doesn't necessarily mean that it's free to show it in your hotel. I think the term free is what confuses most people. For clarity, in many parts of the world Free to Air just means the broadcast stream is not encrypted. You are still responsible for complying with any subscription costs or local licensing.

So, in 2020, knowing that there may be a cost to actually showing a specific channel as part of your Hotel TV Channel Line Up, certainly means some strong consideration to the value of showing that channel.

Now, 3 months into 2020, and we are at a point that calls for serious measures. Most of the world is on lockdown, and the hospitality industry is effectively closed for business. Some hotels continue to operate, providing a vital lifeline for key workers, as temporary hospitals, and solace for those displaced throughout the world due to travel restrictions.

As I said, these hotels need serious measures

What we need here is a much more pragmatic approach. This is not a time for blanket rip out of systems, cancelling of contracts or the dreaded switch off. This is time to realise which systems cost the hotel money, and plan for how to move or remove the cost. Then, not only will you save money now, but be ready if something like this ever happens again.

## **Moving the Cost to the Guest**

We know there are many different components of a TV system. Hotel's were often known for offering channel lists of over 300 channels, trying to capture content from every corner of the globe. They were also moonlighting as cinema's, offering recent Hollywood content through a video on demand system.

My concern is, how much value to these actually bring? These features cost the hotel money, month after month. Content and channel subscriptions are not cheap, and let's be honest..... Does anyone actually watch them?

The solution could be right here, with [ROOMNET TV](#). A solution that allows you to take control.

## **An On Demand Solution for An On Demand World**

It is very clear that guests bring their own content with them these days. Not only do they bring content with them, but they wish to consume it on their own timeline. Funnily enough, those of us in the Hotel technology space [predicted this shift 11 years ago](#), but we didn't quite get it right. Yes guests will bring content with them, however it's not physical access that we need to provide guests anymore, by way of a HDMI socket or USB interface. No, we need to give them access to their subscriptions.

Over The Top Apps, often known as just OTT, are applications that deliver on demand content to TV's. These are apps such as Netflix, YouTube, Apple TV+, Disney+, Hulu, HBO Go, I could go on. The point is there are many. In recent years it has been accepted that giving access to some of these services would be enough, but now, it isn't.

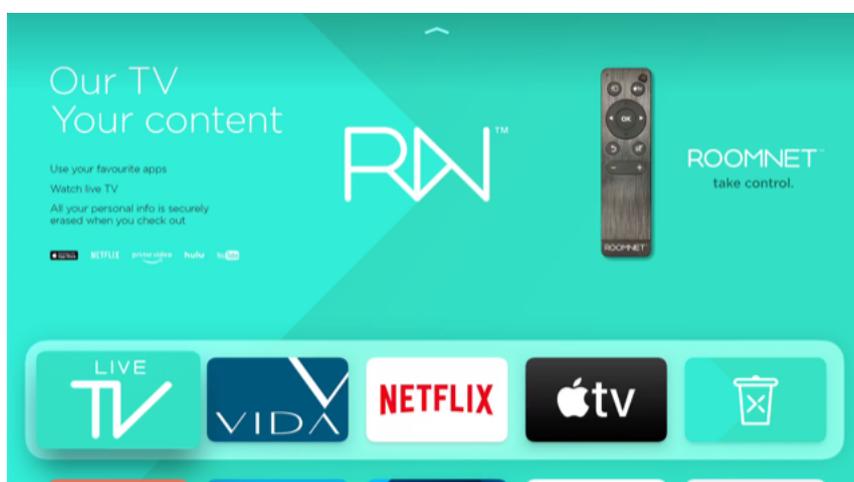
What is enough, is giving your guests a choice. The easiest way that you can give choice to a guest is through OTT apps, but what if you could allow them to choose the apps themselves?

## Back to Those Hotel TV Channels

As I said at the beginning, now is not the time for knee-jerk reactions. Now is the time for analysis of what costs you money. When I talk of shifting the cost to the guest, remember we are probably not asking them to swallow cost they don't already have. A huge percentage of guests already have subscriptions to one or more of the services I mentioned above. So the answer? Turn those TV channels off.

### There, I said it. Switch. The Channels. Off.

It sounds daunting, but it isn't, as long as you have something in place, to pick up the slack. [As I mentioned in my last post](#), Iglu Student Accommodation realised exactly that. Installing ROOMNET TV without any TV channels. This install happened before the current COVID-19 crisis had taken hold. A clear message that accommodation can open without any linear TV channels.



Costly TV channels provide such limited bang for buck in 2020, that it is those that should be furloughed. Perhaps brought back when the hospitality industry emerges from this pandemic, but perhaps not.

Coming back to my point about guests choosing the apps themselves. The constant evolution of OTT apps means that installing a smart TV with some of them now, could cost you in the future. The easiest solution? Get your guests access to the Apple App Store. [ROOMNET TV](#) does just that, giving your guests the choice. Allowing your guest to take control.

So are you ready to give you guests a choice of content like never before. Do you need a way to cut costs without cutting the experience? [ROOMNET TV](#) is the answer. Get in touch with us below and let us help you.

## About the Author



**Darren King - Founder & Chief Mischief Maker**

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Darren has built the ROOMNET brand and business through a relentless drive to always look for the better way, by putting the guest experience at the front of everything he does. Now Darren is sharing his thoughts, week in week out, on how RoomNet are disrupting the Hospitality technology space, showing you how to bring the ultimate guest experience to your hotel, Apartment or shared space through technology.