

Simplotel leads global hotel industry recovery with image and video management technology from Cloudinary

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Solution

Simplotel’s mission is to help independent hotels of all sizes to grow their direct website bookings by providing Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) technology that enables them to compete at a higher level, drive greater awareness and increase direct sales. With the help of Simplotel’s easy-to-use product suite, Simplotel’s customers often see their bookings double and revenue multiply within a matter of months. Their success relies heavily on the ability to quickly upload and display high quality imagery and videos to hook in prospective customers.

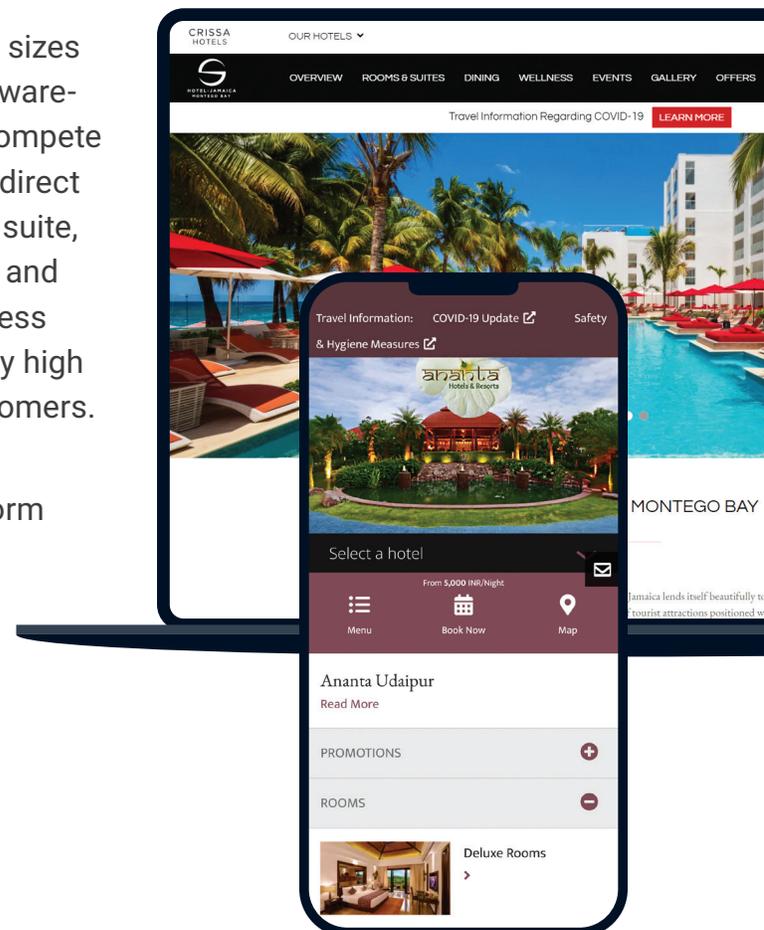
For the past six years, Cloudinary’s fast, reliable image and video management technology has been the platform for millions of hotels’ images and videos, all served instantaneously to customers around the world.

Results

Improved session times and reduced bounce rates

Hundreds of engineering hours saved

Impressive customer retention rates



Company

Simplotel is a SaaS provider designed to simplify the lives of hoteliers and help them drive more bookings through all their online and offline channels. Founded in 2013 and headquartered in India's Silicon Valley, Bangalore, Simplotel helps over 2,000 hotels across 21 countries to drive more direct bookings, showcase their brand online and improve the experience of their guests.

The Challenge: Image and Video Management for the Fast-Paced Hotel Industry

Hotels are working harder than ever to attract customers. While AirBnB has been turning up the competitive heat on the hospitality industry, many hotels have also found they have become over reliant on commission-hungry intermediaries such as Expedia and Booking.com. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, decimating hotel revenues worldwide, the landscape became exponentially more challenging.

"Now more than ever, hotels need a presence across multiple channels in order to maximize sales opportunities," says Tarun Goyal, Founder & CEO at Simplotel. "They need to be everywhere, but they don't necessarily have the technology or the resources to enable them to compete with the big boy intermediaries."

Simplotel's proprietary content management system (CMS) is completely customized to hotels. When a hotelier signs up with Simplotel, they can upload their content, choose a page template, input their room rates, and set up a payment gateway – all in a few hours.

The most crucial step in this process is uploading visual assets. Thanks to changes in online shopping behaviors and the proliferation of visual social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the most important weapons in a hotel's marketing armoury now are imagery and videos.

"Gone are the days where people land in a city, walk into a hotel and say, 'hey, I want a room here, let me look at the lobby.' The decision is being made online: it's about your reviews, your pictures and videos," Goyal explains. "A picture is worth a thousand words, and video is worth a million. We've found that when hotels use video really effectively to tell a story, customer engagement jumps by five or six percentage points," he continues.

But while images and video have become crucial elements to selling hotels online, they also contribute extensively to a website's load time. "You can have the best video ever, but if it doesn't load properly or fast enough, or looks jittery when it plays, what's the point? Your customer has already lost interest. This is where Cloudinary comes into play," says Goyal.



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The Cloudinary Solution: Reducing Lag and Improving User Experience for Image and Video Content, Globally

In order to keep page load lag to a minimum and ensure images and videos can be quickly and securely uploaded by customers using the Simplotel platform, Goyal and his engineering team turned to Cloudinary's image and video management tools.

"All of Simplotel's images and videos are automatically hosted by Cloudinary, amounting to around 800GB of data," explains Goyal, who says that Simplotel partners with Amazon Web Services for all other hosting requirements. "We rely extensively on Cloudinary to provide a fast and smooth experience for our hoteliers and their end customers."

Cloudinary is integrated into Simplotel's back end, meaning that only a handful of Simplotel's developers work directly with Cloudinary. When a customer uploads images and video to Simplotel's CMS, they're automatically hosted on Cloudinary's platform.

Cloudinary enables dynamic resolution and format adjustment, meaning that Simplotel customers' images and video load fast and at high fidelity across all browsers and devices – crucial for a business operating in so many different markets.

Today, Simplotel hoteliers regularly record lower bounce rates, longer dwell times and jumps in direct and third-party bookings thanks in part to improvements in customer experience delivered by Cloudinary's pioneering technology.

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The Results: Driving Hospitality's Recovery through Engaging Customer Experiences

Aside from huge wins in customer experience, Cloudinary has also brought tangible benefits to Simplotel's busy engineering team. By enabling the engineering team to offload the complexity around image and video management and dedicate precious development time to other areas of the business, Cloudinary helps Simplotel to accelerate its time to market for new features and stay competitive.

“Cloudinary's image and video optimization capabilities are so easy to use and integrate with our platform, they've saved our engineering team hundreds of hours of development time,” says Goyal, adding: “The fact that Cloudinary consistently invests in new features, such as dynamic video and picture resolutions and image shape settings, means that we can focus on other areas and innovate much quicker for our customers.”

Despite the turbulence of the COVID-19 crisis, Cloudinary has enabled Simplotel to continue to provide a service that its customers say is essential to them, ensuring it retained business at a time when other costs were being slashed. To that end, Cloudinary's customer support team has worked closely with Simplotel this year to help optimize the service and keep costs down. Goyal says that the team's consultative approach has enabled him to look afresh at how Simplotel can best maximize the value of their investment.

Goyal says he found Cloudinary via a recommendation from a friend, and hasn't looked back: “We looked at it and we loved it: every prototype we built ran smoothly. We've been using the platform for six years, and until the COVID-19 crisis struck we never needed to contact the support team. It all worked seamlessly.”

About Cloudinary

Cloudinary's end-to-end solution makes it easy to upload, store, manage, manipulate, and deliver images and videos, efficiently and effectively. Cloudinary has quickly become the de facto solution used by web and mobile application developers at major companies around the world to streamline image and video management and deliver an optimal end-user experience. Among Cloudinary users are Conde Nast, Bleacher Report, Forbes, Wired, TED, Under Armour, Lululemon, Whole Foods, and many others. For more information, visit www.cloudinary.com or follow on Twitter.