

COVID-19: Interview with Stephan Radwitz, Founder and CEO of ModiHost

Like many industries, hospitality has faced unthinkable challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will likely face continued struggles as doors reopen and people want to travel in a world with new concerns and protocols. Maddyness spoke with Stephan Radwitz, Founder and CEO of ModiHost, the AI-powered SaaS hospitality platform, set to bring hospitality to the next stage in its evolution.

ModiHost is a new platform for hotels that uses artificial intelligence to offer a better hotel management system, centred around personalising the guest experience. In turn, ModiHost aims to drive increased spending and brand loyalty. We believe we have cracked a code that many hotels haven't, offering a solution to aid in remembering guest preferences and anticipating their needs – something most hotels wouldn't be able to employ on their own.

ModiHost's goal is to create an advanced AI system to maximise hotel revenue, boost occupancy rates and increase guest satisfaction. The system will drive greater efficiency for hospitality providers, ranging from small motels and boutique hotels to larger chains. This will enable us to compete with the leading hotel giants as well as share economy services, such as Airbnb.

What have been the biggest professional challenges during lockdown?

During lockdown, despite the challenges that have arisen, we have also seen significant opportunities for company transformation, highlighting areas of the business that could use perfecting as well as new growth possibilities being revealed. Focusing on the organisation's potential, rather than dwelling on any losses, is an effective way to excite employees about the company's future while boosting team morale.

I cannot control the pandemic, so focusing my energy on that is a waste. Instead, I have chosen to focus on the impediments in my business – something I can control. For now, I have chosen to take this opportunity to transform. We must try to find the opportunities in everything we do.

What have been the biggest personal challenges during lockdown?

Like most people, I have fear and anxiety relating to what is happening and how quickly it will spread and affect us the people around us. It is an anxiety-inducing and unnerving time. I have had to adapt to a huge lifestyle shift since the coronavirus outbreak.

However, I have also taken plenty of positive things from the experience. I view spending the extra time with my family as an opportunity and one that I'm grateful for and every day. I also count my blessings that I am healthy.

Was working remotely a new thing for you, and if so, will you be adapting your work to allow for more of it?

Remote working is not a new thing for me or the team. Our team is International so remote working has suited all our needs and allows for the flexibility we require.

How have you been keeping your

employees happy?

I would like to think that my employees are always happy, regardless of the current situation. A few things that I actively do to ensure they remain happy are:

1. Communicate More With Employees.
2. Listen and Understand Staff Concerns.
3. Inspire and Encourage Staff Members.

As a leader, have you successfully managed your (and your teams') mental resilience through lockdown?

I believe I have, by creating emotional safety. This is the period of greatest uncertainty and disruption we'll face in our lifetime. Everything has changed; the old patterns and paradigms are suddenly defunct. This has created enormous anxiety, especially in my Analytical employees and leaders who like established patterns and proven routines.

During this time of tremendous insecurity, it is vital for me to connect (even if virtually) with all employees. One-on-one sessions create the greatest degree of psychological safety.

Which actions have you implemented to stay competitive?

ModiHost is a next-generation cloud-based hotel management platform that integrates AI, Machine Learning, Cognitive Computing and Native Voice Recognition. It enables hotels to deliver a range of advanced, tailored services to their guests. Moreover, ModiHost furnishes hoteliers with a greater degree of precision and control over their business operations than ever previously possible. ModiHost will also operate with a fairer and more transparent fee system than any HMS currently on the market. While most HMS products charge fixed rates, the ModiHost platform operates on a flexible Pay-Per-Use model wherein hotels only pay fees on services delivered. In effect, ModiHost will pay for itself as it delivers direct value to management.

Do you feel confident in your business post-COVID?

Our team believes that once a guest experiences all the features we are offering, they will be interested in revisiting the establishment where they had that experience. Imagine hotel staff knowing your name, your habits, your favourite food and drinks. You will be offered the right things at the right times. It is hugely important for hotels, chains, management companies, etcetera to take advantage of our system and implement these new technologies, because now, more hotels are going to be fighting for a piece of a smaller pie, at least for a while. Hotels cannot control the market, so they will have to control costs. As ModiHost deals with ancillary income to the hotel, it could play a huge role as we come out of the pandemic.

Have you noticed any changes in society/the economy that you think will help you?

The popularity of international tourism has been increasing exponentially since the 1950s. Faster, quicker, and cheaper air travel, as well as better living standards and greater workforce holiday provisions have contributed to a holiday market boom which has shown no signs of slowing over the last decade. Post-COVID, I expect this to continue and hospitality tourism to return stronger than ever before.

Tell us about your future, post-COVID.

We are experiencing shifts in so many facets of life from family and community to work and how we socialise. While we may worry about the worst-case scenario, it is worth remembering that a positive future is likely when we consider what ModiHost will do for the hospitality industry.

What advice would you give to other founders or future founders?

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly changed the world for investors and founders. If I had to offer advice to future founders it would be:

- Build your Community
- Don't worry about "Perfection"
- Find strong Mentors
- Show, don't tell

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