



### Business challenge

Poor guest experiences in the hospitality industry reduce brand image and guest loyalty. Panasonic Corporation of North America saw the opportunity to use its technology to create exemplary experiences.

### Transformation

Panasonic teamed with IBM to build the Panasonic Digital Concierge Platform (DCP). Built on IBM® Watson® technology and hosted on IBM Cloud™, the solution provides the foundation on which Panasonic can develop innovative AI solutions that create conversational, interactive and personalized guest experiences.

## Results

### Creates opportunities

to design personalized, information-rich guest experiences

### Expands reach

into previously uncharted areas of guest-oriented service industries

### Extends functionality

of innovative technology offerings such as Panasonic LinkRay by adding an unmatched cognitive “wow” factor

# Panasonic Corporation of North America

## Helping service industries create exceptional guest experiences with IBM Watson and IBM Cloud

Founded in 1918 in Osaka, Japan, [Panasonic](#) has become one of the world's leading electronics manufacturers. The corporation's motto is, "A Better Life, a Better World."

*"Thanks to IBM Cloud, we can integrate Watson into many of our other technologies to access multiple services, including IoT solutions."*

—Oliver Akinrele, Senior Engineer, Panasonic System Solutions Company of North America

Share this



## Pursuing guest loyalty

Providing a great guest experience drives the hospitality, travel and entertainment industries. Poor experiences affect brand loyalty and image and decrease guests' likelihood to return to the venue, whether it's a hotel, restaurant, theme park or stadium. No one enjoys standing in line for service or waiting on hold to speak to a receptionist or concierge.

"We know that the hospitality industry has been working to improve the guest experience for the past several years," comments Don Guelich, Engineering Manager, Panasonic System Solutions Company of North America. "They want to deliver a 'wow' factor. In part, they are trying to address the millennials by integrating even more technology into the travel experience."

Millennials aren't the only ones who can benefit from a more technology-driven hotel, food-service or entertainment experience. People are now accustomed to having



information at their fingertips on their mobile devices. Guests want personalization, automation and ease of use wherever they go.

Panasonic saw an opportunity to meet this technology demand by creating an interactive hotel room mirror that responded like a mobile device screen, displaying information when touched or swiped. The original design was simple—a 2-way mirror overlaid on top of a touch-responsive Panasonic screen.

Panasonic demonstrated the mirror to key hospitality companies. A major hotel chain then deployed the mirrors into one of its boutique hotels, where the experience of getting news, weather, hotel and local information on their hotel room mirror wowed tech-savvy guests, who wanted even more.

"We asked ourselves how we could make the mirror even more attractive from the guest's point of view,"

explains Guelich. "We didn't want to provide just a single piece of technology. We wanted to engage the user with a personalized experience." Panasonic also knew that it needed to provide more value to its hospitality customers, which would have to replace a hotel full of hundred-dollar mirrors with significantly more expensive smart-screen devices.

Of course, Panasonic could simply design a more advanced interactive device, but it saw a greater opportunity to meet the demand for innovative, interactive, personalized experiences. The growth of Internet of Things (IoT) solutions, cloud-based services and cognitive technologies provided the perfect opening for Panasonic to create immersive technology solutions for the hospitality, travel and entertainment industries.

"While working on some of our other ideas with IBM, we began a cognitive value assessment [CVA]," says Guelich. "We wanted to better understand how IBM Watson technology and IBM Cloud could help us add personalization to elevate the user experience."

## Refining the guest experience

Panasonic, long known for excellence in electronics, is integrating innovative cognitive and cloud-based technology solutions into guest-focused service industries. The Panasonic Solutions Company of North America is the hub that helps Panasonic harness 100 years of manufacturing experience to enrich these industries and develop new markets as a technology solutions provider.

Together, Panasonic and IBM Services developed the Panasonic DCP, built on IBM Watson IoT™ and IBM Cloud. The DCP incorporates an ever-growing number of IBM Watson application programming interfaces (APIs) that can continuously expand the scope and functionality of

Panasonic offerings and solutions. “Even though AI is often just a catch phrase, having the cognitive services of Watson helps increase the value of the concierge mirror,” says Oliver Akinrele, Senior Engineer.

Panasonic created the Panasonic Digital Concierge Mirror as the first solution to build on the DCP. The Digital Concierge offering enhances the digital mirror design with Watson Assistant, Watson Natural Language Classifier, Watson Text to Speech and Watson Personality Insights APIs on IBM Cloud. Now guests can have a natural language, interactive dialog with the mirror to tap in to the hotel’s guest and concierge services. The Digital Concierge solution also provides information about the surrounding area, including dining, entertainment, transportation and weather.

According to Guelich, Panasonic plans to expand the Digital Concierge offering beyond hospitality to retail, museums, entertainment and theme parks. Panasonic could also extend it to multitenant apartment buildings or senior living facilities where management can provide a concierge-style benefit to residents as a service.

In addition, the Panasonic Connected Solutions division and IBM are already collaborating to use the DCP to bring IBM Watson Assistant functionality to the Panasonic LinkRay offering. The LinkRay solution uses visible-light communication technology to deliver content to users’ mobile devices. IBM Watson Assistant-enabled hospitality apps can communicate with LinkRay technology-enabled mobile devices, including kiosks, displays and signs

to allow 2-way conversations that connect users with information and experiences

The team is working with IBM Services to create a go-to-market value proposition for the Digital Concierge and LinkRay solutions to generate new revenue streams for Panasonic. Together, IBM and Panasonic are exploring different consumption models, including utility, leasing and hardware ownership, to provide the most comprehensive and flexible cross-industry offering. Unlike its typical business-to-consumer (B2C) sales model, IBM will deliver the cognitive solutions through a business-to-business-to-consumer model (B2B2C), as a pure “as a service” offering.

## Delivering the “wow” factor

Panasonic and IBM are working together to create a range of opportunities for customer-focused service industries to enhance consumer experiences around location-based services and content consumption through the cloud. IBM Cloud is a critical component of the company’s AI strategy, according to Akinrele. “Thanks to IBM Cloud, we can integrate Watson into many of our other technologies. With it, we can access multiple services, including IoT solutions and data storage services.”

In fact, Panasonic is already injecting an unmatched wow factor into the hospitality and entertainment

environments by enhancing some of its vast array of electronics offerings with AI and cloud technology.

Panasonic plans to continue expanding its connected solutions vision by using IBM Watson technology intelligence and its LinkRay solution to provide natural cognitive functionality and expanded features throughout the service industry. Panasonic has been showcasing a Smart Aquarium application that uses LinkRay technology and the Digital Concierge solution to create immersive and awe-inspiring visitor experiences. Panasonic hopes to use this technology to create new opportunities for zoos and aquariums

throughout the US to provide information-rich, personalized experiences to visitors.

By working with IBM to build the scalable DCP on IBM Watson and IBM Cloud, Panasonic can continuously expand into previously uncharted areas within the entire scope of the service industry. Whether providing hotel or residential concierge services or interactive attraction and theme park experiences, Guelich says: “It’s not about stand-alone offerings. It’s about personalizing the whole experience by building groundbreaking, immersive AI solutions.”

### Solution components

- IBM® Cloud™
- IBM Services
- IBM Watson® Assistant
- IBM Watson IoT™
- IBM Watson Natural Language Classifier
- IBM Watson Personality Insights
- IBM Watson Text to Speech

### Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2018. IBM Corporation IBM Watson New Orchard Road, Armonk, NY 10504 Produced in the United States of America, October 2018. IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, IBM Cloud, IBM Watson, and IBM Watson IoT are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at “Copyright and trademark information” at [ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml](http://ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml). This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates. The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions. THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

