



Commercial Strategy

CONFERENCE



From Operator to Architect: Why Revenue Management Doesn't Disappear When AI Gets Better



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From Operator to Architect.

*Why revenue management doesn't disappear when AI gets better –
and what you need to do about it now.*

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Professor Emerita, Cornell University

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The question is no longer "Will AI change my job?"

It is:

*"What value do I provide
once AI can price better than I can?"*

AI excels at the 'what'.

Your role is the 'why,' the 'so what,' and the 'what next.'

Operator → Architect

OPERATOR

Sets rates in the RMS

Generates performance reports

Approves system recommendations

Manages room revenue only

Reactive to demand signals



ARCHITECT

Designs how the system is governed

Narrates insight — prescribes action

Questions and challenges AI outputs

Orchestrates total commercial P&L

Proactive — shapes demand and strategy

Four Pillars of the New Role

01

Commercial Strategist

Room revenue → total business orchestration

02

AI Systems Governor

User → guardian of automated decisions

03

Human Intelligence Interpreter

Reporting data → narrating insight

04

Continuous Learner

Master of a craft → student of change

01 The Commercial Strategist

From Room Revenue to Total Business Orchestration

THE SHIFT

Move from managing transient room rates to orchestrating the hotel's total commercial performance.

THE MINDSET

***You are not a rate setter.
You are the orchestrator of profitability.***

01 The Commercial Strategist

THE ACTION

Expand your metrics

Champion TRevPAR and GOPPAR — not just RevPAR. These are the true measures of asset health.

Lead the commercial calendar

Integrate pricing strategy across rooms, events, F&B, and spa.

Earn a seat at the P&L table

Your role is no longer just rooms. It is the entire profitability of the asset.

02 The AI Systems Governor

From User to Guardian

THE SHIFT

Stop thinking of your software as a simple tool. Think of it as a super-smart automated employee that needs your guidance.

THE MINDSET

***You are not a passenger.
You are the flight supervisor.***

02 The AI Systems Governor

THE ACTION

Hold a weekly 15-minute AI Check-In

Review its key decisions. Ask: 'Does this make strategic sense? Does it fit our brand values?'

Demand explainability

Your AI vendor must provide clear, simple reasons for every major recommendation. No black boxes.

Own the override

When you override the system, log it. Track whether you were right. That's how trust gets built.

03

The Human Intelligence Interpreter

From Reporting Data to Narrating Insight

THE SHIFT

Move from generating reports to translating data into actionable strategy.

THE MINDSET

***You are not a historian of data.
You are the futurist who connects the dots.***

03

The Human Intelligence Interpreter

THE ACTION

Stop reporting. Start prescribing.

Not 'ADR was up 5%.' Instead: 'The AI pushed rate, but we traded long-term corporate for short-term gain. Here's the fix.'

Be the AI's guide to the real world

You provide the context the system cannot see: the competitor's rumored sale, the street festival, the promise to ownership.

Redesign your deliverables

Every report should answer: so what? and what next? — not just what happened.

04 The Continuous Learner

From Master of a Craft to Student of Change

THE SHIFT

Move from perfecting a stable discipline to adapting to a fluid one.

THE MINDSET

***You are not defending a fortress of expertise.
You are exploring a new frontier.***

04 The Continuous Learner

THE ACTION

Learn beyond hospitality

Study the forces reshaping all knowledge work: data science basics, behavioral economics, ethics of automation.

Look to adjacent industries

The best ideas won't come from hospitality. Find the parallels. Connect them to your own context.

Protect time for learning

It won't happen on its own. Block it. Treat it as a revenue management priority — because it is.

The Architect's 90-Day Plan

1 WEEK 1 — AUDIT

Log your time for one week.

Categorize every task as Tactical/Operational or Strategic/Architectural.

Be brutally honest. Most people are surprised by what they find.

*The honest answer for most revenue managers: 70–80% tactical.
That is not a personal failure — it is a systemic one.
The audit is the first step toward changing it.*

The Architect's 90-Day Plan

2 NEXT 30 DAYS — PLAN

Commit to reallocating 20% of your time from Tactical to Strategic. Block it on your calendar now — before something fills it. 20% is one blocked hour a day. That's it.

3 NEXT 90 DAYS — ACT

Choose ONE concrete action from the four pillars. Schedule a lunch with your Director of Sales. Draft a one-page AI Governance Charter. Enroll in a data storytelling course. One thing. Now.

The Architect's Audit

Look at last week.

How much of your time was tactical — and how much was strategic?

Your handout has the exercise.
Work through it — then we'll discuss.

*There are no wrong answers.
There are only honest ones.*

The future belongs not to those
who can set the best price —
but to those who can design
the best strategy.

Sherri Kimes · Cornell University · Professor Emerita

Research: Future of Hotel Revenue Management — results coming soon

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