

# The Guide to Switching Your PMS



# Contents

Introduction	> 02
10 questions to ask when choosing a PMS	> 03
What makes a successful onboarding?	> 15
Online onboarding: the new normal	> 20
A typical onboarding	> 21
Conclusion	> 27
About Mews	> 28

# Introduction



So you're thinking of switching your PMS? We hear that a lot. On average, a hotelier changes their PMS every seven years, although the emergence of more agile, cloud-based solutions is likely to bring that number down.

This guide will help to prepare you for making the switch, including what to consider when searching for a provider, the keys to a successful implementation, and what a normal onboarding timeline should look like. No smoke and mirrors or sugar coating; just years of expertise on the realities of migrating your most vital hotel software.

But before we begin, let's address those long-standing preconceptions about moving your property to a new hospitality solution. No, it's no longer a hair-pulling experience that takes years off your life and leaves you questioning why

you're in the hospitality industry in the first place. If that's been your experience so far, we can only apologize for the legacy systems that went before us.

However, nor is it as simple as changing your internet provider. Yes, many elements are now automated and digitalized, but any hospitality cloud has a lot of moving parts. Switching your PMS still requires good preparation, proper commitment, and sound project management – but none of this should be daunting if you're serious about getting more from your property.





# 10 questions to ask when choosing a PMS



Our industry is changing. Finally.

For decades, PMSs were little more than dressed-up spreadsheets – and the dressing up often wasn't even good. They were vital to hotel operations, but the fundamentals remained the same and there was little differentiation between each solution.

In the late 2000s, cloud technology changed everything. By the early 2010s, plenty of exciting next-generation platforms had already sprung to life, with more open, connected philosophies as well as more agile systems.

If you've been around hospitality for a long time, you might still be caught up in the old way of thinking. The reality is that the questions you need to ask a PMS provider are different now. These ten key questions aren't the only things you should be asking, but they're a great place to start.

# 1

## How will this benefit my guests?

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Most hospitality clouds will tell you all the ways their solution can help you and your hotel team, and of course, that's important. But few will go into the details of how it will improve your guest experience, which should arguably be the most important factor in any PMS decision making.

Is there a payment solution that automates transactions so guests don't have to enter their card details every time? Is there an intuitive booking engine and easy messaging tool? Analyze your guest feedback and reviews to identify any shortcomings at your property, then ask how this new system will fix it.





# 2

## How will you boost my revenue?



A good PMS isn't just about effective task management: it should be able to boost revenue and cut costs for your property. There are any number of ways a solution can do so, from increasing conversion and upsells to reducing operational bloat.

Find out how they'll help your bottom line, then find out by how much they could help; case studies with concrete figures are invaluable here.

# 3

## How easy to use is your platform?



As a digital-first generation enters the workforce, they'll demand technology that's user-friendly, with a clean, simple UI and logical workflows. Learning to use your new hospitality platform should be as easy as using a social media tool like Facebook.

Not only will this cut down training time and reduce the number of questions your team will have for support, it will have a huge effect on staff happiness. And the happier your staff, the better service they're likely to provide.





## How secure are you?

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The answer to this will probably always be 'extremely', but ask for a copy of their platform documentation and security certification to make them prove it. A PMS stores personal customer information, sensitive business data, and processes countless transactions, so you need to be sure you can rely on them.

The same goes for platform stability; find out their platform uptime and processes in place to ensure continuous service.

# 4



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## What can I do with my data?



With cloud-capability comes access to data. Lots of data. Don't take it for granted that you'll be able to access it whenever you want; believe it or not, some PMSs still charge for reporting.

Make sure you can easily view insights and data in near real time, and on any device. Analytics tools are a real bonus, as they'll help you to make strategic decisions based on trends, reports, and smart business intelligence.





## Who do you integrate with and how easy is it?

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Perhaps the biggest change in the last decade has been the shift from all-in-one PMSs to more open systems that connect with hotel tech specialists for specific functionalities. The world is moving too fast to rely on a single provider to give you everything you need, so it's vital that you dig into how a PMS integrates with other apps and tools.

As a general rule, the bigger the app store the better – but be sure to check how frequently new integrations are added as well. Also, how easy is it to connect to these integrations? Check whether there are plug-and-play options, and if add-ons require separate contracting or if they can be rolled into your PMS contract.

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## How long does onboarding take?

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Twenty years ago, onboarding could feel like pulling teeth. Physical servers needed to be installed onsite, daily operations were disrupted, and guests often suffered because of it.

We'll go into much more detail about a typical onboarding later in this guide, but spoiler alert: there's no reason why you can't get your property up and running on a new system in a month's time. And if you have a specific timeline, your new provider should be able to work with that.





## What's your support like?

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As someone in the hospitality industry, you know the value of outstanding customer support. Your guests expect it from you, just as you should expect it from your PMS.

Don't just look at contact methods and response times (although these are important); any provider worth their salt will have an extensive knowledge base or help site that's easy to search and understand. If there are video tutorials too, even better.

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## What do your users say?



Most salespeople will be able to convince you that moving to their hospitality cloud is a great idea. That's literally their job. But never just take their word for it. Ask them for case studies and examples of similar customers who are using their solution; not just quotes but data points as well.

Be sure to check out their rating on sites like [HotelTechReport](#) and [Capterra](#) and reach out to your network of hoteliers to seek reliable recommendations.





## What's your plan for the future?

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At first glance, this question may seem a little wishy washy, but you need to understand the plan and ambition of your business-critical future partner. You can get specific and ask about their product roadmap to see what new features are being developed, or you can talk about innovation philosophy.

When it comes down to it, you want a solution that will help set you apart from your competitors and put you at the forefront of hospitality; if your potential new provider is all about maintaining the status quo, it's time to move on and think bigger.

# 10

# Key question recap



Wouldn't it be useful to have all of those questions on the same page? We think so, so here they are. Feel free to use this as a checklist when talking to providers.

1. How will this benefit my guests? > 05

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2. How will you boost my revenue? > 06

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3. How easy to use is your platform? > 07

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4. How secure are you? > 08

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5. What can I do with my data? > 09

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6. Who do you integrate with and how easy is it? > 10

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7. How long does onboarding take? > 11

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8. What's your support like? > 12

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9. What do your users say? > 13

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10. What's your plan for the future? > 14

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# What makes a successful onboarding?



Onboarding a new PMS is a little like baking a cake. If you only have a basic understanding of the recipe and just fling everything into the oven and hope for the best, it's not going to work out. Follow the instructions, however, and you'll end up with something that everyone will enjoy, from your team to your guests.

You also need to understand what your goals are as an organization and what obstacles are preventing or slowing you from reaching them. Setting these goals makes all the difference as they help to align all your stakeholders and makes the justification of investing in a new PMS much simpler.

It's also worth noting that onboarding never truly stops. With the current churn rate in hospitality, you'll need a system that's both easy to pick up and that can handle new starters all year round. Make sure you have access to training whenever you need it, and that you know where to find all your e-learning materials.

There are four key areas that will ultimately decide the success of your onboarding. None of it is rocket science, mostly just good preparation and communication.







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## Successful Onboarding

# Commitment

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A successful onboarding needs buy-in from everyone involved. Let's return to the cake analogy again. (Hungry yet?) You follow all the instructions perfectly and out of the oven comes a perfectly baked cake. The problem is, you made a carrot cake and everyone else wanted chocolate. The moral? Involve every stakeholder from the very beginning to make sure you're aligned on exactly what you want, what you need, and who's responsible for what.

Here's a real-life scenario we sometimes see: a contract is signed with a new provider, and then the responsibility to manage the integration is passed on to someone who hasn't even been involved in the conversations until then. This is going to cause delays, which is fine if you're not working to a timeline, but chances are you'll be keen to get started on your awesome new software ASAP.

If you're a part of the decision making, think about who else you need to involve, even on an FYI basis. It's not just operations and tech, it's accounting and revenue management too. Communicate with your team about why you've chosen your new PMS so that everyone's onboard from the beginning. If they know what's coming, they can get ready and start to free up some time. As our Scout leaders used to say: always be prepared.

Finally, as we alluded to back at the very beginning of this guide, don't underestimate the time involved. Take the time to understand the system properly early on, and you'll prevent delays and future problems once you start using it. The more actively engaged you are, the more you'll get from your new product.

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The real thing is understanding that there's a time commitment. It's not simple, but it is easy in terms of the process as long as everyone is working together towards the same goal."

Ryne Parsons, Senior Global Implementations Manager for Mews

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## Successful Onboarding

# Project management

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Every onboarding has lots of moving parts. Your new PMS should have their own Implementation Manager working with you, but it's also important that you appoint a Project Manager from within your business.

If you've been involved in big, multi-department projects before, you'll know that too many cooks can spoil the broth (or cake). Your Project Manager is the vital connector to other members within your team, making sure that set-up is on track and that staff are attending their training. Having this dedicated leader, spokesperson and point of contact on your side ensures more cohesive communication and delegation of tasks, and will ultimately help your project run more smoothly.

As long as you choose a provider with a strong onboarding setup, project managing isn't scary at all. You'll get all the guidance you need from the PMS Implementation Manager, so it's largely a question of coordination and ensuring everyone else on your side, from managers to integration partners, are ready to play their part.

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The key to a successful onboarding is project management. It's not a Herculean effort to get this system set up – the real struggle comes when a partner or an aspect of the project hasn't been coordinated or planned on the timeline.”

Ryne Parsons, Senior Global Implementations Manager for Mews





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## Successful Onboarding

# Training

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Don't underestimate the importance of thorough training. Seriously. When you have a new hospitality cloud with a financial system in the same place, one misplaced click could mean €1,000 going to the wrong place. So what's the best way to get up to speed?

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Alongside all our training, we really encourage people to discover the system for themselves. Being hands on is one of the best ways to learn and ultimately you'll be more self-sufficient."

Ryne Parsons, Senior Global Implementations Manager for Mews

The best way to learn a new system is through a combination of guided training sessions and self-learning, so always be sure to ask how training is conducted before you commit to a property management system. Classroom sessions, a sandbox environment and a comprehensive help site should all be part of the process.

One of the biggest onboarding mistakes you can make is to go light on the training and assume you'll be able to figure everything out once you go live. Yes, modern systems are much more intuitive and user-friendly, but there are still lots of moving parts. You don't want to have to contact support for simple things that you could have easily learned yourself – that's an extra stress you don't need when you've just gone live with a new system.

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## Successful Onboarding

# Integrations

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Although we briefly mentioned integration partners earlier, it's worth calling out here because this is typically one of the biggest blockers and reasons for a delayed onboarding.

In all likelihood you're already connected to at least a couple of third-party integrations, be they channel managers, accounting software or anything in between. If you want to carry these integrations over, they'll need to be connected with your new provider, and potentially re-contracted too. As you can imagine, this isn't as simple as pushing a button; it involves a little effort (on their part). The more notice they have about your move, the less they're likely to delay you.

At the very beginning of the project, scope out the integrations that you want to keep using and inform your relevant account managers. This way, nothing will fall through the cracks.

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The sooner you talk to your integration partners, the better. You don't have visibility on what projects they're working on and how busy they are, so give them ample time to factor in the mapping for your property.”

Ryne Parsons, Senior Global Implementations Manager for Mews





## Online Onboarding

# The new normal



For a long time, a 100% online PMS implementation was unimaginable. But times change. Now, it's hard to mount a convincing argument for the extra effort and outlay of an onsite onboarding. Here's why.

If you're moving to a cloud-based solution (and really, that's the only viable option) then there are no physical servers that need to be installed on premises. Not only will that save you time, it will save you money too. Effectively, you don't need to pay for plane tickets and accommodation for an implementation specialist to visit your property.

Online onboarding is also less disruptive, both for your operations and for guests. You'll have a more flexible time frame without the pressure of having to get everything done

in the two or three days that the installer is at your hotel. The fact that staff can learn at their own pace is also a big bonus. Self guided learning and quick classroom sessions are a much better, more comfortable way to learn than eight hours straight in a conference room, sweating through onsite training.

As for your guests, they'll have no idea that you're undergoing an implementation, and your team will still have the time and the ability to provide them with an exceptional experience.

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# A typical onboarding



What does a typical onboarding look like, besides from being fully online? There should be enough flexibility for you to work to your own timeline, but also enough structure to keep the project moving. No one wants to drag their feet for months when it can be done in weeks.

## Participants

Who's involved depends largely on the size and structure of your team. As we've already pointed out, good communication is vital to a smooth onboarding, so anyone who'll be playing a part should be aware of the process and their role from the beginning.

Once you're certain you're switching PMSs, it's a good idea to make an internal all-company announcement (whether by email or meeting) that you're moving to a new provider. You don't need to go into all the details; it's just a heads up and a rough timeline so that even those not immediately involved are aware of when potential disruption or platform training is likely to happen.

Typically, the key players involved in implementation from the property side are:

- + C-level sign off
- + General Manager
- + Designated Project Manager
- + Revenue Management
- + Tech / IT team
- + Accounting
- + Operations

## Case study

# Onboarding spotlight

YOUR APARTMENT | MEWS

## Your Apartments

Your Apartment has over 100 apartments in the Bristol area, in addition to a 34-unit aparthotel. They welcome guests for both leisure and business, with short trips as well longer, multi-month stays common.

## Their implementation

With dozens of serviced apartments located across Bristol, a traditional on-premises property management system would be time-consuming and expensive to implement. With Mews, Your Apartment did a 100% online implementation, which was particularly important for staff safety during the pandemic. The result? All of their 100+ apartments went live in little more than four weeks.

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The Mews team have been really good, especially when it comes to help with integrating channel managers and other integrations. The whole process took only four or five weeks in total.”

Dan Robinson, Marketing Digital and PR Lead,  
Your Apartment



# A standard timeline

Broadly speaking, implementation can take as little or as long as you want it to. If this sounds fanciful to you, it probably means you haven't changed PMS in a while; in which case, what are you waiting for? When you do, the timeline will most likely look a little like this:

## Day 1

Welcome call to set expectations and establish schedule.

## Day 2

You get a live, working environment to commence set-up, complete with payment integration and the skeleton of the system.

## Day 2 - 14

You'll get a training session to guide you around the live environment and the set-up process, with further progress calls to answer questions and keep the deadline on track.

Now it's up to you to set up your properties. Usually, an hour or two of work every day will be enough to configure the system so that you're able to take reservations and payments.

This is also the time when all employees should begin their self-training so they're ready to use the platform as soon as it's active. Self-driven e-learning usually plays a major part, and our data shows that if people complete e-learning courses, their chance for learning the system well increases significantly.

## Week 3

The real focus on training for all of your team who'll be using your new PMS. This is usually in the form of live sessions tailored to specific roles (a receptionist needs to know different things to a revenue manager), with plenty of opportunity for Q&A.

## Week 4

Once all the final checks are made, your property goes live. On go-live day, you'll do a reservation import, connect OTAs, turn on your channel manager and start doing check-ins and check-outs.

An implementation manager will keep a close eye on your first few days to ensure everything runs smoothly, and after a few days you should be handed over to a specific point of contact in a customer success team to ensure your long-term care and happiness.

Of course, if the team is already familiar with the tool, it's feasible you can be up and running from week one.



## Case study

# Onboarding Spotlight

c-hotels | MEWS

## C-Hotels

C-Hotels welcome around 235,000 guests every year to their nine properties along the Belgian coast. Every hotel has a unique concept, from art nouveau to industrial New York, although the hotels share an ethos of excellent customer service and embracing forward-thinking technology.

## Their implementation

C-Hotels began by onboarding five hotels with Mews, all of which were fully online in only three days. During the same time, hotel staff were learning how to use the platform, having been given access to a sandbox environment where they could explore freely and learn by using the system.

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We did the necessary preparations for onboarding, and because of that it went very smoothly. The staff were very excited about it. You always have a few who don't like changes, but they learnt it very quickly. Don't be afraid of the implementation because it's not that difficult."

Inge Decuypere, Owner of C-Hotels



# Training

There's no use implementing an amazing new system if no one knows how to use it. Training is a core part of the implementation process, but it doesn't have to be a chore. If you've chosen a modern, intuitive PMS, you and your team should be able to pick it up quickly, and each person's time investment should be hours, not days.

A few things you should expect:



## Sandbox environment

The best way to learn is by doing, but when you have a customer-facing system, the risk is a little high. A sandbox environment allows your team to familiarize themselves with your new system without any chance of accidentally cancelling a booking or giving everyone in your hotel a free breakfast.

## Self-training

People learn in different ways. Some prefer to teach themselves by reading help documentation, so make sure that your new provider has a comprehensive set of learning materials, from granular user guides to product use case videos. This should be tailored to the staff role, so your housekeeping manager doesn't waste time learning about setting up rate rules, for example. It goes without saying that this training should all be available as online e-learning, accessible any time, from wherever it's most convenient for those learning.

## Live training sessions

We've found that online training sessions work best with group collaboration, because you'll get the chance to share experiences and ideas with your peers and learn from others as well as your trainers. Also be sure to check in advance whether you can get your training in a choice of different languages; if you're not confident speaking English, there should be other options for you.

## Case study

# Onboarding Spotlight

OVERSIGHT | MEWS

## Oversight hotel management

Oversight is a company that assists hoteliers in the implementation and monitoring of an innovative and growth-generating management model. It currently supports eight independent hotels in Paris, including Victoria Palace Hotel, Le Tsuba Hotel, Hotel Opera Liege and Hotel Villa Saxe.

## Their implementation

The Mews Implementation Team devised an accelerated onboarding plan to meet the group's timeline, including a dedicated day of training and access to Mews University where all staff can learn how to use Mews through online video tutorials. The group were able to take eight hotels live within a three-week period from the first onboarding call, and 94 out of 95 hotel staff preferred Mews to the previous PMS.

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Onboarding went very quickly and it went very well. 95% of my clients are online so changing PMS is not a pain at all. So it was a fairly easy switch and I have not suffered any pushback from any member of the team.”

Stanislas Wargny, Founder and CEO, Oversight





# Conclusion



If you haven't switched PMSs in a while, we hope this guide has been a pleasant surprise for you. Likewise, for anyone who's had bad implementation experiences: it doesn't have to be that way.

The so called 'pain' of onboarding is no longer a viable excuse to put off the move. Cloud-based providers have changed the landscape of our industry, and if you're not already feeling the benefit, there's no reason to delay any longer. It's not as simple as pushing a button, but it's nothing that you can't already do.

As long as you do the right preparation and put in the effort required, you'll be up and running in no time. That begins with asking the right questions and identifying the hospitality cloud that's best for your property. Naturally, we think that's us. So why not get in touch and we'll tell you why switching to Mews can help you provide remarkable experiences for your guests.

# About Mews



Mews has been transforming hospitality since 2012. What began in a single hotel in Prague now powers thousands of hotels around the world, as we pursue our mission to develop transformational solutions for brands and create remarkable experiences for guests.

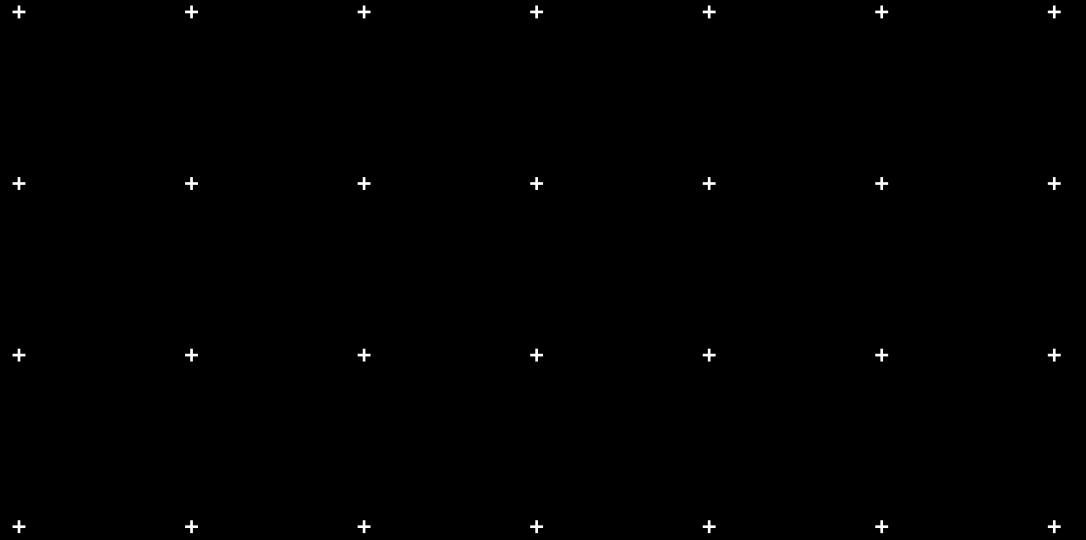
Since the beginning we embraced being different. We're not simply a property management system, but a connected hospitality cloud with products across the hotel ecosystem and more integrations than anyone else.

From global hospitality brands to independent properties, hoteliers join Mews because they recognize the power of innovation. They understand that properties like yours can benefit from hotel tech that drives efficiency, maximizes revenue, and improves guest happiness. Are you ready to discover your future?

Head to [mews.com/demo](https://mews.com/demo) and fill in the short form. One of our sales specialists will get back to you and arrange a time to show you around Mews Hospitality Cloud in more detail.

We can't wait to hear from you.





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