

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Starwood unlocks digital key expansion, highlighting guests' reliance on mobile

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SPG Keyless is taking Starwood's resorts by storm

By [Alex Samuely of Mobile Commerce Daily](#)

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Starwood Hotels & Resorts is expanding its SPG Keyless room entry capability to enable multiple guests sharing the same hotel room to leverage their smartphones in lieu of physical key cards, showcasing how the technology is evolving to better meet the needs of mobile-savvy travelers.

SPG Keyless is making its way to participating Westin, Sheraton, Four Points and Le Mridien properties around the world, joining the current number of 160 properties worldwide with the technology already enabled. As travelers become more reliant on their smartphones during the vacation-planning and booking processes, hotel marketers will also need to keep up with the demand for on-site mobile-enabled perks.

"SPG Keyless has been hugely popular since launch, and one of the most common requests we heard from guests was that their travel companions also wanted to use SPG Keyless," said Alyssa Waxenberg, vice president of mobile at [Starwood Hotels & Resorts](#).

"We have carefully considered the safety of our guests in rolling out multi-key functionality authorization by the primary guest on the reservation ensures that mobile keys are pushed to the right people who also must be SPG members, have the SPG app and enable their phones for SPG Keyless."

Next-generation mobile technology

SPG Keyless first launched in the fall of 2014, with initial rollouts taking place at Starwood's Element, Aloft and W properties. Starwood Hotels, in partnership with Assa Abloy Hospitality, developed a Bluetooth-enabled lock for its hotel rooms, which leveraged keyless software to detect and connect with a guest's smartphone.

This technology enables customers to use their mobile devices as keys, instead of relying on easily misplaced or lost physical cards.

Now, guests staying at select Westin, Sheraton, Four Points and Le Mridien resorts will be able to download the SPG application and use a mobile key to open their rooms.

Starwood Hotels acknowledges that many individuals prefer using their smartphones as a remote control for their travel experiences, which also prompted the hospitality brand to plan to expand its mobile check-in options on the SPG app within the next few months.

Multiple people can now leverage SPG Keyless for the same room

"We're excited to begin offering expanded mobile check-in features on the SPG app in the near future," Ms. Waxenberg said. "We understand that mobile travelers have become accustomed to arranging travel logistics in real time by checking in to flights prior to arriving at the airport, reserving car rentals before reaching the rental counter, etc.

"With the success of SPG Keyless, we want to extend the opportunity for SPG Members who aren't using SPG Keyless to let hotels know their time of arrival so we can be more agile in ensuring our guests have the best stays possible," she said.

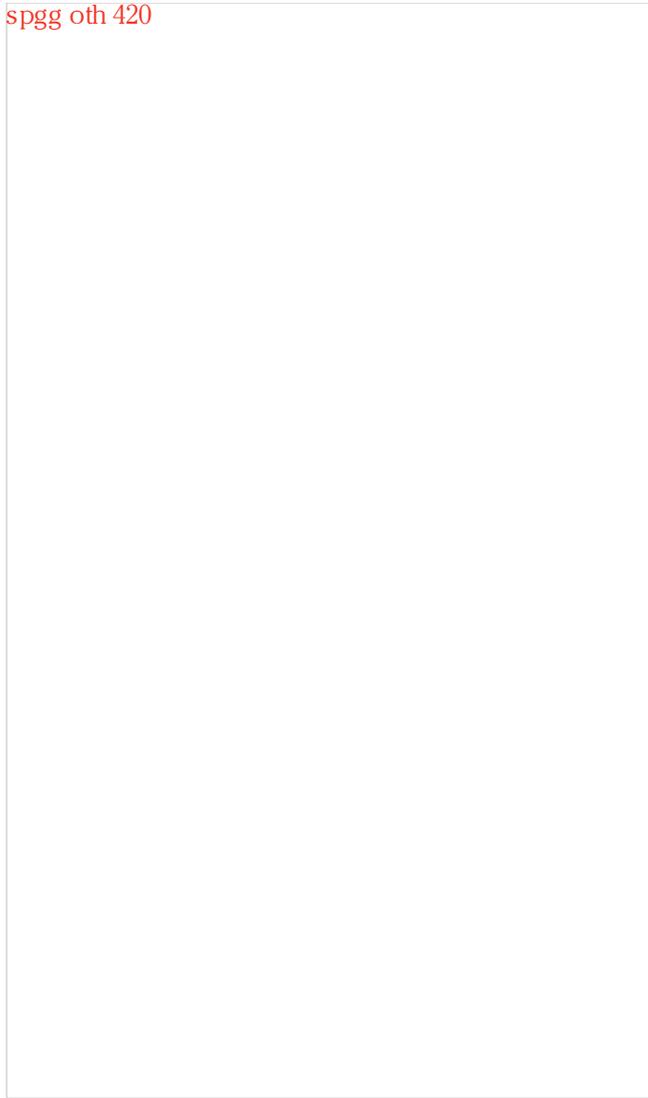
"With SPG Keyless, we've increased the stability and speed of door unlock and improved offline access to ensure Keyless works even if the phone isn't connected to a network. We've also added useful data into the app, empowering associates to troubleshoot directly with guests."

Innovation and personalization

Starwood Hotels' guests will likely appreciate being able to unlock the same hotel room with several different smartphones. For instance, if a family of three is staying in the same room, all three members can download the SPG app for their mobile devices instead of asking for three physical key cards at the front desk during check-in.

This functionality may also bolster the number of downloads that the SPG app sees.

The brand has found that SPG Keyless allows its associates to spend more time personalizing its guests' stays, showcasing how hotel marketers can enhance customer service and fuel more bookings by keeping up with the latest technologies.



Mobile room keys are also eco-friendly options

Starwood Hotels' Tribute Portfolio brand recently partnered with shopping platform LiketoKnow.it, enabling travelers to browse social influencers' curated content on Instagram, tap a photo and receive a link via email to book a stay at a featured property ([see story](#)).

Additionally, Starwood Hotels furthered its loyalty program perks via a partnership with Major League Baseball, giving SPG members the ability to play a responsively designed game for a chance to win World Series tickets ([see story](#)).

"We're continuing to innovate to address our members' preferences," Ms. Waxenberg said. "Travel is inherently mobile, and we know our members expect to use their mobile devices to enrich their experiences.

"We are integrating mobile tech innovation into all aspects of the guest experience, both in booking and planning, as well as on property, and are excited to share those updates soon."