MONSCIERGE

Oklahoma City-based Monscierge creates technology that's changing hospitality industry

Oklahoma City businessman Marcus Robinson had a craving for Thai food while visiting Paris on a business trip. He didn't speak French nor did he know the city well. So he turned to a smartphone application offered by the hotel to seek a local recommendation.

"I very much appreciate good Thai food, and the hotel's recommendation directed me to one of the best Thai places in Paris," said Robinson, 38. "It was a great experience."

Turns out, Robinson was eating his own food, so to speak.

The mobile application he used to find the Thai restaurant and translate the recommendation into English was developed and marketed by Monscierge, an Oklahoma City-based company founded by Robinson in 2009.

The European trip provided hands-on field experience for Robinson with his product.

Monscierge developed a mobile software platform that allows hotel staffs to communicate with guests and with each other through large-screen kiosks in the lobby, smartphones, tablets and, most recently, the Apple Watch.

"We are first and foremost committed to changing the hospitality industry as an organization," Robinson said. "We want to change the guest experience throughout the entire guest journey."

What that means is that through an App on their mobile device, hotel guests can communicate needs to the hotel staff and more quickly resolve issues.

The mobile App also provides information about the hotel, local directions, entertainment venues and restaurants recommended by the staff.

Today, about 1,500 hotels around the world use Monscierge's communication platform. The company has contracts in hand to roll it out to an additional 8,000 hotels over the next 18 months.

The global growth is having a local impact. With more than 50 employees, Monscierge has twice appeared on the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Metro 50 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the Oklahoma City area.

"Last year, we grew at a 50 percent rate, and this year we are forecast to grow at a 300 percent rate," Robinson said.

Monscierge and a sister company also founded by Robinson, Clear Creek Construction, recently relocated to a new office building in the Quail Springs Business Park just west of Quail Springs Mall. The two businesses share most of a floor of the newly constructed Linn Energy building.

Last year, Monscierge became an Apple Business Solutions provider, which means it can provide Apple products to its customers in the hospitality industry.

"They are a phenomenal partner," Robinson said. "They are very focused on getting things done. They have extremely high standards that you need to adhere to, but we embrace that challenge."

Monscierge developed software specifically for use on the Apple Watch, which allows hotel staff members to see messages at a glance on their wrist.

Ernie Noblett, Monscierge's vice president of engineering, demonstrated the company's software on an Apple Watch.

"If I'm a guest and I say I need a towel, that information will come across the screen and they can have a preset response and just touch their watch," Noblett said as he showed me the watch on his wrist. "We've got some pretty cool stuff that's coming out."

Soon, when a guest who has the Monscierge software on a phone or watch walks into a hotel lobby, the staff will automatically be alerted to the guest's presence.

"It recognizes you, and the staff can have your coffee ready for you, for instance, because it told them you were there," Noblett said. "From a guest experience, it takes it to a whole different level."

Monscierge recently completed a funding round led by i2E Inc that will assist it in the rapid expansion underway fueled by the Apple relationship. They are working to expand the technology into the cruise line industry, as well.

"We are working very closely with Apple to transform the hospitality sector," Robinson said. "These next 18 months are going to be pretty exciting."

See the story in the 5-24-16 Oklahoman

Watch the video

Go to the Monscierge website