



ALICE Raises \$3 Million For Its Hotel Management And Guest Services App

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A newly launched mobile app called **ALICE** is looking to make dealing with hotel staff a lot easier for both guests and hotel management after its \$3 million seed financing.

For guests, ALICE is like a concierge and front desk service in your pocket. Guests staying at hotels that are using the app, simply download it upon check-in (or before with a prompt from ALICE), and then have a constantly updated app of the amenities available to them upon arrival.

Using ALICE, guests can book a table at restaurants, get tickets to shows, or request a massage or spa services, and make any requests of the hotel staff for room service, housekeeping, and generally getting in touch with hotel services. One early customer of the service actually used ALICE to request a private jet for his travels.

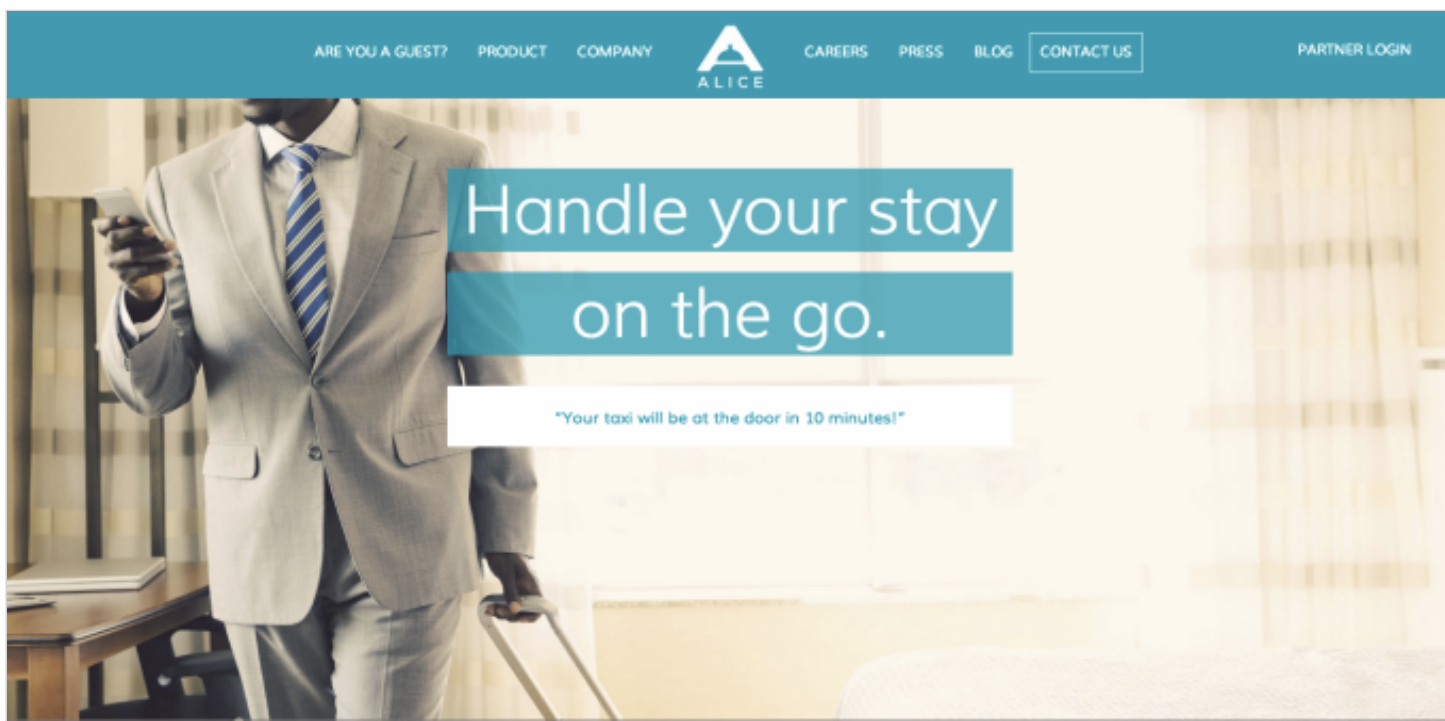
That's the consumer-facing side of ALICE's business. On the back end, ALICE monitors every request made of hotel staff and provides a monitoring and management tool for hoteliers to check on everything from room service and cleaning to the thousands of random requests that front desk attendants field daily.

"ALICE provides software that can transform the hospitality industry," says Nnamdi Okike, Partner at 645 Ventures, which was an early investor in ALICE. "What we thought was more compelling was the back-end hotel operations."

The launch of ALICE's app is the culmination of two-and-a-half years of work for the company's three co-founders: the 25-year-olds Alexander Shashoua and Justin Efron, who serve as president and chief executive, respectively; and their 32-year-old chief technical officer Dmitry Koltunov.

For Shashoua, whose father was a hotelier responsible for several boutique chains in the UK, and Efron, the ability to upgrade the service experience at hotels using mobile devices tapped into an unmet need.

"All of those service requests can be made simpler with mobile technologies," says Shashoua.



Built from the ground up with input from the hotel chains that the company wants to become its customers, Shashoua says the back-end of the service is actually more appealing

to hotel owners than the front-end experience that it offers guests.

“For the first time a manager in a hotel has a 360 degree view of everything that’s happening in a hotel. They suddenly have one system that lets you pull out all relevant data,” Shashou says of his new startup’s service.

Each member of the core team at ALICE comes from a background in financial services. The CTO Koltunov previously built the back end trading management system for a multi-billion dollar hedge fund; Shashou was a trader at Goldman Sachs; and Effron was an analyst at Citigroup.

Shashou says that for software, there’s not much difference between the millions of exchanges that occur in a trading platform and the hundreds of different requests, tickets, and services generated by guests at a hotel.

The company’s app is already being used in luxury hotels around the globe, and with the new \$3 million in seed funding, is eyeing further growth.

“We have already expanded our operations team and are looking to add more on our sales side,” says Shashou. The company is also expanding geographically, with the intention to hit Berlin in March and continue to grow in Asia.

Investors were certainly keen to track ALICE’s growth as well. The company had initially intended to raise \$750,000 but bumped that to \$3 million thanks to considerable demand.

More than the capital itself, the pool of investors that the company attracted speaks to the breadth of Effron and Shashou’s vision. Strategic investors in the round include principals from the property management giant Tishman Realty; the founder of boutique workspace collective Neuhouse; early stage venture investor 645 Ventures; and the founding team behind [Seamless](#): Jason Finger, Todd Arky and Paul Appelbaum.

Alice isn’t the only company to pursue the app market. From startups like [MobileSuites](#) to large companies like [Intelity](#), an increasing number of businesses are taking a stab at simplifying workflows and guest experiences in the multi-billion hospitality market.

Hotels using the company’s service include: Shangri-La’s Hotel Jen, Bespoke Hotels, The Setai, The Gansevoort Group, Standard Hotels and Sixty Hotel Group.

At The Setai, the company selected ALICE over other app options because of its price and

its ease of installation, according to manager Alex Furrer. "The price point was at the lowest level and the time to implement was very quick — only three to four weeks," Furrer says. "The benefits of the service are more on the front end... The main idea is the front end and customer data collection."

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