

QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS: WHAT DOES THE VIRTUAL CONCIERGE DO?



Overview

As hosts, whether you run a large 5-star hotel, many vacation rental properties, or just one listing on Airbnb - you share some things in common. One of those things is a continuous stream of questions from your guests. They include everything from how something works at the property, to your insider recommendations for places in the local area.

[Virtual Concierge Service](#) is a platform that allows you as a host to equip Alexa and Google Assistant with the knowledge to answer those questions. For example, a guest can ask "*Where are the spare pillows kept?*". In response, Alexa can deliver the custom answer that you define, such as "*Spare pillows are stored in the master bedroom in a plastic bin under the bed*". This can surprise and delight guests. It also gives them insider tips on restaurants and things to do that can turn a vacation from good to great.

How does it work? As a host you have access to a web-based [Portal](#) where you can add all kinds of information. This content is completely flexible - answers can be provided for any guest question. Setting up answers to a few frequently asked questions is a natural place to start. However, how do you know what else a guest might ask about? You obviously can equip the Virtual Concierge to answer a question that you've never thought of. So how do we deal with situations where a guest asks a question that the Virtual Concierge doesn't have an answer for?

We've built this platform with some special patent-pending capabilities for exactly those situations.

Unanswered Questions about the Property

If a guest asks the Virtual Concierge a question about the property that you haven't yet provided content for in the Portal, here's how it works:

Let's take the example of spare pillows described above. If you haven't yet provided an answer, the Virtual Concierge (through either Alexa or Google Assistant) will say "*I don't have information about where extra pillows are stored quite yet*". Then, if you have opted-in to receiving notifications, the response from the Virtual Concierge will continue with: "*but I can reach out to your host for a quick answer. Would you like me to do that?*". If the guest says yes, you will receive a text message alerting you to the question.

By clicking a link and replying with the answer, two things happen: The guest will get an immediate answer to their question, and that answer will also be added to the knowledge base so that the next time a guest asks, the Virtual Concierge can provide an immediate answer without involving you.

Unanswered Questions about the Local Area

In cases where a guest asks the Virtual Concierge a question about places to go or things to do in the area, you really want them to get a curated answer - in other words, one that provides insider information that you as a local host have. That said, you can't predict all of the questions that guests may ask about the local area. When the Virtual Concierge gets a question about the local area that you haven't yet provided a custom answer for yet, here's what happens:

Let's say your guest asks "*Where is the best place to get ice cream?*". If you haven't created a content item in the Portal for ice cream, the Virtual Concierge will provide the best substitute answer we can find, based on the location of your property and the technical integrations we've built with a variety of web services. At the same time, 'ice cream' will be noted for you as a topic that your guests have asked about.

On a periodic basis (which is configurable), you will get an email that summarizes all of the things that your guests have asked about. This will also include which topics were answered with your custom content, and which ones required a substitute answer from the Virtual Concierge. Then, with one click from this email summary, you can launch a wizard interface that will allow you to quickly provide custom answers for questions that guests asked that you haven't yet provided answers for.

The next time that question is asked, the Virtual Concierge will handle the answer. In this way, you can follow your guests' lead, and only provide information that is being requested. This is efficient, and allows you to build a significant knowledge base of information over time - and one that is 100% relevant to what your guests want.

Configuration Settings

In the Virtual Concierge [Host Portal](#), you can configure how this system works. Under Settings, you will find a section called 'Notification Preferences'. There you can:

- Opt-In or Opt-Out to receive periodic reports via email that summarize the things your guests are asking about. You can also set the frequency of these reports to weekly, monthly or quarterly, as well as select who should receive them. **Note: the default is set to Opt-In, and a frequency of monthly.**
- Opt-In or Opt-Out to receive real-time notifications via text when a guest asks a question about the property that the Virtual Concierge does not have an answer for. You can also not only choose which point of contact should receive the text, but also the hours during which they should receive these notifications. **Note: You must specifically Opt-In to enable this capability, it is not turned on by default.**

Summary

Voice technology can make it possible for you as a host to delight your guests and provide them a rich set of information that can turn vacations from good to great. At VCS we're focused on delivering the best in class solution to make this possible. That includes investments we've made in handling questions that there aren't answers for.

Need any help, or have some questions? Contact us at support@virtualconciergeservice.com,



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