

Choice Hotels International Kicks Off 11th Mastery Tech Summit, Bringing Hands-On AI Experimentation to the Center of Innovation

Week-long event puts teams in build mode—hacking, testing, and applying AI solutions to pressure test new technologies against real business challenges.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Feb. 27, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH), one of the world's largest lodging franchisors and a leading hospitality technology company, kicks off "Mastery" today, its 11th annual technology and innovation summit. Throughout the week-long event, more than 800 associates will gather to work in real time, solving business challenges through hands-on workshops, collaborative competitions, and knowledge-sharing sessions—focused on helping franchisees drive revenue, reduce costs, and operate more efficiently.

This year, Choice Hotels associates from all across the company will dive into how advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud-based platforms, data and analytics, cybersecurity, and other emerging technologies can strengthen business intelligence, enhance security, support on-property operations, and continue scaling Choice Hotels' proprietary tools and systems.

At Mastery, interactive challenges such as "Capture the Flag" (a scavenger-hunt-style cybersecurity challenge) and AWS AI league, a high-energy, hands-on competition where participants rapidly build real-world AI solutions using AWS tools, will test participants' problem-solving and AI capabilities. During the summit's Make-a-Thon competitions, engineers will develop and present new software products designed to enhance company and hotel operations and guest experiences. Winning teams will earn cash prizes, with top innovations considered for company-wide deployment.

"At its core, Mastery is about designing technical capabilities that will shape the next chapter of hospitality," said Brian Kirkland, Chief Information Officer, Choice Hotels International. "By engaging associates across the organization—not just engineers—we're unlocking new opportunities to apply AI and emerging technologies to real business challenges. That collective investment in talent and expertise is accelerating innovation across the Choice Hotels system and translating into dependable, practical tools that help franchisees operate more efficiently, make smarter decisions, and grow their businesses with confidence."

A winning project from last year's Mastery event demonstrated how emerging technologies can deliver tangible business impact. In 2025, Choice Hotels' technology organization faced a major initiative to modernize Hotel Suite, a legacy, web-based system used across the company's entire property portfolio. The effort focused on updating and reimagining a critical platform that had become increasingly complex to maintain and evolve. Initial estimates projected the Hotel Suite modernization would take more than a year using traditional development approaches. Instead, a cross-functional engineering team applied lessons from Mastery 2025, leveraging generative AI and a "vibe coding" development approach to fully reimagine the application. The team not only dramatically accelerated the delivery, but also modernized the user interface and delivered the first business-critical, end-user-facing application at Choice Hotels to reach production using an AI-assisted development model — cutting timelines by months, and saving more than \$750,000 in projected investment.

History of Innovation

Choice Hotels brings a decades-long legacy of innovation to the hospitality industry, from introducing the first hotel website with real-time rates and availability and launching the first hotel app for the iPhone, to creating the first mobile-friendly rate management tool for operators and fully migrating its platforms to the cloud. Through Mastery, that innovation is put into practice—leveraging technology to give owners tools that simplify operations, strengthen competitiveness, and allow them to focus on delivering great stays for guests.

Choice Hotels has built and introduced industry-first, owner-facing technologies, including:

- In 1995, Choice launched the first hotel website with real-time rate and availability information.
- In 2003, Choice launched the first cloud-based property management system (PMS), choiceADVANTAGE.
- In 2009, Choice released the first hotel app for iOS.
- In 2014, Choice became the first hotel company to offer instant booking on TripAdvisor. That same year, Choice was the only hotel company listed on Forbes' Top 100 Most Innovative Growth Companies.
- In 2016, Choice became the first hotel company to offer immediate in-app gift card downloads.
- In 2018, Choice launched choiceEDGE, the industry's first cloud-based central reservation system (CRS).
- In 2019, Choice became the first hotel company to commit to being 100% on AWS (Amazon Web Services) Cloud.
- In 2021, Choice launched ChoiceMAX, an award-winning AI mobile-first revenue management solution.
- In 2024, Choice announced the closure of its last data center, making it the first major hotel company to migrate its entire system infrastructure to AWS.
- In 2025, Choice introduced Choice Maps, an AI-driven platform that analyzes proprietary data to help identify high-demand markets and inform development strategy

In addition to fueling innovation, Mastery also brings associates together for a community service event, *Bey's Blessing: The Choice to Impact*. During the event, attendees will partner with local nonprofit **Bey's Blessings** to assemble comfort kits for members of the unsheltered community, with additional activities supporting the organization.

About Choice Hotels®

Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH), is one of the largest lodging franchisors in the world, with over 7,500 hotels, representing more than 650,000 rooms, in 50 countries and territories. A wide-ranging portfolio of 22 brands that includes full-service upper upscale, midscale, extended stay, and economy properties enables Choice® to meet travelers' needs in more places and for more occasions while driving more value for franchise owners and shareholders. The award-winning Choice Privileges® rewards program and co-brand credit card options provide members with a fast and easy way to earn reward nights and personalized perks. For more information, visit www.choicehotels.com.

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