

Tink Labs' handy revolutionises hospitality industry, experiences for travellers in Africa

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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Hong Kong startup, Tink Labs Limited announced the launch of its handy travel device to the South African market at the One & Only hotel in Cape Town. Handy is a fully integrated IoT solution offering an innovative mobile travel solution that combines the functionality of a personal smartphone with that of hotel services.

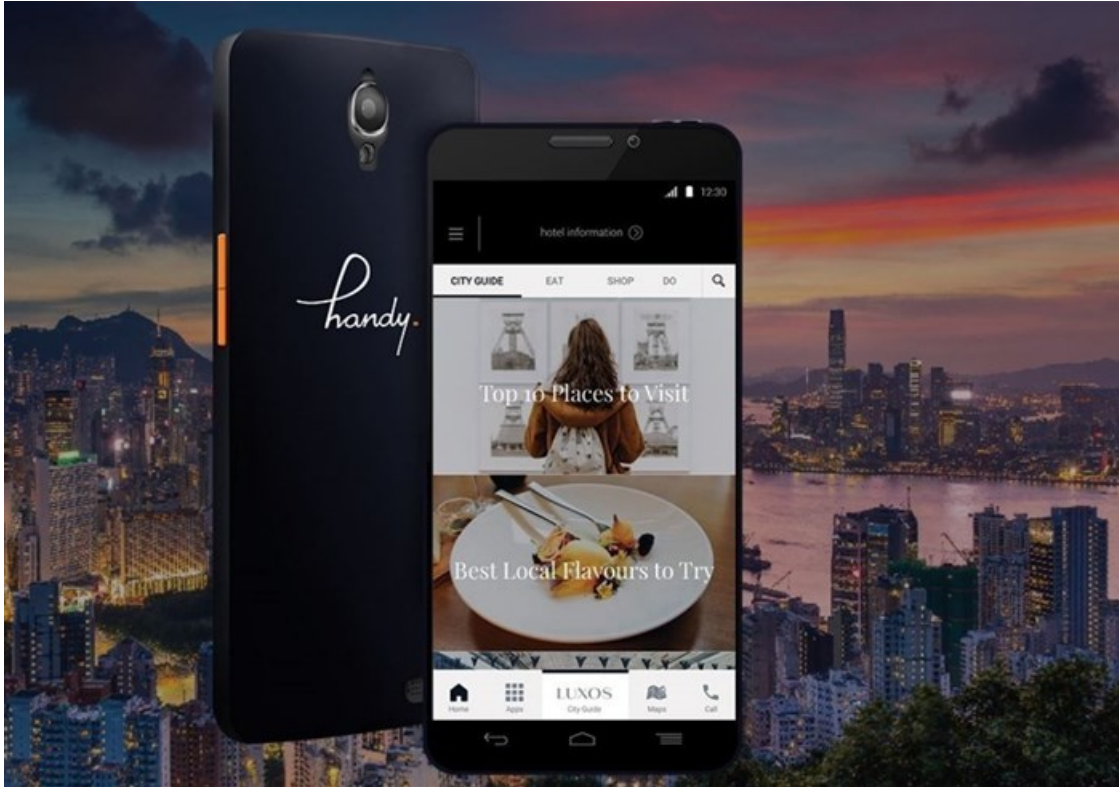


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Created by founder and CEO of Tink Labs, Terence Kwok, handy is more than just a platform to interact with hotels, it enables guests a hassle-free travel experience that combines city guides, restaurant suggestions, ticket and tour prices and GPS with a clean solution that connects everything in its interactive system.



Handy smartphone for hotels: A revolutionary hospitality IoT solution

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We caught up with Steven To, Tink Labs global head of sales to find out more about handy's positioning in the African market, how it is revolutionising the travel industry and what the future holds for the handy device.

■ What does it mean for Tink Labs and handy to have a presence in South Africa and Africa?

It actually means a lot, I think, to the company and also to the continent. For us as a global company, we don't want to miss out on Africa – being here is part of our global strategy. But for Africa, I think it even means more because people have a lot of stereotypes about travelling to the continent – they're afraid of the danger, they worry that it's undeveloped.



Steven To

I think this device is going to provide the mental confidence for people to travel here because they always know that they are connected to the hotel –the hotel can also find them anywhere. They will have recommendations on where to go for shopping, for eating and they also have a phone, just like when they were at home. So it's going to help the traveller with a new type of travel experience, which is to travel like a local.

Have there been any challenges that you have faced developing and positioning handy in Africa?

One of the challenges we faced is that it is a new product and any new product is not going to immediately be trusted by people because they have yet to learn what it is. They have yet to use it, have yet to see it and they have yet to feel it. We are doing the launch event, we have deployed in more than 30 hotels in South Africa already and we are slowly proving to the audience here how the phone is going to generate value for the guest and added value for the hotel. So I think that one challenge has been overcome.

The other challenge I will mention is the worry or concern of theft. People are afraid that the guest will take the phone away with them, that they are going to lose the phones – what are we going to do with that? I am very proud to actually report to you that of the 30 hotels that we have deployed the devices in South Africa, we haven't lost a single phone because of the guests. I think that the hotels are doing a good job to keep the phones together, and they also educate the guests on what it is about – that they are actually not going to be taking it home, but that they are going to use it during their stay here. On the other hand, the guests will also understand that it is a product that could potentially be traceable and is expensive - so if they take it away, they are afraid the hotel might actually go after them. Because of all these different reasons the theft concern is not really a concern.

How would you say handy is revolutionising travel in your opinion?

It's actually bringing travel to the next level. I've been travelling a lot myself and I have a lot of pain points when I travel. If you're going to a country that doesn't speak your language, you immediately feel handicapped. But with handy, you can have the recommendations on where to go and where to shop.

You can always be connected to the hotel and your friends, so you can always ask for help if you want to. Of course, you can go online in your language as well. So this is going to help you a lot when you're in a country that you're not familiar with or in a country that you don't speak the language and, basically, it's really a phone that acts as your travel buddy during your travel.

That mental ease is really important to me. You don't have to worry about it anymore. You know sometimes when people travel, they are so alert about things that they don't really enjoy the travel, they are always worried that something is going to happen. Handy is going to ease that concern and make travel just so much comfier and more enjoyable.

Where do you see this form of technology moving in today's business travel environment?

If you look at South Africa – Cape Town is a popular spot for leisure travel. In Johannesburg, it's more for business and we do have some presence there as well. However, a business traveller, like myself, would use it on several occasions. When you're on a business trip, everything is planned out but if you have some free time, what do you do, where do you go? You can check the city guide and find places easily.

If you're travelling with colleagues, you don't always have their contact numbers. With handy, you can contact each other easily. What's even more amazing is that we have a function called room-to-room, so if you stay in the same hotel you can just call the room number and find the person you're looking for.

And lastly, we have a MICE function for the hotel as well. Imagine you're organising a conference – you can actually send a push message to the conference guests notifying them of where to meet and you can send the programme schedule. It's a great e-management tool to pull a conference together.

■ In which direction would you like handy to move in the future?

It's quite straightforward. We want it to be in every single hotel in every single city. We want to make travel easy, not just in the more serious hotels or the more expensive cities. Travelling is now becoming such a common thing around the world – we just want to make sure everybody can enjoy travelling.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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