



## Smart Hotel Rooms: One Brave Property Ditches the In-Room Phone



The intercom system at Weekapaug Inn. / Skift

JASON CLAMPET, SKIFT

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The in-room hotel phone has [been on the decline](#) for some time now. Rarerly do guests get close to it: You don't need it for a wake-up call (you can use your cellphone) and you don't need it to call anyone (again, your cellphone).

As much as guests don't use the phone, rare is the hotelier with the guts to rip off the bandaid and remove it altogether. Instead we've been given fancier phones with multiple lines or even a second, cordless phone for the opposite side of the room. As if more features from a device that's going unused will save it.

The [Weekapaug Inn](#) in Westerly, RI, re-opened last October after a four-year, multi-million dollar renovation of a historic yet faded property on the Atlantic coast. And when it opened, it did so without phones in the room. Instead of a handset there is a simple intercom panel next to the front door (and in some bathrooms) with a direct connection to the front desk and a button for 911.

"It's worked extremely well so far," says general manager Antonia Korosec.

The property had a history of "just basics" — no air conditioning, televisions, or weatherproofing, for that matter — before the massive renovations that proceeded its reopening last fall. But when it opened in October 2012 with all the luxuries of a [Relais & Chateaux](#) property, an in-room phone wasn't in the mix.

That doesn't mean it's backwards — guests can connect to the free hotel Wi-Fi throughout the property and the grounds — it's just means the property realizes the in-room phone isn't going to bring them anything that other technology and service can't.

## SKIFT TAKE

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Removing the hotel phone is akin to Apple's Steve Jobs removing the floppy disk drive from the iMac or Flash from the iPhone: necessary and brave.

— Jason Clampet