

# Keep it Simple

## Getting Back to Basics

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**TODAY, TRAVELERS HAVE THEIR** pick of many hotel brands and short-term rentals to choose from and the choices seem to be growing every day. Luxury, midscale, and economy brands all are competing for their business.

With competition knocking at their doors, hoteliers must consistently assess their hotel, keeping in mind that, although their guests are looking for a unique guest experience, they're ultimately looking for a respite from their everyday lives. Aside from curb

appeal, welcoming lobbies, and a friendly face to greet them, their room remains the primary focus of their experience. It seems this is where a hotel generates the majority of its customer reviews.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When you think about it, isn't a bed and bath the easiest location of the hotel to use for creating a lasting impression? After all, it's what the hospitality industry is based upon.

Back in the day, when automobiles were first hitting the nation's backroads and highways, travelers required a place to rest their heads and freshen up before they continued on their journey. The nostalgic motor lodges offered a room to get a good night's sleep – a total refresh to face their travels the next day. Today, no matter how evolved our lodging has become, we must not look past these basic necessities that created the hospitality industry!

Whatever level of service or amenities a hotel provides – whether it has marble lobbies or luxury vinyl flooring – every hotel must offer a comfortable mattress and clean, tidy bedding, as well as a sparkling bathroom. Ultimately, this is what guests will remember about the hotel. This is where their great experiences will continue or will come crashing down, leaving you with a scarred reputation that will be hard to disprove.

### CLEANLINESS COUNTS

In today's world, we've become understandably germophobic, and expository news stories with black lights exposing bodily fluids don't help! So, around a decade or so ago, the hotel industry went to back-to-basics bedding – plush white duvets draped in triple sheeting surrounding the guest in a sea of white sterility. This new approach to linens has become the norm, creating a more relaxed environment for travelers, who can see for themselves that there are no hidden surprises in bed with

them! Add the new solid bedframes that enhance the height of the mattress and eliminate the need for a dated bedskirt and the room has transformed into a "sleep oasis."

The guest bathroom has also been under more scrutiny, especially following the pandemic. Poorly maintained tile floors, discolored grout and caulking in bath areas, and dim lighting can really hurt a hotel's reputation, as this room is expected to be pristine. Even though "worn" doesn't necessarily mean "dirty," the brain sees it as so. The age of a hotel isn't as much of an issue as the cleanliness and condition are.

An inspection list should encompass the sink, tub, and their fixtures. Does the sink drain properly? Is the lighting bright enough for shaving and applying makeup? Are the towels bright white? Does the exhaust fan work? Does it rumble? When was the last time the shower curtain was washed? Are soap dispensers replenished?

The larger hotels with a head housekeeper usually have these items covered, but some smaller hotels need to check the rooms on a regular basis to make sure the bathrooms are being maintained, not just cleaned. Make sure the cleaning staff reports something that requires a repair or replacement. Doing so not only makes the guest feel more comfortable; it helps to eliminate negative reviews.

### MAKE IT WORK

Every guest who stays at a hotel needs that room, whether it be for work, for vacation, or just a "home" for the night. The rates have risen and demand for quality has, too. Social media has stirred business from points never imagined, but it also spreads reputations wider than ever before. Years ago, word of mouth and an occasional billboard were the only means of advertising. Today, reviews are exposed to the world. It's important that guests are happy and leaving positive feedback.

To remain relevant and reputable in a highly competitive industry, the hospitality "basics" should be maintained and updated on a regular basis. When guests sleep well, they feel well, they boost your reputation, and they return!

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