

Tech Savvy Traveler Needs New Hospitality Services

The boomers, still checking into your hotel in large numbers, grew up with the television and had the first touch tone phones. Some have grasped the high tech world and some have not. They are better at face to face conversations. Gen Xers were born into a world where the landlines of yesteryear were beginning to be phased out. They multi task, learn the latest technologies in computer enhanced living and prefer their business communications through web based meeting platforms.



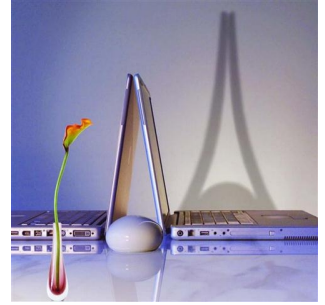
Generation Y never had to unseat themselves to change the channel or answer the phone. They prefer e-mails to letters, instant messaging to e-mails and texting to just about anything. They multi task very fast and they believe that these easy to understand and use technologies will be there forever. All three of these generations have certain expectations in the way a hotel treats them and their needs. A balanced consideration of all of these should be undergone if not done already.

The generalizations, given above, are broad concepts, of course. The millions of people that make up those categories must be thought of by the relatively few of those who do take advantage of your hospitality. Every guest has their own expectations, preferences and eccentricities. Let's examine some of the re-imagining or re-invention of your high tech services to better meet the challenges going forward.

A Full Service Business Center

Your guests, many of them with their own laptops, arrive without a printer. A business center, similar to some of those already present, can be a welcoming sight for those who need to print out their next boarding pass or itinerary. It should be open 24 / 7 as many travelers do not keep regular business hours. These can be set up, however, so that it is not a long row of stodgy, confining cubicles with no windows. A light, airy approach should be used to be more inviting for them to spend the few minutes they need to take advantage of the printer and move on.

These should also be available for those who do not have their own computing devices. They need to check their e-mails or make a quick posting on their Facebook page telling everyone where they are. The inability for them to accomplish these tasks may make for a less than glossy review of your facilities.



New and Improved 'Smart Lobbies'

The number of people, from all generations, who carry with them everything they need to keep in touch simply need a free Wi-Fi system that many hotels install throughout their common areas. Lobbies have become impromptu meeting, surfing and texting areas with enough flat surfaces to accommodate drinks and, maybe, a snack.

These lobbies will also have wireless printing set ups and plenty of high capacity Internet connections and power outlets for charging. A number of state of the art hotels provide a high tech concierge for last minute tech help should that be required. These systems allow for the use of Macs as well as PCs and all conventions, as far as connectivity, is available.

These smart lobbies will also have large screen message boards, touch screen monitors with up to the minute local and world news as well as local points of interest. Additional connections will be available for gaming, a quick web cam appearance and or updated flight or arrival information for their next leg.

The Expansion of In-Room Services

A large number of travelers do want to be able to socialize in the above ways, however, there are quite a number who still need the privacy and comfort of their own room. Many hotels have incorporated a lot of the high tech services, gadgets and connectivity in the guest's rooms. The large screen TVs will allow connections to a laptop and the facsimile machine, printing devices and additional lighting will assist in making this solitude as productive, or as entertaining, as possible.



Availability, Security and Vendor Reliability

The availability is a matter of creating the spaces, atmosphere and congeniality that is necessary for welcoming all who have need for this technology. Security is something that must be arranged through

the use of proper hardware and software. Many firms, used for the installation of these devices, have set it up so that all user data, storage, passwords, information and any cookies created on hotel equipment is scrubbed from the hard drives after each log out.

The vendor used for all of this technology should be carefully considered. Many hotel specific publications will carry reviews of some of them and should be consulted for compatibility. The smallest number of vendors should be used so customer service issues are kept to a minimum.

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