

Hotels Are Modernizing



These days, hotels are quickly improving their technical equipment to meet the needs of businessmen on the road. "Hotels are now beginning to make sure they accommodate the tech needs of business travelers," says Joe Brancatelli, founder of the business travel site Joe Sent Me. "Five years ago, you wouldn't build a business-travel hotel without a two-line phone in the room, but who needs that anymore?" Travelers nowadays want high-speed Internet and the possibility to use their mobile phones in all areas of the hotel they stay in. For example, at the Mandarin Oriental in New York the guests are assured that their calls will be uninterrupted, thanks to a new technology. Travelers can also borrow a mobile phone charger from the hotel staff, in case they have lost or forgotten their own. This trend makes more and more hotels to invest in their technical equipment and therefore high-speed Internet access and Wi-Fi connectivity have become standard in many hotels.

Companies that offer this kind of equipment are now witnessing a heyday. For example LodgeNet Entertainment Corp., an operator of interactive entertainment systems and services for the lodging industry, has designed several services to appeal to this fast-growing market. They offer e.g. LaunchPad device, a connectivity panel that allows guests to connect their laptops and most portable media devices to high-definition displays located in their hotel rooms. What more, there are also products and services offered to guests that are not related to work only. Hotels for instance provide a service, Entertainment 2Go, that makes it possible for guests to download full-length movies legally to their laptops.

And hotels are using these services. For example Elizabeth Newman, spokeswoman for Stanford Hotels, said that the company invested about \$6,000 in each renovated room. She said: "Many business travelers are using the service to do presentations on the 42-inch plasma flat screen, and leisure guests are using it for multiple reasons."

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