



Re-Thinking the Hotel of the Future

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HOSPITALITY LEADER

Cover Image: JW Marriott Brickell, Miami, FL



*In 2017, CallisonRTKL created the **Hotel of the Future** study, a comprehensive look at how the hospitality industry was poised to change and grow. Three years later, we are “Re-Thinking the Hotel of the Future” as the landscape has permanently changed due to COVID-19. Here are key insights into how this new look will be different.*

Escape Becomes Destination Isolation

From a bird’s eye 2017 perspective, the past, present and future of the hospitality industry moved from an inclusive, closed space to an open, decentralized, urban layout. Post-COVID, it looks as if the industry will shift to a more protected, controlled and wellness-focused model.

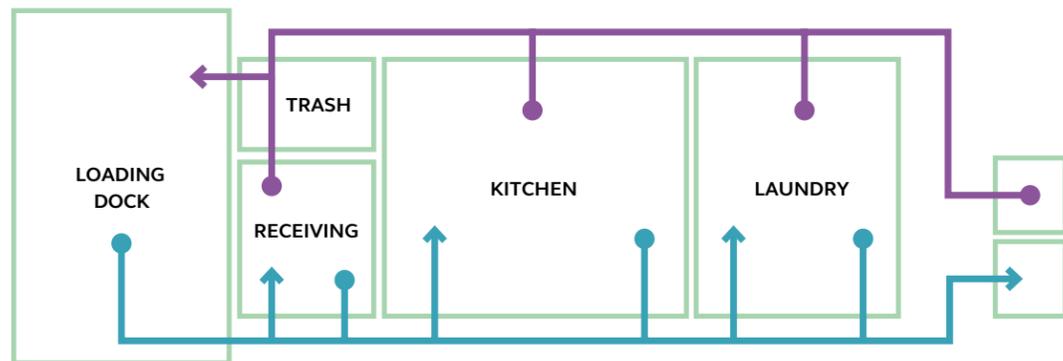
In the original report, hotels used to be aspirational and inspirational -- all about the escape from day-to-day work stress, a place to celebrate key life events, something to cash in all of your mileage points and a reward to look forward to. Guests would generally stay put at a resort destination with dining and entertainment all in one place. And pivoting away from the traditional hotel experience, the early 2000’s era ushered in new interest in a local, more curated experience through the popularity of Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway.

Resulting from the pandemic, a trend is emerging where guests will seek a private, more isolated, experience. Consumers will certainly still want to travel to a new place – but would prefer to be on their own in the hotel, safely distanced and not venturing out to a museum, a concert or on an adventurous activity involving more than a few virus-tested and virus-free individuals. People may also want to explore life on the road rather than getting on a plane. Think remote cabins, glamping or small enclaves of retro-Airstream trailers with a private pool and a controlled-capacity central clubhouse.

Hospitality Design Will Change Dramatically

The back of house, front of house, guest rooms, gyms, restaurants – essentially everything about hospitality design will change dramatically. For many years, hotels in Asia have had circulation routes to dispose of trash and manage soiled laundry that were separated from the incoming produce, supplies and clean linens. Nothing, coming in and out, mixes en route to its destination and all corridors and surfaces are regularly sanitized.

This is what needs to happen in our revised hotel design plans. While eliminating this practice in the U.S. with single corridors handling all incoming and outgoing deliveries, as well as trash and laundry service was previously the most efficient way to shrink the layout to control costs, it must be redesigned to protect not only guests, but also employees, visitors and service providers. And in turn, their families, friends and coworkers. In short, protecting our communities.



Additionally, mechanical systems will should be overhauled. Whether you're in the lobby, a guest room or a conference room, the way a building conditions a space cannot have air blowing down on a person or across the room; floor or base laminar air flow should be considered; the introduction of air from floor registers distributing air vertically in non-turbulent flows instead of horizontally and swirling as in traditional register-to-return air distribution.



We should also expect handwashing stations on every hotel floor. These washing stations are currently used in hospitals and reinforce the need to always be aware of safe health practices. We can design these stations to fit the brand and infuse a sense of fun around the safety process.

Relationships or partnerships with local businesses will also take off. Instead of using valuable hotel square footage for a gym, guests can go to a local gym (perhaps for a daily discount or a personal training offer). The same rings true for restaurants. Walk up the street for a 20% discount at the Yelp-reviewed favorite and charge it to your hotel room. In this way, hotels can relieve themselves of the financial burden – and potential liability – of an in-house restaurant in the post-pandemic environment.



Four Seasons Los Angeles Private Residences
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What Does the New Hotel Room of the Future Look Like?

Previously, rooms were smaller because the hotel's social areas were designed to be much larger and it was assumed that a guest would mostly be going to meetings or venturing out on excursions. It was just a place to take a shower, watch a favorite TV show, maybe grab some room service and go to sleep.

Now, when a room is seen as a sanctuary, more luxurious linens, comfortable furnishings, soothing colors and amenities may make their mark. However, extra blankets, pillows and towels that could possibly absorb

a contaminant will be available only upon request. Carpets will be replaced with tile or vinyl flooring and guestroom connector doors will be reconfigured into a corridor vestibule that can be regularly sanitized. Touch-free room keys, lighting and in-room technologies will be expected from every guest. No longer will cleaning be relegated to the midnight hours when few people are around to witness the work; guests will see employees regularly sanitizing public spaces, doors and other high-activity zones.

In the short term, it is more of an expense for the owner to retrofit for this new normal, but it delivers a peace of mind for customers and employees. Which means increased reservations, improved guest experiences and keeping valued employees on the payroll.



The Role of Wellness and Community Connection

Wellness in the new hospitality space is more than just having a juice bar and in-room yoga mats. Where we have the LEED standard for sustainability in architecture, the **WELL building standard** will now prevail as well. Wellness in hospitality will become a more predominate overlay to the hotel's attitude; not just as a response in the form of cleaning protocols or health checks. A move to demonstrate that your hotel is now a refuge with the guests' health at the fore will have to be demonstrated to provide the confidence and the assurance that the guests' health is the most important aspect of the property's concern. Hotels, such as EVEN® by IHG, will continue to integrate wellness-oriented products throughout their offerings— from food and beverage menus to an array of guestroom amenities. Biophilic design will emerge as well. The use of natural materials, daylighting and places for quiet reflection or meditation should become the norm for leisure hotels and business hotels alike.



*Utilizing **WELL building standards** ensures a commitment to wellbeing -- as individual wellbeing is intrinsically tied to environmental wellbeing. This also has the potential to strengthen the overall value proposition and brand loyalty.*

At this time -- and moving forward -- we need to be designing to the senses and emotions in addition to considering cost savings. Always keeping in mind the benefits for both guests and staff. It will pay off in the long term.

We have the insights, the experience and the tools. Now, do we have the courage to be the leaders of the change? I challenge you.



Clay Markham

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Clay Markham leads the hospitality sector with a dynamic design and management approach to architecture, interior design and construction management. Through more than 30 years in the industry, Clay has worked extensively on international projects, allowing him to apply diverse market experiences to a variety of project types from single-use environments to large-scale master plans to mixed-use projects. His compelling designs and successful project delivery skills have resulted in award-winning projects for top-tier clients including Marriott, Starwood Hotels and MGM Mirage.

CallisonRTKL, a global architecture, planning and design practice, began over seven decades ago and has evolved into a cultural agency to advance positive outcomes in our local and global communities. Through a human-centric design approach our team addresses the imperatives of resiliency, wellbeing and technology and their influence in the built environment.

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