



INDUSTRY UPDATE

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The Importance of Relationship Building for Hotel Revenue and Longevity

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It's no secret that today's most successful companies are built on relationships. Customers crave real connection with brands for more meaningful engagement and experiences, and employees need it for a sense of belonging that directly affects the quality of service they deliver.

Organizations, meanwhile, need it for staying relevant, driving loyalty, and increasing spending. We may live in a hyper-digital world, but prioritizing humanity offers major competitive advantages. This is especially true for hotels, where the emotional connection--providing that "home away from home" feeling--is critical.



connections. Here are my top recommendations for hotels to successfully do so:

Engage data wherever possible. Use modern technology to gain knowledge about guests and provide experiences that nurture genuine relationships. This knowledge can be derived by analyzing data related to how they spend with your brand, most recent interactions or even predictive data based on things like past transactions and engagements. Combining big data with cognitive computing (artificial intelligence and/or machine learning technology) helps glean key insights that allow your brand to better serve guests, putting you one step ahead of the rest. This data-driven experience- combined with partnerships with certain vendors- allows guests to order car service, schedule a class or massage, or order food at a moment's notice from their preferred vendors (you could even feature daily menu specials in guests' rooms to reflect their dietary restrictions or affiliations). It's these kinds of actions that make guests feel heard and truly cared for. Leveraging data in the right way (remember to be transparent in how it's collected and used) always keeps customers coming back.



Promote custom messages and offers. Nearly 75% of guests appreciate custom messages and offers. This could be a list of nearby activities based on a customer's TripAdvisor ratings or a personalized message via customers' channel of choice to inform them of things like confirmed reservations, early check-in options or changes to an itinerary. For business travelers, consider personalized reminders about upcoming meetings or conference show happenings (of course, data is integral to achieving these more personalized objectives). Guests should also be able to instantly initiate conversations with experts should they have any questions. These are all critical to relationship building for driving loyalty and repeat spending.

Don't forget your employees. When talking about relationship building, it's critical that employees be considered (after all, the employee experience is the new customer experience). Building authentic and genuine relationships with employees is

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University of Warwick, for example, found that a general feeling of happiness among employees led to a 12% spike in productivity while unhappy workers proved 10% less productive. More productivity equals more profitability, period. A great example of this is the Ritz-Carlton's [21-day employee engagement strategy](#). I encourage you to check it out.

We live in an age where authenticity, transparency and "realness" is valued above almost everything else: the products or services a company offers, achievements and accolades, and even prices. We are certain to see the continued value and importance of relationship building as hotels prioritize human connection. Customers and employees are setting higher standards for their work and experiences, and organizations that meet those standards are sure to see higher revenue.

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A veteran customer loyalty professional and guest experience expert for over two decades, Robert has provided service-focused insights to a number of Fortune 100/500 companies while holding positions as General Manager, Director of Operations, Regional Human Resources Manager, and Director of Fitness Operations to name a few.

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