

# ADVANCES IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY: CURRENT INTERIOR DESIGN CONCEPTS IN THE WORLD OF HOSPITALITY

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India, in the dawn of the millennium saw an influx of international chains coming and setting up shop here. With this entry of world famous hospitality players in India, the managements of hotels were forced to revamp their properties to compete with younger and more modern chains. It all suddenly, was about a more contemporary and trendy look and renovation was the answer to this. Executive housekeepers play a crucial role while this renovation, refurbishment, restoration, remodeling or plain redecoration is planned.

A property may need a new look due to its constant use or simply use its area effectively. Trends need to be carefully studied before implementation. Changes in demands of guests who constantly seek newer look, freshness of the property have to be satisfied, as people may shy away due to the obsolete interiors. Most housekeepers introduce change, after studying the market and rise of competitors to keep afloat.

Revenue generation takes a direct hit if these market trends are ignored. Housekeepers need to do a great deal of market research on these ever changing trends and realize that target clientele will only patronize the property if it offers an ideal gamut of facilities which are technologically, functionally and aesthetically appealing.

The hospitality industry boasts beautifully tastefully done interiors. A guest room is the main product we sell in order to contribute to maximum revenue of the total sale. After the room comes the food and beverage areas which have to be equally stunning to attract repeat as well as newer customers. Today, bold choices and decisions need to be taken by managements of hotels to display striking interior design and transform rooms into smaller units, packing them with highly personalized experiences for guests. Following could be said the game changers in the world of interior design pertaining to hospitality.

## **Creating a Lobby into a Social Space without Boundaries:**

A lobby happens to be the first dramatic effect a guest can experience when he enters a hotel. All lobbies have a lasting effect on guests, striving hotels to have a constant need to make this area, the most impressionable. The story, now-a-days is a little different, where the emphasis of formality has been replaced by informal warmth and social interaction. Many hotels have moved away from a formal reception counter and in its place would be comfortable sit-down desks where the check-ins can be efficiently done. Guests can sit in a tea-coffee lounge and have a relaxed unhurried check-in or check-out. The lobby area now is equipped with ports for guests to plug in electronic devices, work on laptops, get free Wi-Fi. Formal furniture has been replaced with recliners and ergonomically designed furniture. Informality has crept into the Lobby. People are more receptive and calmer in informal settings. Hotels have started realizing this off late.

**Thoughtful Design of Guest Rooms:** Again here, the formal has been replaced by the contemporary. The interiors of a guest room now includes surprises ensuring guest delight. Business clientele are treated with spaces in their own room to serve as their mini office. A technology friendly room will bring guests who seek these small pleasures like remote controlled air-conditioning or light glare adjustment. The regular and mundane color schemes for walls and the décor have taken a backseat. Contemporary accented neutral color schemes are being used to create a perfect balance of formal and informal atmosphere. A focal point which is created in the room may have relevance to the history of the place where the hotel is situated. The guest experiences a sense of belonging to the room and may come back to stay there again. Carpets once considered a sheer necessity is no longer a part of contemporary décor as it has been replaced by more maintenance free flooring. The flooring can be a source of pattern in the room.

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**Inclusion of Environmentally Friendly Design and Practices:**

Now a days the environmental consciousness of hotels has seen a considerable shift from apathy to responsibility. Many hotels strive to incorporate this in their structural or creative design. Hotels start from choosing an eco friendly piece of land with most positives like direction of wind, sufficient sunlight etc. Inclusion of sky windows or French windows, solar panels provision, sustainable materials for furniture, toilets having electronic water closets of guestrooms and public areas. Miniature gardens inside the hotel, strategic placement of potted plants in the different areas can make a positive addition to the existing design and décor.

**Bathing Space:** These areas are now given extra important place in the design of guest room than ever before. Instead of the regular wardrobes placed as a standard practice, the new trend is a walk-in wardrobe. Though these can be seen in suites, they are becoming the very reason guests choose only such rooms. They come with a proper dry and wet area demarcation, spacious vanity counter, a Jacuzzi, huge bath tubs, large mirrors and soothing interiors.

**Food & Beverage Areas:** These areas are forerunners after rooms to generate revenue for the hotel. A well designed F&B area can be a boon if it meets its technological, functional and aesthetic needs. A restaurant, now could be known for its design as well as its food. The rise in food at sight options/live counters has given ample scope to designers to push the envelope further. Funky interiors, weird shaped furniture, mélange of different lighting along with a formal colour scheme may be the future of restaurant design. Bars are again an area where exhibition of talent takes place. The bartenders do flair bartending which increases the guests interaction. The bar counter should serve as the focal point of the bar where all the activity takes place. A restaurant should not just be a place that serves meals and drinks but a place where the guests savour the ambience with their eyes while enjoying the meal.

**Provisions for the Differently Abled in the Design and Décor:** It is mandatory by law to have provisions like ramps, doorway clearances, grab bars in corridors and toilets to name a few. Every hotel needs to provide for these whatever the trend may suggest.

**Hotels Being Promoted as One of the Main Attractions of a Destination:** People visit hotels not solely to stay there but to be a part of history at an iconic hotel famous for its design architecture, special civil features etc. Such hotels organize a walk through the hotel for guests who wish to taking a tour and learn about the hotel's history and how it was put together and the thought process of the creators. Exquisite interiors with plenty of lines to create a pleasing effect.

Dramatic use of lines has a positive effect on a guest's psyche. Designers also use texture and lighting to create illusions which create a focal point (Raghubalan & Raghubalan 2010). A simple combination of colours can create a trend like metallic colours which add a hint of contrast in a regular colour palette. Any space that needs to be decorated has to be aesthetically handled. Today, a lot of empty space is left in interiors to avoid clutter and a hurried look. Guests appreciate open spaces and are wary of too many partitions and furniture. One can observe this trend in resorts where indoors are connected with the outdoors by introducing glass walls large windows and small porches.

**Addition of a Kitchen Space in a Room:** This feature is the latest trend in the extended stay hotels. This makes the room more personalised and gives a feel of home away from home. A sense of domesticity makes the guest feel at home.

**Abundant Use of Exterior Spaces as an Interior Design:** Hotels part of blessed with panoramic views or sights include this as a part of their uniqueness to sell their rooms. The indoors can be decorated as an extension of the outdoors bringing in nature in the form of fountains, water bodies, vertical gardens, portable potted plants, an atrium that illuminates the entire hotel where the guest can feel and connect with nature (Copolov & Eastwood, 2017).

**Rising Health Consciousness:** Guests who are committed to exercise expect hotels to have special areas designated for this purpose. A little area in the room itself with some basic equipment, can give the guest the sense of being looked after he realizes that his exercise routine is your business too. Gyms, spas, salons would do rest of the job.

**Inclusion of Destination's History in the Hotel Interiors:** These days a lot of focus has shifted to localize the look of the interiors. There is a requirement of a great deal of research that needs to be presented well so that the guests can savour the past in a limited but authentic way. These aspects can be presented in civil work, furniture, bathroom fixtures windows, soft furnishings, paintings, murals, fabric collages. Local artistes can be employed for the same.

**Autograph Hotels:** The hotels in exotic locations filled with originals of the artwork by local artists example The Autograph by Marriott, at Asheville, N.C is filled with marble sculptured and mounted game shots by Richard Kessler. This practice showcases the culture in which the guests can experience the glorious past (Autograph Collection, Cited on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

**The World is a Global Village:** In most themed restaurants, spas, hotel suites around the world designers are bringing décor ideas and objects of art from where they are made and would be economically viable to the hotel. Guests get to

experience this décor without having to go physically to the country of the source of such indigenous products.

**Virtual Designing:** With the technology savvy consumers, hotels realize that a guest would like to see how the hotel looks even before he decides to book a room. The close to reality shot of the décor has to be planned and executed well. Videos and 3D Imaging can be a tool to market the facilities and amenities.

Encompassing the above trends, it is prudent to summarise that interiors are of everchanging nature. Most of the decisions taken by customers to visit a property are directly related to the aesthetic appeal of the interiors. While this beautification is necessary, one should keep in mind that

optimum utilization of space, maintainability, convenience and the cost incurred should be in tandem with the aesthetics.

## REFERENCES

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