

HOTEL TRENDS IN OMAN

ENHANCING OMAN'S TOURISM
INDUSTRY THROUGH ENGAGING
CLIENT EXPERIENCES

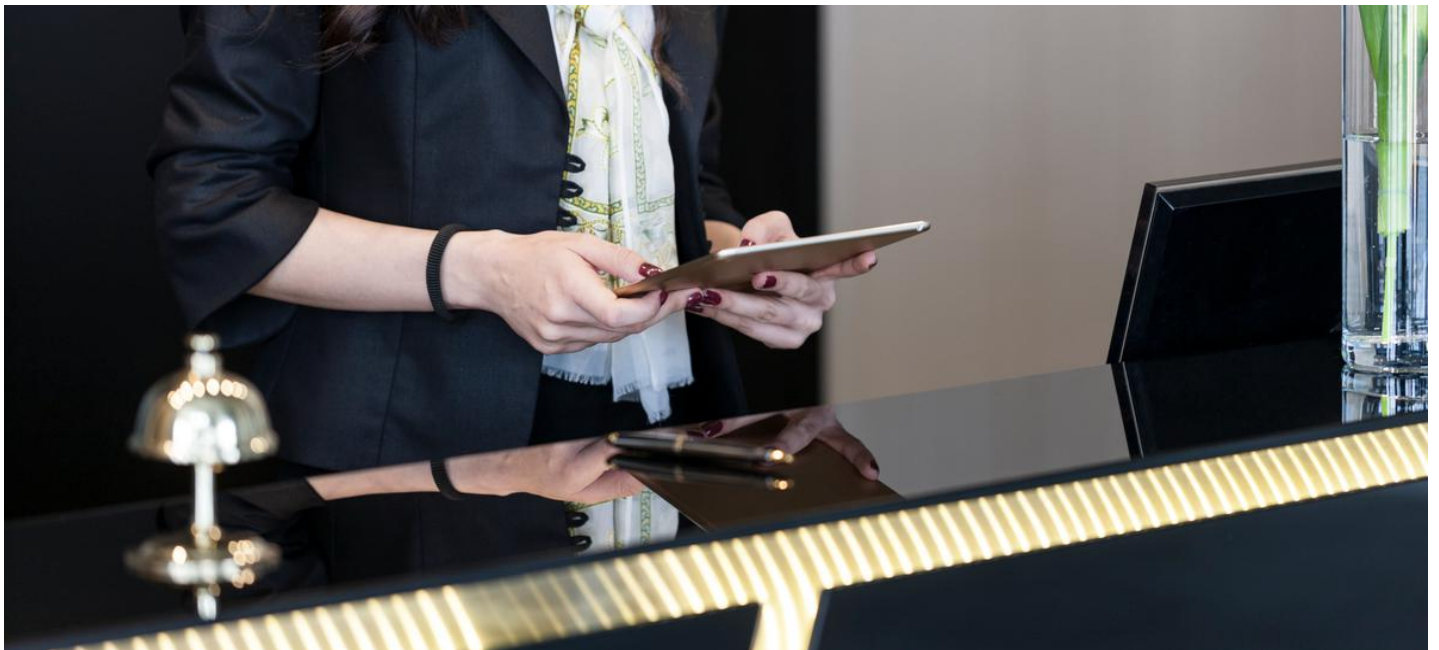


EXCEEDING GUEST EXPECTATIONS BY IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE HOTEL TRENDS

A hotel is not simply a place for people to sleep. It is an opportunity for hotels to engage guests in an experience. Hotel operators recognize that to create a successful and sustainable operation, it is imperative to focus on developing a genuine and engaging guest experience.

With “guest experience” as the new frontier across industries, it is expected that by 2020 customer experience will overtake price and product as key brand differentiators. Interestingly enough, research also predicts that 85% of customer interactions will be managed without a human by the end of 2020.

What does this mean as trends shift towards automation and AI, such as in-room concierge services and chatbots? How can hotel operators, investors, owners, and developers ensure they are creating memorable and sustainable experiences for clients with more integration of technology? This paper will identify trends we are seeing enhance these human experiences while improving processes and operations.





As tourism steadily increases in Oman, developers are recognizing the importance of creating an experience for end-users – hotel guests – to ensure more opportunities for Oman’s tourism industry are capitalized on. To support this growing industry, MEC has identified some of the trends which we anticipate will have influence on the Oman market as “experience” becomes a primary focus for hotel brands.

SUSTAINABILITY

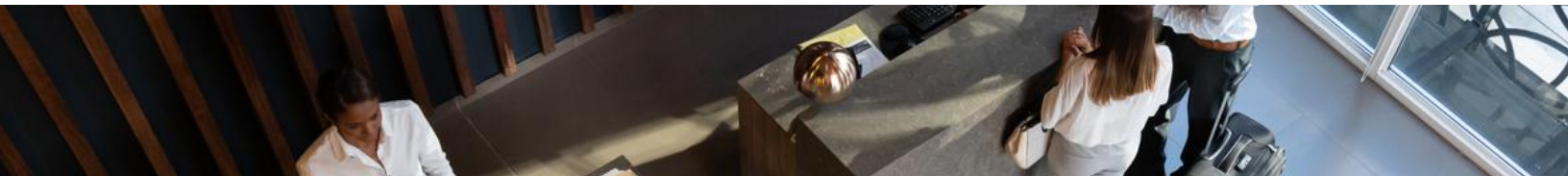
Unsurprisingly, sustainability has become a key trend for hotel design and operations. From a physical standpoint, the materials used, renewable energy, and integration of technology allow for more intelligent buildings. This, in turn, ensures buildings can be proactively monitored and maintained, resulting in lower long-term costs. Specific trends allowing for greater building intelligence can be broken into two types of sustainability: physical and process.

PHYSICAL DESIGN SUSTAINABILITY

- Eco and green hotels are enhanced by integrations with nature, while increasing their use of natural light and ventilation,
- Solar and other renewable power sources, coupled with smart switches, help prevent wasted energy usage,
- Increase use of reused and organic materials, such as wood, stone and metals, reduce environmental impact,
- Energy saving appliances and water saving systems using greywater,
- Emphasis on incorporating design within landscape for more harmony with nature, and
- Smart materials that help improve building intelligence to better monitor and predict building decay.

PROCESS DESIGN SUSTAINABILITY

- Earlier involvement of facilities managers with hotel designers,
- Incorporation of operations process within the actual design of hotel,
- Working with local craftsmen/women for cultural touches and to stimulate local economy, and
- Paperless check-in to reduce paper and streamline systems.



ENHANCED GUEST EXPERIENCE

While there is in-depth focus on sustainability through improved designs, materials, and incorporation of building operations, sustainability of the local culture is also important. By looking at sustaining the culture, the guest experience is naturally enhanced with truly unique experiences that connect beyond the hotel room, to the hotel brand, and extends into the city's culture as a whole.

This cultural sustainability also leads to travellers looking for more personalized experiences. As such, hotels are creating a home away from home experience, particularly for business travellers. Trends we're seeing that enhance the guest "feel-good" factor involve both local cultural experiences, along with access to healthier lifestyle options while travellers are away from their home.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

- Evolving the lobby into an interactive connection centre for guests and locals alike,
- Improved lobby libraries to share reading material,
- Increase in cultural-related design, particularly in non-business hotels,
- Involving local guides to help guests understand the culture, creating hyper-local experiences, and
- On-site local experiences along with personalized recommendations.

LIFESTYLE EXPERIENCES

- Healthier meal options to maintain diet while travelling,
- Quality gym equipment, which powers the electrical grid,
- Branded amenities, designed to be gender-neutral, serving all guests,
- Providing shoes/clothes to enjoy exercise without having to travel with workout gear,
- Upgraded gyms, health spas and retreat/meditation areas, and
- Colour changing building smart materials which inform guests when it's time to get out of the sun.



ROOM TECHNOLOGY

Turning rooms into fully customizable and connected experiences helps guests create singular memories that are hard to replicate. Improved technology will be crucial to creating these types of unique experiences.

IN-ROOM TECHNOLOGY

- Voice controlled virtual assistants, such as Alexia/Siri systems, with improved security and privacy,
- In-room concierge available in various languages,
- Internet of Things (IOT) allows for less devices, yet more seamless communication between room items such as TV, radio, curtains, heating/cooling system, and lighting, all of which can be pre-set for each guest,
- Netflix or other TV streaming connection for guests, and
- Improved in-room top level Internet connectivity.

OUT-OF-ROOM TECHNOLOGY

- Guest apps, improving communication for hotel notifications, services, and loyalty programs,
- iPad or similar tablet use for stress-free and paperless check ins,
- Keyless room entry via mobile devices, and
- Modern portable audio-visual systems provide versatility, flexibility, and connectivity, allowing for improved video conferencing and multimedia presentations.



ABOUT MEC

At MEC, we anticipate many of these trends to be seen in the ever-evolving hotel market here in Oman. The delivery of harmonious booking, ease in arrival, along with a personalized in-room and departure experience is surely the key to success in the hotel industry. With data driven personalization, and a heightened focus on data security, MEC sees a wide range of opportunities for hotel brands to improve the guest experience while continuing to support Oman's greater tourism industry. Whether you are designing a new hotel or are contemplating a much-needed upgrade, then the MEC Project Management team can provide support on the journey!

To discuss your next project, visit www.majaneng.com or contact Kevin Ellis at k.ellis@majaneng.com.

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