



Reframed [Rituals]

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INSIGHT SERIES

REFRAMED RITUALS:

The innovation of optimizing, amplifying, reinventing, and even eliminating established rituals across the hotel experience — purposely considering the impact on guests, staff, and strategic partners.

Going beyond clean, COVID-19 unlocks an opportune moment for hotels to innovate

While the sharing economy both threatened and reshaped the hotel industry in the last several years, consumers will be reevaluating their travel behavior and lodging providers following COVID-19.

Safety, health, and evidence-backed messaging will drive all consumer decisions—leading to a resurgence in reputable hotel brands that can provide a level of regulation and credibility around cleanliness that shared platforms like Airbnb and VRBO cannot.

This creates a rich opportunity for leading hotel brands to step up and redefine what a trusted overnight stay looks like in a post-pandemic world.

Hotel experiences are highly ritualistic and each stay is carefully crafted to cater to routines. Guests check-in with specific touch points and expectations in mind—from daily workouts to continental breakfast buffets.

We will see leading brands optimize, amplify, reinvent, and even eliminate familiar rituals for guests throughout the hotel experience—with careful consideration for how these changes also affect their employees, partners, and franchisees. Read on as we explore five imperatives for leaders in the hospitality sector.



INSIGHT

#1

BASELINE CLEAN

The race to define and signal the “new clean” will drive hotels’ responses in the short-term. Brands will need to leverage a combination of both visible and invisible tactics as these will ultimately become the new cost of entry for sanitizing and germ mitigation. Transparent communication of these efforts and protocols will be equally as important to ensure guests feel informed, reassured, and confident—reinstating a mutual brand relationship built on trust. These new processes will primarily reshape existing operational rituals for staff and property managers.

53%

Of survey respondents say reassurance that a hotel property is doing extra sanitizing will most likely persuade them to book a future vacation during the coronavirus outbreak (Fuel)

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in action*



Hilton CleanStay x Lysol

Hilton’s CleanStay program partners with Lysol and the Mayo Clinic to activate medical-grade cleaning strategies across properties. A seal on every door signals that the room hasn’t been accessed since it was cleaned. The initiative has built a focus on cleanliness that will be visible to guests throughout their entire stay – in their guest rooms, restaurants, fitness rooms and in other public spaces.



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#2

BEHAVIOR SHIFTS

As brands evaluate the guest touch points across a hotel stay, there will be opportunities to adjust minor rituals and experiment with redefining core behaviors. This includes trading traditional room service for pre-packaged meals, or a bigger push for digital keys and contactless transactions. The most immediate impact may come from an evaluation of in-room amenities. The do not disturb door hanger will take on a new meaning as guests will want more control. Fitness, and potentially even socializing, will transition from public spaces to individual rooms, and an investment in outdoor spaces and activities, will be paramount.

“Your phone will be your new master key – getting you not only into your room, but access to other areas of the hotel. It will also play the part of the thermostat, remote control, and light switch.”

—Jim Stapleton, NELSON Worldwide

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Five Feet to Fitness

Hilton offers an in-room wellness concept that brings over eleven different fitness equipment and accessory options into the hotel room. The new fitness-focused rooms make it safer for travelers and exercise enthusiasts to maintain their routines and avoid the contact of others during their hotel stays.



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#3

NUANCED JOURNEYS

As businesses reopen and travel ramps up, we'll see evolved guest attitudes and preferences vastly influence hotel experiences. Some guests will be traveling out of necessity for work or family, but are still uneasy about the perceived risks of travel. Others will simply want to reclaim their wanderlust and sense of normalcy. These new guest profiles are an opportunity for hotels to capitalize on catering to new rituals, attitudes, and beliefs.

61% *of U.S. business travelers say they'll book future travel during lockdown*
(Stylus)

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Business and Relaxation Packages

In Washington D.C., the Hamilton Hotel has created a nine-to-five package, where guests use rooms as a daytime office and receive room-service meals, delivered contactlessly. Chicago's Godfrey Hotel operates a similar promotion, but swaps room service with in-suite perks like a Keurig machine and CBD cocktail kit.



53% of travelers will opt for hotels over homeshare models (IDC)

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#4

SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY

While many of these initiatives may seem to strip back amenities or services, we can't forget that the spirit of hospitality itself must continue to be the driving force of hotels. The best brands will implement solutions that communicate cleanliness—but they will also empower their employees to keep a welcoming, concierge mindset at the center of all interactions. Finding new ways to integrate first-class service, personal connections, and unexpected moments of delight will elevate these new rituals.

BeSpoke Travel Company Scavenger Hunts

Beijing based travel company, Bespoke Travel Company, has developed a program that offers socially distance scavenger hunts, where members can be “alone-together.” Targeted at the domestic market, the scavenger hunt activity offers mailed booklets that guide participants through Beijing and Shanghai's sights with clues and historical facts and stories about the place they are visiting.



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#5

POWER OF BRAND MEANING

Hotels should invest in branding efforts to reframe what the hotel experience means to its consumers, ensuring it uniquely resonates with post-pandemic beliefs. These efforts could include elevating brand purpose, rethinking positioning in the marketplace, being intentional about partnerships, and galvanizing team members around employer values. Hospitality corporations with a portfolio of brands have the particular opportunity to strategically leverage certain property types, service levels, and brand propositions. As attitudes and need states continue to evolve, these major players can flex and focus accordingly.

“Consumers will hold brands accountable to an entirely new level of responsibility, especially as they seek guidance on how to best transition back into travel.”

—Tori Tasch, NELSON Worldwide

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Tempo By Hilton

Hilton’s latest brand, Tempo by Hilton, features elevated guestrooms that support the expectations and routines of Tempo guests. Each room has a large “get ready” zone with a dry vanity, illuminated mirror, and more space to prepare for the day or wind down night, much like guests would at home. Every element from the enveloping hug headboard to the warm colors and textured materials give off a residential feeling, helping guests feel more comfortable.

Let's talk.

Looking for custom ideas to elevate your hotel experience?
Schedule time with your NELSON team of experts to discuss
your brand and business goals and how you can succeed in the
future of hospitality.

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