



Designing the Perfect Repeatable Hotel Room

The Functional and Design Requirements of Hospitality

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The success of a hotel room's design hinges on the satisfaction of the guests. It is a nuanced balance of design, function and finances.

Picture an empty box. That's your starting point when designing a hotel room destined for replication 100 times — the average hotel room count. Where it goes from here is dependent on theoretical guests. As a designer, your goal is to meet and exceed the soon-to-be clientele's expectations.

When guests step into a hotel room, they hopefully "ooh" and "ahh" over the compelling design, comfort of furnishings and window views. Rarely do they take into consideration the multitude of decisions made before getting to these elements.

Vast knowledge of the target market and location is the foundation for designing the empty box. Location refers not only to physical locale — seaside, urban or the countryside, for example — but also to where this hotel is situated in relation to competing hotels in the area. What are the neighboring accommodations? One must assess what travelers' needs and desires the competitors are fulfilling. More importantly, what the competitor hotels lack in accommodations is the niche that must be carved out in your room design.

Should your project run parallel in scope to existing hospitality options? Can you offer competitive room rates to capture the attention of clientele? Reducing room rates may mean physical compromises down the line. Hospitality design is a balancing act between finances and functionality with the aspiration of providing the most attractive option to potential guests.





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The functional requirements of the room design refer to the elements needed for optimal use by the guest. Square footage of available counter space in the bathroom, accessibility and quantity of plugs for mobile devices, quantity and size of beds, as well as building and mechanical restrictions are examples of such requirements.

These must be strictly adhered to and are the designer's responsibility to obtain from the developer. The specifications of ADA-accessible rooms — including but not limited to doorway clearance, roll-in showers, support railing and visual notification for door knocks and phones — are a requirement of all new and newly renovated hotels. However, rote compliance with the ADA code is simply not enough. Rooms, whether in use by persons with disabilities or not, demand a compassionate design approach to integrating the usability of the space. Every guest wishes to be transported and have their individual

needs met during their stay and nothing less. This transformative effect of the guest room must be considered even in applying the functional requirements.

Additionally, some amenities fall under this functional requirement heading. These amenities change with the times and correlate directly with the target demographic of the hotel.

In this modern age, guests demand high-speed internet and an en suite business center with connectivity. Television is considered a piece of standard tech, yet it is controversial in the wellness sector of hospitality design. This division of hotels seeks to embody serenity to guide guests to a slower state of being while unplugging.

Herein lies the paradox; creating a sanctuary that appeals to a spectrum of clientele. Does the television, the most basic commodity, get left out, included in a traditional design approach, or hung in a way that is obscured unless in use? Any option requires convincing the developer to take a gamble.

Once these foundational elements are set, it is time to bring the design requirements to fruition. Begin the story development with the hotel's geographic location in mind and outline the anticipated guest profile. Will the guest likely be a single traveler, family or group? How long is the projected average stay? What is the level of service and anticipated average daily rate?

The degree to which the designer can offer input and influence the design requirements varies dramatically from a branded project to an independent property. A branded property may leave less room for designer input; instead, the designer is expected to follow pre-approved concepts. Independent hospitality properties, on the other hand, allow the designer to dive deep and create that story through independent research and experience.

The key is to reflect an aspirational nature while considering current design trends, color and style. The overall design needs to be relevant and evergreen. Color palettes significantly impact a guest's first impression of the room and the story you want to tell as the designer.

A hotel in the heart of a metropolis will likely cater to leisure and business. The story that bridges these vastly different guest types is the location. What are the colors and textures inherently associated with the city? In the case of a San Francisco hotel on the Bay in a neighborhood that is home to a major league stadium and medical center, the story begins with the anticipated sophistication of a hotel in the city. Neutral colorways of cool tones with a nod to team colors are an option that would appeal to the diverse clientele.

The perfection of the design relies on the intimate knowledge of the clientele. Though hotel room design is for the masses, in the end, success hinges on the experience of the individual.

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