



INTRODUCTION TO THIS DOCUMENT

Hotel News Resource summarises Kelly Gardner's insight on the current and future of the hotel industry and new concepts that hotels can adapt to serve guests post COVID-19

OUR TAKE-AWAYS:

This is what we learned from this document:

- **Due to COVID-19 many hotels are in survival mode and doing everything possible just to keep the doors open and stay hopeful. It is currently not possible to predict when it might even be possible to welcome guests again but when that happens evolution is needed and hospitality brands have to respond to the new mentality that is currently being born.**
- **In the post COVID-19 era, the way people will connect and how they will feel comfortable in social settings will be very different for a while, maybe forever. Hotels will have to provide more heightened awareness of hygiene, health and immunity protection.**
- **Hotel communication strategies should clearly project compassion, warmth and a sense of security.**

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Evolution of the Hotel Experience, in a New World & Key Areas for Hoteliers to Integrate Now - By Kelly Gardner

Hotel News Resource

14-18 minutes

While none of us can completely know what's in store, one thing we can count on is change, embracing it, adapting to it and doing our best to use this time well and keep morale and creativity high.

Guest writer Kelly Gardner shares her insights for the hotel industry.



Looking into the crystal ball to see the future of the hospitality industry has been an interesting journey the past weeks. From speaking to Hoteliers & hospitality creatives, watching engaging discussions of hospitality powerhouses and bright brave souls, as well as some intuitive guidance, all signs point to some main areas to consider going forward. Evolution is needed for hospitality brands to rise to a new mentality that is currently being born. Like many unprecedented aspects coming out of this period, the shift in the industry to collective thinking and connecting for collaboration and support is rising and opening eyes to new ways of operating.

There is an inner shaking and an awakening happening across the globe, an unprecedented collective physical stillness that's been 'ordered' on to us. While there is a lot of darkness in the situation there is a lot to be grateful and hopeful for. There is certainly a shift in seeing, in appreciating, in health, in hygiene and looking at what is really necessary in our lives. Outside distraction is less and the call to go within is stronger. More than ever it seems people are looking for hope, for inner calm and for faith in a positive and prosperous future. In the Post COVID-19 era, the way we will connect and how we feel comfortable in social settings will be very different for a while, maybe forever. Heightened awareness of hygiene, health and immunity protection is at the forefront.

The pace of **attendance** and desire to be around large groups may be a **very slow** reintroduction, the millions of options of places to go to or travel to everyday have been replaced by newly released access to a myriad of incredible online discussions, events, courses, museums etc. Also the re-shaping of homes into home offices, homeschooling, home workout space and hosting the occasional digital party, is giving people a new sense of fulfillment and options without having to travel to access it. New creative and careful spending habits are emerging, purchasing only what's necessary as well as making space, purging closets and emptying space in our minds and in our homes. Suddenly there is time to reflect on what we are doing, collectively. Many have the time to be more available without the guise of being too busy as well as thinking of ways to offer help to other people or businesses. There is always light to match the dark, the lessons and blessings that are happening will be life changing, they will tear some people and businesses apart, bring some together, spark creativity, spark

innovation and bring new ways of operating. The new mentality and way of operating will need to be handled with awareness and care.

Hotels are a prominent nucleus for cities and countries, the gateways of tourism and the ambassadors of its people and culture. Hospitality is fueled by open, creative, empathetic and positive spirits, the world needs that spirit more than ever, let's do our best to support this spirit and keep the faith. **Compassion, warmth** and a **sense of security** will be sought out more than ever once the doors of travel reopen, hospitality mavericks offer that remedy.

Of course many hotels are in survival mode and doing everything possible just to keep the doors open and stay hopeful. We also don't know when it might even be possible to welcome guests again.

Below are **10 concepts** to consider for the '**new world**', most can be incorporated creatively without much cost. Perhaps technology, innovation or AI will take over many of these areas in the near future, but true warmth and human care is so far irreplaceable. The following concepts are not hard facts, they are open to discussion and development.

10 Key areas of the New World Hotel Experience

1) Purpose Driven





Collective Mentality shifts:

- The wish to connect to experiences more deeply, less rushed, with purpose and at a comfortable distance.
- A shift away from spending without meaning, or purposeful value.
- Stronger desire for a sense of relaxation, healing, nourishment, safety, self love, immunity boosting, clarity finding, revitalization, joy and new unique experiences to look forward to.

Approach:

- Offering activities or experience packages that deliver value, purpose and connection, leaving the guest with a lasting positive feeling as a result.
- Offering opportunities to learn something new, cultivate inner peace, have a unique immersive experience, host a small comedy theatre etc. Guests may not always go for it but the realization that it's there lets them know about the level of care the hotel offers and gives them the option of a fulfilling 'experience' only your hotel offers, rather than just a hotel night.

2) Sanctuaries of Compassion

Collective Mentality shift:

- Many are in a pandemic fearful mindset, fearful of other people, places and unsanitized objects being a potential culprit of death or

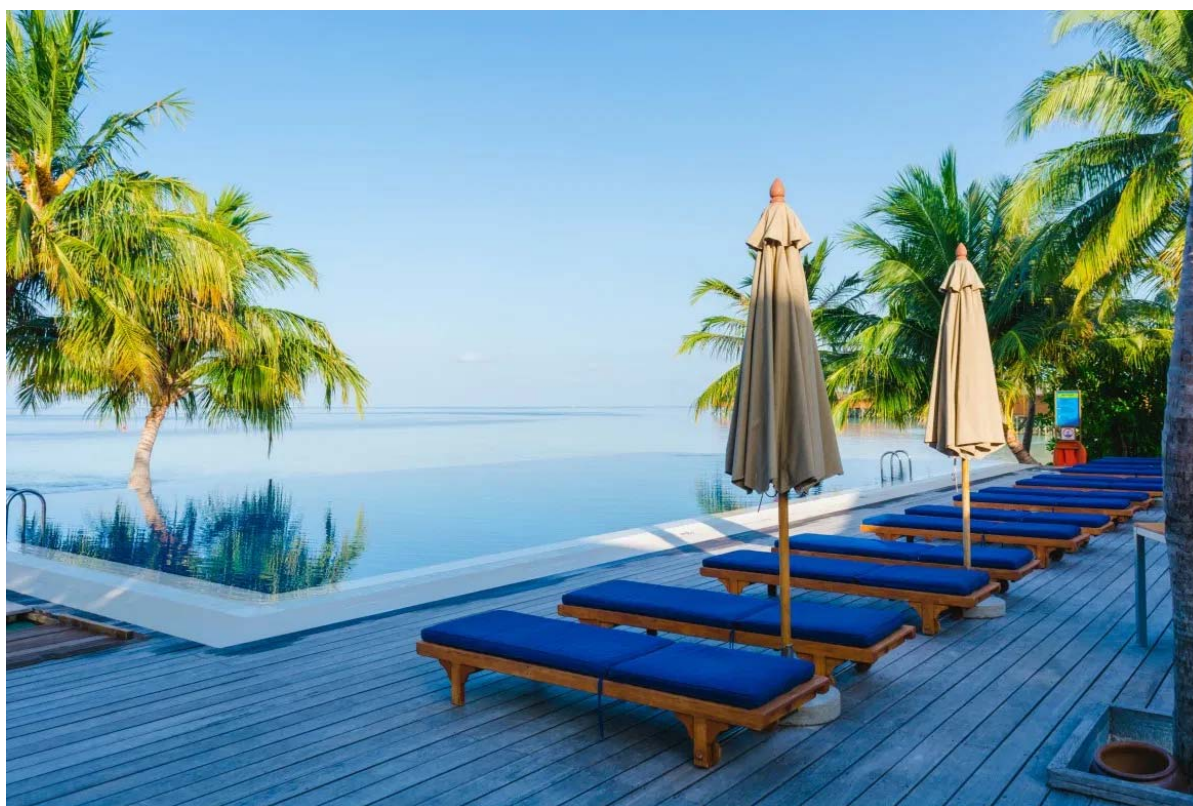
disease.

- The new way of perceiving and treating each other with extreme caution and physical distance will be ingrained in the human psyche for some time.

Approach:

- If hotels are empathetic to this mindset and combat the fear with open compassion and security that guests are in a safe haven and looked after, they have the opportunity to change their minds about humanity, which will be paid forward.
- **Communication**, demonstration and transparency in the steps the hotel takes to ensure compassion, safety, comfortable distance and care can help diminish fear.

3) Creating Comfort in Design and Use of Space



Collective Mentality shift:

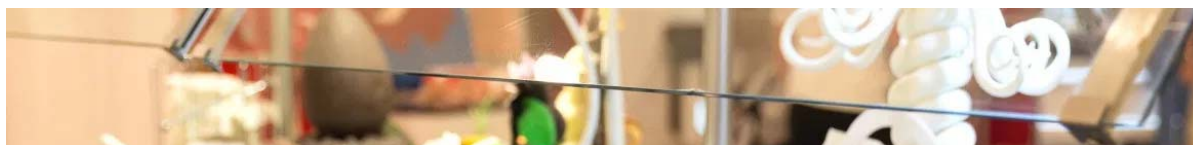
- The need for more space to move freely and comfortably in a

shared space, without having to worry about having contact or squeezing past anyone. Perhaps the days of restaurants being slammed full and barely space between tables are over (at least for a long while). The dynamic of design and a thoughtful creation of it will play an interesting and integral role in the new world.

Approach:

- Creatively optimising spaces to give openness and expanded distance between chairs, tables, bar stools, entrance and exit flow. This may reduce the number of covers in a restaurant or cafe but will increase comfort, value and consistency.
- Avoiding congestion of people and offering thoughtful direction in areas where people often get crammed together, especially entrance ways.
- Open and uncluttered spaces.
- Natural materials that are easy to clean and easy to visibly see that they are perfectly clean.
- Elimination of plush materials that can trap germs, dust mites and moisture most likely will be less appealing, including throw pillows and carpets.
- Repurposing small gym/work out spaces that mostly will not be spacious enough with the new regulations of personal distance, airflow and hygiene. Smaller rooms can potentially be used for work outs of one or two people max or to repurpose into a meditation room.

4) Revitalising Food & Beverage





Collective Mentality shift:

- Immunity, strength and vitality are currently at the forefront
- Strong focus on healthy nutrient based choices.

Approach:

- Organic and locally sourced will likely not be enough, research and deliver options rooted in beneficial nutrients and immunity boosting, energy and revitalization incorporated into all food and beverage options.
- Probiotic cocktails that balance the digestive tract
- More Low Alcohol and Non Alcohol options
- Not just smoothies, but juices and smoothies that are proven to boost immunity and that don't mix fruits with dairy, still many places are doing this, it can wreak havoc on digestion, check food pairing health options.
- Comfort food immune boosting, food that is wholesome, vital, and

soul warming, less skimpy, salty and deep fried menu options.

- A bigger draw to tasty plant based options.
- Self service / open breakfast buffet will likely need to be replaced by curated menu with service. Otherwise, buffet options covered by glass protection and a server to assist. Curated menu is likely to help with extravagant food waste and give a more unique touch.
- Ginger shots may become a norm first thing in the morning before, after or next to coffee.
- Boosted Coffee: introduction of MCT oil, cordyceps and many more options of adaptogens to add energy, immunity and stress relief ingredients to coffee or tea.
- Each plate giving fulfillment, not the sense of overpaying for inadequate unfulfilling portions.

5) Cutting Costs / Outsourcing Resources

Hotelier Mentality Shift:

- With costs under the spotlight and survival mode turned on, hoteliers are being forced to cut down on one of their most crucial and valuable assets, but also one of the biggest expenses: employees.

Approach:

- Outsourcing options for functions that are handled in the back office or mostly online may be an option to operate cost effectively for a while.
- Having a review management strategy and management in place and outsourced to pros, as online reviews can make or break a hotel when post COVID-19 reviews start coming in. More info on

this below.

6) New levels of Hygiene



Collective Mentality Shift:

- Cleanliness and hygiene practices are and will be under heavy scrutiny.
- New measures will be incorporated into what hotels are expected to offer in the new world.
- Hygiene and fear of lack of hygiene around them is currently a motivating factor in decision making.

Approach:

- Transparency and over communication of the measures and care the hotel is taking for guests when it comes to hygiene.
- Availability of hand sanitizers and cleaning wipes likely to be the norm and expected.

- Travel size, hotel branded hand sanitizers, upon check in. As well as branded or customised face masks, made of appropriate non-toxic materials, in case guests would like one or in case they have a cold or cough.
- A 'designer hand sanitizer' dispenser stand, in the lobby may become a normal 'piece of the furniture'.
- All spas or shared facilities will likely need double or triple the checks and cleaning they had before.
- New signage "All must wash hands" instead of just employees.
- Enough sinks available in common areas and bathrooms for handwashing.
- Motion detected soap & hand sanitizer dispensers if possible.
- Focus on common area bathrooms, it happens often in hospitality that common area bathrooms are not monitored and cleaned enough, this will need new regulations and checks.
- More visibility of cleaning staff, not only cleaning during off times when common areas are empty but also during busy periods so guests see first hand the cleanliness levels are being carried out.
- Guests may travel with their own pillows, blankets or shawls to not expose their skin to surfaces. Hotels can offer this option sterilized and personalized.
- Making laundry services affordable, quick and easy to access.
- No chocolates on the pillows but next to the beds and clearly handled with care
- Only sealed or carefully covered food items left in the room as a gift or via room service.

- Perhaps a return to 'white glove service' in all hotels for all front line staff, especially when touching guests' belongings or serving food items. Gloves and likely face masks, for bellhops, desk clerks, servers, valet as well as kitchen staff.
- Perhaps the new world can bring a new color, the era of 'red glove' service.
- Having cleaners potentially positioned as the 'front line/ stars' of the hotel.
- Over communication of the seriousness and care the hotel is taking to ensure complete cleanliness and the highest standards of hygiene.

7) Zen Space / Silent Room, in all hotels

Collective Mentality Shift:

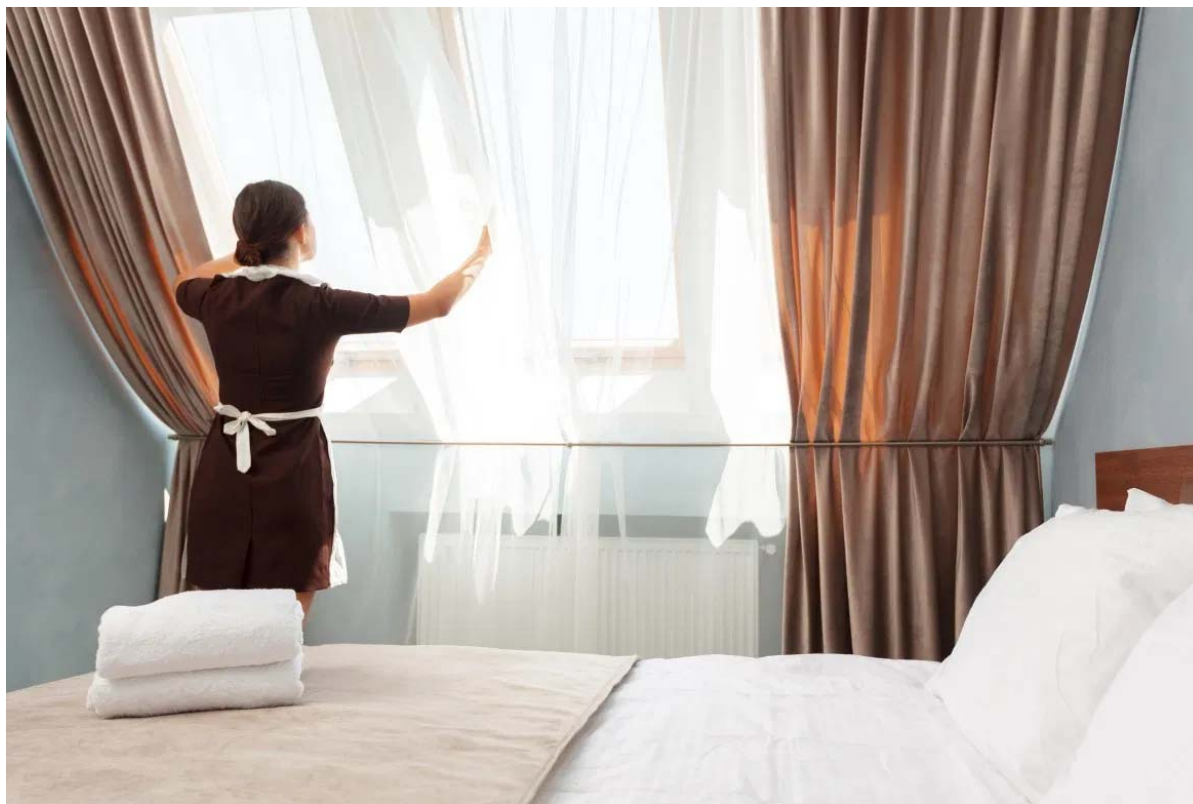
- The growing awareness of the importance of calm, peace and quiet for inner peace and balance.

Approach:

- A designated zen space where guests know they can go and enjoy silence.
- Offering an escape from work, family or from distractions of their own rooms, to have a place they know is clean and quiet when they need a few minutes or a few hours of calm.
- Safe zone from music or technology or noise and plenty of space between people.
- Calm lighting or candle light, natural materials, tea or at least water available, 24/7.
- A meditation teacher (or experienced staff member) to lead daily

or weekly meditations if possible.

8) Air Circulation



Collective Mentality Shift:

- With a strong focus on avoiding potential diseases, focus on breathing clean air that is not contaminated with airborne germs, or air that is recycled in and out of other guests rooms.

Approach:

- A look at current air systems, how clean and pure it is.
- How is air circulating in and out of guest rooms and how can this be explained to guests so they feel comfortable?
- Ability to open windows likely will be more important.

9) Offering “Safe & Boosted Experience” Packages

- An example: Vitality package: Clean air, openable windows, double cleaning measures, Immune boosting breakfast, 24/7 silent

inner Zen room, an inspirational quote of the day, clean mountain water, red-glove service, mandatory and regular tests of health of the staff, comfortable space in all common areas, a ginger shot and organic boosted coffee options.

10) Involvement of local community

- Likely domestic travel will be the focal point first. Invite the neighbors, offer incentives and extra compassion to those living in your city and country, especially previous local guests.
- They will be excited to get out of their homes and have a small getaway to change the scenery and be pampered & cared for.
- Create gratitude for local support with a local 'local members club', or something along those lines, to offer emotional value and gratitude and build a sense of local community in the hotel.
- F&B visits and events from local guests can bring consistent revenue to hold things over until international travel picks up.
- Local companies or corporate group incentive offerings following all guidelines above.

Guests will be looking for safety and comfort and that they can rest assured their best interest is at heart with every choice the hotel makes.

The hotels that are authentic, transparent and truly care about their guests' experience, health, well being and emotional needs are and will continue to be the leaders of the industry in the new world.

My mission is to help the industry survive and thrive and creatively think ahead.

I'm offering support, creative solutions and strategy planning for

owners, internal optimisation programs for the team, online review strategy & management and tailored free programs during this downturn to strengthen and evolve the core of the hotel.

About the Kelly Gardner:

[Kelly Gardner](#) is an experienced Hotel Consultant & Hospitality Professional with a demonstrated history of results in the Boutique Hotel industry.

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