

MOOD: MEDIA

HOW TO CREATE LASTING GUEST LOYALTY WITH A MULTI-SENSORY HOTEL EXPERIENCE

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If there's one primary take away from this article, it's this:

The ultimate goal of the guest experience is to **create memories that guests want to repeat and share.**

Perhaps we're preaching to the choir here, but it's worth reinforcing this objective because it's more important today than ever for a number of reasons.

For starters, your property is one of more than 180,000 others in the world, and that number doesn't even include the home-sharing market created by VBRO, Airbnb and other startups. Your prospective guests have more accommodation options than they can handle, so when they do check into your property, it's vital that you create an experience for them that makes their decision to choose your brand in the future a no-brainer.

Secondly, word-of-mouth is more powerful today than ever before, thanks to social media. Instagram and Facebook users will never hesitate to post a short video or story that features your location in one way or another if you're giving them a knockout experience.

1 SENSATIONAL HOTEL MUSIC

The first way to begin connecting with your guests on a deeper emotional level is by playing **music that appeals to their tastes and reflects your unique brand personality**. Musical preferences are a key component of one's identity, and the better you can align your music programming with the preferences of your target clientele, the more likely your guests are to have a strong affinity for your hotel and brand.

The music you play cannot be random - and according to federal law, it cannot be your favorite radio station either.

Getting it right takes a significant amount of research, time and expertise, so unless you don't have anything better to do (like manage the day-to-day operations of your business), then it's a good idea to get professional assistance from a licensed music provider.

Be wary of consumer-based streaming platforms that rely solely on bots and algorithms to generate your soundtrack.

How do you create this type of experience? One of the biggest ways is by connecting with your guests on an emotional level. When the experience you create appeals to your guests' positive emotions, it becomes one that your guests want to own. The experience plants the seeds for loyalty, and as a result, your hotel is no longer just a place where your guest stayed. In the eyes of your guest, your hotel becomes their place. To them, your location is now "where I stay."

Additionally, cost becomes less of a deciding factor for your guests if the experience you provide engages them on a deeper level. Connecting with your guests in this manner takes more than the fundamentals, but by the same token, you also don't need all of the best amenities. Rather, you need to consider what your guests see, hear and smell at your property, because these senses are direct lines to the hearts of your guests. Effective use of hospitality media solutions can be instrumental at creating a multi-sensory experience that lays the roots for lasting guest loyalty.

In this article, we'll take a closer look at how we can leverage some of the most important sensory elements to create such an experience. One that brings guests back again and again, and inspires them to share with others just how much they loved the experience at your property.

Such programs are prone to going off the rails, and your brand experience is not something you want to put on auto-pilot. Expert design and management of your music ensures a consistent experience that is true to your brand and that resonates with guests.

For example, dayparting is an essential consideration of hotel music. Your solution should give you the ability to schedule different programs for different times of the day. Doing so, you can drive the energy that is consistent with the time of day and the experience you want to create.

Additionally, having centralized control of the music is also essential if you're a national or global brand with multiple locations. In this case, you want to be able to ensure that your guests have the same great experience no matter which of your properties they're staying in.

Lastly, your music solution needs to be reliable. The last thing you want are streaming interruptions, odd segues between songs or complete silence because the internet is down at your property.



2 SEE SUCCESS WITH DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Humans are incredibly visual by nature, and effective use of digital signage, digital wayfinding and video walls will undoubtedly elevate your guests' experiences, boost their impression of your hotel, and even improve your bottom line.

Additionally, hotel digital signage applications are more cost-effective and significantly more efficient than their print counterparts. With most solutions, you can update and schedule content instantly using a web-based portal. No more waiting for signs to come back from the printing company, and no more printing fees. Just a simple monthly rate that typically amounts to some pocket change a day.

As we hinted at above, hotel digital signage comes in a variety of different solutions for different applications, and each application fulfills different goals.

- + **Digital directories** are suitable for larger properties, and they can go a long way in ensuring that guests can easily navigate your location.
- + **Digital signage and menu boards** are excellent for promoting your restaurant and café offerings. Generally speaking, digital signage and menu boards are more effective than print when it comes to winning your guests' attention. They're also much easier to read than print menu boards.

- + **Digital promo boards** have multiple uses in hotels. When used in general areas, they can be a great medium for:
 - Posting welcome messages for large groups
 - Promoting luxury amenities
 - Listing event schedules
 - Driving traffic to your restaurant, café or retail stores
 - Serving as a digital concierge
- + **Video walls** are generally used in hotels with ambient visual content in order to make an aesthetic statement and enhance the branded feel of your property. However, they can also be used for promotional purposes.

Ultimately, using digital signage and video walls is one of the most effective ways to capture your guests' attention and create a share-worthy "wow factor" at your property. While digital signage is much more affordable than you may think, it's not an ideal do-it-yourself project. Consult an experienced end-to-end provider that specializes in designing and installing digital signage solutions for hotels. They'll be able to assist you with your content, screen placement and other important considerations for a sound digital signage strategy.

3 TAP INTO THE POWER OF SCENT MARKETING

Scent is a critical component of the guest experience, and at a bare minimum you should leverage clean and refreshing fragrances throughout your property to help complement the look and feel of the experience you're aiming to create.

That said, Scent Marketing does much more than simply smell nice to your guests. The fact is that our sense of smell is tied to memory and emotion more than any other sense. With thoughtful use of Scent Marketing at your property, you can directly appeal to your guests' emotions and ensure that they associate the memory of a great hotel stay with your fragrance. Some Scent providers can even help you create a signature fragrance to make your guest experience even more unique.

Additionally, you can also take a "billboard" approach to drive traffic to your restaurant or café. You can waft the aroma of freshly brewed coffee in the morning and afternoon, or extend the scent of hickory smoke at night to stimulate appetite and promote your dinner entrees, for example.

Scent Marketing truly is a powerful and versatile tool for enhancing the guest experience. Talk to a Scent professional in your area to find the right fragrances and diffusion systems for your brand and your property.

4 DELIVER THE MESSAGE

The guest experience can begin even before check in, and having a solid **On-Hold Messaging** strategy can ensure that you make a flawless first impression.

Think about what you want your callers to hear while they're on hold. Do you want them to sit through silence, or would you rather help them pass the time with your friendly brand voice and valuable information that will improve the quality of their stay? Additionally, you can use On-Hold Messaging to promote other areas of your business, luxury amenities and any special rates you're offering. Once you have an On-Hold Messaging solution in place, don't forget to update your messages regularly. Any messages your callers hear while they're on-hold need to be relevant to the time of year, and offers need to be up-to-date.

5 DON'T COMPROMISE ON AV SYSTEMS

Hotels demand high-quality **audiovisual systems** to complete the experience. Even the best music and most engaging digital signage content will make a poor impression on your guests if the screens and speakers are faulty or lacking in performance. Show you care about quality and invest in a professional AV system.

Your AV system needs to provide adequate coverage, performance and quality not just for the most common experience at your hotel, but also for the **biggest type of experience you may provide at your property**.

For example, if you have a large bar and lounge area that shows all of the big games and has a nightclub feel on the weekends, then you need screens, speakers and amps that can create that type of high-energy experience. On the other hand, if your clientele are families and you're only playing overhead Music, then a more basic commercial-grade AV system will meet your needs. Finally, if a majority of your clientele are on business trips, you may want to invest in some conference room AV solutions.

Additionally, remember that commercial-grade AV equipment is a must. Home audiovisual equipment and screens aren't designed to handle 24/7 usage, and any warranties they come with are null and void when you use them in a business environment. On the other hand, professional-grade solutions typically come with robust warranties that cover the common wear-and-tear that comes with commercial use.

Remember, the ultimate goal of the guest experience is to create memories that guests want to repeat and share, and to succeed, you need to provide a multi-sensory experience that connects with your guests on an emotional level. Doing so will enable you to turn your guests into lifelong brand advocates.

To learn more about designing a multi-sensory experience at your hotel, **contact us** today. We help the world's leading hospitality brands and more than 20,000 independent and boutique hoteliers create a more personal emotional experience - and we have the expertise and affordable solutions to help you do the same.