



Margaux Constantin

The Next Normal | Video transcript

The hotel of the future

In the 2030s, the best hotels will offer highly personalized guest experiences, sustainable travel options, and attractive employee opportunities.



Vik Krishnan

How will hotel operators use new technologies, respond to travelers' changing needs and preferences, and become more sustainable? Five leaders of McKinsey's Travel, Logistics & Infrastructure Practice envision what the hotel experience might be like in the 2030s. The following transcript has been edited for clarity.

Convenience and customization

Caroline Tufft: The big change that I anticipate, more than anything, in hotels in the future is that every single pain point will be removed. There will be no check-in line. There will be much better, more flexible options—you won't have to wait until 4:00 p.m. to check in.

Vik Krishnan: As you walk in, the hotel knows why you're there. It assigns you your room through your phone, so you don't have to stop by a front desk.

Matteo Pacca: If you think about it, we use data in hospitality very, very little. We can customize emails, we can customize promotions—but the customization of experience, for now, is a rarity. I believe we're going to see much more of that going forward: the intensity of the light in your room, the coffee you will find there, the installations in the bathroom, the shower, and so on.

Steve Saxon: The biggest growth in travel is going to come from developing markets, which have not been hotels' core markets to date. Most of those travelers are not going to speak English. Every hotel should have a mobile app that can automatically translate a wide range of languages.

What future travelers will want

Margaux Constantin: How hotels think about programming will be quite critical. What is appealing to the younger generation is this notion of a unique experience that is not replicable and that is one moment in time. For example, there might be a hotel that's hosting a yoga retreat with some famous teacher, and it's only for one week—and so you want to go there.

Vik Krishnan: The reality is that younger generations actually want differences. They want their hotels to reflect the environment and the location in which they're physically situated, as opposed to having a sense of sameness. So, how can hotels integrate local elements? I think that is going to become pretty important as well.

Caroline Tufft: I think hotels have emphasized spas and other well-being experiences, and I can see there being scope for even more of that thinking: everything from how they evolve their menus to how they think about the use of light and technology in the room.

Matteo Pacca: We talk a lot about virtual reality, 3-D glasses, and other technologies. I think we'll see opportunities to test your room before you get there, in ways that are much more immersive than they are today.



Steve Saxon



Caroline Tufft

Steve Saxon: The room itself can have automation. The furniture shifts around and can be converted to a variety of uses. In the day, it can be for meetings. It can be for parties. Then, at night, the room can transform into a great place to sleep.

The sustainability imperative

Vik Krishnan: We expect the imperative around sustainability to only increase in the hotel of the future.

Matteo Pacca: Guests—whether they're business guests or leisure guests—will look for guarantees that they are in places that respect the environment. And they will be more demanding, even before regulation steps in. The demand for sustainability will cover everything: the materials from which hotels are built, the way the food is processed and served, and so on. Sustainability will be a big segmentation factor for winners and losers.

Steve Saxon: Sustainability should be absolutely top priority. Hotel rooms will have sensors to know: Is there a person in the room? And if so, what is the person doing? Therefore, what does that mean we need to do in terms of temperature control? Because the largest source of energy usage in a hotel is the HVAC systems.

Talent matters

Vik Krishnan: The hotel of the future is going to have to be a responsible employer. Many hotel jobs are very, very hard. They're not hyper-desirable.

Margaux Constantin: There's a big thing with Gen Z around exploration of alter egos—it's the fundamental belief that "I'm more than just one person." The younger generation of employees ideally would be, for example, a concierge on Monday. They would be a waiter on Tuesday. On Wednesday, they would be working from home, managing the social media community of the hotel. On Thursday, they would be back doing concierge work. Then they wouldn't mind doing Friday evening room service.

Matteo Pacca: Hospitality is about experience. Most of the experience is actually delivered by people—and people can only deliver a fantastic experience if they're happy, relaxed, well paid, and well trained. So, winning will also be about the capability of attracting and retaining the best talent to give the best experience to guests.

Margaux Constantin is a partner in McKinsey's Dubai office, **Vik Krishnan** is a partner in the Bay Area office, **Matteo Pacca** is a senior partner in the Paris office, **Steve Saxon** is a partner in the Shenzhen office, and **Caroline Tufft** is a senior partner in the London office.

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