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## **Consumer Behavior in Tourism: Understanding the Hedonic and Utilitarian Needs of Consumers**

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***Abstract:** Circumstances over the past few years have triggered a transformation within the hospitality industry. Many businesses didn't survive, others adapted swiftly and hung on in there, and some were born out of the chaos that ensued with innovative concepts tailored to our new normal. Technology has been evolving at breakneck speed, and the hospitality industry will be utilizing technologies in many new and wonderful ways in 2023.*

***Keywords:** New trends, Hotels, Hospitality, Advertising, Guests.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

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The practice of Stay home and stay safe is constantly being replaced by revenge travel and socialising. The new sense of freedom is encouraging a majority of people to step out and get the best of what they couldn't enjoy during the global pandemic. This passion for socialising is also fuelling new consumer expectations where guests seek convenience and sophistication from their favourite brands.

In fact, a McKinsey study revealed that around 75% of consumers tried a new shopping behaviour in the early years of the pandemic, and more than 80% of those intend to continue with the new behaviours. An experience-centric industry like hospitality needs to adapt fast, which means innovation is coming. Hospitality technology describes a wide range of IT, e-commerce, and similar technology solutions within

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the hospitality industry. The use of this technology is typically intended to either make life easier for a business's employees or to improve the overall experience for hospitality customers.

This can be achieved in several different ways. For example, hospitality tech may help to increase automation and ease the workload for staff. Likewise, it could make processes faster, potentially saving money and time. Alternatively, it could help customers at numerous points along the customer journey.

Apps are increasingly important in the way hoteliers manage the services they provide to their customers and can now control many aspects of the guest cycle and experience. Needless to say, the trend towards digital and contactless services has gained new momentum. Traditionally, customer-facing services are being given an overhaul thanks to the more widespread use of technology-assisted options, such as mobile check-in, contactless payments, voice control and biometrics.

Consumers who have become accustomed to unlocking their smartphones and laptops using facial and fingerprint recognition will soon come to expect the same convenience in accessing their hotel rooms. Unfortunately for the establishments looking to welcome them, these upgrades may be costly to install and maintain. If you want to stay ahead of the curve, we recommend you dig deep and make the investment.

A hospitality trend that is both current and a hallmark of recent years: "sustainability" once again assumes its position, with a focus on renewable energy. In recent years hospitality outlets have been making small steps by prioritising the removal of disposable plastics, eliminating unnecessary paper consumption thanks to opt-in receipts and reducing food waste, however more far-reaching ethical and environmental considerations are shaping decisions made at the hospitality management level and within the construction stage.

The hospitality sector is extremely competitive, making it essential to keep up with the latest hospitality technology trends. Technology can help businesses streamline their processes, reduce costs, lower staff workloads, increase revenue generation potential, and improve customer experience delivery. Using the latest technology may improve the accuracy of work to a level that would be difficult for human staff to achieve on their own. Technology solutions can also make work more manageable and may make it easier to live up to the increasingly high expectations that today's customers have.

A trend can be described as a generalized change, development, shift in behavior, or prevailing tendency that can be observed within a particular field. Many developments have been responsible for changes in consumer behavior, subsequently leading to the emergence of new hospitality tech trends.

Technological advances have played a significant role, especially in the widespread adoption of voice search, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things. Contactless payments have become more popular in retail, while mobile check-ins have emerged in hotels, restaurants, and airports. Many of these technologies have grown because they help to reduce friction and cut waiting times.

It is also important to note that the coronavirus pandemic has accelerated some behaviors, especially concerning hygiene. This has had a particularly strong impact on contactless payment technology, mobile check-ins, and cleaning technology, such as cleaning robots, as these all minimize direct human-to-human contact.

According to Hospitality Insights, 94% of hotels were understaffed, and 47% were severely understaffed in 2022. Contemporary hospitality employers are forced to reimagine staff management strategies as many workers have resigned during the last few years due to employee burnout and underpaid labour.

Ethical labour will be a focal address in 2023. Technologies like automation can free workers and let them focus on tasks that require human intelligence. A great example is housekeeping modules connected to cloud platforms that help workers stay connected to their task lists, avoiding missed responsibilities or overwork.

Most hoteliers are now focusing on new year goals, which focus on improving staff safety and welfare. This has led to most hotels on the lookout for safety solutions like panic buttons and other employee safety devices (ESDs) to help them alert relevant authorities if they are faced with difficult situations.

Looking at the highlights, 2023 appears to be an exciting year with possibilities for the industry; many new trends await to be implemented to ensure greater guest satisfaction levels. Hoteliers are left with numerous options for service enhancement and seamless guest journeys. However, a strategic approach is vital in implementing the right trend at the right time in the right place to maximise the benefits each innovation offers. As a customer-centric industry that always requires human touch in each of its services, an erroneous approach can leave an unhappy guest and a bad reputation on the entire hotel ranking system.

Planning for the right equilibrium in modern hospitality services will help businesses envision the right path for them in the upcoming year. Incorporating both innovation and traditional methodologies will maintain a familiar feel that ensures personalisation, adoptive accommodation, just the right amount of technology, green revolution and empowered labour and will enable hoteliers to provide the ultimate guest experience. As new trends continue to flourish and meet guest demands, hoteliers will continue to innovate the sector with bigger and better solutions to satisfy the continuous market fluctuations.

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