

HAS THE CONCEPT OF LUXURY CHANGED MUCH SINCE WE PREPARED THIS ARTICLE OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO IN 1990?



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World Leaders in Executive Recruitment for the Hospitality Industry

1990 SPECIAL INSERT



LUXURY IN THE '90s personal service & technology

For over twenty years at Renard International we have received a vast number of resumes from hoteliers who claimed to have worked in the category of DELUXE, LUXURY, FIVE-STAR, WORLD CLASS, BEST HOTEL and so on. Can there really be that many world-class, deluxe hotels?

Perhaps the problem in defining WORLD-CLASS, DELUXE HOTEL is that there has never really been a truly acceptable definition of *luxury*. What really constitutes a world-class, deluxe hotel?

In the early eighties, we set out to define the word *luxury*, the over used definition of quality. Again this year, we have tried to revise that definition of luxury as it relates to the '90s.

Perhaps no one had ever dared to disqualify hotels that wrongly claimed to be luxurious because of concern for personal reputation, the fear of losing future business or simply the fear of losing a friend.

One critic even suggested that it was fear for his life that kept him from cutting some hotels from the deluxe class. As a result, luxury was not properly defined and the ambience related to luxury had never been properly qualified until then.

In our worldwide travels, we at Renard International have gone to more than 200 hotels and have repeatedly asked the same question: what is luxury, and how has it changed from the study RIHC did in the 1980s and what will luxury be in the '90s?

The thoughts expressed in this article address this

question and come from many sources including some of the most recognized consultants in our industry as well as from articles and interviews from many of the foremost innkeepers and hoteliers of the world.

We have combined information sourced in the mid '80s, upgraded it and modernized it to include the technological changes we all predict are here for the '90s.

In our discussion of the definition of luxury, we have surfaced two distinctive areas, one is the actual contents and structure, without which a guest could not be provided with suitable accommodation, amenities and ultra-modern service in an international deluxe fashion. The second aspect, as most would suggest, is more important: the human aspect.

After careful thought we have concluded that it is unfair to simply compare hotels within a city or a country. The criterion for excellence is objective and worldwide. There may be several hotels within a city that are rated deluxe, but the worst hotel in your city may be infinitely better than the best hotel in all of another country!

Even if your property does not meet the pre-requisites of this article, it still may be the finest in your area. We could never expect to rate a hotel as "the top hotel in the world" for many reasons, including that the participants are constantly changing and the staff that made a hotel great in one year may be working for the competitor the next.

We now feel confident to detail what we believe to be a truly acceptable definition of luxury for the '90s. ■

☆☆☆100 Points of LUXURY☆☆☆

Luxury is perception! Reality is the basic requirement for a luxury hotel in the '90s as outlined in our 100 POINTS OF LUXURY. It is possible for your hotel to be the most luxurious in your area based on the parameters in our 100 POINTS OF LUXURY even if you only have 50 points; especially if your competitors have fewer points than you do. Before adding a few more diamonds after your hotel name, or increasing your room-rate based on our definition of luxury, please carefully review the upcoming comments of your peers on the other factors important to a luxury hotel.

Below is a checklist of the basic requirements of a luxury hotel in the 1990s.

Guest Services

- The reception must be open 24 hours daily, have VIP pre-check and have records of all previous guest visits available. The account and credit service must be prompt and accurate. Guests must be able to view their accounts at all times in their rooms as well as on checkout.
- Laundry and valet services must be available at least 16 hours a day, every day.
 - Dog kennel, children's playground, games room and babysitting services must be available. A licensed nurse/doctor must be on duty 24 hours a day, in case of an emergency.
- A pharmacy, bookstore, barber, beautician and stores selling gifts, entertainment and travel tickets — as well as other shops — must be in, or very near, the hotel.
- A guest must have access to recreation facilities such as swimming pool, squash or tennis courts, sauna, gymnasium, massage service, and possibly golf or other seasonal sports.
- A hotel car or limousine must be available for all guests.

Public Areas

Public areas are the only ones that many people get to see in a truly great hotel. This is where the pictures are taken for the postcards. We always meet "meet under the clock," "in the lobby" or "by the fountain." The Mandarin Hong Kong has a Picasso in the main dining room, the Bristol Place in Toronto has one in the lobby. This isn't a must but it certainly wouldn't hurt.

- Bars must be open as long as legally allowed and must serve as broad an assortment of beverages as law permits; soft drinks and juices should be proffered with the same finesse as the most glamorous cocktail; both domestic and European wines, where permitted, should always be available.
- Hot-and-cold food as well as beverage service must be offered 24 hours; local cuisine should be side by side with traditional continental cuisine in a choice of restaurants; even the 24-hour room service must be a memorable dining experience. Your dining room and public areas should be equipped with portable telephones for the convenience of guests receiving important messages; no other telephones should be allowed in your best restaurant.
- The lobby must have areas for quiet discussion and must not be overly commercialized.
- An adequate number of passenger and freight elevators is mandatory.
- Security guards, smoke detectors, double door locks, bedroom peepholes, and regular rotation of door locks or computer-door entrance keys are among the required security arrangements.

SCORE		
YES	NO	PARTIALLY
4	0	3
3	0	2
3	0	1
3	0	1
3	0	1
3	0	2
4	0	2
5	0	3
3	0	1
4	0	3
4	0	2

- A well-versed bilingual concierge who oversees luggage and valet service around the clock; a free shoe shine as well as complimentary umbrellas when required.
- Facilities for the handicapped must be available, including wheelchair stairways and washrooms and electric pool-entry seat. Braille elevator buttons and chiming elevator signals must be available for the blind; this is just a sample of the requirements mandatory for the handicapped in deluxe hotels.

Bedrooms

- Bedside controls for the television and radio; bedroom curtains and lights, in-house movies; 24-hour international news station; complimentary local and international newspapers recommended; VCR in NTC, Pal, Secam as well as CB player must be easily available.
- They must be soundproofed, spacious and well-appointed, with enclosed wardrobes and at least as much furniture as the guest would have in his own bedroom at home; smoking and non-smoking rooms must be available.
- Adjustable lighting must be available for everything from nighttime reading to morning dressing.
- Self-adjustable heating and air-conditioning (something not available in many of the best hotels) is an absolute requirement.
- Direct-dial three-line personal fax machine/telephone with speakerphone connected to domestic and international links, with automatic do-not-disturb option; a message light on or near the phone; an extra telephone in the bathroom is now recommended.
- The washrooms should be full-size containing no-fog mirrors, a shower, bathtub, heated towel racks and bidet; they must have extra-large towels, dressing robe, clothesline, a bathroom scale and soaps, shampoos and other basic toiletries and perhaps a TV.
- On request housekeeping should immediately provide daily an iron as well as a sewing kit and hairdryer; housekeeping should also provide daily fresh fruit, flowers, snacks, liqueurs (if law allows) and ice.
- For the guests who lose their luggage, housekeeping should quickly provide toothbrushes, hairbrushes, razors, after-shave lotion, neutral shoe polish and should meet any other reasonable request.
- Fire masks, in-room safety vaults, smoke detectors, key-hole viewing, keyless computer entry cards, and similar facilities for the handicapped are common now in all deluxe hotels.

Executive's Services

- Guest-staff ratio must allow for the smooth provision of all these services; you may not be able to meet the 2:1 ratio of hotels and still be cost-effective, but you should be well past the 1:1 ratio that is fairly standard in a superior hotel.
- You must have butler service when required in a prime ministerial or VIP suite with several bedrooms, as well as adequate special-occasion suites and banquet and meeting rooms.
- Guest lounges and quiet areas for after-business meetings must be available by reservation.
- Secretarial, voice messaging, telex and photocopy services should be available 24 hours; a fully-equipped business showroom must be available; in-room computers should be available on loan; teleconferencing and facsimile transmission service; mobile phones. Some hotels offer translations of all in-room information, i.e. room service menus in Japanese and other languages for the international travellers.
- Women's suites, specially designed for the more frequent woman traveller, must be available.

Total Possible

YES	NO	PARTIALLY
4	0	3
3	0	1
3	0	1
5	0	3
3	0	1
5	0	2
5	0	2
5	0	2
3	0	2
3	0	2
4	0	2
4	0	3
4	0	3
3	0	1
4	0	3
3	0	2
4	0	3
3	0	2
100 Points		

Noah Webster, in his dictionary, defines luxury as:

"Great ease or comfort...something desirable, but costly, hard to get — few can afford. Something adding to pleasure or comfort but not absolutely necessary."



Karl Walterspiel,
Mitglied des Vorstandes,
Kempinski
Aktiengesellschaft,
Hamburg, Germany

Karl Walterspiel believes in the computerization of the '90s, but a "hotel room should remain a place to enjoy and to live in for rest and peace and should not look like the interior of a spaceship with lots of buttons and complicated switches, which nobody will understand anyhow."

The general manager of a luxury hotel in the 1990s will continue to need an excellent education, the knowledge of world languages (maybe some knowledge of Russian and Chinese). They must be good businesspeople, but in order to be a leader for a staff producing quality, they must know how quality is produced in all fields.

The manager must be even more of a leader and a good example that is already necessary today, because staff motivation will play an increasing role for high-quality service. High wages or pressure from the top will not work anymore. Teamwork under the leadership of a highly skilled manager will become increasingly important. I am convinced that true quality will be on the winning side, because guests become more discriminating every day, and the promises made by marketing must be fulfilled. Competition will be increasing even more, and only high quality will guarantee survival.

High technology will help operate luxury hotels, but it will not replace the highly trained and highly motivated staff.

Kurt Wachtveitl,
General Manager,
The Oriental Hotel,
Bangkok



Fax and other wonder machines, greeted with awe and excitement on first appearance, quickly took on a mundane aspect. Modern inventions have been and will be a time-and-all-saving boon, ideally leaving us with more time for

pleasure and pursuit of happiness. The test of luxury will always be in the feeling, the warm glow and the sense of special well-being that comes from being well cared for, well-served, well-fed, spoiled if you like, in the best sense of the word, in an atmosphere of comfort and elegance — not unlike home, yet exhilaratingly different.

The luxuries for the '90s could benefit from this extra time and from the way we help guests to spend it. ■

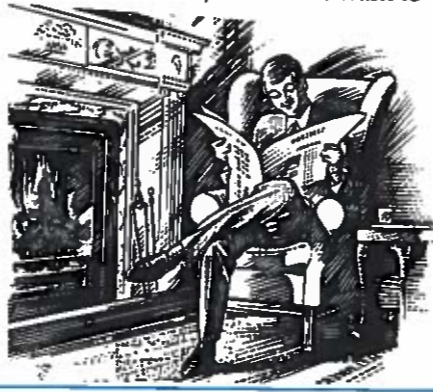


Peter Leder
General Manager
The Gleneagles Hotel,
Perthshire, Scotland

"The more successful you become, the harder it is to get away. Believe me, I know."

In the few precious days that I manage to steal every year I must have stayed in some of the finest hotels in the world. I've had some good times — but I've also learned that excellent service, haute cuisine and the finest crystal do not make a great vacation. I'm looking for more. I want to be looked after, but I don't want to be pestered.

I want to stay in distinguished company, but I want to feel at home. I want every conceivable sports facility but I also want to be able to relax in a chair all day. For me luxury is a perfect hotel where the food and service are superb, the leisure facilities are magnificent. The magic of such a hotel as The Gleneagles Hotel is hard to define, it may lie in its setting or in the warmth of the smiles, but for me it is the paragon of luxury.



John R. Jefferis,
Vice President and
General Manager,
Elbow Beach Hotel
Bermuda



"The basic requirement for a general manager of luxury hotels is an overwhelming desire to completely satisfy one's guests and a constant striving for perfection in all areas of the operation — have not changed in the last decade and will not change during the

1990s. However, I do see a stronger trend towards luxury hotel general managers becoming even more involved in sales and marketing, due to the increase in competition resulting from overbuilding in the luxury hotel market, particularly in the area of resorts. Food & Beverage will continue to be an important ingredient in a luxury resort's total product, with demand for innovation and titillation becoming de rigeur.

A flawless performance by the hotel will be expected by our customers. Those who do not deliver will surely suffer the consequences." ■



Thomas P. Wicky, C.H.A.
Vice President and
General Manager,
The Breakers,
Palm Beach, Florida

Debuting, too, in the '90s will be the introduction of the next leap in telephone technology — ISDN, or the Integrated Services Digital Network. With ISDN, video, voice and text transmission can be simultaneously combined and utilized as never before. The possibilities are limitless: the long-awaited picturephone for in-room teleconferencing, enhanced computer networking, home banking and shopping and much more will all become reality.

For the luxury hotel guest of the '90s, ISDN will provide unprecedented flexibility in managing one's affairs while away from home. As ISDN and fibre optics, which can carry vast amounts of information with little distortion in signal, become more prevalent, we may also see luxury hotels getting rid of bulky and expensive satellite systems. ISDN may even begin to displace cable television as a transmission medium for entertainment programming. ISDN is being implemented now. In fact, AT&T has designated its West Palm Beach switching facility near The Breakers as one of Florida's first ISDN installations.

Needless to say, these new technologies will change the way we as hotel professionals do business. When someone calls Reservations, the ISDN system will determine the caller's telephone number and display the name. The hotel reservations system, which will be tied into the phone system, will check its database to see if the caller is a former guest, and if so, will also display the guest's previous history including sleeping room preferences and other information.

Improved guest databases will assist management in making sales and marketing decisions. Indeed, The Breakers was a pioneer in hospitality software and continues to offer five hotel programs through its sister company, Flagler Computer Software (FCS), which also provides industry support services for IBM hospitality software.

Implementing sophisticated technology, as costly as it is, also can help reduce operating expenses. New environmental controls will work to contain energy costs. Other systems will enhance billing and collection to bolster the bottom line.

With every advance, however, be it in telephone or computer technology, ours remains a people business. As labor pools decrease in the '90s, hoteliers must manage their human resources carefully so as to retain their employees. This will become even more important from a training aspect as complex technologies will necessitate longer, more expensive learning periods that in turn mean an even bigger investment on behalf of management.

Not to be forgotten, of course, is the guest. He or she may get lost in the mechanics of the future and will still need a caring and dedicated hospitality professional to politely and sincerely ask, "May I help you?"

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— Tom Wicky
Vice President & General Manager,
The Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida.



George Hinden,
Development Executive,
Marco Polo Hotels,
Hong Kong

"Considering the nature of our industry," says George Hinden, "I doubt whether new technology and innovation will revolutionize hotel business in the '90s. Industry-related technology will be applied and improvements made. More than ever attention will be paid to standards of service and anything that enhances communication controls and improves the efficiency of operations and their quality or range of services for the industry." But George quickly adds that hoteliers are not necessarily the quickest to accept and adapt to new technology. "Frankly, service is still widely regarded as being synonymous with the personal touch, even at the expense or instead of technology." George also feels that there will be a shortage of staff in the '90s and that can only be solved by enticing better qualified trained staff through improved employment conditions. He feels that Food and Beverage will be as important in the '90s as it was in the '80s. But the overall concept has to change. Tomorrow's Food & Beverage will be less fixed in their approach and more innovative and sensitive to particular market demands and trends. Eating and drinking has to become "fun". It has got to be a total entertainment experience with quality of F&B, consistency, services presentation, ambience all playing an integral part.

Conclusion: George Hinden says everyone is talking about hotel general managers being better businesspeople than technicians. In his view, they have to be both. Many are unable, unwilling or incapable or haven't the time to be. "Maybe today's luxury hotel should have one of each. A business administrator as well as a technician. After all how can anyone personally take care of the many facets of the guest's well-being, and at the same time watch the till?"



Robert J. Gerber,
Regional Director,
Hotel Victoria,
Hong Kong

Robert Gerber believes that Technology and Innovations of the '90s will bring a total new ambience to the luxury hotel. Upon check-in, you will see a voice translator offering diverse language assistance, i.e. when a guest checks into the registration desk speaking in Japanese, the message would be translated into English automatically on the screen or by a voice transmitter.

Robert feels that food and beverage management in the '90s will remain important, yet hoteliers shouldn't have to work so hard for so much less. The days of having three to four restaurants and two to three lounges and banquet facilities for 600 to 3,000 persons and a food and beverage staff team representing 75% of your total staff — not to mention millions of dollars investment in china, glassware, silver and food sitting on the shelves instead of in the bank earning interest, it's not worth it when every type of ethnic cuisine is available within five miles of your front door. Keep it simple with one signature restaurant and a lounge. Banquet and meeting facilities should be measured against your individual market.

Staff shortages, he notes are worldwide. Training is one thing! At times we may be given to believe that we have devoted so much on training, yet when it comes to staff members' resignation, we are somehow shifting our training dollars to our competitors. Training should stress commitment and loyalty, and we should provide adequate and reasonable benefit entitlements to each and every staff member, with hands-on management and an assurance for advancement. When a luxury hotel cuts service, it is in fact cutting standards, and people give service through human touch and not via machines.



Reto Grass,
General Manager,
Hotel des Bergues,
Switzerland

Reto Grass believes luxury in the '90s can be explained in a couple of words: *space, personalized service, atmosphere* and *efficiency*. He has a 140-year-old hotel and has equipped it with a very sophisticated and efficient computerized front-office system that is hidden from the guest's sight. "We want a dialogue with the guest, not with the computer."

Space and service will most certainly become more and more important in the '90s. High ceilings, two windows in a room, a window in the bathroom, a concierge or headwaiter who calls you by your name: that's the real luxury. Atmosphere is important too, it is the spirit of a hotel, that art of giving to guests a sense they have arrived somewhere, where they feel at home, somewhere they can hang their stress in the wardrobe upon arrival. Atmosphere is not necessarily created by a sophisticated decor, it can be as simple as a sincere smile or a warm handshake; it is the fantastic energy which general managers must communicate to their teams, which will then be communicated to the guests — and it works. The proof is when you hear from your guests that "there is something very special about the hotel, but I don't really know what it is."

More than ever we must act today in order not to have to re-act tomorrow. Nor must we forget that in our industry we have the immense privilege to be in daily contact with human beings; we must never forget that and be proud of it. It is a real luxury in itself and we are the "innkeepers of it."

Graham K.L. Jeffrey,
Vice President &
General Manager,
The Willard
Inter-Continental,
Washington, D.C.



As per capita income rises and the world's population becomes increasingly affluent, more and more people aspire to luxury living in an effort to enhance their lifestyle.

Luxury hotels must, therefore, gear themselves up to satisfy this need if they are to survive and stay ahead of the competition. As people enjoy a higher and higher stand of living at home, they expect that standard to be raised even further when they stay in a luxury hotel. Accommodations must be at least as spacious and luxurious as back home, and more and more clients will be expecting a suite rather than just a bedroom.

Luxury hotels are likely to be enlarging their facilities and reducing the total number of rooms to remain competitive.

Service will play an even greater part than ever before and in the USA we will have to develop in our employees the notion that providing service to our customers is an honourable and satisfying endeavour.

"Customers come first" is a philosophy that is being implemented in many hotel groups today in an effort to gain that competitive edge. Empowering front line employees with the decision-making responsibility previously given only to management and supervisors will produce results, not only in increased sales and repeat business, but at the bottom line. Nordstrom's department store, British Airways and many others have demonstrated the results that follow from such a philosophy.

Many hotels may be able to provide a luxury product, but unless it is backed up by superb service provided by employees sensitive to customer needs, they will not survive in the '90s.



George D. Schwab,
Vice President and
Managing Director,
The Pierre,
New York

George Schwab predicts that the hotel industry will continue to provide a balanced blend of "high tech" and "soft touch" in the '90s. We will continue to see an increase in guest requests for the full range of business services and equipment — secretarial services, fax, satellite hook ups for meetings and the myriad special requests that are routinely handled every day by our concierge staff.

As important as these tools are, we still find our business clientele keenly interested in room amenities and personal service.

"As the industry becomes more sophisticated in the areas of marketing, operations and accounting, the demands for general managers to tone their skills in these disciplines grows.

"While technology has most certainly enhanced operations in many areas — the computerized guest history for example — there is no substitute for the human factor in our business. The acknowledgement of a guest by name, the recall of a guest's favourite room, the warmth of contact between guests and staff: this personal attention is what is required to satisfy the needs of travellers of the '90s."



Fred G. Peelen,
Vice President and
Managing Director,
Hotel Inter-Continental,
New York

According to Fred Peelen, we will see increased computerization in luxury hotels in the 1990s. Check-in, in the luxury properties at any rate, will still be handled personally. However, the credit card presented at check-in will then become the guest's key opening the guest room, minibar and safe, operating any computer or fax equipment in the room, and allowing video check-out from the guest room.

The hotelier will always remain a diplomat, but as a result of an increasing emphasis on bottom-line performance, the general manager must be, now or by the '90s, more adept at controlling revenues and costs.

Even more important than an increasing knowledge of global marketing strategies, a given even in today's arena, will be a growing emphasis on human resources. Incentives, once the domain only of executives and sales staff, will be extended to all departments. Increasingly tight labour markets and immigration restrictions will require greater emphasis on training, and on training the trainers (middle management), to reduce staff turnover.

Anton Kung,
Vice President,
Park Hotel,
Gstaad,
Switzerland



Any possible way of reducing dependence on the hotel's infrastructure and of increasing the satisfaction of having lived a rewarding experience — that's what the customer of tomorrow is looking for."

Anton continues: "I believe that the role of tomorrow's general manager has to be much more in the role of a coach than an authoritarian.

Shortages of qualified staff and the abundant use of modern technology will increase the need for investment in staff training. Such investment should be for the benefit of the property and its clients and should aim for stability and consistency in its employees and the services provided.

"Having passed the age of standard hotels with the same uniform style in decor and design and the same standard uniforms all over the world, tomorrow's traveller will be in greater need of individual, home-like treatment.

"A personalized welcome by the general manager and similar gestures will provide the difference and give a competitive edge. Technologies are standard, but personalized services are unique and, hopefully, a little different from employee to employee.

"In many parts of the world, restaurants in hotels are not extremely profitable. The access, the prestige and the formal appearance of deluxe hotels from the outside do not often display the warm welcome customers enjoy within. I guess this is an additional reason to be different and, consequently, personalized in approach.

"It is part of our destiny as innkeepers to provide our guests with a balance to the ever increasing isolation created by the communication age and to compensate for the one-way dialogue produced by mass communication technologies."



Fred Duerr, C.H.A.,
General Manager,
Kona Village, Hawaii

Thank you for the invitation to once again participate in the preparation of your article on the new technologies and innovations that will be part of the hotel industry, and particularly the luxury market, in the '90s.

Inasmuch as we have tried to maintain the intent of our founder — to create a haven for the weary in body and soul and retain the flavour of a Polynesian village, with no telephones, television, radios or other frantic, 20th century intrusions — we have succeeded in operating without most of the technical wizardry available these days.

I am sure there are many other operators in a much better position to assist you with your new survey.

We can only hope that, in that hectic era which is almost upon us, there will be sanctuaries like Kona Village available for the harried managers to renew their spirit and passion.



Siegfried Beil,
Chairman,
Chief Executive Officer,
Beaufort International Hotels,
Singapore

Wolfgang Rattman,
Managing Director,
Bühlerhöhe,
Böhl, Germany



Siegfried Beil and Wolfgang Rattman both believe that as hotel management is a business enterprise, the general manager should be acquainted with all modern techniques without being a technician. Versatile activities include organization, administrative leadership and supervision of guidelines for training and sales and marketing. The challenge of the '90s will be for managers to return to early traditions.

New advances in communication allow them to work in a paperless environment. Obstacles will no longer take their time and keep them away from actually servicing their guests. In the '90s technological innovations will finally release innkeepers from manual handling and give them the time to take care of the things nearly forgotten, to personally look after the guests, and take care of them.

Both Siegfried Beil and Wolfgang Rattman believe the '90s will improve service, which will replace the opinion clients are just "room-mates".



Alan Tremain, O.B.E.,
President,
Hotels of Distinction,
Palm Beach, Florida

As we approach the '90s, we will undoubtedly enter the most challenging era in the hotel industry in the sense that the last five years of this decade, 1985 to 1990, will have seen the largest expansion of hotel rooms ever in the USA, particularly in the upper end of the market. This expansion will also have produced the most financial failures of hotels in the past 50 years, brought about by the USA tax reform. Previously, companies and institutions bought hotels for tax purposes. Now, they have to be bought as businesses and must produce enough cash flow to meet debt service, or else go out of business.

On top of this, social reform has dictated that drinking, as in contrast with the 1960s and 1970s, is out. So the second largest producer of profits, the beverage department, continues to decline and it will no longer be able to subsidize the food side of the department. So profits in food and beverage will shrink.

Technology and amenity programs will not save us, simply because in the 1990s, sophisticated travellers will take for granted the fax, as they did the hair dryers and baskets of goodies in the rooms in the past.

Hotels, particularly the luxury ones, will have to set themselves apart from the rest if they are to survive. General managers will also have to be adroit cash managers. They will have to be much more cost-conscious and will have to surround themselves with professionals. For instance, restaurateurs will have to manage food and beverage facilities as entrepreneurs and as though their livelihood depended on it, which it does if they're a free-standing restaurant, rather than dining room managers who traditionally have been nothing more than glorified maitre d's and who don't know what a profit centre is.

General managers will need professional sales and marketing people who can manage room inventory, maximize revenues and anticipate changing markets, which, because of currency fluctuations and airline fares, can open up or close a destination market overnight.

Finally, the general managers, in my opinion, will have to possess the tact, diplomacy and detailed discipline of the European hotelier as well as advanced management techniques and American know-how.



Joseph E. Dennehy,
Vice President, Food and
Beverage,
Adam's Mark Hotels,
St. Louis, Missouri

In the view of this vice president of Food and Beverage, he expects computerization will continue in the back of the house to match that in the front of the house and in guest rooms. Joe believes there will be computerization of kitchen, ware-washing, laundry and building-services equipment. This will not only cut energy costs, but enhance product handling and increase productivity.

From the guest perspectives, waiters, waitresses and housekeeping staff could be using handheld electronic ordering and inventory units to relay information instantly, for both ordering and for notifying the various departments of a guest's needs. Food and beverage and guest service will be more important than ever before in the hotels of the '90s so the guests become more cocooned in their rooms with such high-tech amenities as TV, VCR and computers, time spent in the hotel's restaurants and lounges will have to be nothing less than exceptional.

The Guests will be less tolerant of insufficient and slow service. Imagine that they have checked themselves into the hotel at the airport, transacted a complicated, international business deal from their bedside through the use of their room teleconferencing system, and received copies of that deal from thousands of miles away across a multitude of time zones through the use of their personal fax receiver. The last thing they want to hear is, "I am sorry, but your order will be another 30 minutes."

Joe feels that the moment of truth in the perception of the quality of luxury will be when the guests sense that their needs have been anticipated, their requests fulfilled and, more importantly, they have been appreciated.

WHETHER IT BE THE '80S OR '90S

1. Luxury. A luxury hotel must be near a park, a predominant historic site or in the major business section of a city. Just being close to the downtown area is not good enough. If the property is a resort hotel, it must take advantage of the beautiful natural surroundings.

2. Staff Attitude. The attitude of the staff must reflect the image that the hotel is attempting to project. There must be a staff and guest communication and a relationship with the staff recognizing and respecting the guests. Personnel must have pride in their work and reflect confidence and be prepared to sacrifice "with a smile" for the guest.

3. Heritage. The hotel, either by exterior construction or facade, must reflect a heritage and tradition. Age is not the only judge. The atmosphere of the hotel must reflect the stature of the guest and make him feel at home.

4. Service. Attention to detail must be taken to ensure every guest facility and desire is not only attended to immediately, but not forgotten. Even if your hotel has all the facilities, it is not truly luxurious unless these facilities are used to their fullest advantage.

5. Ambience. The feeling that "I am somebody by just being here" is self-evident when you walk through the front door of your hotel. Rotation of door locks where used or computer door entrance keys are among the required security arrangements.

LUXURY: COMMENTS FROM THE PAST...

Here's what some of your peers said was a DELUXE HOTEL in the 1980s. Has their definition really changed?

Caesar's Ritz's son, Charles Ritz, summed up his definition of luxury:

"Personal attention to the guest is everything. The public and private rooms should be tastefully laid out and decorated without ostentation, the chairs should be in place, the bed faultlessly made, and there should be cut flowers in the room every day. Any hotel can have the finest building and be equipped with the latest inventions, but what you sell in a deluxe hotel is attention and service. Service should start even before the guests check in, if possible. Good hoteliers know, in advance, their guests' habits, what they want, what will please them, and instruct the staff accordingly. Such things as heated towels are to be reheated, room temperatures are to be set in advance. In the dining room, the captain and the waiters should be unobtrusive, but always there. The guests must feel they are being taken care of throughout the dining experience — and by servants in absolutely impeccable attire.

"With reference to obnoxious guests, we just have to be oblivious to vulgarity. At the Ritz, we try to be kind. We tell someone who is loud or offensive, 'Here we like things done our way.' But the guest is always right — even if we have to throw him out."



Virginia Graham,
Executive Director of
Marketing,
Arizona Inn, Tucson

Virginia Graham says a deluxe hotel should have luxury and convenience of services and be built with the desire to give its guests total privacy, quiet and sunshine. Maintaining these priorities for the guest is number one and is the secret. "Graham also believes in allowing the staff to make decisions for their own departments. No job descriptions and no time clocks to punch, benefit the guests. When asked what types of amenities she might add to our list of luxury necessities, she responded, "I wish every room could have a fireplace."



Andreas Koch,
General Manager,
Excelsior Hotel,
Berlin

Andreas Koch strongly suggests that managers are the key to a luxury hotel's success, since they must "always try to avoid any impression of a working to a routine because guests want individual service. Nevertheless, they must not forget the routine of supervising their staff and maintaining property." And, an important factor in making a nice, well-furnished property world-class: "Personal care for the guests and flexibility of the staff and management will keep the hotel alive and will guarantee a top quality of service, the most important thing we sell."

Roman Pajares,
Vice President &
General Manager,
Inn on the Park,
London, UK



Roman was voted the hotelman of the year in the UK for 1984. He considered a luxury hotel's location of prime importance and said: "It is important to select a site for the hotel in keeping with the image to be created. I believe that a luxury hotel today has to be able to combine the right degree of so-called 'old-fashioned service' with efficiency, and I strongly believe that managers have to manage by example." He said, do not believe that a hotel, however luxurious and good it may be, can be called luxury if surroundings are not in accordance with the atmosphere and image the hotel wishes to create." Pajares also said luxury hotel staff must have a desire to care for hotel guests, and enjoy doing so. He said: "I personally feel that, without a continuous and proper training program, it would be practically impossible to achieve the degree of excellence that a really luxurious hotel requires."

Frank Klein,
President,
Hotel Ritz,
Paris



Frank Klein wrote: "You asked what my philosophy on quality is? Books have been written on the subject of quality in the hospitality business: However, quite simply, I have chosen to concentrate on providing our guests with perfection in service, luxury in surroundings and privacy to relax in. Our staff members are encouraged to offer friendly, efficient service and to think of our clients as members of a family returning home."



J. Patrick Foley,
President,
Hyatt Corporation

Another of America's leading hoteliers, J. Patrick Foley, discounted the "glass and brass" reputation of the chain's newer hotels by saying "You continue to hire the best and the brightest in the industry and to provide them with a supportive environment. We spend a great deal of time, especially our general managers and department heads, cultivating our people — and I don't just mean technical training. Like everyone, we make mistakes — people make mistakes. But we teach our people that a hotel can make mistakes without crumbling. The most important thing for them to know is to respond to mistakes quickly and effectively." With everybody trying to reach the deluxe market, Foley believes "You beat the competition by out executing them."



Dario Regazzoni,
Vice President
Operations-
Asia/General Manager,
Hong Kong,
Conrad Hotels

According to Dario Regazzoni, "A luxury hotel is a landmark which always employs the art and artistry reflected in the local culture." Although Mr. Regazzoni is rightfully proud of the decor and setting of his hotel, he recognized that "the unique warmth of the people is perhaps the most essential and integral part of the hotel's atmosphere. Every guest is considered a VIP."

He added that "the essence of a deluxe hotel is not easily imparted by glossy brochures and promotional photographs. It is a quality more subtly experienced by the guests. The beautiful grounds and building of a hotel, its excellent cuisine and the attentive and thoughtful manner of the staff create an ambience of luxury and friendliness. But the real success and charm of the luxury hotel lies in the perfect blending of all these elements." When asked what little touches a luxury hotel should have, he mentioned that each guest must, on arrival, be escorted to his or her room by a guest relations staff member, then left with a personal room steward who is there to offer fruit, a welcome drink, deliver their newspapers, help unpacking, etc.



Kai Herbranson,
Senior Vice President,
Ramada Renaissance,
Phoenix

Kai Herbranson noted that many travellers seeking a luxury hotel are handicapped. He considered it is the obligation of the luxury hotel innkeeper to provide handicapped travellers with accommodation in the very same luxury standard, as enjoyed by any other visitor including special phones, menus, furniture, procedures and equipment.

Herbranson also believes staff is the key factor in a deluxe hotel's program, saying a "world class hotel must stress training and educational programs for all staff, in order to maintain good morale and reduce staff turnover. Training gives individuals a sense of pride and self-worth, as well as help them identify with the corporate philosophy and identity. Internal-training directors responsible for orientation, safety procedures, dictating standards and job function description also help give employees a sense of how each individual fits into scheme of the entire hotel. The key words are communication to and from all levels of staff. Communication encourages individuals to express innovative ideas and try unique projects. The Staff members tend to express genuine concern and interest in the hotel's guests, helping to create that luxury experience." Herbranson concluded by saying, "Luxury is a constant search for excellence. It is a continual challenge to meet the ever-changing marketplace directly, honestly and to the best of our abilities."



William N. Hulett,
President,
Stouffers Hotels

William Hulett called Training the main ingredient of luxury and said he was committed "to the education and training of our employees, from the highest level executive to the ever-important service employee, in order to provide the personal service that will differentiate us from many of the hotel companies in the world today. As you are well aware, a sincere commitment to quality sometimes is lost between the executive level and the guest when the communication gap is substantial. The guest is the final inspector and critic."

Henk Bosch,
General Manager,
The Excelsior,
Hong Kong



Henk Bosch says: "To be ranked among the world's luxury hotels, the hotel must start with first-class appearance and facilities. It must also have a distinctive personality that lifts it above the rest. Creating this personality is the responsibility of management. My managers and I are always correctly dressed for every occasion, always friendly and efficient. The staff emulate us. They smile and greet every guests as he or she passes anywhere in the hotel — staff memorize the guests' name and use them whenever they see them." Bosch said a luxury hotel must also have correct marketing as an essential ingredient of the mix. "We take great care to target to the right segment so that guests will feel at home among their own kind."

Severyn Aschkenazy,
Owner,
L'Ermitage Hotel group,
California



Severyn Aschkenazy called vision and honest creativity keynotes of success. His L'Ermitage Hotel in Beverly Hills is the first West Coast hotel of "des grandes classe." He believes a luxury hotel must contain only suites. World-quality hotel guests expect the extras that go with hotels such as L'Ermitage: morning breakfast and evening caviar, neither of which are charged for. "Luxury in this instance is combining the elements of the finest European hotels with the exceptionally friendly service of the West Coast."



Seamus McManus,
General Manager,
Crescent Court,
Dallas

Seamus McManus said a truly luxurious hotel "operates with a philosophy of service as an obsession." McManus added: "Another important point for senior management in truly luxury hotels is to maintain a long-term view of service as a revenue builder. This is frequently ignored in many would-be luxury hotels. Profit objectives, which are necessary, are internally focused and certainly do not inspire employees way down the line. Service objectives on the other hand are meaningful to down-the-line employees. A strong sense of personal accountability among down-the-line employees is crucial." In conclusion, McManus, with a smile on his face, said, "One last thing: guests and staff should enjoy themselves...it's a fun business and the true luxury hotel should exude that."



Robert H. Burns,
Chairman,
Regent Hotels

Robert Burns defined luxury accommodation as "home-away-from-home comfort." He said he believed firmly that location is a key to a luxury hotel, whether that means proximity to business and entertainment districts or site in a prime resort area that makes the most of the scenic splendour. On the human touch Burns said: "The bottom line in a great hotel is its people: motivated people, skilled people, concerned people with one thing in mind — satisfied guests. Just as a lack of confidence can easily be spotted in hotels facing crisis after crisis, employees at top hotels reflect a sense of understandable pride, knowing that whatever their job — laundry service, cashier, food and beverage — they are doing it well and are part of a team that realizes their importance. In short, cutting corners in expertise can only result in cutting down on effectiveness and on the enthusiasm of guests."

W. Ted Wright,
General Manager,
Regent,
Sydney, Australia



W. Ted Wright called himself a solid believer in luxury: "Every effort is made to communicate with staff at all levels. We would like to believe that we are all employees and we are all responsible for guests' satisfaction. We must stress the fact that every person has a responsibility and they realize that the roles we play are those of actors and actresses, stage or screen." Wright mentioned an important point when discussing a luxury hotel: "We are constantly concerned about market sensitivities. Changes in attitude and expectations are constantly being monitored in the respective marketplaces with a particular emphasis on consistency in service, flexibility in attitudes." Luxury is constantly changing with the times, he noted. Whether yours is a beautiful building surrounded by gardens or a modern marble hotel with all the amenities, you still must monitor the changing attitudes of your guests.

Fernand Roberge,
President,
The Ritz Carlton,
Montreal, Canada



Stability is the key, according to Fernand Roberge, "Today, many Montrealers have particularly warm feelings towards a hotel that has witnessed their childhood and the major events of their lives." He believes cost is no reason to compromise quality, while noting that employees must have a genuine interest in their work and be proud of their hotel. Some of the little touches his hotel adds to maintain the Ritz Carlton reputation is room service served course by course. VIPs tours of the city are in a Rolls Royce and we have functional marble fireplaces in some of our suites.

Alan Tremain, O.B.E.,
President,
Hotels of Distinction,
Palm Beach, Florida



When Alan Tremain was asked what a deluxe hotel, he commented it depends upon whose interpretation. " may be the ultimate in modern facilities to one, and to another, fine architecture and antiques. Personally, I feel that a hotel is like a woman. Some men approach hotels like philanderers, they love them and leave them and move on to the next. Others cherish them for their grace and elegance. Some men are as proud to be seen in good hotels as they are to escort a beautiful woman to a public function."

"I also personally feel that managing a hotel is like producing a play. First of all you build the scenery, and this again depends on what you think you can see best and what the audience will appreciate. You then create the actors, who are your employees and who are, and should be, as well trained as a good Shakespearean actor, whether he or she be a waiter, bellman, or on the front desk, etc. Your customers will then automatically become your audience and if the show is good they will come back to see it time and time again." Tremain feels attention to detail is one of the major requirements of a deluxe hotel. "My father used to have a gardener that tended to his lawns and shrubs. The lawns were magnificent and when people used to drive by and ask the gardener why the lawns were so magnificent, he replied, 'They have been groomed for one hundred years.' A world-class hotel needs the same immaculate attention."

Robert McCauley,
Vice President,
Westin Hotels,
Canada

Bob McCauley bluntly said a luxury hotel is where "quality supercedes quantity," and that is the philosophy upon which luxury and selectivity is based.

In completing our study on luxury hotels for the 1980s and 1990s, we came up with a definition of luxury that we feel is timeless. DO YOU AGREE?

“Luxury is a reputation earned by the physical beauty of the marble and ornament combined with ultramodern services for the human traveller. It is perpetuated through seemingly simple gestures that make the building a home to the traveller, if only for a few hours.”

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