

Why the hospitality industry needs to adapt to millennial travellers

Millennials, fuelled by a powerful combination of FOMO and wanderlust, represent one of the most lucrative segments of the travel market. While the hospitality industry has welcomed this rise in millennial travellers, it does present more traditional industry players with significant challenges. Dale Simpson, the curator of Radisson Red V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, says that the priorities of the millennial-minded traveller contrasts quite significantly with that of their older counterparts, calling for a major shift in the traditional hotel model.



Dale Simpson, Curator of Radisson RED V&A Waterfront, Cape Town

Shared experiences

He points to a global survey conducted amongst millennials, which reveals that 88% of respondents travelled overseas between one and three times a year and that 30% travelled solo. “Rather than seeking lavish facilities and exclusivity, this new generation of traveller prefers a more social experience, opting for shared activities, and choosing to interact with other tourists and locals alike. In order to meet this demand, the Radisson Red hotel will, for example, offer daily morning yoga classes and social engagements that allow locals and guests to mingle and experience different cultures.”

Tech savvy and tech dependent

There is no mistaking that technological advancement and the widespread use of tech devices has played a large role in this evolution, says Simpson. “The millennial-minded traveller is not only technologically savvy, they are technologically dependent. In tune with the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) trend, which refers to individuals increasingly bringing their own computing devices to work and school with them, millennials demand to be ‘connected’ at all times.”

The ideal vacation image

One of the primary reasons for this demand is because, today, everything is documented in real time and shared over an ever-expanding realm of social media platforms, he explains. “The growing social-sharing culture is, in itself, driving the rise of millennial travellers, as people are increasingly chasing that idealist vacation image they saw on Instagram and forever trying to live up to their Twitter bio of ‘wanderlust-driven adventurer’.

“After all, if you didn’t post a picture, did it even really happen?” he jokes.

Self-service

Despite this desire for connectivity, Simpson points out that, ironically, the millennial-minded traveller doesn’t always need to interact face-to-face. “When it comes to travel services or any service for that matter, millennials want fast, efficient service, which often means doing things online or via an app. Take, for example, the growing popularity of Uber, OrderIn, or even the online service check-in facility now offered by airports. In line with this trend, Radisson Red guests will be able to check in and out, order room service and communicate with reception or the concierge via the easy-to-use Red app.”

Catering for millennial-minded travellers

This noticeable shift in travellers' priorities and preferences has undeniably played a pivotal role in Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's latest brand offering, says Simpson. "Millennial-minded travellers – those experience-driven, tech-savvy individuals who are young at heart, modern and minimalistic – have been largely under-served by the hospitality industry. This is why Radisson Red is set to shake up the South African hospitality industry with its bold new philosophy that aims to cater specifically to the ageless millennial mindset."

Simpson concludes that the wait is almost over, with Africa's very first Radisson Red set to launch in the third quarter of 2017. "Cape Town's REDvolution is just a few months away as the Radisson Red V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, situated in newly revamped Silo District, will be opening its doors on 12 September 2017."

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