

10 Basic Things a Hotel Must Offer Guests

1. Cleanliness: This is an absolute must. Hotels, whether we're talking about a Red Roof Inn or a Bulgari resort, need to uphold the highest cleanliness standards, offering clean public spaces, bathrooms, bedrooms, and amenities. While it's an important initiative, recycling must not give way to a lack of hygiene.

2. Adequate safety/security: For many, a hotel functions as a home away from home. With that comes a hefty expectation for the most diligent safety and security measures. Many hotels now focus on providing personalized safety and security measures for different guest profiles such as women, children, and the elderly. Technology plays an increasingly important role in providing better safety, but some guests still place more importance on the human touch.

3. Internet: Guests at all types of hotels demand some level of Internet service, but business hotels especially must offer the highest level of connectivity and flexibility. At many hotels, if not all, guests expect Internet access to be complimentary—for some, free WiFi is as necessary as the air we breathe.

4. Comfortable beds: At the end of the day, a hotel serves a very basic need: It provides a place to rest your head, but only if the bed is of good quality, clean, well maintained, and well designed. It also needs to be well positioned in the room to allow proper circulation. Some hotels take the liberty of being creative with the pillow and blanket offerings, which is great—as long as the guest feels comfortable with the choices available to them.

5. Bathroom plumbing: The reason this is highlighted as "plumbing" as opposed to just a "good shower" or "hot water" is because this concerns the entire bathroom. Hot water is of no use if it is just trickling down; lack of proper water flow from the sink and toilet is a significant burden and inconvenience to any guest. All guests should expect clear, potable water; proper and continuous hot running water in the shower; flowing water in the sink and toilet; and no leaks.

6. Attentive phone answering: Hotels typically have a standard "answer the phone in three rings" policy; unfortunately, this does not happen as often as we would like. Sometimes the call is directed to an agent who does not have the information, but is rather there just to answer the phone...so on to another transfer! No matter what the hotel classification, the property must assign a qualified agent who is able to effectively and efficiently answer a guest's questions and concerns, and refer them to the appropriate department only if absolutely necessary.

7. Lighting: This is a pretty big issue across a lot of hotels. Most don't offer adequate lighting in the hotel rooms, from bathrooms to bedside lamps, and it's a hassle for guests across the board. Improved lighting serves to enhance the guestroom experience and provide a sense of security.

8. Aroma: Upon entering a hotel and the hotel room, the smell of the property has a major impact on a traveler's first impressions. Guests are often sensitive to newly created hotel "signature" scents or stale smells from carpets and bathrooms, which can influence the guest's perception of the quality and cleanliness of a hotel.

9. Simple, tasty food: The availability of food and beverage outlets varies based on the hotel service level. However, certain things—such as a hot breakfast—are a basic offering that really adds to a guest experience. Even budget hotels could be conveniently located next to an all-day diner, which caters to hotel guests. Access to a convenient and affordable breakfast is turning from a plus to a must.

10. Check in/Check out: Nowadays, a front desk check-in and -out experience is constantly evolving—from pod check-ins to a personalized iPad check-in. While these advances are exciting, hotels need to stay focused on certain elements of a check-in/check-out process that really effect a guest stay.

Other things:

- good value
- free parking
- hairdryer
- fridge / microwave
- no carpets /tiled or wooden floors
- gym
- indoor or outdoor pool