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Four Hotel Chains on the Rise of Communal Spaces

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This Just In

[A recent report by Resonance](#) called the “Future of U.S. Millennial Travel” yielded a surprising finding about this demographic group that is expected to spend US\$200 billion this year alone: They overwhelmingly prefer staying in full-service hotels to short-term apartment rentals (think Airbnb) by a margin of more than 2-to-1.

One of the reasons for this preference cited by the 1,600 respondents is that they like having the option to frequent the lobby or other “public salon” spaces in the hotel.

Communal workspace environments at hotels have become an important guest amenity, not just for U.S. Millennial travelers, but for business travelers of all ages around the globe. Why? It’s the rise of the [“third place” between work and home](#), often associated with Starbucks’ popularity among boomers and Millennials alike. These are spaces where people can connect to free Wi-Fi and work while being with or around others.

Moxy, Marriott International's budget lifestyle brand, is one of the global chains leveraging the third place in their properties. The Moxy brand entered Europe in 2014 with the opening of a property in Milan and has since grown to 20 hotels worldwide, with 90 more in the global pipeline.

Key features of this primarily franchised brand include a vibrant lobby with bar, 24/7 self-service grab-and-go food concept, and an extensive number of power points for personal devices. John Licence, vice president of premium and select brands at Marriott International, Europe, said that Moxy was developed to respond to the changing needs of the next generation of travellers.

"Moxy Hotels allow our guests to not take themselves too seriously," Licence said in [a press release](#), "providing them with personalised experiences in a well-designed space...with the latest technology and plenty of social spaces that blend work and play."

For the cover story in the upcoming April issue of PCMA *Convene* magazine, Associate Editor Casey Gale checked in with three other hotel brands to learn how they are incorporating the demand for communal spaces in their properties:

"Our hotels are seeing a 13-percent rise in revenue when they do their public-area renovations. When they incorporate things like communal tables and mixed spaces, guests are willing to pay more for that hotel. We know that trend is definitely bleeding into the other hotels even if they're not meant to be lifestyle hotels." — **Amy Hulbert, Vice President, Boutique and Upscale Brands at Best Western Hotels & Resorts**

"Our research showed that travelers tend to have similar expectations and travel attitudes, including a desire for human connection. They want more than just a place to rest their heads; they want to be able to connect with other travelers or be 'socially alone.'" — **Alexandra Jaritz, Senior Vice President and Global Head for Tru by Hilton**

"We are mindful of how we deal with hotel colleague presence and transactional experiences in the social spaces. No one wants to feel as if they are being watched over by the front desk host, for instance, yet people want to know that colleagues are nearby when needed or that they can easily access things they want, such as power outlets and Wi-Fi everywhere. ! It comes down to striking the right balance both in terms of furniture settings and service and having everything they need at their fingertips to make for an effortless experience." — **Kristen Contry, Vice President of Global Design Services, Hyatt**