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2017's top hospitality trends

by [Elliott Mest](#), [Jena Tesse Fox](#) |
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The year has come and gone, and it will be remembered as one of uncertain optimism. Things may be looking up for 2018 as pro-business reforms, such as changes to the tax code, begin to effect change on the industry, but looking back on 2017 we see an industry already in action. Hotels took time this year to adapt to the changing business landscape through partnerships, changes in strategy and a renewed focus on technology.

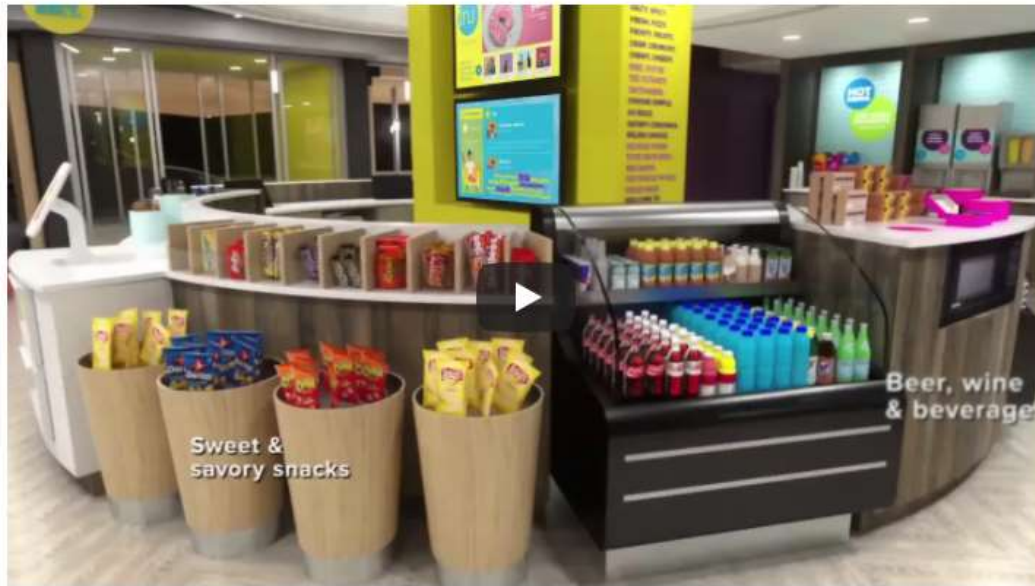
Here are the five biggest storylines that took place in 2017...

4. Design Disruption

Whether you call them disruptors or game-changers, the hotel industry is subject to constant shifts in how rooms are designed as 2017 aptly demonstrated.

Small guestrooms have become increasingly popular as millennials seek out communal spaces for socializing. One of the main brands pushing small guestrooms into the future is Marriott's [Moxy](#) brand, which even Vicki Poulos, Moxy's senior brand director, acknowledges is "polarizing" among guests. "It's defined by attitude," she said. "Some people love the concept and they get it. Others don't. The brand isn't for everyone." Moxy guestrooms only cover 183 square feet on average, and use a "pegboard" to hang furniture until needed, freeing up space.

Hilton's Tru brand is also leading the small-room revolution, and Brittney Weiss, design manager, global design services, Hilton, said that owners and developers are responding to the changes. At least part of the brand's appeal, she suggested, lies in its ROI. "It's cheaper to produce per key," she said.



Stonehill Taylor principal of design Michael Suomi agreed, noting that fitting rooms onto a floor adds to the bottom line and can increase both occupancy and cash flow. "Construction costs have continued to rise," he said. "The consumer price index has risen modestly, but construction prices have gone beyond." By shrinking a room's square footage by 30 percent to 50 percent, a hotel can add 30 percent to 50 percent more rooms to the overall count, and make 30 percent to 50 percent more each night. "The math works out well for big cities," he said.

"Hotel design, in general, is becoming more streamlined and less cluttered to reinforce the sense of cleanliness that guests are demanding," said David Breeding, VP of architecture and design for the Americas at InterContinental Hotels Group. IHG announced its new midscale Avid brand in September, with streamlined guestrooms that do not have a closet or drawers. "For example, we created what we call a 'working wall,' where a central mounted beam along the back wall connects elements including a full-length mirror, a vertical lamp, a mounted TV screen, hooks for hanging items and plugs with USB ports." The guestroom's desk has also been redesigned as a ledge mounted against the wall with open space beneath for additional storage.