

Different ways to holiday: Embracing a mixed-use approach to hospitality

By  Sharmila Ragunanan

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We live in a time of stress and uncertainty. Hotels, guesthouses and lodges have struggled to keep their doors open through rolling lockdowns, and recovery - especially as the world continues to grapple with travel restrictions and red lists - is likely to be slow.



Source: [Pexels](#)

Now's the time to adapt and evolve, actively exploring fresh, new approaches to delighting guests, all while increasing the opportunities to bring in the profits. Now's the time to take on an innovative, mixed-use approach to hospitality, offering various types of travellers and travel parties different ways to holiday, different ways to save, and different ways to see, experience, and savour the beauty of South Africa.

Vacation ownership

Holidaymakers love the freedom to be able to plan out their future travels, as well as the confidence that there's a guaranteed vacation awaiting them. They also value the affordability attached to the concept of vacation ownership (commonly known as timeshare in the past). Even if an unexpected event makes it impossible for a owner to venture off on their holiday as planned, it's relatively easy to rent out your holiday home to another interested party without incurring monetary losses along the way.

For hotel and guesthouse owners, a vacation ownership model provides similar peace of mind. The knowledge that vacation owners will be paying their annual maintenance fees can take the financial pressure off of an establishment, particularly during uncertain times when once-off bookings might not be as abundant as usual.

The goal should be to design vacation ownership-focused programmes that provide travellers with an all-access pass to the holidays that they want ... when they want them. There should be different levels of membership to suit different types of travellers and different budgets. It's recommended for the programme to operate according to a no-frills, easy-to-understand points allocation system and to allow holidaymakers to book their vacations online or telephonically through a dedicated holiday concierge department.

Throw in a time-specific delivery promise and the option to purchase additional points at any time for fully satisfied, long-term members who are more than happy to spread the word.

'Workcationers'

According to workation.com, there are statistics that show that remote workers are, on average, 20% more productive than those employees who are confined to a typical office environment. If this is the case when simply working from home, it's easy to see how working amongst beautiful surroundings can increase workers' productivity even more! Hence the rise of the 'workcationer'.

Workcationers are people who combine a holiday with their usual work responsibilities, i.e., putting in their regular hours and exploring their chosen location in their free time. This type of holidaymaker has been on the increase since the start of the pandemic. Accommodation establishments that are actively catering to the needs and wants of this type of vacationer are sure to see long-term benefits.

The majority of workcationers are on the hunt for long-term rates that allow them to remain in the same place for an extended period of time, usually more than three weeks, without having to fork out a fortune in the process.



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All-inclusive holidays

We live in a time where potential guests are equally concerned about their finances as they are in desperate need of a holiday. This is why it pays (literally) to make it that much easier for them to budget, while still banking on enjoying a getaway to remember. This is where all-inclusive holidays come in. These holidays are tailored to be infinitely more affordable in the long run, all while helping holidaymakers do the relevant calculations to ensure that they don't overspend during their time away.

Establishments eager to expand their offering in such a way should offer guests a fixed rate per room/day, inclusive of all their meals and drinks. This affords them the freedom to budget upfront without having to stress about settling an ever-increasing bill upon their departure.

Exclusive-use bookings

Concerns about coming into contact with Covid-19 remains the number one reason why many South Africans have yet to fully return to travel. As such, it's easy to understand why many hotels have embraced the exclusive use booking trend. Travellers are increasingly looking to book out the entire accommodation unit for their own, exclusive use, thus minimising

any interactions with others and maintaining a safe 'travel bubble.'

Along with peace of mind regarding health and safety, the concept of exclusive-use also allows the travel party a more bespoke, value-for-money experience. The hotel staff will have the chance to get to know the guests on a more intimate level and thus provide them with a greater personalised service.

Rewards programmes

Rewards programmes that help travellers to save in the short-term, and thus encourage them to keep coming back for more, also provide accommodation establishments with a steadier profit stream in the long-term.

The goal should be to make it simple for people to save while they holiday. Allow for point accumulation when booking accommodation directly, when ordering room service or eating at the property's onsite restaurant(s), and when taking part in hotel-specific activities. Steer clear of sign-up fees and go out of your way to provide plenty of value-added extras, such as holiday coupons, complimentary Wi-Fi, and other outstanding discounts.

Ultimately, this mixed-use approach to hospitality enables South Africans to take more holidays and holiday differently. It is also a viable solution for accommodation suppliers in regaining a steadier income and influx of guests throughout the travel revival.

It's time to look to the future and focus on giving travellers maximum experience and maximum peace of mind.

ABOUT SHARMILA RAGUNANAN

Sharmila Ragunan is a hospitality expert and group marketing executive for Dream Hotels & Resorts.

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