

Sales and Marketing

Hotels see business from marketing exterior corridors

05 NOVEMBER 2020 8:22 AM

More open-air spaces have been a big benefit for hotels looking to generate business during the pandemic.



By [Laura Koss-Feder](#)

REPORT FROM THE U.S.—Cleanliness is always important in the hotel industry.

With the spread of the coronavirus, being germ-free and having more open windows and less closed-in spaces are elevating exterior-corridor properties above their competition. And as hoteliers fight for their share of fewer travel dollars, they need any and all ammunition in their corner to bring in guests.

“Exterior-corridor hotels have a situational advantage during the COVID-19 pandemic, by giving the guest the ability to reduce touchpoints, avoid elevator rides, and be a more self-contained traveler,” said David Sangree, president of Hotel & Leisure Advisors.

In addition, exterior-corridor hotels tend to have lower prices and be located off highways versus in urban settings. They have not been impacted by the loss of group and corporate business as much as their urban counterparts, he added.

Hoteliers agreed, saying they are making the most use of their accommodations and how travelers are relating to them at this time. Exterior corridors have seemed to have become more popular than ever, and are gaining a resurgence in many markets across the country.

“Exterior corridors have definitely become a selling point as customers re-enter the market,” said Mike Frits, GM at DoubleTree Resort by Hilton Myrtle Beach Oceanfront. “This is particularly true of seasoned meeting planners that have to communicate the positive health and safety attributes of a property to their potential group customers. Balcony doors, windows that open, and individual ventilation units have become selling points as well.”

To make the most marketing use of its design, the DoubleTree Resort by Hilton Myrtle Beach Oceanfront has edited all of its room-type descriptions on its

website to include exterior corridor as part of the room description, he said. It also has added “exterior corridor” to its group solicitation responses to highlight this as a favorable amenity in the current environment.

Casey Numetko, marketing manager at the Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch Resort in Tucson, Arizona, said air flow and ventilation are now competitive advantages.

“We feel that the overall layout of our properties rooms gives us an advantage over larger enclosed hotels and resorts that have more constricted air flow,” he said. “Nearly all our rooms have open-air access allowing for greater ventilation, spa treatments rooms are accessible from the outside, and we have a number of Catalina rooms that have outdoor showers.”

The property informs potential guests on social media and in other marketing avenues the safety benefits of choosing to stay where there is an exterior-corridor layout.

The outdoor corridors of the Downtown Clifton, which is also located in Tucson, help make people feel safe, said Marketing Manager Sierra Lemerise.

“There are no shared elevators, which require touch, as well as the ability to have contactless check-in, which allows guests to avoid shared spaces entirely,” she said.

The hotel has marketed its open-air areas to guests who are fleeing high-density areas greatly impacted by COVID-19, to those who need to quarantine, and to others looking for staycations.

“We have updated our website, our reservation confirmation emails to guests, sent marketing materials to first responders who may need sheltering, and pivoted our online listings and advertisements to highlight these features,” she said.

Occupancy levels are holding steady in exterior-corridor hotels, sources said. Valencia Hotel Group’s four Court properties, for example, are running about 15 occupancy points higher than its traditional-style hotels, said Amy Trench, corporate director of brand marketing and public relations.

“Guests can drive up to the hotel and park their own car, minimizing potential interaction in busy lobbies and avoid elevators entirely if they prefer,” she said. “Each guestroom also offers guests their own inward-facing exterior entrance, and generous front porches.”

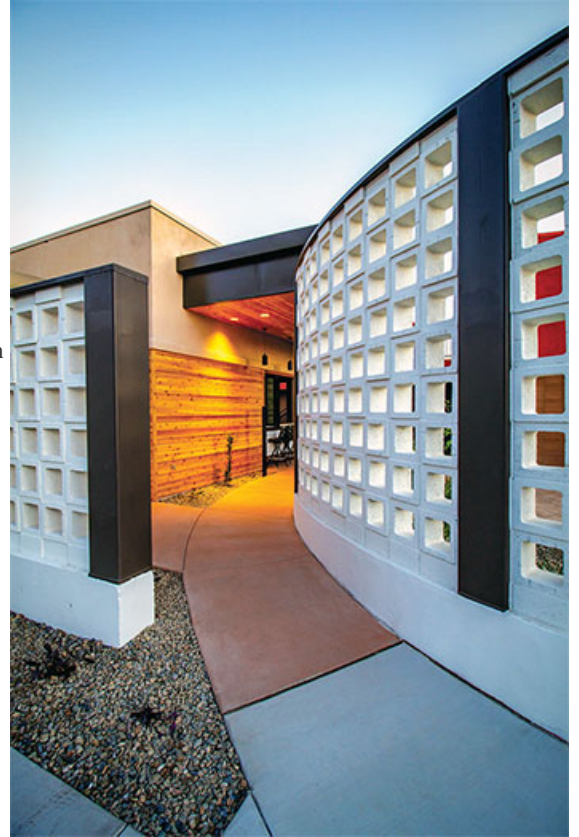
At 68% of Red Roof’s properties nationwide, guests access their rooms from the outside of the building instead of an interior hallway, which has helped business, said Marina MacDonald, chief marketing officer of Red Roof.

“After check-in, guests are able to drive to their room without walking through the building, reducing contact with interior touchpoints and avoiding public areas,” MacDonald said. “In addition, most properties have individual air-handling units continually providing fresh outside air.”

In the second quarter of 2020 alone, Red Roof’s exterior-corridor properties had 14% higher occupancy than those without this type of design, Trench added.

“These days, guests are seeking safety more than ever,” she said. “Coupled with RediClean, Red Roof’s enhanced cleaning protocols, exterior-corridor Red Roof hotels have regained their popularity.”

The brand now promotes its exterior corridors in emails to members of its loyalty program, RediRewards, as well as non-member guests, and offers access to a map of all such properties nationwide. Guests who visit Red Roof’s website will see messaging about the safety of exterior-corridor properties and can view exterior photos of each property on individual property pages.



The Downtown Clifton hotel in Tucson, Arizona, is actively marketing and promoting its exterior corridor design to guests during the coronavirus pandemic. (Photo: Downtown Clifton)