

OPINION ARTICLE

6 March 2019

# Exceeding Guest Expectations Across Generations: Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers

By **Adam Hoydysh**, Vice President of Hotel Sales at PLUM

🕒 5 min read    💬 0 Comments



WE USE COOKIES TO ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST EXPERIENCE ON OUR WEBSITE





How exciting is it, to live in a time during which industries and brands are continually re-inventing themselves in tandem with the rapid evolution of technology and innovation(s)?



Exciting — absolutely, but these frequent consumer-driven shifts also create a unique challenge for industries hoping to keep their finger firmly on the pulse of modern expectations. And with the influx of millennial consumers, it's not merely a matter of remaining technologically savvy — brands also need to demonstrate an understanding of generation-specific desires and preferred service models.

In the case of hospitality, we arrive at the ultimate question; what does the modern guest look like? Is marketing to the millennial masses vastly different from previous generations? What trends are forecasted for 2019, and how will those affect travel and hotel brands in their pursuit of long-term guest loyalty? Luckily, we can shed some light on this topic.

## Millennials

Millennials are inherently value-driven consumers. I don't mean value regarding the *monetary* value, though. Rather, I'm alluding to their

WE USE COOKIES TO ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST EXPERIENCE ON OUR WEBSITE





to demonstrate an  
core values. In fact,  
millennial purchase behavior(s) are rooted in a  
different set of values than previous generations.

These include:

- Quality and variety
- Convenience
- The history/story/team behind a product or service
- A brand's innovations, philosophies, and techniques
- Authenticity
- Sustainable footprint
- Personalization

Across industries, these are the primary drivers of millennial loyalty (which, for the record, is notoriously more difficult to earn), and hospitality is indeed no exception. Millennial travelers are actively seeking out travel experiences that are unique, with sustainable properties that have a history or local ties. They also seek innovative technology and hospitality brands which exercise a deliberately authentic voice and epitomize a more personalized service model.

Furthermore, millennials deeply value the opportunity to experience something novel or exclusive. [The Deloitte study, "Winning the Race for Guest Loyalty,"](#) found that millennials highly value exclusive experiences more than other groups, with 66% of polled millennials indicating that unique experiences matter, compared with just 50% of travelers in all other age groups.



aren't currently pillars of your service model and offering, how can you work them into your brand strategy?

## Baby Boomers

While millennials have consumed a great deal of attention from brands over the past few years, baby boomers are not to be forgotten. Especially considering their generation is expected to inherit a whopping \$8.4 trillion by 2030 and most of them will soon be 'empty nesters.'

As 'baby boomers' represent anyone born between 1946 and 1964, it's important to identify their desire for a more hybrid service model. While they demonstrate an appreciation for modern technology and those subsequent conveniences, they also grew up in a time in which a high-touch, traditional service structure was the norm. With this in mind, baby boomers respond positively to 'outstanding' and personalized experiences with brands — which, luckily, settles in nicely with the millennial preference as well.

To appeal to baby boomers, hoteliers should consider the ways in which they can better connect with those guests on a personal level, to make their stay meaningful while still appealing to their penchant for simplicity. So, how can you curate a more simplified, but meaningful experience? Think affordable luxury, clean accommodations, personalized

## Generation Xers

Situated between baby boomers and millennials, we have the Generation Xers — born roughly between the years of 1965 to 1975. With a front row seat to much of the technological evolution that has occurred over the past few decades, Generation X is the perceived middle child generation that may often be overlooked in the eyes of brands. However, when considering Gen X's strong connection to both baby boomers and millennials, impressive spending power and their strong brand loyalty — it's ever-important for brands to get to know their preferences, too.

So, what do Gen Xers want? Well, it's not actually that complicated. Being a technologically savvy generation, Gen X travelers appreciate a mobile experience — one which is rooted in convenience and self-service. It's reported that 60% of Gen X use a smartphone on a daily basis, while 67% use a laptop/PC daily - which surpassed the 58% of millennials who use laptops/PCs daily. They are noted as the generation that reads the most reviews, and thoroughly researches brands/services before making a purchase decision. With this in mind, hotel properties must remain especially aware of their online presence, while ensuring their offering is communicated clearly and effectively online.

Similar to their generational counterparts, Gen Xers value sincerity and authenticity from brands, and are likely to approve of (and demonstrate loyalty to) those



**hospitalitynet**™ ing that every guest  
expectations. By

offering a more personalized travel experience with access to self-service technology, hoteliers can effectively appeal to the Gen X group of travelers.

## Keeping up with the.... Technology

In the hospitality industry, technology is a priority across all demographics. A recent study found that 34% of hotel guests rank outdated technology in guest rooms as the most frustrating aspect of their stay. Further, 38% said the front desk taking too long to complete requests and 31% cited delays in service from hotel staff. This really comes as no surprise — with the rapid adoption of modern technology, long-standing administrative frustrations such as these no longer seem justified. Today, all demographics demonstrate an undeniable penchant for instant-gratification across all touch-points of the consumer experience. Don't believe me? Consider the following:

- Consumers rarely wait more than two to four seconds for a website to load
- In 2017: Google had 3.8 million search requests, more than 400 hours of video was uploaded to YouTube, viewers watched 87,000 hours of video on Netflix, and 65,000 photos were uploaded to Instagram. All in just one minute.
- Only 26% of individuals polled say they would wait longer than 30 minutes for takeout food, and 41% of consumers say they would not wait longer than 15 minutes for a ride requested via a mobile app.

WE USE COOKIES TO ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST  
EXPERIENCE ON OUR WEBSITE





**hospitalitynet**™ — the modern  
with this in mind, it

becomes ever-important for hotel and travel brands to invest in new technology that allows for a more streamlined experience. Convenient, fast and efficient should be the adjectives of choice when describing the service process at any hotel in 2019. Luckily, with the latest innovations in hospitality technology, everything from the check-in process to serving a glass of wine can be nearly offered in a self-service model, serving up a dose of instant gratification at every touch-point.

So, what does the modern guest look like? Well, there's no one answer to that question — and perhaps that's precisely the point. The 'modern' guest spans across generations and traveler 'types' to encompass anyone currently seeking out an exceptional travel experience. Gone are the days of a "one-size-fits-all" hospitality service model — modern guests demand their own, unique fit, every stay. Ultimately, this represents a call for a more individualized service offering and an intimate understanding of each guest. Modern guests are leading the charge to a new and improved hospitality standard, and it's up to hotel properties to keep up — or risk being left behind.

## Contact

Dustin Caromano

Director of Hospitality Marketing

Phone: 844-856-7586

[Send Email](#)

WE USE COOKIES TO ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST  
EXPERIENCE ON OUR WEBSITE



**SIMILAR STORIES**



- [Different Travelers Want Different Things - So How Do You Know What Hotel Technology You Need? | By David Millili](#)
- [New Travelport Survey: U.S. Millennials Most Likely to Take & Spend More on Vacations This Year, Next](#)
- [Shaking Up Your Marketing Strategy: How Millennials Are Shaping the Way Hotels Operate | By Lauren Hall](#)

## About Plum

Plum reimagines every aspect of the wine by the glass experience. The world's first appliance that can serve a glass of wine just as the winemaker intended, Plum allows hoteliers to satisfy the moments that inspire guests to enjoy a glass of wine in the hotel's room product. Plum delivers an unforgettable experience — and profits — in extraordinary style, one glass at a time. To learn more visit <http://www.plum.wine>

Information Technology   Innovation   Guest Experience

©1995-2019 Hospitality Net™ All rights reserved – Hospitality Net is powered by Hsyndicate – Feedback

