

SECTION 4

Good morning everyone. Today's lecture forms part of the Hospitality and Tourism module. Last week I looked at the economy end of the hotel business; this week I'm going to discuss the luxury end of the market. Let's consider the following scenario . . .

You wake up in the middle of the night in a strange hotel miles away from home, disoriented most probably from jet lag, when even the most expensive surroundings can seem empty and Q31 dispiriting. You have paid a great deal of money to stay in this first-class hotel with its contemporary technology, but according to recent research carried out by an international travel and public relations company, all is not well. The research suggests that even the most opulent, luxurious hotels seem to have underestimated the most basic needs of their customers – be they travelling for work or pleasure: the need to feel at home in surroundings Q32 which are both familiar and inviting.

Do these findings, however, apply only to hotels situated in particular areas? Is it possible that the external environment can affect a guest's well-being? The company's research covered a whole range of different hotel types, both independent hotels and those which are part of Q33 large chains. They investigated chic so-called boutique hotels in the heart of downtown business districts, stately mansions located in the depths of beautiful countryside, and plush hotels built at the edge of tropical beaches surrounded by palm trees and idyllic blue ocean. And the research concluded that what was outside the hotel building simply didn't matter. Q34 This is a fascinating revelation and those of you hoping to move into careers in the travel and leisure industry would be well advised to look at the findings in more detail.

Tapescripts

But back to the main point of this lecture . . . the need to feel at home. What can the hotel industry do about it? And is the very idea so subjective that it's impossible to do *anything* about it on a global basis?

However, nothing stands still in this world. One company has come up with the slogan 'Take Your Home With You', and aims to provide clients with luxury serviced apartments. Those in the business travel industry maintain that these serviced apartments dispense with all the unwanted and expensive hotel services that business travellers don't want, while maximising Q35 the facilities they do want. For example, not only sleeping and living accommodation, but also a sleek modern kitchen that allows guests to cook and entertain if they wish, at no Q36 additional cost. The attractions of such facilities are obvious and it'll be interesting to see whether the company manages to establish a trend all over the world and make a lasting Q37 impact on the luxury accommodation market.

Now, finally I want to consider the psychology underpinning the traditional holiday hotel industry. As a hotelier, how do you go about attracting people to give up the security of their own home and entrust themselves to staying in a completely strange place and sleeping in an unfamiliar bed? Firstly, hotels exploit people's need to escape the predictability of their Q38 everyday lives. For a few days people can pretend they are free of responsibilities and can indulge themselves. Secondly, there is something very powerful in our need to be pampered and looked after, it's almost as if we return to being a baby, when everything was done for us Q39 and we felt safe and secure. And not far removed from this is the pleasure in being spoilt and given little treats – like the miniscule bottles of shampoo and tiny bars of soap, the chocolate on your pillow at night – and we actually forget that we are paying for it all! Q40

Next week, I'm going to look at eco-hotels, a fairly new phenomenon but increasingly popular . . .