



KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

SEASONS CHANGE, TRENDS COME AND GO BUT ONE THING REMAINS CONSTANT, CUSTOMERS VOTE WITH THEIR FEET. IN TODAY'S RAPIDLY EVOLVING FOOD AND BEVERAGE MARKET, HOTELIERS WILL NEED TO DO THEIR PART TO REMAIN RELEVANT, POPULAR AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, BUSY.

The hospitality industry, and the licensed hotel sector in particular, has proven innovative and nimble in the face of significant legislative, media and economic pressures. One of the key post-financial crisis learnings is that the best operators survive.

We have seen impressive innovation in the sector as leading operators seek to put distance between themselves and the competition.

As the standard of offering rises, reinvestment and regular venue updates have become crucial, especially for metropolitan areas. However, **Ferrier Hodgson's** Morgan Kelly explains that reinvestment doesn't just mean refurbishment.

"Spending on point of sale technology, social media campaigns, or new entertainment concepts are all keeping venues fresh and interesting, and drawing customers in."

"No two venues are the same and specific factors related to the usage and competition vary but, in our experience, offerings should be refreshed every three years," Kelly says.

"This keeps the offering current and appealing to customers, even if it is something as simple as investing in new payment technology or gaming machines."

According to **Arcon** construction manager Rory O'Brien, "the best time to renovate is never".

"No-one wants to deal with the interruption to business although they are well aware of the significant benefits that will flow from that interruption."

However, O'Brien explains there is no choice but to make these changes or be left behind.

"The advent of small bars and micro-breweries in addition to the legislative changes to smoking laws has made it essential that the whole industry rethink the layout of their establishments and the services they provide in these establishments," he says.

"Experience has shown that the establishments designed with timeless natural materials, like timber and steel, avoiding the latest fads, will lead to the longevity of any renovations and makeovers undertaken and avoid date stamping the venue."

"It is most important to ensure the structure and basic layout of each venue is built of timeless finishes making it easily adaptable. This will allow easy introduction of pop ups and minor modifications to implement the latest design trends and legislative changes with minimum impact on business."

A WORD FROM THE WISE

One of the great mentors of **Concrete Seed** Nik Rollison's career told him that "a crowd breeds a crowd".

"He continually had me focus on ways to provide our guests with products that people not only wanted, but also wanted to be associated with."

Rollison explains that this sense of belonging and association can sometimes outweigh the actual quality of products or service, simply by providing a positive feeling around brand affiliation.

"In the hospitality design realm, we like to call these brands 'lifestyle propositions' – concepts that provide an essence of how their customers wish to, or actually do live their lives. Venues are leaning towards fresh menus, light and vibrant designs and a reduced need to remind the customer that they have alcohol, smoking and gaming as part of their proposition."

In order to maintain relevance and improve footfall, Rollison recommends operators intensify their focus on contemporary menus anchored by fresh produce, genuine and anticipatory service, as well as low-alcohol content drink options.

"It's all too easy to take the position that the hotelier should chase a hot trend like Korean fried chicken, ramen, bathtub gin, 'dude food' and the like, but our view is that food and drink menus developed with a sense of purpose and sympathetic to the local provenance will always be popular," he says.



Black, Sydney

BATHROOM BREAK

Wiping your hands on your jeans on the way back to the bar is never a good look. A wet handshake from a returning friend is even worse. After being left waiting for an inefficient hand dryer to warm up and dry their hands most people just simply give up and head back to the bar. Always needed after a drink or two, but not always considered important, bathroom facilities can often be a part of the customer experience that lets many bars and restaurants down.

Dyson engineers took to inventing a completely new hand dryer. Rather than try to slowly evaporate the water, the Dyson Airblade literally scrapes the water from your hands, using two high powered air knives. With one of the world's smallest fully-integrated 1600W motors, it's the only hand dryer motor powerful enough to draw in up to 30 litres of air a second through a HEPA filter, and dry hands in 10 seconds.

Not only is Dyson Airblade the fastest hand dryer to dry hands, but it also uses HEPA filters and 99.9 per cent of bacteria and viruses in the washroom air are captured. So hands are dried using cleaner air, not dirty air.

Some washrooms use paper towels as a solution. But constant restocking and disposal of paper towels is expensive. Including the cost of the machine, a Dyson hand dryer costs eight times less than paper towels over five years. The paper waste can also build up leaving the washroom littered and looking dirty too.



The Ivanhoe

PROPERTY & INVESTMENT



Floor coverings make up the largest surface area in any venue

It doesn't take an advanced degree in mathematics to recognise when revenues and traffic patterns aren't what they used to be, but it does take some smarts to know what to do about it.

"We find it invaluable to constantly be on the lookout for the hottest new venues, recent renovations and what's trending on social sites like Instagram to get a good gauge of where the market is headed," he says.

"The simple act of getting out there and kicking the tires of the competition can provide inspiration, enlightenment and sometimes envy, for all of the right reasons. When it comes to knowing when is the best time to adjust your concept, or the smartest ways to improve your offerings, take a look across the road because it's not always a bad thing to keep up with the Joneses."

IT'S THE SIMPLE THINGS

The decision to invest in a venue can be an expensive exercise for most hoteliers, especially if a partial or complete rebuild is necessary. However, traditional pubs are increasingly looking to small scale renovations for their rejuvenation, which has proved the most cost effective method, whilst still retaining original character. The customer progression has prompted hoteliers to consider all components of their business from interior finishing and layout to food and beverage offerings, social media marketing, gadgets and even point-of-sale technology.

"We've found rejuvenation is fast becoming a preferred method for hoteliers, with small interior cosmetic changes often making a big impact, and at a more viable cost" said Anthony O'Halloran, director of Signature Floorconcepts.

With the age-old adage that 'first impressions last' still holding true, Australian pub owners have been increasingly forced to transfer these newly-founded customer expectations into their venues.

"With floor coverings making up the largest surface area of any establishment, it all starts from the floor up," O'Halloran said.

Hoteliers need to make careful consideration with the floorcoverings of a venue. These include decisions on the type of flooring material suitable, the overall interior look and feel, along with the functionality of their particular venue space.

Carpets have long been a preference in the hotel



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– RORY O'BRIEN, ARCON.



The Bourbon



industry as they address the issues of foot traffic, noise, warmth and provide a focal interest to support the overall look and feel interior design.

“Understanding your customer base and type of venue operation are all key elements when designing carpet for the hotel and hospitality industry,” he said.

“Depending on the area within the venue, the carpet needs and design will change. For instance, carpets in a gaming area will differ greatly to those carpets required for a large function or bistro area.”

Taking the dynamic changes of the industry into consideration, the Signature Floorconcepts’ design team has developed a cost and time effective answer for hoteliers with their ‘Ready-To-Wear Collection’.

Multiple patterns from the collection can combine to create distinct spaces, which can work harmoniously together in the venue, due to the cleverly designed complementary colourways. Just like in fashion, the ‘Ready-To-Wear Collection’ is constantly evolving to include the newest interior trends and colours which are incorporated on a regular basis. As this range is completely ‘in stock’ the newest fashion trends are available instantly, without the usual hassle of lengthy production lead times. With its third instalment coming in, Signature’s ‘Ready-To-Wear Collection’ now encompasses 16 en-trend designs and colours. Made with a hard-wearing blend of wool and nylon woven carpet; the commercial grade quality and performance of Signature’s ‘Ready-To-Wear Collection’ is the perfect solution for tight deadlines and refurbishment turnarounds, without sacrificing design, quality and Axminster performance.

CREATING THE PERFECT MOOD

We have all been to those pubs where everything looks right; the menu, the furniture, the décor; but somehow the atmosphere is not inviting you to have a seat. Usually the problem is lighting. Unless you are running a fast food canteen and want your clients to vacate their seats as soon as possible, lighting is a key tool to create a pleasant and practical atmosphere for your guests to enjoy.

Dean Brosnan of Neue explains that lighting has a few important roles in a venue.



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 – Nik Rollison, Concrete Seed.



Use lighting to create an inviting atmosphere

“First, you will want your guests to be able to easily see the product they have purchased, assess the colour of the drink, and maybe even snap an image for a comment on a review or rating website,” he says.

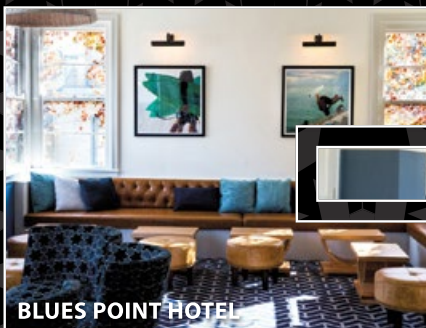
“In design speak, this function is called task lighting – practical illumination targeting areas of action, for example countertops and tables. A common mistake is to think that task lighting will be provided with general illumination such as chandeliers. In order to distinguish details, our eyes need a fair amount of contrast. This means that the task area should be more brightly lit than the surroundings.”

Brosnan explains the second main reason to really think through your lighting design is the comfort of your guests.

“The main enemy to conflict with a relaxing experience is glare from uncovered luminaires. Some people are more sensitive to direct glare than others; and for some, this effect can be totally intolerable and tiresome.” **AH**



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