

Decorative light fixtures at the Element Hotel reflects the modern decor seen in many new hotels.



On the Go

Today's fast-paced mobile lifestyle is changing the way hotel developers design and market new properties.

Between tablets, smartphones, and laptops, it is nearly impossible not to stay connected while on the go. Couple that with the advent of social media, and the way people communicate has drastically changed.

While today's fast-paced lifestyle is driving the shift in the way we communicate, the concept behind social media — sharing information and staying plugged in at all times — is creeping into hotel design. Newer-built hotels are not only streamlining and simplifying design, but they are also keeping functionality and the new traveler demographic in mind.

Brad Wiens, executive vice president and chief development officer of True North Hotel Group, says that *design trends fall into three Cs: Connect, Concise, and Communal.*

CONNECT

"We're designing our hotels with more plugs in multiple locations so travelers can charge devices or work from a laptop, as beds and sofas are often 'desks,'" he said. "Travelers don't want to go hunting for an outlet when they need to stay connected."

CONCISE

Many hotels are moving to a more streamlined, practical design in the rooms. "Today's younger travelers, who are setting the trend in the industry, appreciate efficient, functional space. They don't unpack, which means less of a need for a traditional bureau with drawers. We are seeing more open closets and smaller desks, and the couch is re-designing into a comfortable workspace, complete with e-walls nearby. Because of this, business centers are going away in many of our properties," said Wiens.

COMMUNAL

The concept of "sharing" is not restricted to social media. People like sharing their hotels' public space, too. "Younger travelers are looking for two things: productivity and a

social experience. Traditional lobbies are giving way to large social spaces, broken down into zones where people can eat, work, play, or gather around a fireplace or bar," said Wiens.

To accommodate all types of travelers, Wiens is seeing a shift to a "social" approach in new hotels. True North Hotel Group is developing combo hotels — two brands under one roof — where both extended-stay and short-term guests share space, such as social spaces, a larger bar, or an exercise room to incorporate a community feel. Marriott International is also adapting to the demands of today's traveler — it has introduced three lifestyle brands within the past few years alone to attract clients of all kinds.

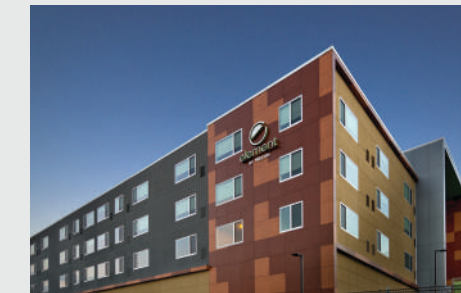
With lifestyles and technology driving hotel design, hotels are going out of their way to cater to our social society. After all, every "like," "share," tweet, or post is in the palm of travelers' hands.



Contributor Brad Wiens, Executive VP and CDO of True North Hotel Groups, and MW Builders have enjoyed a successful partnership, building seven hotels together nationwide.

20+ Years of Hospitality Experience

Take a look at some of MW Builders' recent projects that highlight the shift in the new era of hotel design.



Element Hotel by Westin — Lebanon, NH



Home2 Suites by Hilton — Cranberry Township, PA



Candlewood Suites — Fort Hood, TX