



# 7 DESIGN TOOLS

HOTELS  
+  
ACCOMMODATION

# INTRODUCTION

Inside a tourism business brews a story you must share.

The story is about your business and your place, and it is an amazing place to visit. The distinctive personality, values and passion that are embedded in your brand make it one of a kind. It is a place where your brand is so tangible that visitors feel that they could almost be a part of it, and where people understand the value of what you do so completely that purchasing from you is the obvious choice.

**Do you want people to spend more money at your place?**

**Clueless how to get people to remember your brand?**

**Do you need an edge over your competitors?**

Whether you are emerging or established, starting or already running successful accommodation - guest house, retreat, resort, hotel, motel, hostel, b&b or inn - this guide will help you.

You will discover how to make tourism spaces work effectively. Guests will understand, remember and recommend - make longer bookings, more often. Staff will work better to engage guests, impart information and sell product.

We wrote this book because tourism is all about visiting a physical place. You asked us how you can make a stay in your accommodation different to everyone else - a 'must see' destination, an unmissable hotel experience. You asked how to use your space differently so that guests buy more, and staff sell more. You asked how to tell a story through buildings.

Each page gives you short, no-nonsense tools to get people immersed in your brand through your buildings and grounds, in touch with your product in a physical and emotional way, and enthusiastic to book longer stays, more often.

With your passion, intention, attention and patience, you can achieve a place that is alive with your brand – buildings and grounds that tell stories that bring people back time and time again. You will unlock untapped revenue, gain a following of brand loyalists, create a niche market with you as the only destination, and you'll love the adventure and sense of achievement. Bringing your brand to life through your buildings will surround you and your employees with a sense of what you are working toward and keep you focussed and motivated to be the best you can be.

**So turn the page, let your imagination roam, and begin down your path to profit now!**



# ACCOMMODATION FOR TODAY'S TOURIST

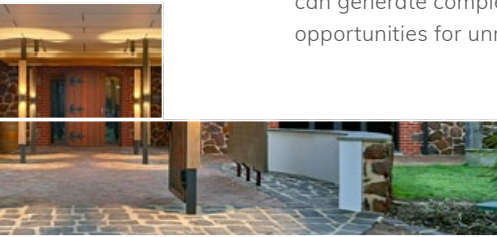
Accommodation design has come a long way in the last 300 years. From humble inn-style beginnings without reliable quality standards, accommodation made a big leap at the beginning of the industrial revolution.

19th century grand hotels promised a taste of the perfect life to anyone who would pay for it. They offered an out of the ordinary experience and were the unmissable centre of a town.

Changing gear in the 20th century, a fast paced travel world meant that visitors stayed only a night or two and the accommodation industry focussed on functionality and operational efficiency to keep up. Business hotels evolved a standardisation that was embraced by travellers because of its predictable and reliable quality, but for resorts and tourism accommodation the trend resulted in hotels all over the world that looked like they could be anywhere.

Beyond simple observation, today's tourists seek authentic life experiences, and demand accommodation that can offer unique and specific value. Sharing economy accommodation (eg. Airbnb) embraces the desire for real immersion into a culture, challenging traditional properties to transform in order to compete.

Today's traditional accommodation properties must become a hybrid between the comfort of home and the atmosphere of the local culture and place - merging efficiency of operation, sanctuary of home and authenticity in experience. These properties can offer a gateway into the local culture from a place of refuge, and be made unique under a strong banner of their own branding. Woven together, place and brand can generate completely unique offerings, stories can be unfolded and opportunities for unmissable experiences created.





# UNMISSABLE EXPERIENCE

According to Deloitte, there are opportunities that accommodation properties can seize to offer their guests a memorable experience in today's market.

## **Experience**

Create partnerships with local business and use their products and services to offer variety that delights your guests and allows them to explore new experiences. Be the curator of great experiences by allowing the local partnerships to shape the environment within your accommodation.

## **People**

Encourage your guests to forge connections with both your brand and other guests. Play matchmaker to help build relationships by shaping space and furniture to encourage connections.

## **Authentic Culture**

Use your hotel as a gateway into the local community and the culture outside its doors. Open your doors and windows to embrace the street life, involve the locals in their day to day lives and enliven your public spaces at the same time.

## **Creative Use of Space**

Create multi-purpose spaces both inside and outside of your hotel to be used for a variety of cultural and local activities. Offer more flexibility to your guests by thinking about your hotel as more than just "heads and beds", instead striving to foster a love of your place in tourists and locals alike.

## **Processes and Operations**

Choreograph the staff operations and visitor experiences of your accommodation. Provide your customers with a seamless and convenient experience by shaping the movement paths and operational spaces to function naturally within your brand language.





# 1

## OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Accommodation is generally a combination of guest rooms or suites, shared areas (lounge, entrance, food and beverage service, health facilities) and back of house areas (laundry, food preparation, administration, deliveries). Revenue producing spaces should get the benefit of the best spaces, while back of house and areas that don't require natural light (meeting rooms and conference centres, health clubs, etc) can be positioned elsewhere.

The building block of the multi-room development is often the standard guest room, the size of which often determines layout of structure and engineering services and may shape the entire development. Determine the needs of your target market and design the room specifically to cater to their needs.

Traditionally, accommodation sites provide a range of shared (public) spaces for guests to meet, relax, and eat and drink. These spaces have provided opportunities for guests to 'be seen', immerse themselves in the local culture or relax and get comfortable without leaving the hotel. Today's hotel design pairs these essentials with cultural and branded experiences and fosters social connections through purposeful spaces to make them uniquely unmissable places to be (not just sleep).

The quality of staff spaces can make the difference between a great team and an average one. Consider shaping the employee spaces with the same quality and character as the rest of the accommodation to help staff feel valued.

Universal access throughout the shared areas of your accommodation is good design, will ensure Australian Standards compliance, and provide access for everyone. A proportion of rooms are also required to be compliant with access requirements, including B&Bs.

*Tip:*

*Luxury hotel bathrooms often exceed one third of the total guest room space. Make sure your bathrooms are designed with the right size and material qualities for your brand.*



# IDENTITY

## TELL YOUR BRAND STORY

What is your brand and why is it important to the design of your building?

Brand is more than just a logo. It is the essence of what your product is about, the services you provide, and how you provide them. Brand creates recognition and separates you from your competitors - making your business stand out and attract visitors.

Branding your buildings, grounds and interiors needs to evoke the experience you want for your visitors. This should be revealed through your logo, website, services, style of language and communication, as well as your space design. Consistency assures your visitors that they made the right decision in choosing you over the competition.

Tell your brand story through journey, interactive spaces and décor. Shape your space to allow staff to be part of the space and naturally engage with guests in the style you want for your brand.

Great immersive branding can trigger people's sensory reflexes and loyalty instincts, making them more likely to spend more money, more often. Identify the personality of your brand and what story you want to tell. Decide what colours, materials, atmosphere and style are right for your brand, and apply that character to your whole business.

**Don't know your brand character?**

**Discover your brand personality with our quiz.**

**[To take our quiz now, click here.](#)**

*Tip:*

*Star ratings are weighted. Accommodation that clearly demonstrates strong brand reasons for design and amenity decisions can achieve higher star ratings than a similar quality competitors.*



## VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Great cities to visit have many activities and options within close proximity. The city is vibrant, interesting and accessible. It is the same for hotels and accommodation. Shared spaces can be flexible, and used to enliven the atmosphere, bring life and culture into the hotel, and engage the locals as well as guests.. Create a unique setting with careful selection of activities and displays authentically represented and in line with your brand.

### Flexible Spaces


Shared guest spaces empty for the vast majority of the time? Use your breakfast room and other under utilised spaces to offer cultural activities.

### Bring in the Local

The foyer is often a place that guests pass through multiple times a day. Make it fresh with displays of local business product. Encourage guests to engage with the local businesses through pop-up display, offering tastings and meet the maker opportunities within the foyer and shared spaces.

*Many successful bars and restaurants attract both locals and guests. Design your restaurant and bar to engage with the street and attract passers by.*

Use your relationships with local businesses to populate hallways with regularly rotating displays, giving them an opportunity to promote their wares while making your hotel an ever changing, dynamic place.







## SCALE + COMPLEXITY WHAT'S REALLY YOU?

The size, proportion and organisation of spaces will have a subconscious effect on guests, visitors and employees. Use your brand character to give yourself a big picture of scale and complexity of space and furnishings first.

Create a comfortable atmosphere for guests and employees that promotes activity and security in shared spaces and work areas, and relaxation in guest rooms. Inviting, brand appropriate seating in the public areas connected and overlooking the street will keep guests feeling connected to the place. Carefully consider furniture, artwork and decoration that reflects quality expectations, the local culture and speaks to your brand character.

Work spaces should be designed for comfort and productivity, and to promote the style of communication you want for your brand.

Use an energy efficient heating, air conditioning and ventilation (HVAC) system to provide good room air quality at a comfortable temperature. Locate supply vents carefully to avoid drafts. Focus on creating a successful lighting design that will enhance your guests' experience and adjust to their needs. It will make them feel calm, focussed and confident in welcoming areas, and encourage lingering and foster social connections in the public areas.

Provide good light levels locally in work areas, and adjustable lighting to cater to a variety of uses in public spaces and guest rooms. Well-chosen lighting adheres to building standards and energy codes while assisting businesses to save money with energy efficient systems and lighting.

The music you play in your space has a profound yet subtle effect, so make your playlist full of local music and sounds. Take care not to create too much reverberation or echo as it can make it unpleasant and difficult to communicate.

**Tip:**

*Materials and colour selection of floors, walls and ceilings, and selection of lighting and sound should be consistent with your brand story.*



## NAVIGATION CAPTIVATING PATHWAYS

The way guests and staff navigate their way through an accommodation property can be the difference between a frustrating and disappointing stay, and one filled with delight and unmissable, memorable experiences.

### **Freshness**

Rotating local culture installations and displays depicting brand story can keep your public spaces interesting and pique curiosity. Visitors are also more likely to return if they know you have a regularly changing display.

### **Brand Story**

The mood and character of your brand constructs a story with the materials, colours and textures, furnishings and artwork you select.

### **Journey of Delightful Discoveries**

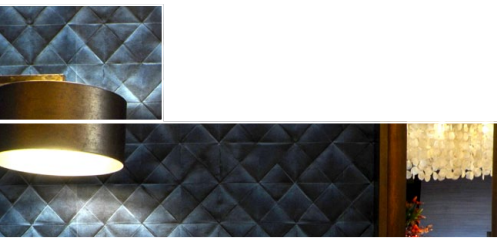
People delight in discovering secret spaces and places, hidden parts of the story that aren't initially obvious. Design the journey from street entrance to room and even inside the guest suites to create a fascinating and memorable experience.

### **Social Connections**

Nooks and lounges can create variety and interest and become vibrant when used for guest social space. The location and acoustic treatments needs to be carefully considered to minimise noise nuisance for guest rooms adjacent the social spaces.

### **Signage**

Your brand language should incorporate vibrant non-verbal wayfinding.





# 6

## PEOPLE THE SOCIAL & THE PERSONAL

Today's tourists are social and culture driven, and looking for highly personalised experiences. Public spaces can be shaped to offer guests a variety of social opportunities at various levels during their stay, to make choices for themselves or allow staff to engage more naturally to discover guest's needs. .

### **Foster Connections**

Foster connections between individual guests and with your brand. Encourage communication with hotel staff. Provide conversation starters and curiosity generators through brand and local culture story telling. Furnish for lingering and arrange seating to allow conversations to naturally be initiated. Encourage staff to use those spaces to engage with guests and surprise them with delightful, insightful and on-brand experiences.

### **Observe and Relax**

Offer guests the choice to step back from the hustle of the unfamiliar street with spaces to observe and overlook the local culture and hotel activity from a relaxing environment.

### **Sanctuary and Privacy**

Small spaces reserved for private interactions allow guests to interact on a personal level without having to retreat into their room or suite.

### **Get Involved**

Exciting guest experiences bring local culture into public spaces (foyers, breakfast areas, bars and street frontages) and encourage guests to get involved.

### **Be Seen**

For some tourists, being seen to be participating is a big part of their experience. Create spaces where guests can flaunt their presence. The 'selfie tourist' craves a great photo. Striking, unusual, branded and cultural opportunities for these tourists turn them into great word of mouth marketers!





7

## SOUL A PLACE IN MY HEART

Brand has become more than a logo or a relationship.

Your brand has become the place, people, history and future all intertwined in a story of what makes 'you'. To experience a brand is to be immersed in the culture and character of the story, so that visitors can imagine they could fit into it too.

Let people discover a piece of your soul.

Allow them to uncover something they can only be part of by visiting your place. Use your buildings to create a sensation that they know what it is like to be part for your team, by telling your stories, creating curiosity and stimulating people's senses and memories through your spaces.





## PATH TO PROFIT

How you engage your guests through your space is critical to creating an environment that will attract more visitors (both guests and locals), get them to linger longer, increase bookings of additional nights, and draw guests back to your business in the future.

It is vital to keep in mind that from the moment someone encounters your brand through your website, social media, travel agents, marketing collateral and booking sites, they build an expectation of the guest experience with you. If you convert that interest, a guest enters your grounds with an expectation that you must at least meet, if not surpass.

Smart design decisions make a significant difference to how your guests experience your accommodation, in the booking rates and the impression your visitors leave with.

# TIME TO PUT YOUR NEW TOOLS TO GOOD USE

Studio S2 Architects are not your average design team. We specialise in tourism because we love it - we live and breathe tourism and we have a network of connections as well as insight into the industry because we spend so much time digging around behind the scenes. It is our delight to be able to provide you the latest information about how buildings can attract visitors, meet and exceed demand and drive growth for your business, and connect you with a team of people who can help bring it all together.

**Need help to design your space and place?**

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NEED HELP?

Let's just start with a coffee

P: (08) 7231 5470

W: [www.studio-s2.com.au](http://www.studio-s2.com.au)

E: [studio@studio-s2.com.au](mailto:studio@studio-s2.com.au)

