

# **DESIGNING LUXURY HOTEL EXPERIENCES AS MEMORABLE EVENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores service design practices in the luxury hotel industry with focus on the entertainment aspects of memorable experiences. It applies Pine and Gilmore's (1999) *entertainment, educational, esthetic* and *escapist* realms as the conceptual framework for defining service design practices of luxury hotel industry experts. Previous research has found that these four realms contribute variably to consumer perceptions of bed and breakfast experiences (Oh et al. 2007), to cruise line experiences (Hosany and Withiam, 2010), to hotel visits and to hotel website reviews (Laitamaki, 2011), and to winery tour experiences (Quadri-Felitti, 2012). This study extends prior research by investigating the applicability of the four experience realms in the context of the luxury hotel service design. It highlights service design practices that produce memorable experiences based on the entertainment realm. The study is based on a Delphi survey of luxury hotel industry experts representing twelve global hotel brands with properties in five continents. The findings show that the most important memorable experience generators *currently*, are those designed and delivered within the *entertainment* and *esthetic* dimensions. In the *emerging* luxury hotel service design environment, the experts predict that the focus will shift toward designing and delivering memorable experiences within the *entertainment* realm. The study concludes by identifying important service design practices that hoteliers can use for designing luxury hotel experiences as memorable entertaining events.

**Keywords:** *service design, entertainment, luxury hotels*

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