

THREE REASONS TO INNOVATE IN A RURAL HOTEL



Innovate [Latin *innovare* to renew] means to begin or introduce something new for or as if for the first time; to take the lead or initiative in; to introduce new ideas or methods .

In business, the term innovate means to use new ideas, concepts, products, services and practices with a view to increase productivity. In this sense, the essential purpose of innovation is to achieve larger benefits, both for the supplier and the user.

Therefore, innovation demands clear objectives, so that ideas may be turned into reality with concrete results that may be appreciated and enjoyed by people.



THE MOTIVES

I firmly believe that businesses must not lose their *raison d'être* or their identity; I am also certain, however, that we must move forward with time and take advantage of the new tools that will allow us offering a better product or service that may be attractive to our customers.

I think that calling customers' attention is critical to delivering your product, and presenting it with an attractive wrapping is the best way to capture interest.

When we start an activity, we take great effort to shape our ideas and give them content; nevertheless, once the business starts to operate, it is easy to fall into inactivity, let the time go by, and continue working with what we had since the beginning.

A key to avoid this inertia is continuous improvement, keeping in mind that the business should evolve to meet customer needs, so we have to be sensitive to customer demands.

The three reasons I propose to innovate in a rural hotel are aimed at:

- Adding value to your business
- Differentiating and positioning your business
- Offering customers what they need



THREE REASONS

The first reason: ADDED VALUE

Added value means additional services for your guests other than those traditionally offered at other lodging establishments.

For instance, we can have a library with topics related to the hotel's surroundings. Customers will value this source of information we make available to them.

Nonetheless, innovation implies keeping up to date to fully satisfy the needs of our guests. In this case, if we do not enhance and further develop our service, in time we will continue offering the same and to one specific type of customer, whose interests match the topics included in our library.

At this point, added value is illustrated by the two pictures above. The first one, an old book, is certainly attractive because of its format and contents, but it is anchored in time. The second one, an electronic book, is a modality that opens up the possibility of satisfying guests' reading needs or interests.

The second reason: DIFFERENTIATION AND POSITIONING

By developing and carrying out an innovation project, you will reflect your concern for and interest in improving what you have, but above all, you will make evident your hotel's interest in enhancing guest service.

A person's selection of a place to lodge depends on several factors, mainly comparison, which leads to incline first for anyone who offers something more. If the plus is, in addition, a novelty, the decision is evident.

The complement is to deliver these services with high quality, and thus we will not only have loyal guests, but they will become promoters of our business, and let's recall that word-of-mouth is the best advertising we could possibly have.

The effort made in innovation projects will be paid back with your business' differentiation and positioning in the market.

If you differentiate and position your business in the marketplace, customers will recognize, value and choose you.





The third reason:

CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENT

You must bear in mind that innovation projects should serve to broaden or enhance your services with a view to achieve full customer satisfaction.

Some projects are addressed to increase the performance of the people working at your business, but any improvement entails an enhanced customer service. Additionally, if you work in this kind of projects, the people working at your business will get involved and be a part of it. Therefore, it is an incentive for all the employees, since it will give them the opportunity to contribute their knowledge, inventiveness, ideas, and points of view. This, in turn, will allow expanding your vision and taking up a sounder and more comprehensive project.

As a result of the implementation of a groundbreaking project, your business becomes both internally and externally differentiated. Firstly, employees to whom the possibility to take part in the project is offered, will feel more valued and appreciated, and their performance will be higher. Consequently, they will be more willing to serve the guests, who will –undoubtedly– perceive this transformation and appreciate the continuous improvement attitude to provide not only new services but also higher-quality services.

Innovation is something that is perceived; your customers will notice it, ask about it, become interested in it and give it value.

Important things for a rural hotel are the location, the premises, and the typical characteristics of the area and the environs, but innovation is not at variance with the above; on the contrary, innovating in a rural environment, preserving harmony, increases the lodging establishment's value and considerably differentiates it from the rest, besides helping to enhance services; and, perhaps, any innovation in this type of business will be more appreciated.

My final thought is the following:

Innovating in a rural hotel is focusing on our customers' satisfaction, which is our main mission.



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I have not much experience in the hotel sector, but given our geographical situation and analyzing the sector's situation in these troubled times, I firmly believe that achieving differentiation through quality and innovation will allow us positioning ourselves in an increasing competitive market, where we have to see opportunities, not problems.



Please, find more information on this topic at the following addresses and telephone numbers:

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<http://11870.com/hotel-rural-cuartamenteru>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/hotelcuartamenteru>

These links will show you the innovation project of the Cuartamenteru Rural Hotel:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJqwGC2HkqI&feature=channel_page

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5Ng-vMWhQQ&feature=channel_page

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