



Office use of hotel rooms provides revenue boost

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Hotels are adapting guestrooms for a new source of demand—people working remotely who need a quiet environment and place to get away from home.



The Offices at the London are guestrooms at the London West Hollywood at Beverly Hills hotel that have been converted to fully equipped office spaces. (Photo: London West Hollywood)

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REPORT FROM THE U.S.—Hoteliers are seeing new demand—and revenue-generating opportunities—from remote workers who don't necessarily want to work from home, and sources say this business might have staying power in the future.

Pre-pandemic, many hotels offered daytime rates for guestrooms and other services to corporate travelers seeking short-term stays—on flight layovers, for example.

A somewhat new demand for that service emerged as companies enacted work-from-home policies for their employees as a health precaution during the coronavirus pandemic.

- [Read how hotels position, price day bookings of guestrooms](#)

The InterContinental Washington D.C. – The Wharf experienced an uptick in day-use and traditional overnight bookings by work-from-home-weary professionals, said Director of Sales and Marketing Cat Carter.

"There seems to be a strong desire to get out of the house and work in a relaxing, quiet environment. We see guests coming in with their laptop bags and files, pacing the lobby, taking calls and adding fantastic reviews noting their productive stay," she said by email, noting that standard pricing is applied and the window for these bookings is short (24 to 48 hours).

"We have found they truly just want an inspiring space to focus their efforts," she said. "They often request our ... guestrooms featuring partial or full balconies to soak in the scenery and sunshine."

She said the hotel expects this service to "remain in demand until workers return to physical offices, assuming that working remotely doesn't stay in place when we see what our new norm looks like."

At the London West Hollywood at Beverly Hills, guestrooms are converted into "Offices at the London," which are booked on a monthly basis as fully equipped office spaces for that work-remotely guest segment, said Director of Sales and Marketing Greg Velasquez.

"We have seen an uptick in long-term stays for business travelers. We try to anticipate our guest needs, and we think that temporary, controlled office environments might be the next area of demand," he said by email.

Monthly rates for the Offices start at \$5,000 for a 725-square-foot converted guestroom, each with a private bathroom and balcony but no bed.

Staffing required to service those rooms is minimal, with "periodic janitorial and cleaning service ... provided by our existing staff," he said.

"Office tenants do not receive daily housekeeping service, nor do we restock and replenish typical guest supplies, such as bath amenities, towels, bottled water, etc. Without a bed, the rooms do not require bed linens to be changed. From a food and beverage standpoint, Office at the London tenants are able to order food from our various outlets, including in-room dining, so they enjoy access to our F&B services during all normal operating hours," he said.

Velasquez said future offerings of the service will depend on the need for it, noting that so far the hotel has pitched it only to its "existing corporate clients via direct marketing."

"We anticipate that this is a stepping-stone solution for companies who are not ready to bring employees back into their offices at this time," he said. "Given the fluid situation, it's impossible for us to say if we will be offering this product beyond 2020. We certainly hope that we can all return to more 'normal' operations sooner rather than later, but if the need for this service remains, we are here to provide it."

The boutique Washington School House Hotel in Park City, Utah, which reopened on 15 May, has gotten a good response to an in-room workstation amenity from guests "antsy to get out of their homes," said GM Jared Gentile.

He said the hotel's small room count also seems to be a comfort to guests seeking safe spaces to work remotely.

"With only 12 rooms, and plenty of space, we are well-equipped for the 'new normal,'" he said by email. "We already offer super-low density, no at-counter check-ins, plenty of fabulous schoolhouse windows that open to the fresh mountain air, and a team ready to customize each guest experience, with the overriding idea to stay safe."

Carter said her team at the InterContinental Washington D.C. – The Wharf sees challenges as opportunities.

"Everything is being reconsidered at this point; in a good way. What worked today will not work tomorrow, and that may change frequently so it's important to constantly innovate," she said.

"I'm very impressed with the way many industries are innovating and rethinking the way they deliver their services and products. I like to collect ideas all day; it's inspiring to see how determined and creative businesses can be," she said.

"Our pricing models are based on full capacities, so we have to rethink how we price per square foot with new and interesting services and amenities. Maximizing virtual reality technology, curating unique food-and-beverage experiences and providing a conduit for community activation on site are on my mind this week."