

Travel and hospitality trends to dominate in 2018

By Josephine Wawira

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Skift, in its [Megatrends Defining Travel in 2018](#) report, termed 2017, "the year travel found its larger purpose in the world."



Image: OSABEE

Though the year was marred by extreme economic and security uncertainties and instabilities across the board, from political upheavals to the controversial [Trump Travel Ban](#), the advancement of the industry is not a subject to be overlooked.

Use of various tech solutions, diversification of services by hotels, and the surge of millennial travel are just some of the highlights that marked 2017. So, will these continue to dominate 2018, or do we expect new and rising trends in the travel and hospitality sectors?

Augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR)

Getting a feel of your hotel room before you even get there, or your airline's premium economy flight has never been so tangible. Virtual travel is expected to further evolve this year, as service providers haste to offer easy and reliable travel planning and experience.

Did I mention the Giroptic iO HD 360 camera for your smartphones/tablets? This represents the perfect way to capture and display your perfect travel memories. It is also an essential marketing tool for destination promoters, as they sell the best 360° views of the various tourism destinations this year.

Personal fulfilment

Travel consumer demands will not stop at accommodation, good food, a comfortable ride or flight. Whether for leisure or business, at a five hotel or at a backpacker's hostel; 2018 travellers will be more concerned about their experiential immersion and fulfilment.

It will be about clearing the bucket list with new encounters, which comes with a clarion call to hoteliers among other service providers to focus more on personalisation. Client specifications must be adhered to, and swift adoption of emerging technologies necessary, if this trend is to be fully monetised. Understanding the customer to fit your marketing strategy is also key in offering personalised services and achieving maximum revenue growth.

Hotels vs home sharing

The growth of home shares in 2017 created an intense competition in the accommodation sector, largely due to the high demand for diversification of products in the travel and hospitality market. Yet, in its [2018 Future of Millennial Travel Report](#), Resonance Consultancy indicates that only about 23% of the U.S respondent millennials prefer to book their accommodation and travel via home sharing sites.

This, perhaps a big relief for hotels, with 64% preferring to book on travel websites while 47% through specific hotel, resort, and airline websites. Travel agents, still come a little ahead of home sharing sites at 24%.

Increased sustainable travel

As the [UNWTO International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development](#), 2017 saw massive campaigns aimed at promoting responsible travel both by the World Tourism Organisation as well as by other concerned stakeholders. It is therefore expected that this year will see the implementation of the policies put in place towards sustainability.

Additionally, the millions of travellers worldwide who were reached and impacted by the [Travel.Enjoy.Respect Campaign](#) by the UN body will increasingly practice caution in their travel behaviours, in a bid to leave only positive impacts in the destinations they travel to.

I conclude by echoing former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon's words, "Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship, and strengthen governance".

ABOUT JOSEPHINE WAWIRA

Josephine Wawira is a consultant in communication and public relations with over six years of progressive writing and broadcast experience. She is currently a writer for Africa's online hotel booking portal, Jumia Travel, focusing in the areas of travel, tourism, and hospitality as it relates to Africa.

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