

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

The return of luxury travel is boosting innovation

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The death of the office is creating a generation of digital nomads. From zoom backdrops to curated immersion, it is a chance for luxury to innovate. Image credit: Shutterstock

By [Daniel Langer](#)

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The "death of the office" seems unstoppable.

When Apple asked people to come back to the office for part of the week, employees including the head of AI resigned.

While Tesla has doubled down recently on insisting that all employees come back to work, the trend towards more remote work seems unstoppable, at least for the foreseeable future. This puts enormous pressure on the hospitality industry and offers huge opportunities for innovation.

In the past, luxury hotels did not have to worry about where the desk was placed. But in times of sheer endless zoom and teams calls, the lighting and the backdrop in a hotel can become as critical as other amenities for digital nomads in the luxury segment.

And from my own experience, traveling extensively worldwide, few hotels have adapted successfully to the needs of high-end business travelers that manage a significant part of their work while on the go.

I remember a recent stay in London, where in one of the best hotels in town it was literally impossible to find a quiet space for an important video call.

And as luxury travelers become more digital, new innovative services emerge.

Brevity is a travel tech company that caters to high luxury travelers, taking the stress out of the trip planning experience by giving people trusted, vetted and personalized recommendations. It is an app-based service that empowers total immersion in any place in the world.

The idea is simple, yet powerful. A traveler spends, say, four days in Paris, Tokyo or Los Angeles, and has a program mixing work meetings and leisure.

The app will provide highly curated and personalized immersions at the travel destination that are matched to the

preferences of each discerning traveler.

John O'Korn, founder/CEO of Brevity, told me that "the modern travel experience is often so stressful and time consuming that it robs us of the joy that should come innately with new experiences.

"We exist to make life better for people who live in constant motion by providing them with personalized recommendations that will surprise and delight them again and again," he said. "They can immerse themselves as a local would anywhere in the world without the need of complex preparations."

The future of luxury travel will be ultimate personalization, flexibility and context-sensitivity. Receiving precisely the information a traveler needs, when they need it.

Another disruptive move was recently done by Airbnb.

The landing page was completely overhauled to provide travelers, including the most affluent, with destinations that are curated for them based on their passions and interests.

Instead of looking for a stay in one particular place such as traditional travel searches, Airbnb now offers categories including "beach," "amazing pools" "OMG!" or "lakefront." Customers now choose to be surprised with destinations worldwide or in a specific region or place.

Of course, traditional luxury travel concierges remain important for top-end clientele.

However, many younger affluent travelers prefer to curate trips themselves or have personalized apps or digital services do the job for them before they travel or while on the go.

Destinations are often chosen, especially by Gen Z, to deliver social media content. Influencers on TikTok now have more persuasion power on where customers travel than traditional travel publications.

At the highest level of customers, the demand for "barefoot luxury" is increasing dramatically. Often, super high-net-worth individuals now ask their travel advisors to avoid Michelin star restaurants and find places where locals would go that are topnotch, immersive, experiential, but yet relaxed and casual.

New hotel concepts emerge, such as the Equinox Hotel, where wellness and fitness rituals are the total focus. These concepts attract customers that do not want a disruption in their daily routines while they are on the go.

For some customers who have regular sessions with their personal trainers, and go several times a week to a spin or pilates class, the opportunity to have their habits and lifestyle while they travel makes concepts like these extremely alluring and a threat to traditional luxury hotels that usually place more emphasis on ambience and personalized service.

Gen Z, technology and new lifestyles are not just changing many of the tangible luxury segments, including cars and fashion, but also are deeply disrupting travel and hospitality. I see this as an opportunity for brands who dare to lead the change.

These trendsetting brands will be driving a significant demand and accelerating the shift further.

This is an op-ed article that reflects the views of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of Jing Daily.

Named one of the "Global Top Five Luxury Key Opinion Leaders to Watch," [Daniel Langer](#) is CEO of luxury, lifestyle and consumer brand strategy firm [quit](#), and the executive professor of luxury strategy and pricing at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. He consults many of the leading luxury brands in the world, is the author of several best-selling luxury management books, a global [keynote speaker](#), and holds luxury masterclasses on the future of luxury, disruption, and the luxury metaverse in Europe, United States and Asia. Follow [@drlanger](#)

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