



Customers are at the heart of hospitality and it's vital that we consider them in all we do. They're also a key stakeholder to engage in your social and environmental efforts. Your actions can help hotel guests make more sustainable choices.

Follow the steps below to advance **customer engagement**, on the Pathway to **Net Positive Hospitality!**



1. Understand your customers

It is crucial to understand your guests' needs to succeed in delivering on your strategy.

Consider the information you need from your guests to ensure their welfare and help you engage them in your sustainability efforts:

- What demographics do they fall into?
- Where are they travelling from? Are there any cultural nuances you should be aware of?
- Are they travelling for business or leisure?
- Do they need any support to aid accessibility?
- What is most important to them (safety, cleanliness, environmental and social issues etc.)?
- How interested are they in environmental and social issues?



2. Communicate with your customers

When communicating with your customers, consider what you want to achieve. For example, you may want customers to select your hotel based on your sustainability progress, for guests to have a more positive impact during their stay, or to recommend the hotel to others after they have left.

Put time and effort into designing your communications:

- Think about the different audiences you want to engage (e.g. families versus individuals travelling for business).
- Make sure to back up claims with evidence and information to help guests make more informed decisions.
- Keep it specific and relevant to them and ensure the messages they receive are backed up by what they're seeing and experiencing during their stay.

Consider the guest journey and the touch points you have to find out about your guests and communicate with them, including:

- Company website and listings on OTA websites.
- Pre-stay and post-stay engagement emails.
- Check-in and check-out plus concierge / guest assistance interactions.
- F&B spaces (e.g. on menus, via serving staff).
- Guest rooms (e.g. TV screens, in-room collateral).
- Concierge / guest assistance.

Match your messages with where they best fit in the guest journey. For example, information about accessibility and cleaning policies is best shared on websites and at check-in, details about sustainable food options on menus and via F&B staff, and ideas of how event attendees can reduce the impact of their events and meetings via communications with event organisers.

Employees can be great ambassadors for what you're doing, so ensure they are engaged and know enough about your efforts to talk to guests about them.



3. Directly engage your customers

The best way to meaningfully engage customers is to provide them with opportunities to get involved in your efforts. Sustainability should not be seen as something you do to guests, but with them.

Try to create thoughtful and personalised opportunities for guests to get involved and experience sustainability in action. Some ideas include:

- Letting them know about local businesses offering guided tours or activities in nearby natural areas.
- Inviting them to join the chef in harvesting produce from the hotel's vegetable garden to be used at dinner.
- Providing them with opportunities to purchase products created in the local community.
- Sharing examples of actions they could take to reduce their environmental impacts whilst they're staying with you.

You may want to coordinate activities to align with internationally recognised days, such as World Environment Day, International Youth Day, or International Day of Charity.

Make the sustainable option the default option. For example, switching to an opt-in housekeeping programme for stays shorter than three days.

For actions which require proactive behaviour, make it as easy as possible for your customers, and then ask for engagement at the right moment, where they can act straight away.



4. Review progress

Remember to check how engagement is going by providing guests and employees with an opportunity to give feedback.

We recommend evaluating the following points:

- Are messages being understood by guests?
- Are messages being communicated in the right place and in the right way?
- Are messages still relevant?
- Are guests taking opportunities to be involved in your initiatives? If not, what is the barrier?
- Are there additional opportunities your guests would be keen to be involved in?



Resource:

Discover further guidance on [*Sustainability and Consumer Decision Making in the Travel Sector*](#), from BVA BDRC.



Training:

Access a free 2-hour training webinar on [*Sustainability Marketing and Communication*](#)