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Lobby retrofit trend: First impression means everything

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I'm sure you have found yourself waiting for a client or friend in a building lobby or entry atrium. Some can be dark and shabby, making the experience less than noteworthy. Lately, that experience has become more enjoyable. Recently building owners, including those of office complexes and hotels, have been creating crowd-pleasing spaces.

Commercial buildings have been feeling the need to upgrade their entry spaces with modern-day and slick finishes. These face-lifts have been happening everywhere. It is all about curb appeal. Studies have shown that if a building owner commits to these types of upgrades, they will see an increase in their property values. This includes the future resale of a building, as well as bringing in new tenants. At 100 Summer St., the property owner recently revamped their lobby with high-end finishes, including floor-to-ceiling back-painted wall panels and custom Chinese Calcutta marble flooring. A large flat-screen TV and custom furniture were also positioned throughout the lobby space. With over one million s/f of rentable office space to manage, it was important that the owner offer its tenants an enjoyable space to be experienced every day.

A lobby is also your chance to make a first impression. Focusing on the "wow factor," lobby design of today has changed dramatically. Hotels offer up another great example of the lobby retrofit design trend. A hotel lobby used to be a place for guest to check-in. They would come in, and depart quickly. Now, hotels are expanding their lobby to become major circulation spaces and the hub of the facility. The lobby has become multifunctional, offering guests different experiences. Recently at the Loews Hotel Boston, the hotel created a number of separate spaces in their lobby area to be used for business meetings, a lounge, or a place to socialize and relax. They carried that theme into the Precinct Kitchen + Bar as well, breaking up the space with a working fireplace surrounded by a variety of seating nooks. It also has a wrap-around bar with a custom charcuterie station, along with a more formal dining area. This boutique property was transformed to offer a unique blend of historic charm and sophistication.

Lobby renovations in both the commercial and hotel business have benefited the bottom line. A polished look attracts more guests and attracts high-end businesses. The new lobby concept has offered many businesses the opportunity to reevaluate the use of their public space, which was once under-utilized.

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