

Hotel Owner's Guide to Renovating While Remaining Open

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Introduction: The Balancing Act—Why Renovate While Remaining Open?

Renovating a hotel while keeping your doors open is no small feat. It requires the agility of a performer, the planning of an architect, and the customer focus of a world-class hospitality professional. The pressures of maintaining steady revenue, honoring guest bookings, and retaining staff are all heightened when your property is also a construction zone. Yet, closing entirely during a renovation is often not financially feasible—especially for independent or small-chain properties. The ability to strike the right balance can make or break your business's future success.

This guide is crafted for hotel owners and managers facing the dual challenge of transforming their property while upholding their reputation for exceptional guest experience. We will walk you through each step of the process—from the initial assessment and prioritization of goals, to strategic planning and communication, to budget management and marketing. Throughout, you'll discover actionable insights, real-world examples, and practical tools to help you manage change, minimize disruption, and make the most of your investment.

Renovating while operating is, above all, a balancing act. Success hinges on your ability to anticipate challenges, innovate solutions, and communicate those solutions to your team and your guests. With thoughtful preparation and the right mindset, you'll not merely weather the storm—you'll emerge with an upgraded property, a team proud of their resilience, and a guestbook full of positive reviews.



Three Key Benefits of Renovating While Open



Sustained Revenue

By keeping your doors open, you continue to generate income during renovations, supporting cash flow and reducing financial stress often associated with long closures.



Guest Loyalty

Guests appreciate transparency and effort. Thoughtful management during renovations can lead to increased guest loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.



Operational Efficiency

Operating during renovations helps staff practice adaptability and often leads to smoother processes by the project's end.

Assessing Your Hotel's Needs: Identifying Priorities and Setting Realistic Goals

Every great renovation begins with a thorough needs assessment. Before you break ground—or even call a contractor—take a close look at your property. Walk through each area (lobby, guest rooms, public spaces, back-of-house) and catalog their current state. Are the guest bathrooms showing their age? Are the carpets and furniture worn? Is the technology outdated, or are there compliance issues you must address? Start by creating a comprehensive inventory so nothing escapes your attention.

Once you've assessed the basics, prioritize what matters most to your guests and your business. Pinpoint the spaces with the greatest impact on revenue and reputation, such as the main entrance, lobby, and high-traffic guest rooms. Weigh big-ticket upgrades—like structural improvements or new HVAC systems—against more affordable cosmetic updates. Consider also how seasonality and booking patterns may affect what areas can realistically be closed or disrupted at any given time.

Set goals that are ambitious yet achievable. A successful renovation means more than just a new coat of paint; it's about enhancing the guest experience and future-proofing your property. Establish clear, measurable objectives: Do you want to increase guest satisfaction scores? Boost direct bookings? Achieve higher revenue per available room (RevPAR)? Write these goals down and keep them visible—they'll guide every decision throughout your project.

Remember, renovations are your opportunity to solve problems and delight your guests. Get feedback from recent reviews and surveys. Talk to your front-line staff, who know best what guests frequently request or complain about. A comprehensive needs assessment will set you on the path to a renovation that meets both your operational demands and your guests' dreams.

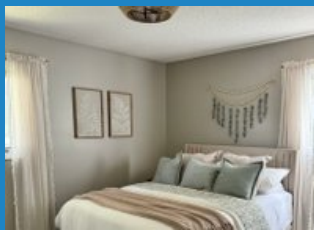


Prioritizing Areas for Renovation



Lobby and Entrance

The main entrance and lobby form the first impression of your property. Prioritizing these areas can dramatically boost guest perception and satisfaction.



Guest Rooms

Worn or outdated guest rooms directly impact repeat business. Refreshing these spaces should be high on your renovation to-do list.



Event and Meeting Spaces

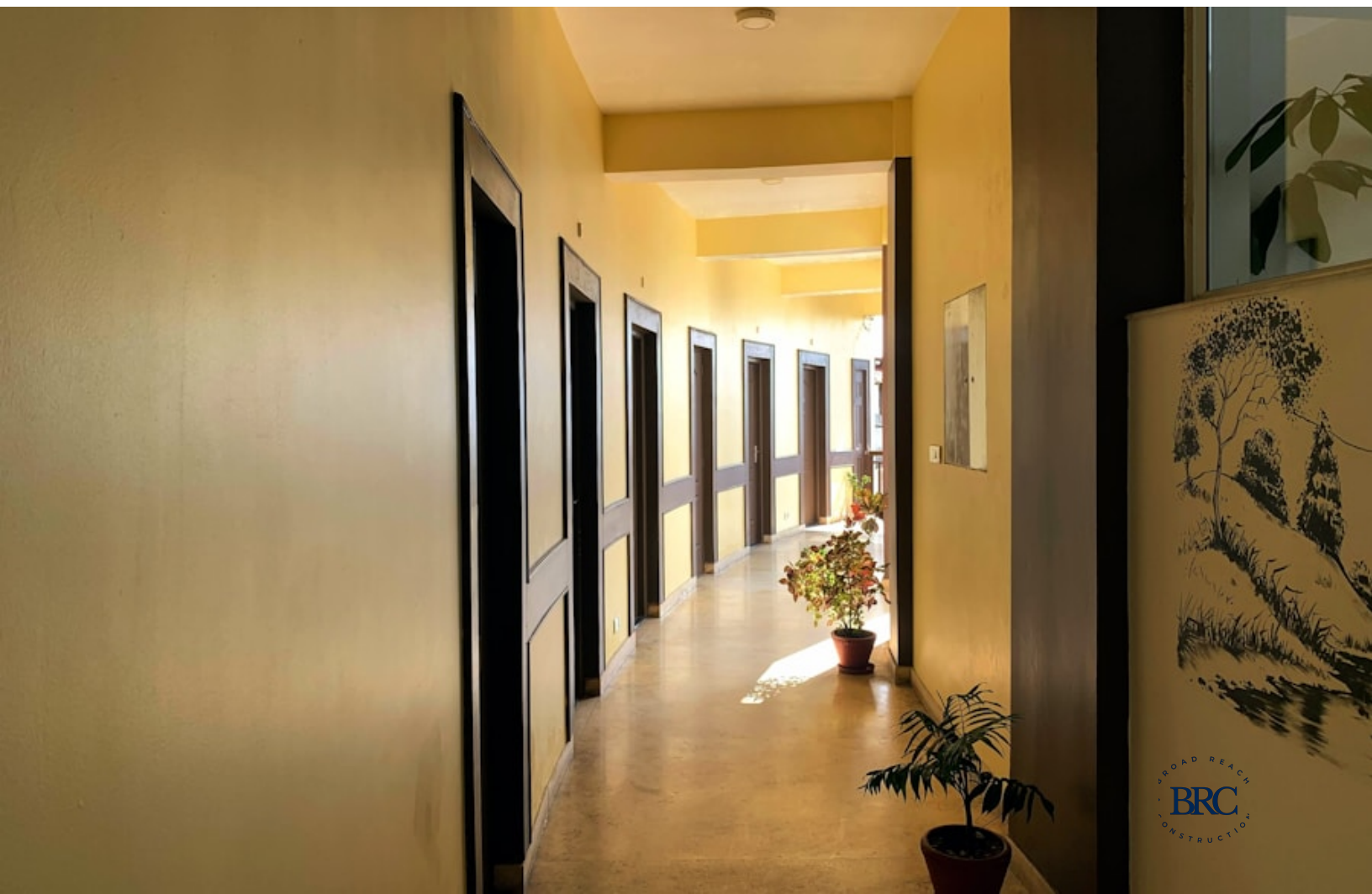
Revamping meeting rooms or banquet halls opens opportunities for new clientele and increased bookings for events and conferences.

Strategic Planning: Phasing Construction for Minimal Guest Disruption

With priorities established, it's time to plan your project phases. The goal is to create a schedule that advances your renovation efficiently while safeguarding guest comfort. Sequence work to avoid major disruptions: Ban noisy demolition for off-peak hours or low-occupancy periods, and stagger the renovation of guest room blocks so large portions of your inventory remain available at all times.

Coordinate with your contractor to identify 'swing spaces'—areas that can be temporarily repurposed to maintain amenities, such as a pop-up reception or makeshift fitness center. Maintain flexibility in your project schedule to accommodate unplanned issues like weather delays, supply shortages, or change orders. Daily or weekly check-ins with the project team allow you to address issues promptly and minimize cascading impacts.

Clear signage and physical barriers protect guests from construction zones. Use digital updates (like your website or property app) and in-person touchpoints (such as front-desk scripts and elevator notices) to inform guests about which areas are temporarily inaccessible, and what alternatives are available. Through careful planning and transparent messaging, you ensure that necessary construction and your signature hospitality coexist as seamlessly as possible.



Phasing Strategies for Success



Block Scheduling

Renovate one floor or area at a time to localize disruption, allowing other sections to remain fully operational without impacting guest experience property-wide.



Noise Management

Schedule loud construction activities during typical guest out-of-room hours and notify guests as part of their booking or check-in experience.

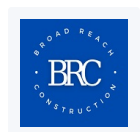


Amenity Re-routing

Set up temporary spaces or routes for major amenities like pools, gyms, or dining so guests can continue to enjoy your core offerings.

“
**Great renovations
are planned with
the guest's
comfort in mind—
not just the
building's
structure.**

Jane McGregor, Hotel Operations Consultant



Communication is Key: Keeping Guests, Staff, and Contractors Informed

No matter how carefully you schedule or phase your renovation, ongoing communication is essential for maintaining smooth operations. Clear, timely messaging preempts confusion and transforms potential frustration into understanding. The first step is internal: gather your management team and staff to review the project timeline, designate points of contact, and update standard operating procedures to reflect temporary changes. Make sure your staff feels empowered to answer guest questions and address concerns with confidence.

Next, inform your guests. Before arrival, update your website, booking confirmations, and social media channels with clear information about ongoing work, expected impacts, and the features (such as newly renovated spaces) that guests can look forward to. Upon arrival, provide personal welcomes (and perhaps a small amenity) to thank guests for their understanding. On-property signage should give easy-to-understand directions, highlight alternative routes, and celebrate renovation milestones.

It's equally important to maintain a collaborative environment with your contractors and suppliers. Schedule regular updates and encourage contractors to keep their crews informed about property-specific protocols, especially if certain hours or areas are off-limits to protect guests. Frequent communication keeps missteps to a minimum and ensures everyone is working from the same set of up-to-date instructions.

Through transparent and proactive communication, you build trust with both your guests and team. Open dialogue not only prevents issues, but also allows you to turn a challenge into an opportunity to showcase your property's commitment to comfort and quality, even during times of change.



Tools for Effective Communication



Pre-Arrival Email Campaigns

Automated emails keep guests informed about renovations before they arrive, providing transparency and managing expectations from the start.



On-Property Signage

Strategic signs throughout the hotel guide guests and highlight progress, while acknowledging potential inconveniences.



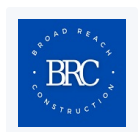
Digital Messaging

Mobile alerts or guest apps provide real-time updates about amenities, routes, and newly opened areas.

—“—

**The best way to turn a guest's
frustration into delight is to
keep them in the loop, every
step of the way.**

Sarah Chen, Guest Services Director



Selecting Reliable Partners: Contractors and Suppliers for Live Environments

The team you choose to bring your renovation vision to life can make a critical difference, especially when your doors remain open. Not all contractors and suppliers possess the expertise—or patience—to manage complex renovations in operational hotels. Look for firms with proven track records in 'live environment' projects. Ask for case studies, references, and evidence of their ability to minimize noise, dust, and disruption.

During the selection process, don't just review budgets and blueprints: discuss project management strategies, request detailed phasing plans, and establish clear site protocols. Experienced partners should be comfortable working around your schedule, pausing noisy activities at set times, and ensuring all sub-contractors are briefed about on-site guest priorities.

Beyond technical expertise, prioritize partners who emphasize communication and flexibility. You need a team willing to update you daily, and adapt plans as onsite realities evolve. Suppliers should commit to consistent delivery, even when access is limited or the schedule changes—an all-too-common occurrence in renovations. Reliable partners anticipate problems, communicate promptly, and view themselves as extensions of your hotel's brand.

Invest in building relationships with selected firms before work begins. The more familiar they are with your guests, culture, and expectations, the smoother the project will go. Choose wisely, and you'll find the right partner is more than a contractor—they are a renovation ally, invested in your success.



Qualities of a Great Renovation Partner



Relevant Experience

Seek partners who can demonstrate successful work within operational hotels, not just new construction. Experience counts in complex, guest-facing environments.



Strong Communication

Teams that keep you and your staff regularly informed will help keep your project on track and your guests happy.



Adaptability

Construction and renovation rarely go exactly as planned. Select partners who can pivot quickly and solve problems in real time.

Safety First: Ensuring Guest and Employee Safety During Construction

Maintaining uncompromising safety standards is non-negotiable during hotel renovations. Your guests count on a secure environment, and your employees must be protected from accidents. A well-conceived safety plan starts by isolating construction zones with locked doors, barricades, and temporary walls. Always ensure these barriers are clearly marked, lit at night, and regularly inspected for stability and visibility.

Collaborate with contractors to enforce the highest worksite standards. All crew members should wear identification, adhere to agreed upon working hours, and undergo safety briefings. Ensure that fire exits remain unobstructed, with alternative routes posted clearly. Emergency protocols—such as alarm testing and evacuation drills—should be scheduled and communicated in advance to both staff and guests.

Cleanliness is next to safety. Construction dust and debris must be controlled at the source, and cleanup crews should be on-site throughout the day to keep walkways and public areas hazard-free. Ventilation should be monitored so guests are not exposed to harmful air quality. For added caution, consider increasing liability coverage or reviewing your insurance policy to mitigate risks.

By visibly prioritizing safety, you reassure everyone under your roof that their well-being comes first. This dedication will not only reduce accidents, but will also enhance guest trust and staff morale, earning you peace of mind as you build your hotel's brighter future.



Managing Guest Experience: Navigating Noise, Dust, and Limitations

No matter how seamless your planning or transparent your communication, some disruption is inevitable during major renovations. The challenge is to manage these disruptions creatively, maintaining a positive guest experience from check-in to check-out. Begin by understanding guest expectations: guests who are aware of renovations in advance are less likely to be caught off guard. Use welcome notes, room notices, and personal outreach to explain what work is being done and—crucially—what steps you're taking to address their comfort.

Proactively manage noise with smart scheduling, sound barriers, and, when necessary, the thoughtful placement of guests away from active zones. Provide complimentary earplugs or noise-masking devices where noise cannot be entirely avoided. Address dust and debris with increased housekeeping rounds and air purifiers in common areas.

When amenities are limited by renovation, offer creative alternatives: partner with local businesses for gym or spa access, or introduce pop-up dining experiences in underutilized spaces. Highlight the benefits to guests—offer 'sneak peeks' of upgraded rooms, behind-the-scenes tours, or exclusive launch invitations. By turning potential negatives into unexpected perks, you show guests that their satisfaction is your top priority.

Ultimately, how guests remember their stay during renovation depends as much on your hospitality as on the new finishes. Your commitment to care, even during disruption, not only secures goodwill but also sets up your new spaces for a successful debut.

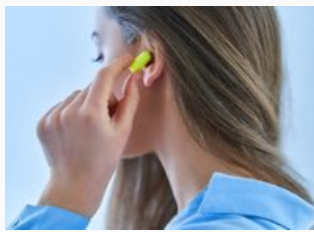


Guest Comfort Solutions



Personalized Welcome

Welcome amenities or handwritten notes acknowledge renovation inconveniences and express appreciation for guest understanding.



Complimentary Noise Solutions

Provide earplugs or white noise machines for guests affected by renovation sounds, boosting their comfort and satisfaction.



Pop-up Amenities

Set up temporary fitness, dining, or relaxation spaces so guests continue to enjoy valued amenities even while main spaces are refreshed.

Creative Marketing: Turning Renovations Into Positive Messaging

Renovations are a natural time of transition, but with the right mindset, they can be spun into a compelling story for your guests and your brand. Marketing renovations proactively keeps guests excited, showcases your commitment to improvement, and drives anticipation for new amenities. Start by developing a communication plan focusing on transparency, benefits, and future value. Regular updates—via email, blog, and social media—invite your community to watch the transformation unfold.

Involve guests in the process: offer hardhat tours, early access previews, or contests to name new spaces. Share photos and videos of behind-the-scenes progress and celebrate construction milestones. Use messaging like “Pardon Our Dust—Exciting Changes Are Coming!” or “Be the First to Experience Our New Spaces” rather than generic apologies. Celebrate the upgrades and share stories of your team, contractors, and loyal guests who are part of the journey.

Don’t neglect review sites and guest feedback forums. Encourage satisfied guests to share their positive experiences—especially those who appreciated your efforts to minimize inconvenience. After the renovation, turn your grand re-opening into an event, leveraging digital channels, local press, and special offers to showcase the refreshed property.

A renovation is just as much an opportunity for brand storytelling as it is for physical upgrades. Use creative marketing to transform a challenging time into a moment of enthusiasm, loyalty, and long-term growth.



Renovation Marketing Ideas



Hardhat Preview Tours

Invite select guests or partners to walk through updated spaces before the public unveiling, creating buzz and building anticipation.



Milestone Events

Host special occasions when major phases complete and share these stories online to keep the excitement—and bookings—going.



Staff Stories on Social Media

Share behind-the-scenes images and testimonials from team members, adding authenticity and warmth to your renovation campaign.

Budgeting and Timeline Management: Staying on Track

Managing budget and timeline during a renovation is a high-stakes balancing act that determines your project's ultimate success. Begin with a detailed, realistic budget that includes allocations for both expected scope and contingencies—at least 10–15% for the inevitable surprises. Work closely with your contractor to develop a master schedule that incorporates phasing, procurement lead times, and local codes or permitting delays.

Monitor expenses weekly at minimum, using project management software or spreadsheets for transparency and accountability. Clearly assign financial oversight roles to avoid confusion. Track both hard costs (materials, labor, furnishings) and soft costs (consulting, permitting, marketing). Hold regular check-ins to review progress, expenditure, and changing project requirements. Empower on-site managers to approve minor changes but require higher-level approval for scope-altering requests.

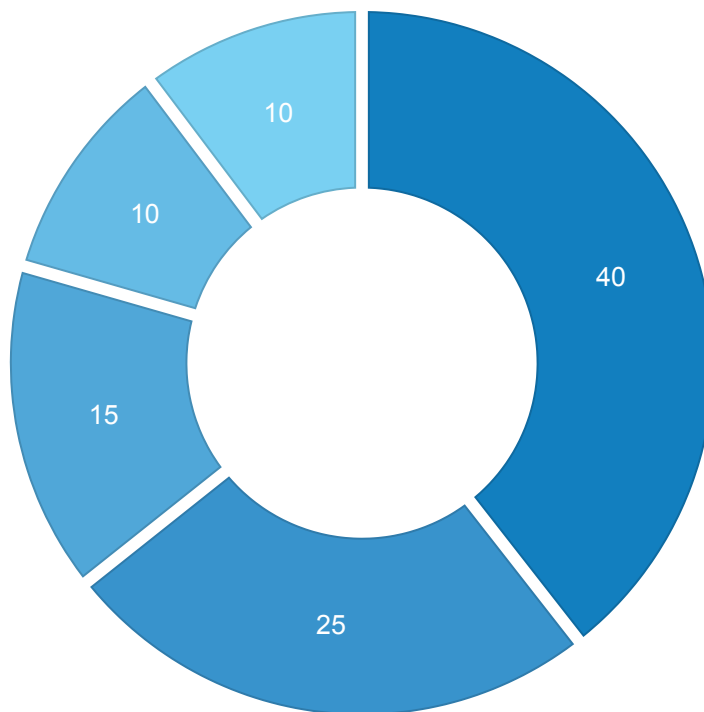
Staying on schedule is just as important as managing finances—and the two are deeply intertwined. Delays increase labor, inconvenience guests, and may result in lost bookings. Proactively identify bottlenecks, such as material backorders or code inspection waits, and adjust timelines as needed. Open communication between ownership, contractors, and suppliers is vital to resolving issues quickly.

Ultimately, careful budgeting and timeline rigor preserve both guest trust and your bottom line. Approach every financial decision with guest experience in mind—the more seamless your process, the stronger your reputation and the greater your ROI when the doors (and rooms) finally open, renewed and ready.



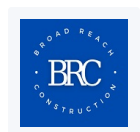
Hotel Renovation Budget Breakdown

Typical Hotel Renovation Cost Allocation



- Guest Room Upgrades (40)
- Public Areas (Lobby, Corridors, Am... (25)
- Back-of-House/Infrastructure (15)
- FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures & Equipm... (10)
- Contingency (10)

This chart illustrates how renovation budgets are commonly allocated among major categories in the hotel industry. Source: Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals, 2024.



Post-Renovation Success: Launch Strategies for Growth

Congratulations—your renovations are complete! Now it's time to capitalize on your investment and show the world what's new. Launching your refreshed property should be an event: host a grand re-opening featuring tours, local press, and special rates. Invite loyal guests, business partners, and local influencers to experience your upgrades firsthand—then encourage them to share stories on social media and review sites.

Update all marketing collateral, from your website to sales brochures, highlighting key upgrades and new amenities. Roll out targeted promotions geared toward prior guests, event planners, and new market segments you aim to attract. Leverage the excitement by creating visual stories: before-and-after photos, testimonials, and video highlights of unveiling moments.

Above all, celebrate your team's role in achieving this milestone. Recognize both staff and partners who went the extra mile—and invite them to be ambassadors for your new spaces. Continuing to solicit guest feedback remains critical; use insights to fine-tune operations and address any emerging needs. Remember, your upgraded property is only as successful as the memorable experiences it continues to deliver.

The ultimate testament to a well-managed renovation is not just a gorgeous property, but guests who return, staff who shine, and a business that thrives for years to come. Congratulations on undertaking—and conquering—the balancing act of renovating while remaining open.



Celebrating Your Reopening



Grand Opening Event

Host a ribbon-cutting celebration with media coverage, live tours, and special amenities for your first wave of post-renovation guests.



Staff Appreciation

Acknowledge your team's resilience and hard work with rewards or recognition, turning them into ambassadors for your hotel's fresh new era.



VIP Guest Invitations

Send invitations to loyal guests or partners for sneak-previews, making them feel valued and included in your hotel's exciting evolution.

BUILDING HOSPITALITY WITHOUT CLOSING YOUR DOORS



The Hotel Owner's Guide to
Planning, Managing, and Successfully
Completing an Occupied Hotel
Renovation



PRACTICAL
PLANNING



PROTECT YOUR
GUESTS & STAFF



PROTECT
REVENUE



REDUCE RISK &
DISRUPTIONS



SUCCESSFUL
PROJECTS

This Hospitality Guide has been provided to assure you that Broad Reach Construction, with its 25 years of experience, has completed many hotel renovations and we understand the pressure hotel managers experience during remodeling.



To make an appointment with Kevin Morgan
about your project, call for an appointment

570-747-4488



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