

# KigoWorld '19: Simon Lehmann Shares How to Enhance the Guest Experience

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In a typically sunny vacation rental destination, your guest has awakened to the sound of rain pounding on the roof. After coffee and a cold bagel, the guest flies out the front door into a waiting car and is soaked.

If only there had been an umbrella in the apartment. But after turning the entire place upside down - looking in every cabinet, closet and corner – no umbrella was found. And the bagel further put a damper on the morning because it couldn't be cut in half to fit in the toaster. The knives were too dull, so it was eaten cold.

That's an unfortunate guest experience that could have been avoided if property management was more familiar with the home.

To deliver an [exceptional guest experience](#), vacation rental managers and operators need to place themselves in the shoes of the guest. That's the take of vacation rental industry expert Simon Lehmann.



## Understanding the guest experience firsthand

In addition to periodic inspections, spending a few nights – maybe a week – in a unit to get the feel of what a guest may experience is one way to ensure the ultimate experience.

“We expect a home life environment,” said Lehmann, who will lead a panel at [KigoWorld '19](#). “If it rains outside, you expect to have an umbrella. If you need to iron a shirt to go to party, you need to find an iron. If you want to blow dry your hair, you need to have a blow dryer that has more power than a bicycle pump.”

Lehmann, CEO of [AJL Consulting](#) and a frequent speaker and moderator at vacation rental events, believes that short-term rental operators must be keenly aware of the product they are leasing in order to provide the quality of experience that the industry is striving to achieve.

At KigoWorld, he and industry leaders will discuss how leading vacation rental management companies are growing through the utilization of different business models, operational practices and strategic initiatives. The session will also cover how the industry is leveraging new technologies to supplement and grow inventory and demand while simultaneously enhancing the guest experience.

An intimate understanding of the product you're leasing is one way the industry can balance what Lehmann calls the host-centric and guest-centric experiences.

"We have to get the experience right," he said. "Stay at your property at least a week once a year. Check it out to understand what the guest is looking for. There are a lot of technologies out there and you expect the same thing you have at home.

"If an owner hasn't stayed in the property, he doesn't realize there isn't an umbrella in the apartment."

## Leveraging home automation to enhance a guest's stay

Owners and operators should also leverage technologies far and above a simple umbrella, whether through smart features in the unit or [guest communication tools](#). Last year, Lehmann spoke at KigoWorld about the evolution of the vacation rental industry and since then he's seen a growing adoption of household automation.

He believes home automation is one of the key trends that industry professionals should have on their radar. Through it, guests can not only experience some of the things they have in their own homes but also better familiarize themselves with their surroundings. Voice control devices in the apartment, for example, can provide information and recommendations regarding attractions, services, restaurants, etc., should be at the fingertips.

But Lehmann adds that a balance should be found between how different guests want to communicate and receive information. Just because Alexa is good for one guest doesn't mean she's good for the other.

"There is a big argument about voice control devices on the property," he said. "Some people want to have them and others want to interact directly. We need to respect what our guests want while they are on the property."

## Tightening the bond between owner and operator

Creating an exceptional guest experience can lead to positive online reviews of the property and strengthen an owner's position in the marketplace. [Kigo Guest Experience](#) empowers owners to maximize investment through upselling tours and activities.

The value of the guest experience also tightens the bond between owner and operator.

"It creates a better relationship with the owners," Lehmann said. "It gives owners a reason to invest and creates a better return while increasing the quality of the guest experience."

Learn more about Lehmann's insights into the vacation rental industry. [Sign up for KigoWorld today!](#)