

Marriott chain directing focus on millennials

By Alexandra Wolfe, Wall Street Journal

Bill Marriott, the 82-year-old chairman of Marriott International, the \$19 billion hotel-management company, is done with flowered drapes and white tablecloths. In place of fusty bedspreads and fluffy carpets, he wants most of his 200 new luxury and lifestyle hotel projects to be filled with sleek flat-screen TVs, hardwood floors and hopping bars.

“We’ve got to be cool!” Marriott exclaims, sitting in one of the last bastions of the old Marriott aesthetic -- his office. Surrounded by oil paintings, old photographs and a model boat, his sprawling suite in his company’s headquarters in Bethesda, Md., is exactly what the future of Marriott hotels will not look like. It will look instead like the hotel company’s innovation lab a few floors below, where mock rooms are being built in a cavernous space to be tested among 20-somethings.

Later this summer, Marriott will launch its new hotel chain, Moxy Hotels, aimed at the millennial generation (roughly ages 18 to 33). In partnership with Inter Hospitality Holding, the hotels will feature small, low-cost rooms with grab-and-go food and the feel of a Silicon Valley startup.

“In four years, 60 percent of our business will be millennials,” says Marriott, who adds with a laugh, “All of us old folks are moving on.”

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