

A FULL EXPERIENCE  
IN A SMALL AND INTIMATE HOTEL  
WITH HISTORIC FLAVOR

## RED TEAM

### Hotel Management Software Development Project

#### [Deliverable 2: Business domain/environment, & client questionnaire]

SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2022



#### Client Information :

**Hôtel Manoir Ramezay – Vivian (Proprietor)**

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## I. Statement of Prior Work

The work herein is possible in part due cumulative learning assignments and projects undertaken in the past, as part of the team's Software Development curriculum. As such, some of the ideas or technical skills used in this project originate partially from prior work. The table below lists past projects undertaken by members of the Red Team, which may contribute in part to elements found in the scope of this project.

Past Projects	Tools Used	Contributor(s)
Mock-ups for personal websites, Application Dev 1	Adobe Photoshop, Cava, Figma	All membres
Simulation Program	Java and Java Swing	Chi-Tao Li
Car Rental System	MS SQL Server	All members
Inventory Management System	Apache Derby Database, Java, and Java Swing	Patrick Larocque
Issue Tacker	C#, Google API, .NET, Firebase	Patrick Larocque
Added Prior Works used for this deliverable	Tools Used	Contributor(s)
Deliverable 1 Report	MS Word, Instagantt.com (for Gantt Chart),	All members

## **II. Executive Overview**

The following document outlines the red team's research activities with respects to Manoir Ramezay's business domain and business environment. The reader will also find a summarized client profile, and a preliminary assessment of the business problems affecting Manoir Ramezay, as they are currently understood, and considering the research conducted thus far. To conclude, this report will outline a series of business specific questions, for which the team's research activities did not yield satisfactory answers. The purpose of these questions is to gain a better understanding of the specific business processes in place at Manoir Ramezay.

Business domain research was conducted to better contextualize the business processes at Manoir Ramezay. Furthermore, the red team sought to better understand the trends and standard practices present in the hotel industry. Business environment research was conducted such that the red team may better understand how Manoir Ramezay has positioned itself in relation to the rest of the industry, its competitors, and the local market. In this section, the reader will find specific details and facts about the business, along with relevant information about the world in which the business operates. Following this section, the reader will find an updated client profile, describing the staff's general computer literacy and confidence with respects to IT systems. This section assures that any proposed business solutions are well suited to the staff that run Manoir Ramezay.

Afterwards, the reader will find an updated statement on the business problems affecting the business, considering the research conducted. Finally, the document will conclude with open questions and a questionnaire. These questions are aimed at uncovering the specific, day-to-day operations at Manoir Ramezay, such that the red team may refine its understanding of the problems the business is facing, along with what processes may or may not contributing be contributing factors. Along with business domain and environment research, which contextualizes business operations and informs the team's open questions, the red team hopes that understanding the business processes, information systems, and staff at Manoir Ramezay will allow for a better diagnosis of the business problems and prototype solutions.

### **III. Introduction**

This document is the second deliverable in a series of documents aimed at the assessment and diagnosis of business problems affecting a potential sponsor. The red team introduced Manoir Ramezay as that sponsor. The red team made a preliminary statement about Manoir Ramezay's business problems, based on the information available at the time, which deliverable two will attempt to build on. Furthermore, the red team's leader Li Yu has also elaborated the detailed and new areas of responsibilities to each member for the upcoming deliverables in the team's logbook submission which will be submitted at a later date.

### **IV. Description of the Business Domain**

Manoir Ramezay – Hotel, Restaurant and Spa, is a business-to-customer (B2C) model. They operate within the hospitality industry, more specifically within the hotel industry. The hotel industry is a service-oriented domain, which deals primarily with guest accommodation or lodgings, but also often intersects with food and drink services, events, and the tourism industry more broadly. The services provided to guests can vary quite drastically from one hotel to another, and hotel owners generally aim to attract a particular type of customer through their pricing model and marketing strategy, or via the range of services they offer. Manoir Ramezay is a small hotel aiming to provide a short-term or long-term stay for guests. They also provide accommodations for guests that are attending special events, such as weddings, work functions, leisure events, conferences, or similar events in the surrounding area.

(<https://www.revfine.com/hotel-industry/>, 2022)

There are a variety of hotel types that typically can be categorized by size, function, services, amenities, and cost. Hotels may fall into various categories. There are chain hotels, boutique hotels, all-inclusive resorts, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, hotels that specialize in meeting and conference spaces or events, and a vast number of other speciality lodging establishments. Manoir Ramezay falls somewhere along the lines of a traditional full-service hotel and a bed and breakfast or auberge. The hotel offers overnight accommodations, meals, a

spa and other relaxation and leisure services. They are mainly aimed at travellers or tourists, although locals may also use them. This category of hotel provides private rooms, and always have en-suite bathrooms. Room types also vary greatly depending on the type of hotel. There are single, double, triple, or greater occupancy rooms, apartment-style rooms, connection or joining rooms, among other room configurations. (<https://hoteltechreport.com/news/room-type> , 2022)

Within the hotel industry, a star rating system is used to provide a measure of the quality and amenities of a hotel. Hotels can receive a rating of 1 to 5 stars, with 1 being the most basic and 5 being the most extravagant. Choosing a hotel stay can be challenging and confusing when there exists so many options to choose from, however, clients typically choose features in function of the purpose of their stay. Once travelers select a particular hotel they are interested in, their next steps are navigating the hotel ratings, reviews, and comments. Although the star rating system roughly equates to the quality of a hotel, there is no international standard for defining exactly what star ratings mean in every case. Visitors will nonetheless commonly narrow down their search using the hotel star system. Although word of mouth and feedback from other customers is important, the star rating can carry extra weight, because many customers take the time to research hotels before making a reservation. Keeping or moving up a star rating can help hotels to generate more revenue and bookings, while moving down can have the opposite effect. Manoir Ramezey offers an average price for a 3-star hotel with decent rooms.

It is essential for hotel owners to keep pace with the latest hotel trends because one of the most important abilities is to meet customer expectations. The outbreak of COVID-19 has greatly affected the industry, and how visitors choose hotels moving forward. Visitors pay much closer attention to safety, hygiene, and contactless services. As a result of the pandemic, some amenities, such as food and drinks, or room service, have been suspended or limited and many guests will order-in from restaurants outside the hotel instead. Hand-sanitizing stations at the front desk and in the common areas may help customers feel safer. Guests are inclined to look elsewhere when safety standards are not satisfactory.

The hotel industry actively makes use of many different software tools to run their businesses as efficiently as profitably as possible. Some of the popular software products

commonly used the industry include hotel management software. used primarily by front desk staff, these are typically general-purpose tools used to manage room bookings, check-ins and check-outs, scheduling maintenance or room services, and other affairs related to the management of the property itself. Other common tools are revenue management systems, used primarily by finance and accounting staff to manage the businesses finances. There are also rate-shopping applications to track the going-rate of the hotel's competitors. There are review and reputation management tools, which help manage customer sentiment and feedback. Depending on the amenities at the hotel, the staff may also utilize tools pertaining to specific services offered, such as a POS system in the restaurant.

## **V. Description of the Business Environment**

Manoir Ramezay is a 3-star hotel located in Marieville. Marieville is a primarily French speaking suburban town in the Canadian province of Quebec. Marieville has a population of 11,332 and it is in the Montérégie region, about thirty kilometres east of Montréal.

Since Marieville is a small town on the outskirts of a large metropolitan area, Manoir Ramezay is the only hotel located in the municipality. As a result, the hotel does not have any immediate competitors located in Marieville. There is a public park across the street, where, during the summer, several local events are held, allowing guest to have easy access to local cultural or speciality events that take place there. The CHSLD Sainte-Croix is only a 5-minute commute by foot from the hotel. Visitors that travel to Marieville to visit their friends or family at CHSLD Sainte-Croix may choose to stay at Manoir Ramezay, given its proximity. Guests may also elect this hotel to attend business events in the nearby area, given that Marieville services a relatively large area. There are nearby grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants in walking distance from the hotel, offering necessities or leisure for guests.

Manoir Ramezay has a ground floor, a second floor, and a basement, where the restaurant is located. The hotel is equipped with an elevator, to facilitate accessibility and to allow for easier access to the basement and second floor, especially for supplies or inventory. The hotel

provides free parking for guests. The parking lot is located behind the hotel and includes 16 parking spaces. Guests can also enter the hotel from parking lot using the rear entrance.

The hotel has their own [website](#). The website includes features typical for a hotel business, including a landing page which introduces the hotel along with images of its amenities, pages that describe the services offered including the restaurant, spa, room features and configurations, along with general contact information. As mentioned, the restaurant is located in the basement, and it has a large dining space and a separate bar area. However, due to staff shortages and repeated COVID-19 restrictions, Manoir Razemay has opted to convert the restaurant into a rental kitchen or a space available for events, when availabilities permit. The breakfast service has also been suspended due to the pandemic. Similarly, prior to the pandemic, the hotel offered a full spa service, including an urban spa with a hot tub, and massage services. Management has also opted a rental service model for the spa amenities for the time being.

The hotel features five standard rooms, with one double bed in each room. There are four deluxe double rooms, each with a larger queen bed. Finally, there are four suites available. The first features a fireplace, sitting area with a futon, and a queen-sized bed. The second is a larger room with a queen-sized bed and a double bed. The third features a king-sized bed and an upgraded bathroom and a bathtub and separate shower, along with direct access to the rooftop terrace. The last suite, called the royal suite, features an open kitchen, a queen-sized bed and a sofa; it too has direct access to the rooftop terrace. All the suites have en-suite bathrooms.

([http://www.manoirramezay.com/index\\_e.html](http://www.manoirramezay.com/index_e.html), 2022)

When clients have chosen their rooms and are ready to check availabilities, they are taken to an online booking portal, using an integrated booking platform called FreeToBook. Here, they can select the number of guests, the dates of their stay, along with their chosen room. They will then be directed to a page where they will be asked for their personal information, before proceeding to payment. The same booking options are available through third party booking platforms, namely Expedia, Booking.com and AirBnB.



## **VI. Description of the Client**

The owners of Manoir Ramezay are a couple, Vivian, and her husband. They purchased the business roughly 4 years ago. They are of Chinese ethnicity, and they immigrated from China to Canada with their two children. They primarily speak Mandarin, conversational English, and limited amount of French. However, during the four years they have been operating the hotel, their French has improved. However, they feel that it is still somewhat of a barrier when communicating with exclusively French speaking clients.

Their primary method of bookkeeping is to keep a record of reservations inside of a physical ledger, which is updated each time a booking is made through any of the various booking channels. They may also print booking confirmations they receive via email, for the purpose of bookkeeping. They do not have a unified database, or a software solution would allow them to reference previous bookings or repeat clients. They have kept most of the legacy systems in place, from when the business was purchased 4 years ago. They have not modified the website, other than for the purposes of COVID updates, and much of the management practices have remained unchanged. Their business has grown since it was acquired, and the staff at Manoir Ramezay has voiced their desire to improve and modernize their management systems to solve the business problems they see themselves facing.

Regarding the staff's computer skills, the owners have working knowledge of Microsoft's Office suite, along with a basic understanding of navigating the web, and using email services. The accountant uses QuickBooks to manage the finances of the business. The cleaning staff do not use any software tools on a day-to-day basis to complete their duties. Management has expressed a willingness to learn any new software tools, should it help them operate their business and solve their current business problems.

## **VII. Description of the Business Problem**

The hotel doesn't have an efficient system in place to keep track room availability across all their booking channels. When a room is booked through one of their platforms, front-desk

staff must update a physical ledger or print out a confirmation from a third-party platform. Front desk staff must then manually change the room's availabilities across all other platforms to avoid duplicate bookings and to reflect the actual availabilities. This is a very inefficient process, especially when the hotel is busy, during the summer months. The front-desk staff is often preoccupied with assisting on-site clients and fulfilling requests, so much so that they are unable to keep up with the current methods of data entry. The potential for double bookings, and overworked front-desk staff may lead to a poor experience for the client, leading them to choose another establishment in the future. Moreover, if a repeat client returns to the hotel to book a room, the front-desk staff must reference the physical ledger or paperwork to find their personal information or preferences (if any were noted). This often leads to the client having to repeat much of the same information that was given during prior visits.

As it stands, the current business problem has to do with efficient booking management. The current process is inefficient, leading to inaccurate room tallies, overworked front-desk staff, an inability to answer client questions and the potential for a poor client experience as a result. Writing down all guests' information on paper is a slow and error prone process and appears to be a pain point with respects to the hotel's day to day operations. Front-desk employees need to be able to quickly verify guest's personal information for the check-in and check-out process to be as seamless as possible. Booking and client information is spread across many tools and platforms, each needing to be cross-referenced every time a booking is made. This creates a bottle-neck for the business, if it wishes to continue growing.

## VIII. Open Questions

Manoir Ramezay, is a Hotel, Restaurant & Spa that has been in business for over 12 years in Marieville, Quebec. To better understand how their business operates, the red team has conducted business domain and environment research. However, to best diagnosis the business problems facing Manoir Ramezay, there are several key pieces of information that remain inaccessible to the team through research alone. That is why we have set out to prepare a series of questions aimed at understanding the specific business processes and information systems currently in place at Manoir Ramezay. Such questions include how booking are presently managed at the hotel. How do they update their records? Which staff member modifies the room availabilities? Is there a way to view users' profiles? How do they check if a room is available? Do the prices of the rooms change? Can booking records be changed? If so, how?

This kind of information is important because it will allow our team to better assess the problems facing the business. Moreover, understanding the responsibilities of the staff, and the sort of work each of them do, along with their competencies, will ultimately assist in assessing the problems at hand, and render any prototype solution more suitable. Who is most effected by the problems on a day-to-day basis and what tools are currently used? What level are the staff's computer and technical skills? Do the employees speak primarily English, or French, or another language? Besides the reception, does the Hotel utilize any other kind of business or management software? If so, what are they and who uses them? This will help our team assess how skilled employees are with computers which will help us design a user-friendly prototype. Also have they ever overbooked a room? If so, what are the processes or events that lead to the overbooking? This sort of information is relevant to solving the right problems in the right context.

With respects to the client's booking experience, can users register to the hotel and view or modify their personal profile? Can users book a room on any specific date, or modify the dates they originally chose? Can the users modify their check-in time before arrival? What about their check-out time? If yes, are there cutoff times for that? The red team would like to know about

Manoir Ramezay's regular clients. How many clients can Manoir Ramezay accommodate? What booking platforms or methods are most popular? Can staff access the hotel's booking history?

Finally, we want to have general information about the major challenges that Manoir Ramezay sees itself facing. What are the most profitable, or least profitable, most problematic, or least problematic components of their business? What are their objectives moving forward? How might software help them moving forward? What would they most like to see solved, and what is most pressing? Do they have competitors elsewhere, that they feel is affecting their business negatively? This information would allow the red team to better understand the business' objectives, along with their business' problems, to provide the best assessment possible.

## **IX. Questionnaires**

1. How would you rate your computer skills? What about those of your employees?
2. What kind of operating system and software management system is used at your hotel?
3. Who in your hotel manages the day-to-day interactions with the clients? Who manages the staff?
4. How do you hire staff and what skills do you look for in a new hire?
5. Do you offer training to your employees, and if so, how long would it take to become effective?
6. Do you want all employees to have the same access to the software management system?
7. Do you advertise your hotel? If so, through what methods? Do these advertisements lead to new bookings? If so, through what channels?
8. What booking platforms or methods are most popular?
9. Which season is busiest? Is it possible for you to anticipate or estimate the volume of bookings on a daily, monthly, or seasonal timeline?
10. What pieces of information need to be collected from a client to complete a booking? Where is this information kept once it is recorded? How long does it need to be kept?
11. Can users give feedback? Where might they do so? Is feedback addressed?
12. What are the major challenges and problems you see the hotel facing?

13. How long have these problems persisted? Have they gotten worse? What has made them worse?
14. What adjustments has the company made to overcome these problems?
15. Have there been any recent improvements at your hotel?
16. How is inventory managed or kept track of (cleaning or food and drink supplies for example)?
17. Do you have any strategic annual plan to expand your business and what is the business' main objectives moving forward?
19. What kind of information is available through FreeToBook? Is it an expandable service?
20. What kind of reports does the hotel produce, and how often? (Financial/Tax, Availability, Day/Week/Monthly, etc.)

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