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Role of Digital Marketing in the growth of a hotel Perspective of The Connaught, London:A case study of Maybourne hotel group

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I hereby declare that this is my own work and not submitted before. I did my research and critical thinking only except where indicated the citations from the respected authors.

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Table Of Contents   **Page No**

Chapter 4
Data presentation and analysis
4.1 Introduction

Chapter 5
Discussion

Chapter 6
Conclusion
6.1 Conclusion
6.2 Recommendations
6.4 Research limitations and the recommendations for the future researcher

References

List of figures
Figure 3.1; a six phase approach to thematic analysis
Figure 4.1: digital marketing and its elements
Figure 4.2: Key benefits of social media marketing

Figure 4.3: role and purpose of e-mail marketing

Figure 4.4: role and purpose of SEO marketing

Figure 4.5: role and purpose of WA in digital marketing

Figure 4.6: role and purpose of rating and review in digital marketing

Figure 4.7: role and purpose of rating and review in digital marketing

List of appendix
Appendix A: Interview questionnaire
Appendix B: coding table

Appendix C;:Details of research participants

Executive Summary

Purpose: overall purpose of this study is to examine the role of digital marketing in the development of luxury hotels. The study delves to explore and analyse various digital marketing media, strategies and tools of a luxury hotel, the Maybourne hotel group. The study analyses how digital marketing strategies, tools and tactics are used by the Maybourne hotel group for creating superior customer experience. After analyzing the role and significance of various digital media such as e-mail, social media and SEO in the marketing domain of the luxury hotel, the Maybourne hotel group, this study analyses the role of digital marketing in competitiveness of the hotel.

Methods: This study adheres with the qualitative research method. By using semi-structured interviewing techniques, this study collects qualitative data from 5 research participants drawn from the Maybourne hotel group. By using thematic data analysis technique, this study undertakes analysis of primary data.

Findings; this study finds that the Maybourne hotel group deploys digital marketing media such as e-mail, social media and SEO to attract, serve and retain customers.

Recommendation; this report makes a pertinent recommendation that Maybourne hotel group should focus on driving social media engagement by encouraging customers to offer feedback and opinion via social media pages.

Declaration of originality

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I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude and sincere thanks to My supervisor Professor Harishchnadra Jyawali for all of his support and guidance throughout the project.
I would also like to thank all research participants, who rendered voluntary contribution to provide some crucial insight for the research

ETHICS APPROVAL

Role of Digital Marketing in the growth of a hotel Perspective of The Connaught, London P143336

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant: Fahad Shakeel

Project Title: Role of Digital Marketing in the growth of a hotel Perspective of The Connaught, London

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

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Page 1 16 Oct 2022

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Research background

Over the past three decades, digitization has continued to redefine the global travel and tourism industry. There has been a remarkable surge in consumers' demand for digital travel and tourism related services. Growing number of consumers are seeking reviews from websites such as tripadvisor, makemytrip etc before booking hotels and other tourism related services. Uses of mobile apps and virtual tours for booking hotels, check-in to a hotel room or finding tourist attractions have increased significantly (statista, 2023). The purchase decision making process in the hospitality industry is complex mainly because of the proliferation of interactive technologies and mobile devices (Mahrous1 and Hassan, 2017). This is the reason that digital and social media strategies have been continuously shaping the overall marketing strategy of hotels. A recent survey hints that 40% of millennials select a hotel on the basis of its "instagramability" (businesswire, 2023).

Today the competitive advantage of luxury hoteliers is principally contingent on their flexible and forward thinking approach towards digital marketing. Factors such as optimizing customers' experience on customers' data, articulating authentic brand using compatible digital marketing strategy, harnessing the optimal advantage of users' generated contents and using authentic brand content to build desirable brand image have started playing increasingly important role in the overall marketing strategy of firms operating from the hospitality industry (LUXE, 2021). It is important to cite that the covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation in almost every industry and the hospitality industry is no exception. Nevertheless, emerging technologies such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Internet of Things (IoT) and some others have continued to transform both the competitive and marketing landscape of the hospitality industry in the contemporary industry 4.0 epochs. It is important to argue that the hotel industry is a service dominated

industry and emerging technologies are playing an increasingly important role in promoting the uses of self service technologies, which not only help hotels to optimize operational efficiency but also redefine marketing activities from the perspective of customers. For instance, VR applications can make a major difference in the booking stage of a hotel because customers can make a much clearer sense of the overall environment of the hotel using VR applications.   VR applications are increasingly used by hotels to provide video tours and 360 degree views of the property. On the other hand, AR technology is deployed by hotels to enhance customers' indoor experiences (Boston Hospitality Review, 2021). The covid-19 pandemic has enhanced the role of digital technologies in customers' journey. It has necessitated the role of multiple contactless technological touchpoints in customers' journey to ensure safety and hygiene of customers (Pillai et al., 2021).

This research intends to examine how digital marketing strategies are deployed in luxury hotels to maintain and strengthen competitive position in the hotel industry. A luxury hotel can be defined as a hotel that offers luxurious and high quality experience to guests. Luxury hotels generally target high paying customers (Mordor Intelligence, 2019).   However, the extant literature on the role of digital marketing on competitiveness of the luxury hotel is only sparse. More importantly, there is a lack of clarity about the definition of digital marketing. Many digital tools and technologies such as the internet, wireless, AR, VR and many others are used for both operational and marketing purposes. Nevertheless, this research remains dedicated to examine the role of digital marketing in the development and competitive advantage of a luxury hotel, Maybourne hotel group. According to Chaffey et al., (2009), digital or internet marketing can be defined as attainment of key marketing objectives through the deployment of digital technologies. Digital marketing principally concerns use of digital technologies to enhance knowledge about customers by matching their needs (Chaffey, 2013)**.** This operational definition of digital marketing insinuates that digital technologies serve both operational and marketing purposes. Nevertheless, ignoring the importance of social media marketing will only contribute towards undermining the

scope and overall significance of digital marketing for hotels. Succinctly, social media marketing allows the hotel to connect with potential customers, boasts the visibility of the brand or the hotel and makes vital contributions in enhancing revenue flow of the hotel. But why social media plays a crucial role in fostering effectiveness of the overall marketing strategy of a hotel operating from the hotel industry of a developed country like the UK. Importantly, there are 61.67 million users of social networks in the UK. Social media penetration in the UK is as high as 84%, which is the second largest in the world (statista, 2023). Facebook has more than 51.34 million users in the UK. But instagram is most popular amongst 25-34 year old people. Moreover, Linkedin is the most popular social media site among professionals (Dixon, 2023). Therefore, social media not only expands the reach of the hotel but also helps in demography based customer targeting.

Furthermore, an interesting trend of seeking advice from trusted influencers is becoming more prominent in the contemporary hospitality industry. People of younger age cohorts follow accounts of travel influencers on popular social media such as Instagram, Facebok, YouTube, Pinterest and few others and seek their suggestion whilst making hotel reservations and availing other forms of hospitality services. Influencers are acting as a source of influencers for customers of the hospitality industry. Nevertheless, sole importance to influencer driven brand contents may not effectively serve the overall marketing purpose of firms operating from the hotel industry. Social media marketing can play an increasingly important role in fostering the online presence of the hotel. Development and implementation of efficient social media strategy can help the hotel to build customer base and gain wider recognition in the industry. Social media has potential to create new ways of attracting, targeting and winning customers for the hotel. For instance, social media marketing tactics such as sharing videos using means such as instagram or facebook reels have great prospects of engaging customers with the brand. Similarly, a tactic using a travel influencer or a celebrity can help a hotel to expand its reach to followers (McLoughlin, 2022). Many potential customers of the hotel often seek and compare reviews and ratings on social

media sites such as tripadvisor before making a hotel reservation (Locallle, 2021).

The current study principally pays attention to identifying and analyzing the role of digital marketing including social marketing on competitive advantage of the Maybourne hotel groupMaybourne hotel group is a British luxury hotel chain that owns and manages a few of London's and the world's most renowned luxury hotels. The hotel has successfully lived to the luxury expectations of customers because of multiple factors including heritage, location and world class service quality. The Maybourne hotel group manages some of the world's best hotels such as The Connaught, Claridge's, The Berkeley, The Maybourne Beverly Hills, The Emory, and The Maybourne Riviera. Each hotel managed by the hotel group retains its own timeless appeal and distinctive service facilities and quality. This study aims to achieve the following research question and objectives.

Research question: What is the role of digital marketing in the development of luxury hotels?

1. To understand various digital marketing tools and techniques applied by Maybourne hotel group
2. To explore and analyse role of digital marketing in creating superior guest experience in Maybourne hotel group
3. To examine the role of digital and social media marketing strategies in the competiveness of Maybourne hotel group
4. To recommend how Maybourne hotel group can foster effectiveness of digital marketing strategies

2. The scope of project

The project scope is confined to building understanding of digital marketing strategies, tactics, tools and techniques deployed in luxury hotels such as Maybourne hotel group. The project further seeks to enrich understanding about the role of digital marketing in fostering competitiveness of Maybourne hotel group. The project examines implications of digital marketing on sales, customer acquisition and retention. Importantly, scope of digital

marketing strategies, tools and tactics extend to operation management (OM), customer relationship management (CRM) and Supplier Relationship Management (SRM). However, the current research does not examine these additional areas having linkages with digital marketing.

3. Rationale of the project

In the contemporary age of the internet, digital marketing or marketing strategies mediated by the internet has gained significant ground. In fact digital marketing has become a mainstream and traditional marketing paradigm is gradually losing its relevance. The emergence of social media has dramatically changed the marketing communication between marketers and customers. Digital marketing tools and techniques including social marketing have produced a transformative impact on the marketing landscape of the industry as well. The extant literature only helps in building understanding of the growing role of digital and social media marketing strategies in the tourism and hospitality industry. This research makes attempts to understand how digital marketing strategies are applied and create value for a luxury five star hotel such as Maybourne hotel group. The current research justifies its rationale as digital marketing has become a major element of competitiveness in the hotel industry.

4. An overview of the project

This project is divided in following chapters:
Chapter 1: this chapter concisely explains the research background, scope and rationale of the project. This chapter also draws key research objectives.
Chapter 2: This chapter explores theoretical underpinnings concerning digital marketing strategies, tools and techniques. This chapter also critically evaluates the role of digital marketing in competitiveness of hotels. By drawing upon pertinent theories and literature, this chapter draws the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3; this chapter mainly concerns key components of research methodology that the author has used for completing this research. This chapter resolves key methodological issues including research paradigm, research approach, research strategy and method of collecting and analyzing data. This chapter also expounds key ethical considerations that the author has used for collecting data. Finally, this chapter identifies key research limitations

Chapter 4: this chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of primary data which has been collected by conducting interviews of research participants.

Chapter 5; by combining both primary and secondary research, this chapter presents discussion over the entire research and determines how effectively this research has been successful in accomplishing its key research objectives.

Chapter 6: this chapter presents conclusions over the entire research by reflecting on key research objectives and how this research has helped in addressing those research objectives. This chapter also makes some pertinent recommendations that will help Maybourne hotel group to enhance overall effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

Chapter 2
Literature review
2.1 Introduction

A digital marketing strategy can be defined as the use of online channels to build relationships between businesses and customers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Social media is one of the key components of digital marketing. Other elements of digital marketing include content marketing, e-commerce marketing, e-mail marketing and influencer marketing (Bala & Verma, 2018).

Digital marketing has evolved as an umbrella term to encompass a wide range of marketing tools and tactics that require digital technologies and the internet to target desired customers and customer segments. Digital marketing can be also conceived as an integral part of digital business transformation. Digital marketing also plays a crucial role in customer relationship management (Veleva, and Tsvetanova, 2020). Some recent studies have underlined that digital transformation is extremely pertinent for hotels as it helps in meeting the changing demand of customers and focusing on customer centric approach to deliver superior customer experience (Lam and Law, 2019). More importantly, the covid-19 pandemic has heightened the need of both digital marketing and digital transformation in the hospitality industry because emerging digital technologies have potential to deliver contactless travel and hospitality experience (Sorrells, 2020). Importantly, digital marketing is all about how a brand or the company is using digital media to generate sales and serve customers. Digital media is an umbrella term as it includes television, internet, radio, mobile phone, social media and several other digital media. However, the focus of digital marketing has remained more confined to the internet enabled digital media. Today, digital marketing is helping hotels to personalize and create unique and fulfilling hospitality experiences. However, hospitality needs, requirements of younger cohorts such as Gen Z and Gen Y are markedly different from needs and requirements of older age cohorts such as Gen X or the millennials. Order generations are more concerned with conventional hotels and car rentals. People of younger age cohorts, on the other hand, have preference for Airbnb

and Uber (Toress, 2018; Weisskopf, 2020). Nevertheless, Customers in the contemporary internet era are more empowered mainly because of two-way communication facilitated by digital media. Rightly, customers expect more, tell more and complain more.

The remaining section of this study reviews existing literature surrounding major themes such as importance of digital marketing for luxury hotels, digital marketing tools and techniques, role of social media in digital marketing role of Web Analytics (WA) in digital marketing and **Social** media marketing strategies and tactics of luxury hotels.

2.2 Importance of digital marketing for luxury hotels

A range of factors contributes towards the positioning of a hotel as a luxury hotel. However, maintaining the highest quality of services in its entire operations has vital implications on the luxury image of a hotel. It is important to note that many hospitality functions rely on Information Communication and Technology (ICT). Importantly, digital media and technologies have pervaded in the ICT landscape of the hotel industry. Importantly, digital technologies can help greatly in optimizing operations such as housekeeping, customer relationship management (CRM) and supplier relationship management (SRM). Optimising operations in these functional areas has great potential to confer competitive advantage to luxury hotels. Furthermore, digital media can be efficiently used by luxury hotels to engage customers through User Generated Content (UGC) which can help hotels to improve services based on needs and expectations of customers. Interestingly, new customers rely heavily on evaluating ratings and reviews of hotels before making final selection. People compare reviews of hotels on social media such as tripadvisor. However, social media can also expose hotels to negative reviews from the customers (Dimitrios et al., 2023).

3. Strategies, tools and technique of digital marketing

2.3.1 Digital marketing strategies

Digital marketing strategies concerns using electronic platforms to reduce customer acquisition and retention cost. For example, most companies use advertising on social media platforms such as facebook, twitter, TikTok, instagram and some others to acquire new customers at lower cost. Hotels are also using search engine

marketing such as Google ads or social media sites such as Tripadvisor and some others, specifically dedicated for the reviews, ranting and booking of hospitality and tourism services. Hotels can leverage big data for marketing purposes. Moreover, mobile applications can be used to enhance customers' experiences (Bhandari and Sin, 2023).

2.3.2 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO principally concerns increasing website traffic (organic) as well as optimizing the website traffic by enhancing the ranking of the website on search engine result pages. Importantly, SEO objectives cannot be achieved without efficient and purposeful content marketing. Content marketing drives digital activities on the internet. Digital marketing is all about branding or marketing products and services using digital media (Khmiadashvili, 2019). SEO renders crucial contributions in increasing visibility of the hotel, brand image and greater prospect of bookings. SEO can render a crucial contribution in increasing the brand awareness of the hotel on the internet (Damnjanović, Lončarić, and Dlačić, 2020). Importantly, the higher ranked website is more frequently visited by visitors. Subsequently, visitors can be converted into hotel guests. Nevertheless, there is no perfect recipe for achieving the higher ranked website on Google search page. Multiple strategies such as word search, local search, image search, video search or even institutional search can be deployed to gain the status of a higher ranked website. A hotel can also use tactics such as the location of the hotel, facilities and related news to generate more traffic for the website (Parvez et al., 2018).

2.3.3 Social media marketing

Social media has brought paradigmatic transformation in people's ubiquitous life. The application of social media marketing has increased in an unprecedented manner in the past two decades. It has been extensively used by companies not only to target and attract new customers but also for maintaining long term relationships with customers (Ruane and Wallace, 2013). Traditional marketing methods and tools only facilitated one-way interaction but the social media marketing paradigm is based on multi-way interaction (Scott, 2010). Importantly, social media has tremendous potential to create value fusion, which not only creates

value for individual customers but also for the entire network (Larivie`re et al., 2013). In the contemporary web 2.0 era, traditional push marketing has been gradually losing relevance. On the contrary, a pull form of marketing mediated by social media is more efficient in targeting and attracting customers (Lagrosen and Grunden, 2014).

Social media marketing uses various platforms and social networks such as mobile phones, facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, blogs and few others. Social media marketing principally strives to attract and engage customers by using compelling brand related contents. It also encourages users to share their views and opinions on brand related contents. Importantly, social media marketing plays an extremely crucial role in the hotel industry as it promotes hospitality products and services such as the quality and aesthetics of hotel rooms, breakfast, lunch, buffet, spa and many other facilities provided by the hotel. Almost all luxury hotels are using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the purpose of advertisement and brand awareness (Angella Jiyoung Kim & Eunju Ko 2012). It can be also argued that social media presence of the hotel is directly linked to hotel sales (Parvez et al., 2018).

A suitably designed social media strategy can enhance visibility of the luxury hotel remarkably. Social media can be used as a principal medium to remain in touch with existing customers. This can help the luxury hotel to generate recurring revenue from its existing customers. Importantly, serving existing customers is much cheaper than the cost incurred in attracting new customers. Therefore, social media strategy can indirectly boost hotel revenue (Dimitrios et al., 2023).

2.3.4 E-mail marketing

E-mail marketing is highly effective in offering personalized services and contents to customers in the hotel industry. E-mail marketing can be used by the hotel to inform guests about check-in time and other services. E-mail marketing tends to be highly personalized therefore, it becomes crucial aid in the decision making (Kotler and Koller, 2008). E-mail marketing can be used to offer hospitality related products and services directly to existing customers with the purpose of maintaining ongoing relationships (Miller, M. 2011). E-

mail marketing can offer multiple benefits to hoteliers including attracting new users or guests, retention of existing guests by creating a compelling offer for them and access to customers' data that can eventually help hoteliers to improve marketing communication and targeting. More importantly, e-mail marketing is far cheaper than other forms of marketing. It facilitates hoteliers to have complete control over marketing in terms of cost minimization and maximization of marketing objectives. It can be pursued in the form of newsletter marketing or campaigns (Cox and Koelzer. 2004). E-mail marketing can be successfully used by hoteliers to enhance guests' familiarity about the variety of products, services and benefits offered by hotels. It is important to contend that e-mail marketing is direct communication between the hotel and its potential and existing customers. Therefore, customers often tend to make independent decisions on e-mail marketing, without even evaluating offers of competitors (Batinić, 2015).

2.4 Social media marketing strategies and tactics of luxury hotels

Social media marketing of a luxury five star hotel is a complex task. A range of high quality contents can be used for attracting customers. But there is a lack of clarity on what types of social media brand communication strategies can prove effective in attracting customers. Luxury hotels marketing strategy remains reinforced at forming luxury narratives. According to Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2019), photographs play a crucial role in brand communication of luxury hotels. Mak (2017) argues that using photographs is a more effective brand communication tactic than using textual contents for luxury hotels. The extant literature hints that visual materials are more effective in capturing relationships between people and place and they are a more powerful tool of storytelling as well. Luxury brands extensively engage with brand conversation on social media to portray their uniqueness and differentiated brand image (Kim & Ko, 2010; Park et al., 2021).Online reviews are also used by customers as a measure of quality of services offered by the hotel. Online reviews also encourage hotels to improve upon quality of service in order to get favourable reviews from customers **(**Schuckert, M., Liu, X., & Law, R. (2015)**.** Most online reviews are presented in two sections: a) the

overall score, and b) the detailed description of service quality on various parameters (Schlosser, 2011). For instance, a review site, Tripadvisor, uses a five star rating system to provide ratings of different hotels. Such ratings sites also provide detailed description of service experience in the form of comments of users **(**Kim, Lim, & Brymer, 2015**).** Online reviews act as intermediary between the customers and the hotel (Bissell, 2012). Customers rate hotels on parameters such as satisfaction, quality of service etc. Some customers also post negative reviews if they feel dissatisfied with service quality. Therefore, management of reviews is a major area of concern for digital marketing (Dimitrios et al., 2023).

Furthermore, many hotels use promotional means such as photo competitions and gift vouchers to attract potential customers or retain existing customers. Digital media also play an important role in the development and implementation of such promotional strategies. In addition, many hotels have developed their own mobile apps or more precisely 'the digital reception' which integrates all internet communications ranging from booking of rooms to special treatment. Digital media is playing an increasingly important role in the personalization of hospitality services (Lagrosen and Grunden, 2014).

2.5 Role of Web Analytics (WA) in digital marketing

WA is extensively used by popular websites to collect customers' data and measure performance of digital marketing. WA can be defined as "*the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing Web usage*" (Web Analytics Association, 2008, p. 3). WA has been increasingly used by managers as an aid in the decision making. WA makes accurate and timely measurement of digital marketing metrics and makes an effective assessment of various digital marketing tools and their contribution in meeting key marketing objectives. It is important to argue that successful implementation of digital marketing strategies require simultaneous integration of a specific process and a specific set of strategies and methodologies on the web with clear objectives. Digital marketing strategies use different tools, platforms and social media to achieve stated marketing objectives (Saura, Palos-Sánchez and Cerdá Suárez, 2017). It is important to underline that customers interact with

companies via various digital channels. WA facilitates marketers or managers to track customers' interaction with the companies and measure how various digital media is effective in customer acquisitions and retention (Chaffey & Patron, 2012). Moreover, the WA data is used by managers to understand online customer behaviour. They facilitate managers to measure online customers' response towards digital marketing stimuli. In other words, WA helps managers to optimize digital marketing elements and actions that can eventually help in fostering consumer behaviour towards the products and services offered by the business (Nakatani & Chuang, 2011).

2.6 Conclusion

The extant literature helps in generating some interesting insight about the growing role and importance of digital marketing in the competitiveness of hotels. Digital marketing has become the most important marketing paradigm for hotels because its scope permeates to the operational landscape of the hotel. The available literature evidently underlines that digital marketing has significant influence on the revenue stream of the hotel, either directly or indirectly. However, the term digital marketing itself lacks a lucid definition. Nevertheless, this research builds insight that digital marketing works with certain elements, tools, tactics and strategies. Digital media is a much wider term but elements of digital marketing in the hotel industry can be summarized as SEO marketing, the hotel's website, e-mail marketing and social media marketing. The review of literature also insinuates that hotels can use a range of digital marketing strategies ranging from advertisement on popular social media platforms to development of apps to deliver customized customer experience. The literature also builds understanding that social media has acquired a central place in the overall digital marketing strategy of a five star luxury hotel. Social media not only helps the hotel pursue a pull marketing strategy but also helps to build long term relationships with the existing customers. Social media is two way communication media. This has facilitated hotels to interact with customers and make improvement in service quality based on customers' feedback and opinion. Social media marketing is also helping hotels to enhance its brand image and generate awareness about the brand amongst

potential customers. Digital marketing tools and techniques have great potential to create unique, innovative and fulfilling hospitality experiences for customers.

Chapter 3
Research methodology
3.1 Introduction
The current study has remained motivated to explore and analyse digital marketing strategies, tools and tactics deployed by luxury hotels to attract and retain customers. The study intends to examine the implications of digital marketing strategies, tools and tactics on the competitive advantage of luxury hotels. However, this study adopts a case study of Maybourne hotel group to understand how luxury hotels deploy digital marketing strategy. This study follows the qualitative research method principally because of its compatibility with case study approach.

3.2 Research philosophy
A researcher can select and adhere to the most suitable philosophical position by identifying from alternative research philosophies such as positivism and interpretivism. Positivism's philosophical position more precisely conforms to the quantitative research method because proponents of positivism research philosophy assert that the research must be conducted by applying rigorous scientific method and in a value free and objective manner. Nevertheless, adherence to positivism research philosophy does not permit the researcher to provide alternative explanations or capture divergent viewpoints. An interpretivism research philosophy, on the other hand, suggests that realities corresponding to the research issue are in fact grounded in research context. Moreover, an interpretive research paradigm helps in providing a deep insight into "*the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it*" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). The interpretivism research philosophy remains guided by a dominant assumption that reality is socially constructed and the ultimate objective of the researcher is to identify and examine socially constructed reality (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). In a broader sense, an interpretive philosophical position is compatible with the qualitative research method as it strives to examine social human problems in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Moreover, the current research adheres with the case study approach. Case study research approach can be defined as "*an empirical inquiry that investigates a*

contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Succinctly, it can be argued that the interpretive research paradigm is compatible with the qualitative research method and case study approach. Thus, selection of an interpretive research paradigm is justified in the current research.

3.3 Research approach

In a broader sense, either an inductive or a deductive approach can be used by the researcher. Deduction involves moving from general to specific. Induction, on the other hand, involves movement from specific to general. A deductive research approach is principally used for testing hypotheses. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the deductive researcher seeks to move from theory to hypothesis. However, the digital marketing discipline presently lacks theories that can be tested by operationalizing hypotheses. Interestingly, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the inductive researcher works from the "*bottom-up, using the participants' views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes*" (p. 23). This research follows the qualitative research method and case research strategy. Using a bottom up research approach and participants' views will help in developing a theory or framework by interconnecting themes which will eventually help in developing better understanding of marketing strategies followed by luxury hotels.

3.4 Research strategy

3.5 Method of data collection and analysis

Data collection

The current research uses both primary and secondary data. Secondary data sources include academic articles and journals, hospitality publications and the company's website. Primary data has been collected by conducting interviews of research participants. Research participants have been drawn from Maybourne hotel group. Overall sample size is composed of only 5 research participants. Semi structured interview questionnaire, which mainly contained a set of open ended questions, has been used to collect response from the interviewees. Use of a semi-structured interview questionnaire for conducting interviews also

helped in conducting interviews in a more informal environment. This helped interviewees to express their views freely. More importantly, the researcher relied on semi-structured interview transcripts to conduct interviews as it is a flexible way of conducting interviews. The researcher has added flexibility to change the wording of questions depending upon the direction of the interviews. This has helped the researcher to pose even additional questions to interviewees to capture emergent themes (Power et al 2010; Corbetta 2003). All interviews have been conducted in a face to face manner. The hotel employees working in the marketing department have participated in this research.

Data analysis

This research mainly deals with the qualitative nature of data. The qualitative data sets are complex as they largely contain unstructured data. The research has remained motivated to identify some interesting trends from the data that can be generalized. The researcher has used the thematic analysis technique to analyse data. Thematic analysis has been used because of its ability to analyse data by converting them into structured form. Codification of data has helped in identifying some interesting characteristics of data. Identifying important themes and collating them with codes helped in identifying important trends from the data set. According to Crawford et al., (2008), thematic analysis is useful when the researcher is motivated to discover common themes from the attitude, feelings and opinions of multiple research participants. Moreover, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) both data analysis and the theoretical element are combined in the analytical element in thematic analysis. The current study adopts a six phase approach to thematic analysis as described below (figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1; a six phase approach to thematic analysis

Adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2012

3.6 Ethical considerations

This research has made sincere attempts to adhere to high ethical standards. Extensive data has been retrieved from academic articles, journals and authentic websites. A rigorous process of referencing has been applied to provide credit for the authorship of data. Moreover, the principles of informed consent and voluntary research participation have been applied to recruit research participants and conduct their interviews.

3.7 Key limitations

This research principally makes uses of qualitative data collected from both primary and secondary sources. Thus, results of this study cannot be generalized over the entire population of interest, the luxury hotel industry. Key research findings of this study will more closely conform to Maybourne hotel group.

Chapter 4
Data presentation and analysis
4.1 Introduction

This section of study analyses primary data collected from the research participants. Employees working on job positions such as assistant marketing manager, marketing communication manager, sales executive, assistant relationship manager, assistant manager (reservation) and graduate management trainee have participated in interviews. This study analyses data using thematic data analysis technique. On the basis of codified data, this study has identified following themes:

Digital marketing tools
Social media marketing
E-mail marketing

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) marketing

Web analytics

Personalized communication and targeting
Reviews and ratings
Guest experience
Brand image and exclusivity

This section of study analyses data in accordance with research objectives, which has been identified in the preliminary section of this study. This section of study presents discussion on research findings along with themes identified above.

4.2 Data presentation and analysis

Research objective 1: to understand various digital marketing tools and techniques applied by Maybourne hotel group

Digital marketing tools

Most of the interviewee identified social media marketing, digital marketing and Email marketing as top three digital marketing tools used by Maybourne hotel group. Interviewee (1) states that Social

media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn are widely used by the hotel to connect with customers and promote the brand. Few interviewees hint that SEO plays a crucial role in marketing of the hotel. "*Many customers use Google search strategy to identify and locate luxury hotels and SEO help in targeting this customer segment*", stated interviewee (4). "SEO is a strategy used by hotels to increase their visibility on search engines like Google. This involves optimizing the hotel's website and content to rank higher on search engine results pages (SERPs) for relevant keywords. By ranking higher on SERPs, the hotel can attract more organic traffic to their website" argues interviewee (1). In addition, the majority of interviewees hint that e-mail marketing is widely used in the overall marketing strategy of luxury hotels like Maybourne hotel. Interviewee (1) argues that email marketing involves sending targeted messages to customers via email. "*The hotel uses email marketing to promote their services, special offers, and events' '*, points out research participant (1). "*Email marketing is also extensively used to nurture relationships with customers, providing them with personalized content and offers based on their preferences and interests*", further adds interviewee (1). Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of interviewees assert that WA plays an increasingly important role in monitoring and optimizing the performance of digital marketing campaigns.

Figure 4.1: digital marketing and its elements

In relation to research objective (1), this study identifies that key elements or components of digital of Maybourne hotel group are e-mail, social media, SEO and WA. The response of interviewees also helps in substantiating that each element of digital marketing serves a distinctive purpose in overall marketing of the hotel.

Research objective 2: examine the role of digital and social media marketing strategies in the competitiveness of Maybourne hotel group.

Social media marketing

  Majority of interviewees overwhelmingly emphasise that social media marketing plays an increasingly important role in developing long term relationships with customers by delivering upon customers' preferences. Majority of interviewees also hint that social media marketing is principally used for maintaining direct relationships with customers. The interviewee also emphasized that social media marketing is also effectively used for PR purposes. Social media marketing such as facebook marketing allows us to understand the guest's preferences. "Understanding the guest's preferences greatly helps in the personalization of service", argues interviewee (4). "*Social media can help hotels build relationships with their customers, share information about their services and offers, and create a community of loyal followers*" stated interviewee (1). "The luxury hotel marketing is all about creating and delivering highly personalized experiences to our valuable guests and social media marketing creates a mechanism on understanding guests' idiosyncratic taste and preferences", points out interviewee (5). However, interviewee (3) maintains that social media is the most effective tool to engage with customers and communicate them about the major attractions of the hotel. "Social media platforms allow the hotel to directly engage with their customers through comments, direct messages, and posts. It's important to respond promptly and professionally to any inquiries, complaints, or feedback from customers. By doing so, the hotel can show customers that they value their opinions and are willing to address any concerns" adds interviewee (3). Moreover, interviewee (2) argues that social media can be effectively used to drive new bookings. "Facebook page provides all relevant information including address, location, contact number and services provided by the hotel. It also helps new guests or potential guests to view feedback and views posted by previous guests" added research participant (2). In a similar vein, interviewee (1) maintains that

social media provides an opportunity to share useful and relevant content that is of interest to guests. "Moreover, social media platforms allow the hotel to personalize their interactions with customers. This can include customized content, targeted ads, and personalized messaging. By providing personalized experiences, the hotel can create a more intimate connection with their customers, which can lead to increased loyalty" added interviewee (4).

"By using a Facebook page, the hotel is frequently posting updates, photos, videos, and other useful and engaging content. Facebook also offers paid advertising options, including sponsored posts and targeted ads, " states interviewee (2). The hotel is using facebook ads to reach a wider target segment," points out the interviewee (1). Interviewee (1) further adds that the hotel is using instagram to post visually appealing photos and contents to impart a luxury brand image of the hotel to current and potential guests. Moreover, LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that is mainly used by the hotel to target the B2B customer segment of professionals. However, interviewee (5) maintains that a facebook or instragram page allows the hotel to build a loyal fan base. "The hotel is using social media to share updates, photos, and videos of the property, special offers and events", points out research participant (4). The Interviewee (4) also hints that social media marketing strategy also remains targeted at fostering brand engagement, brand visibility and brand awareness.

Furthermore, the interview (3) argues that the hotel is using hospitality social media such as tripadvisor to drive hotel bookings and overall visibility of the hotel. "Hospitality social media sites such as Tripadvisor provides all the relevant information including price, services provided by the hotel such as free wifi, parking, restaurant, gym, spa and many other facilities and services. It provides ratings and reviews that help the potential guest in the hotel room booking", argues interviewee (5). Most of the interviewees hint that social media marketing help the hotel to leverage social commerce feature as customers can directly call customer care or make reservation using facebook and instagram page. Majority of interviewees also hint that the hotel is using YouTube for posting visually appealing

videos to impart luxury brand image to wider audience. However, most of the interviewees also point out that the hotel is currently not using Youtube extensively for marketing purpose.

Figure 4.2: Key benefits of social media marketing

In relation to DM element social media marketing, this study finds that social media marketing serves key marketing purposes of the luxury hotel such as PR communication, brand engagement, brand visibility, brand awareness, brand image, increase in sales because of social commerce and building loyal pool of customers in the form brand community or followers of the brand.

E-mail marketing

Majority of interviewees maintain that e-mail marketing serves a crucial purpose to build long term relationships with customers. "*Email marketing is an effective way for the hotel to engage with existing customers and promote major attractions of the hotel. Our e-mail marketing strategy revolves around sending personalized emails to customers containing information such as booking confirmations, welcome emails, and post-stay follow-up emails*", points out interviewee (1). "*Email marketing is also used for the purpose of promoting special offers, events, and loyalty programs, and to encourage customers to leave reviews' '*, argues interviewee (2). Interviewee (5) argues that sending personalized messages such as festival greetings, anniversary or birthday wishes to existing customers help in attaining repeated visits of customers. Other interviewees also hint that e-mail marketing is the most effective medium of building a loyal customer base. However, research participant (4) argues that e-mail marketing is the most efficient marketing tool to operationalise loyalty programs. We are using e-mail to offer rewards such as free nights, upgrades, and exclusive discounts to our valued customers. Loyalty programs also remain targeted to offer highly personalized guest experiences.

Figure 4.3: role and purpose of e-mail marketing

The e-mail marketing is linked with key variables such as long term relationship, personalized communication with guest, exclusive offers targeted at repeat purchase or extracting life time value of customers and implementation of loyalty programs

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) marketing

It becomes increasingly evident from the response of the majority of interviewees that SEO marketing plays a crucial role in fostering brand visibility of the hotel in search engine platform. By optimizing their website for relevant keywords, the hotel is increasing its visibility in search engine results pages. SEO strategy is helping the potential customers discover the hotel when searching for accommodation options in a particular location in a specific segment such as a luxury hotel. However, interviewee (2) argues that SEO marketing is helping the hotel to attract higher quality traffic for the website. By targeting specific keywords and phrases, 'luxury hotel', 'five star hotels' and other similar phrases, the hotel is attracting customers who are searching for the services they offer. Moreover, research participant (3) argues that higher ranking on search engine results helps in fostering brand credibility of the hotel. *"People tend to trust search engines, so if a hotel appears at the top of search results for relevant keywords, it can help build trust and credibility with potential customers"* adds interviewee (3). Interestingly, interviewee (5) hints that SEO marketing is more cost effective than other forms of marketing. "SEO can prove to be a cost-effective way for the hotel to attract new customers. While it can take time and effort to optimize the website for SEO, the long-term benefits can be significant. Unlike paid advertising, which requires ongoing investment, the benefits of SEO can continue to accrue over time", points out the interviewee (5).

Figure 4.4: role and purpose of SEO marketing

Web analytics

An overwhelming majority of interviewees maintain that web analytics serve a crucial role and purpose in the marketing of a luxury hotel like Maybourne hotel group. Interviewee (1) argues that web analytics serve a crucial purpose in understanding users' behaviour. "Web analytics tools are helping in developing understanding about how users are interacting with the hotel website and digital marketing campaigns. By analyzing data such as page views, bounce rates, and session duration, the hotel is gaining insights into what is working well and what needs improvement", asserts interviewee (2). However, interviewee (3) argues that the overall purpose of web analytics is to optimize digital marketing campaigns. "By tracking the performance of different digital marketing campaigns, web analytics is helping the hotel to optimize campaigns and improve their effectiveness". "*Web analytics tools can provide insights into which campaigns are driving the most traffic and conversions, allowing the hotel to focus their efforts on the most effective campaigns*", adds the interviewee (3).

Furthermore, the interviewee (4) maintains that WA plays an extremely crucial role in optimizing users' overall experience of using the website of the hotel. Web analytics can help the hotel to identify areas of the website that need improvement to provide a better user experience. By analyzing data such as exit rates and heat maps, the hotel can take appropriate measures to optimize users' experience. Some interviewees also point out that WA can prove extremely useful in measuring Return on Investment (ROI) on digital marketing efforts. "*By tracking the performance of different*

campaigns and the revenue generated from those campaigns, the hotel can determine which campaigns are providing the highest return on investment and allocate their resources accordingly", maintains the interviewee (5).

Figure 4.5: role and purpose of WA in digital marketing

The primary research insinuates that WA is linked with favourable DM marketing outcomes such as monitoring of users' behaviour, optimizing DM campaigns, calculating ROI on DM investment, and optimisation of users' experience of using the website.

Reviews and ratings

Majority of interviewees hinted that digital marketing serves a crucial purpose in gaining and showcasing positive reviews and ratings. "The hotel monitors online reviews and responds to them promptly. Responding to reviews shows that the hotel values customer feedback and is committed to improving the guest experience" argues interviewee (1). Interviewee (2) further maintain that showcasing positive reviews and ratings across digital channels such as tripadvisor, social media and the hotel's website is crucial for winning trust of potential customers. Research participant (5) argues that management of negative reviews is crucial for the purpose of maintaining a positive and favourable brand image of the hotel. " We try to address negative reviews in a more professional manner by responding to negative reviews that the hotel is committed to addressing customer concerns and improving the guest experience", comments interviewee (5). "Today customers rely mainly on rating and reviews whilst booking a hotel. A five star rating signifies for the overall best quality reviews, which allow potential customers to comprehend how the actual customers have experienced their stay in the hotel in terms of room aesthetics, behaviour of staff and amenities", argues research participant (3). However, the interviewee (4) maintains that favourable and high rating helps in elevating customers' expectations on price-quality

continuum, for instance a five star rating conveys ultimate luxury accommodation experience with highest level of comfort and service quality. Moreover, the interviewee (4) also argues that gaining favourable rating and reviews are crucial for the luxury hotel as they help in building confidence of users in the hotel room booking.

Figure 4.6: role and purpose of rating and review in digital marketing

The primary research has helped in identifying the role and importance of reviews and ratings. High rating and favourable reviews are associated with favourable outcomes such as confidence in booking, brand credibility and trust, brand image, comfort and service quality and positive impact on purchase. Nevertheless, management of negative reviews is a prerequisite to build a consistent brand image as a credible brand to win the confidence of potential customers.

In relation to research objective (2), this study finds that DM marketing plays an extremely important role in fostering the competitiveness of the luxury hotel, Maybourne hotel group. Social media marketing serves key purposes such as *PR communication, brand engagement, brand visibility, brand image and brand awareness. Email marketing, on the other hand, helps in building long term relationships with customers with a purpose of building a loyal customer base and extract lifetime value from loyal customers. DM marketing helps in optimizing sales via reviews, ratings and booking sites and the website of the company. Succinctly, it can be argued that the competitiveness of the luxury hotel is increasingly dependent on DM.*

Research objective (3): to explore and analyse role of digital marketing in creating superior guest experience in Maybourne hotel group

Guest experience

Interviewees hint that the hotel is using digital marketing tools and tactics extensively to deliver superior guest experience. "E-*mail helps in imparting all relevant information from booking status to complementary services to customers*" argues the research participant (1). However, the interviewee (3) argues that e-mail helps in optimizing guests' experience by streamlining check-in process and intimating information such as hotel upgrades, early discounts and exclusive deals and offers. The interviewee (2) hints that the hotel has recently launched a mobile app. "Mobile apps are becoming increasingly popular among younger age cohorts. They provide guests with an easy and convenient way to interact with the hotel. Mobile apps are increasingly used to book rooms, order room service, request housekeeping, and more", argues the interviewee (2). "*By providing guests with a mobile app, the hotel makes an effort to streamline the guest experience and make it more efficient. The mobile app is playing a crucial role in elevating guests' levels of satisfaction and loyalty. The Hotel is also planning to use chatboats to improve guests' unhindered quality interaction with the hotel*", points out the interviewee (3). The interviewee (5) argues that the hotel regularly updates facebook, instagram and LinkedIn profile using popular stories and videos. "*This helps in fostering guests' engagement with the hotel*", maintains the interviewee (5).

Personalized communication and targeting

Majority of interviewees hinted that digital marketing including social media marketing and e-mail marketing are increasingly used by the hotel to target potential guests through personalized and customized contents. Interviewee (1) argues, "*One of the most effective digital marketing tactics for enhancing customer experience is personalized communication. This involves tailoring communications and offers to individual guests based on their preferences and past behaviors*". "*The Hotel uses data such as booking history, demographics, and interests to create personalized messaging that resonate with guests' requirements and expectations. By providing a personalized experience, the hotel makes an effort to make guests feel valued and increase the likelihood of repeat business*", points out research participant (2).

Brand image and exclusivity

It is obvious from the response of the majority of interviewees that digital marketing and social media marketing tools can be effectively utilized for building a favourable brand image of the hotel. "The hotel group is using social media to showcase its unique offerings and a sense of exclusivity. By sharing high-quality images and videos of the hotel's facilities, events, and amenities, the hotel has been successful in attracting the attention of potential customers and reinforces its brand image as a luxurious and exclusive destination", maintains the interviewee (1). *"We are using email marketing to stay in touch with their existing customers and keep them updated on the latest promotions, events, and offerings. By sending personalized and targeted emails to their customers, we are reinforcing the brand image as a provider of high-quality and exclusive experiences"*, argues the interviewee (2).

Furthermore, interviewee (3) hints that the website design also plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of exclusivity to potential customers. "A well-designed website that is visually appealing and easy to navigate can create a positive impression on potential customers and reinforce the hotel's image as a luxury destination. Additionally, the use of high-quality images and videos can help to showcase the hotel's facilities and amenities and create a sense of exclusivity" points out research participant (3).

Figure 4.7: role and purpose of rating and review in digital marketing

In relation to research objective (3), this study builds insight that delivering superior guest experience is an increasingly complex proposition for the luxury hotel such as Maybourne hotel group. Imparting superior and consistent brand experience involves targeted applications of various DM tools and components such as e-mail, social media, WA and the website. For instance, imparting superior and exclusive brand image of the luxury hotels increasingly

dependent on engaging customers through high quality contents, videos and images via social media. Concurrently, delivery of personalized communications and service necessitates judicious application of e-mail. WA, on the other hand, makes a critical contribution in understanding idiosyncratic taste and preferences of customers. Succinctly, it can be argued that DM plays an extremely crucial role in optimizing guest experience in a five star luxury hotel such as   Maybourne hotel group.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The technological change in the past two decades has brought dramatic transformation in the marketing landscape of companies operating from myriad industries and the hotel industry is no exception. In fact, digital marketing has become a mainstream marketing paradigm for the hotel industry. The role of digital marketing for hotels operating from the luxury hotel industry is even more significant because it creates multiple touchpoints to optimize customers' overall experience of consuming hospitality service. Plethora of digital marketing tools, techniques and platforms such as the website, SEO, e-mail, social media, mobile devices and some others are redefining the marketing landscape of the hotel industry. Online review and rating sites such as TripAdvisor and many others have made jobs of travel agents completely redundant (Mahrous and Hassan, 2017). The current study delved to analse the answer of a pertinent research question: what is the role of digital marketing in the development of luxury hotels. This study has remained focused to anlyse a particular case of Maybourne hotel group. Foremost objective of the current research was to understand various digital marketing tools and techniques applied

by Maybourne hotel group and their implications on the development of luxury hotels. The current research insinuates that Maybourne hotel group is currently using a wide range of digital marketing tools, tactics and strategy to attract customers, generate revenue and serve guests in the most efficient manner. The hotel is using digital media such as e-mail, the web site, search engine, social media and app to serve both existing and potential customers more efficiently. Each digital marketing tool or media serves a distinctive or seemingly different purpose. For instance, social media marketing strategies remain directed to foster customers' engagement with the brand. On the other hand, e-mail marketing remains directed at fostering long term relationships with customers.

The second objective of this study was to examine the role of digital and social media marketing strategies in the competitiveness of Maybourne hotel group. This research insinuates that digital marketing plays an extremely important role in fostering the competitiveness of the luxury hotel such as Maybourne hotel group because both current and future revenue stream of hotel is increasingly dependent on successful implementation of digital marketing strategies, tools and tactics. This research insinuates that Maybourne hotel group uses digital marketing strategy to optimize brand visibility, revenue stream and customer experience. The hotel is strategically using digital media such as social media, e-mail, SEO and rating and review sites to optimize revenue and build long term relationships with customers. The extant literature builds insight that online reviews serve the purpose of intermediary between the hotel and the customers (Bissell, 2012). Customers provide ratings to hotels in parameters such as service quality, ambience, satisfaction etc. In other words, ratings and reviews provided by customers serve as cue for the potential customers. This envisages that management of review can play an extremely crucial role in optimizing future revenue streams of the hotel (Dimitrios et al., 2023). Interestingly, reviews and rating sites provide some other information such as location and type of property. Nevertheless, ratings provided by booking.com are based on only 43 reviews. How ratings of a five star hotel based on such

as smaller numbers of reviews can help in winning trust on confidence of potential customers.

Figure 5.1 Rating of Maybourne Riveira provided by booking.com

10:32 AM

Search

The Maybourne Riviera

★★★★★

9.7 Exceptional · 43 reviews

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin · 1.3 km from centre

600 m from beach

Travel Sustainable property

Hotel Victoria

★★★★

8.4 Very good · 690 reviews

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin · 2.1 km from centre

Beachfront

Résidence Bella Vista by Azureva
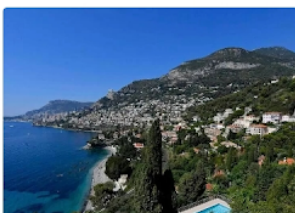
▫▫▫

8.4 Very good · 234 reviews

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin · 1.6 km from centre

900 m from beach

Travel Sustainable property

▫▫▫ A new Booking.com quality rating for home and apartment-like properties. **Learn more**

Grand bleu, appartamento vista mare e Monaco

New to Booking.com ▫▫▫▫

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin · 0.7 km from centre

Figure 5.2 reviews and ratings of Maybourne Riveira

10:34 AM

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, Alpes-Ma...

★ 5.0 (42 Reviews)   1/10
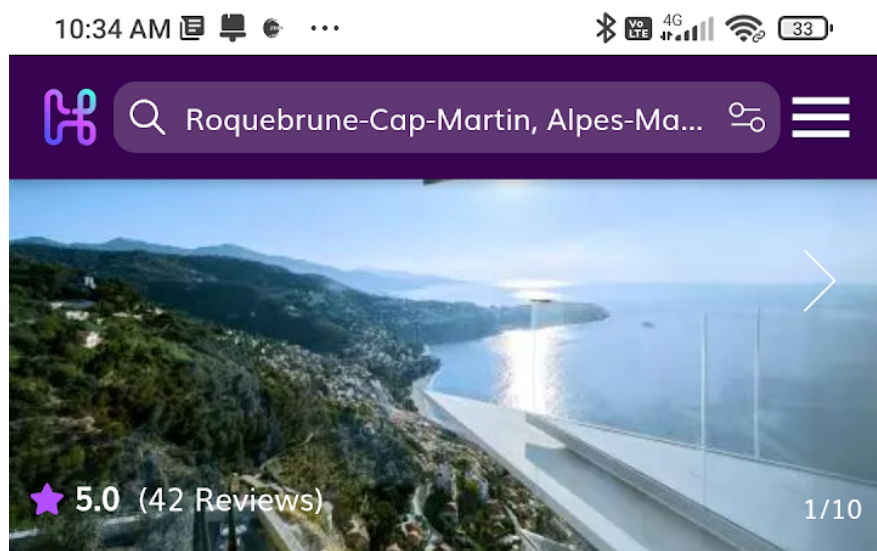
THE MAYBOURNE RIVIERA| HOTEL IN ROQUEBRUNE-CAP..

Nightly rates from:
$889 USD

Check Availability

🐾 Pet Friendly   🛁 6 Bathrooms

👥 14 Guests

Not the right fit? Check out our other properties in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin

Hotel in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin

Set in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, 2 km from Golfe Bleu Beach, The Maybourne Riviera

Show more ⌄

Policies

Importantly, each hotel managed by Maybourne hotel group has received different ratings by booking sites such as tripadvisor, booking.com and some others. Tripadvisor has provided a 5 star rating to Maybourne Beverly Hills hotel, which is based on 149 reviews. In other words, it can be argued that ratings based on larger numbers of reviews can prove more effective in winning the trust and confidence of the hotel.

The third research objective of this study was to explore and analyse the role of digital marketing in creating superior guest experience in Maybourne hotel group. The customer experience can be defined as "the internal and subjective responses customers have during the interactions with the firm" (Meyer and Schwager 2007, 118). Interestingly, the concept of customer experience is extremely personal and it originates and gets accumulated at each touch point during the cycle of sales, i.e pre-sale, sale and after sale. The current research has helped in developing some interesting insight about the growing role of digital marketing the luxury hotel Maybourne hotel group. The study insinuates that digital marketing creates and subsequently uses multiple tochpoints to create a satisfying experience of service encounter. Digital marketing builds touchpints to achieve seamless communication and interaction between the brand and customers (both existing and potential). For example, Maybourne Hotel groups use ticket booking sites such as tripadvisor, the company website and SEO marketing to attract and create a seamless booking experience for customers. At the same time, the hotel uses e-mail to build long term relationships and promote repeat purchase behaviour among its valued customers. Creating superior customer experience is a prerequisite for building a loyal customer. Building a loyal customer base is the main marketing objective of the hotel. According to Hoffman and Offutt (2015), customer experience can be considered as main determinants of repeat purchase behaviour or customer loyalty. The customer experience is a cumulative concept as it depends on each interaction that customer makes with the brand (Debruyne and Dullweber 2015) and digital marketing helps in

shaping the quality of interaction between the hotel and its customers.

Mobile apps are increasingly used to book rooms, order room service and request housekeeping. It is important to argue that the concept of luxury marketing hinges on the notion of unique experience. A luxury experience is a highly subjective concept but it is characterized by elements such as expansive, non-essential, high quality, exclusive, prestigious, symbolic, authentic and hedonic or emotional value (Tynan et al., 2010, p.1158). Importantly, luxury marketing is all about communicating these attributes of luxury brands, and digital marketing has emerged as the most crucial medium of communication. This research insinuates that Maybourne hotel group has been using multiple digital media and marketing tactics to deliver consistent service and seamless service quality. The digital marketing strategy of Maybourne Hotel group has remained targeted to optimize personalized communication with customers. The hotel is using tactics such as sending welcome messages, greetings, gifts and offers using e-mail. E-mail marketing is extensively used by the hotel group to maintain professional and personalized communication and communicate about exclusive deals. Social media such as facebook and instagram, on the other hand, are used by the hotel to engage customers via sharing exclusive photos and videos and obtain feedback from customers. Each luxury hotel managed by the group has its own social media (facebook and instagam) pages that promote exclusivity of the hotel in a distinctive way. Analysis of social media pages of Maybourne Hotel Group helps in developing some interesting perspectives about the role of social media strategy in customers' engagement. The Instagram page of Maybourne Beverly Hills hotel has a modest 24.1k followers. Surprisingly, the page has only 577 posts and reels. Importantly, the instagram page of the hotels posts high quality videos and images. But overall engagement of users with each post or reel is moderate or low.

Figure 5.3: instagram page of Maybourne Beverly Hills hotel

10:37 AM

instagram.com/themaybourr

Instagram

Log in   Open app

themaybournebh

Follow   Message

The Maybourne Beverly Hills
Hotel
Set in the heart of Beverly Hills 🌴 Part of
@maybournehotelgroup (@claridgeshotel,
@theconnaught, @the_berkeley, @themaybourneriviera,
@theemorysw1x)
www.maybournebeverlyhills.com/restaurants-bars

Hotel Life	Flowers	The Terrace	Cafe	The Spa	Maybou

577	24.1K	865
posts	followers	following

There's more to see from themaybournebh   Open app

Interestingly, Maybourne hotel group uses twitter handle as PR platform. The handle communicates about important events and attractions. However, the twitter handle has only 1774 followers. The handle has posted only 118 tweets .

Figure 5.4: twitter handle of Maybourne Hotel Group

11:28 AM

twitter.com/maybournehotels

Search Twitter

Log in   Use app

MaybourneHotelGroup
@MaybourneHotels

Maybourne Hotel Group owns and manages @ClaridgesHotel, @TheConnaught and @TheBerkeley, three of the world's most legendary luxury London hotels.

⊙ London ⊘ maybourne.com
📅 Joined September 2014

37 Following   1,774 Followers

Tweets   Replies   Media   Likes

MaybourneHo... @Maybo... · Jun 4, 2015   ···
Discover exquisite pieces of art at this year's @MasterpieceFair London, held in the garden of @RHChelsea. Read more bit.ly/1ciJ7KV

💬 6   ⇄ 2   ♡ 11   ⌁

⇄ **MaybourneHotelGroup Retweeted**
Visit Lond... 🔵 @visitlon · Apr 27, 2015   ···

The extant literature has tried to examine two-way communication mediated by social media in the context of the hospitality and tourism industry. Two-way communication mediated by social media largely remains focused to achieve a higher degree of customer engagement. But the role of social media or digital marketing in the context of luxury hotels has remained an under-researched topic (Chau & Xu, 2012; Harrigan et al., 2017). The current study builds understanding that Maybourne hotel group has been paying some decent attention on using social media as a major tool of customer engagement. The hotel tries to ascertain customers' feedback using social media such as facebook and instagram. The primary research of this study hints that Maybourne Hotel group uses social media such as facebook, instagram, LinkedIn and twitter. The primary research also hints that these social media platforms are extensively used by the hotel to share engaging posts, videos and images. Nevertheless, the pertinent research findings evidently expounds that the brand's overall engagement with users via social media is either fairly moderate or low. There is a need for exciting posts that can help in fostering users' engagement with the hotel media.

Chapter 6
Conclusion
6.1 Conclusion
This research has remained motivated to examine how digital marketing contributes to the development of luxury hotels. The

extant literature insinuates that existing research on digital marketing strategy apropos to luxury hotel industry is only sparse. Nevertheless, this study has made a sincere attempt to explore and analyse how digital marketing contributes towards the competitive advantage of the luxury hotel. By adhering to a case study of Maybourne Hotel group, this study has tried to ascertain its aims and objectives. The first research objective was to explore and analyse myriad digital marketing tools and techniques applied by Maybourne hotel group and what purpose they serve. This study hints that Maybourne hotel deploys almost all major digital marketing tools and media to attract and serve customers. The hotel uses e-mail, social media such as instagram, facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, WA, social media sites such as tripadvisor, booking.com and some others. These digital media serve a distinctive purpose in the overall marketing strategy of the hotel. For instance, e-mail is efficiently used by the hotel to communicate information about booking, complementary offers etc. Concomitantly, e-mail is also used by the hotel to build long term relationships with customers. Social media, on the other hand, is extensively used by the hotel for promoting the brand visibility and consumers' engagement with the brand. Besides, the hotel makes sincere attempts to achieve the highest ranking on SEO to gain trust and confidence of customers.

The second research objective of the current study concerns the role of digital and social media marketing strategies in the competiveness of Maybourne hotel group. This study provides sufficient evidence that both the current and the future revenue streams of the luxury hotel are heavily dependent on DM strategies, tools and tactics. Presence of brands on hospitality social media sites such as Tripadvisor.com, booking.com and others not only helps in fostering the brand visibility but also helps in increasing revenue flow of the hotel. Social media strategy also renders crucial contribution in the development of exclusive brand image of the luxury hotel. Therefore, this research insinuates that DM strategies, tools and tactics play an important role in the competitive advantage of the luxury hotel. The third research objective of this study was to explore and analyse how digital marketing contributes in creating superior guest experience in Maybourne hotel group. This study

insinuates that customer experience has highly complex and subjective connotations. DM media and tools such as SEO, e-mail, social media and the website of the company help in creating multiple touchpoints. These multiple touchpoints help in creating consistent experience for both existing and potential customers. Furthermore, the fourth and final research objective of this study was to make some recommendations that can potentially help Maybourne hotel group to promote overall effectiveness DM strategies. This research objective will be addressed in the subsequent section of the study.

6.2 Recommendations

Following recommendations are intended to optimize overall outcome of DM for Maybourne hotel group:

Social media engagement; this research insinuates that users engagement with social media pages of Maybourne hotel group is either fairly moderate or low. Thus, the hotel's social media strategy must make an effort to foster user engagement with social media pages. Social media strategy must remain directed to achieve both quality and quantity of posts.

Reviews and ratings; this study insinuates that overall quality of ratings of Maybourne hotel posted on travel and tourism sites such as tripadvisor, booking.com and some others is low because they are based on a limited number of reviews. Thus, the social media strategy of the hotel must remain directed at encouraging existing customers to post quality reviews.

6.4 Research limitations and the recommendations for the future researcher

This research is exclusively reliant on qualitative research methods. The research examines key implications of digital marketing strategies, tools and tactics in the context of Maybourne hotel group. Therefore, key findings of the current study are more relevant to Maybourne hotel group rather than the luxury hotel industry in general. Furthermore, this study has tried to ascertain how DM contributes towards optimizing customer experience in the luxury hotel industry. However, it is important to collect opinion, feedback and views of customers for ascertaining how DM is

related to customers' expectations. This research does not focus on collecting data from customer. This can be considered as an imperative limitation of this study. Nevertheless, this study has created a decent groundwork, which can be successfully used by the future research to explore relationship between DM and customer experience in the luxury hotel industry.

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Appendix A: Interview questionnaire

1. Please explain identify three most important digital marketing tools that your hotel currently deploys for attracting or retaining customers
2. Please explain in detail about your social media strategy and its role on maintaining relationship customers
3. Please identify three most important digital marketing tools and tactics that your hotel deploys for enhancing customers' experience. How are they helping the hotel to improve upon customer experience?
4. How do you use following social media for marketing purpose

   1. facebook
   2. Instagram
   3. LinkedIn
   4. YouTube
   5. Blogs and others

5. Do you use email marketing? What purpose does email marketing serve?
6. How is your hotel using online reviews and ratings in marketing?
7. Please identify three important digital marketing tactics that you currently use for fostering customers' engagement with the hotel.
8. Do you use social media influencers for marketing? If yes, please explain their role in marketing.
9. How Search Engine Marketing (SEO) is helping the hotel to win new customers?
10. How are you using Web Analytics for improving the performance of different digital marketing tools and media?
11. How is your hotel using digital marketing tools for maintaining the luxury brand image of the hotel?

Appendix B; coding table

themes	co	code	discription	interviewee
Digital marketing tools	1	social media	Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn are widely used by the hotel to	1
	2	SEO	Many customers use Google search strategy to identify and locate luxury hotels and SEO	4
			SEO is a strategy used by hotels to increase their visibility on search engines like Google. This involves optimizing the hotel's website	1
	3	e-mail	The hotel uses email marketing to promote their services, special offers, and	1
			Email marketing is also extensively used to nurture relationships with customers, providing them with	1
	4	WA	WA plays an increasingly important role in monitoring and optimizing the	1
Social media	5	Direct reaaltions	maintaining direct relationships with customers	5
	6	PR	social media marketing is also effectively used for PR	3
	7	relationships	Social media can help hotels build relationships with their customers, share information about their services and	1

	8	taste & preferenc es	The luxury hotel marketing is all about creating and delivering highly personalized experiences to our valuable guests and social media marketing creates a	5
	9	customer engagem ent	most effective tool to engage with customers and communicate them about the	3
	10	social commerc	social media can be effectively used to drive new	2
	11	content sharing	social media provides an opportunity to share useful and relevant content that is of	1
	12	customer loyalty	By providing personalized experiences, the hotel can create a more intimate connection with their	4
	13	facebook page	By using a Facebook page, the hotel is frequently posting updates, photos, videos, and	2
	14	Instagra m	the hotel is using instagram to post visually appealing photos and contents to impart a luxury brand image of the hotel to	1
	15	special offers & events	The hotel is using social media to share updates, photos, and videos of the	4
	16	brand visibility	social media marketing strategy also remains targeted at fostering brand	4
	17	,,	hospitality social media such as tripadvisor to drive hotel bookings and overall visibility	3
	18	brand awarness	social media marketing strategy also remains targeted at fostering brand	4

	19	bookings	Hospitality social media sites such as Tripadvisor provides all the relevant information including price, services provided by the hotel such as	5
	20	ratings	It provides ratings and reviews that help the potential	5
	21	youtube	the hotel is using YouTube for posting visually appealing videos to impart luxury brand	2
E-mail marketin				
	22	customer engaem	Email marketing is an effective way for the hotel to engage with existing	1
	23	booking related information	Our e-mail marketing strategy revolves around sending personalized emails to customers containing information such as booking	1
	24	special offers	Email marketing is also used for the purpose of promoting special offers, events, and loyalty programs, and to	2
	25	Loylaty programs	e-mail marketing is the most efficient marketing tool to	4
SEO				
	26	brand visibility	SEO marketing plays a crucial role in fostering brand visibility of the hotel in search engine	3
	27	location	SEO strategy is helping the potential customers discover the hotel when searching for accommodation options in a	1
	28	website traffic	SEO marketing is helping the hotel to attract higher quality	2
	29	brand credibilit	higher ranking on search engine results helps in	3

WA	30	cost effective	SEO can prove to be a cost-effective way for the hotel to		3
	31	consumer	web analytics serve a crucial purpose in understanding		1
	32	users' interaction	Web analytics tools are helping in developing understanding about how users are interacting		2
	33	campaign effectiveness	By tracking the performance of different digital marketing campaigns, web analytics is helping the hotel to optimize		3
	34	ROI	WA can prove extremely useful in measuring Return on		5
Reviews & ratings					
	35	Guest experience	The hotel monitors online reviews and responds to them promptly. Responding to reviews shows that the hotel values		1
	36	trust	showcasing positive reviews and ratings across digital channels such as tripadvisor, social media and the hotel's		5
	37	brand image	management of negative reviews is crucial for the purpose of maintaining a		5
	38	a five star rating	A five star rating signifies for the overall best quality reviews, which allow potential customers to comprehend how the actual customers have experienced their stay in		3
	39	confidence	gaining favourable rating and reviews are crucial for the luxury hotel as they help in building confidence of users		4
Guest experien					

	40	complementary service	E-mail helps in imparting all relevant information from booking status to	1
	41	check-in	e-mail helps in optimizing guests' experience by streamlining check-in process and intimating information	3
	42	mobile app	By providing guests with a mobile app, the hotel makes an effort to streamline the	4
	43	stories	the hotel regularly updates facebook, instagram and LinkedIn profile using popular	5
personalised communication	44	individual preferences	One of the most effective digital marketing tactics for enhancing customer experience is personalized communication. This involves tailoring communications and	1
	45	personal data	The Hotel uses data such as booking history, demographics, and interests to create personalized	2
Brand				
	46	social media	The hotel group is using social media to showcase its unique	3
	47	e-mail	We are using email marketing to stay in touch with their existing customers and keep them	2
		e-mail	By sending personalized and targeted emails to their customers, we are reinforcing the brand image as a provider of	2
	48	website design	A well-designed website that is visually appealing and easy to navigate can create a positive impression on potential	3

Appendix C; Details of research participants

	participants	
1	Assistant marketing manager	
2	marketing communication manager	
3	sales executive	
4	assistant relationship manager	
5	assistant manager (reservation0	