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« Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies » course

1st YEAR DISSERTATION

HOTEL MARKETING STRATEGY IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

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SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
SUMMARY	6
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	8
PART I: MARKETING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IN HOSPITALITY.....	11
Introduction of part 1.....	12
CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS	13
1. The impact of environmental issues on the hospitality industry	13
2. Customer's considerations when choosing accommodation.....	16
3. Environmental actions taken and will be taken by hotel industry	19
CHAPTER 2: FROM MARKETING TO GREEN MARKETING	25
1. Marketing strategies in hospitality industry	25
2. Marketing methods applied in upscale to luxury hotels belong to hotel groups	30
3. Green marketing	33
Conclusion of part I.....	37
PART II: MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE HOTEL'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE.....	38
Introduction of part II	39
CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO GREEN MARKETING: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO ASPECTS	40
1. Target audience of this marketing strategy.....	40
2. Marketing strategy for environmental actions of hotels	44
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATING CUSTOMER TO AWARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.....	49
1. Provide information.....	49
2. Offer activities for the customers to participate in	52
CHAPTER 3: PERSONALIZATION CUSTOMER' ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES.....	55
1. Putting nature at the center of guest experience	55
2. Incorporating experience marketing into hotel operations	58
CHAPTER 4: APPLY GREEN MARKETING AS A PART OF CSR STRATEGY ..	62
1. Incentivize environmentally-friendly behavior	62
2. Partner with environmental organizations	63
3. Measuring and reporting environmental performance, available both for guest and for hotel	65

Conclusion of part II	67
<i>PART III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FIELD OF APPLICATION.....</i>	68
Introduction of part III.....	69
CHAPTER 1: THE FIELD OF APPLICATION.....	70
1. Website	70
2. Social media platforms	71
3. TripAdvisor	73
4. Google Business	73
CHAPTER 2: RESEACH METHODOLOGY: CASE STUDY.....	75
1. Choice of methodology	75
2. Analyze the case study	78
CHAPTER 3: CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH IN MASTER 2	85
1. Research Perspectives.....	85
2. Finding an internship.....	85
3. Data collection in Master 2.....	86
Conclusion of part III.....	88
<i>GENERAL CONCLUSION</i>	89
REFERENCES	91
TABLE OF FIGURES	98
TABLE OF CONTENT	99

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“**T**ourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” – the definition given by UNWTO¹. Considered a global industry, tourism makes significant contributions to the world economy. A recent research by Statista² in November 2022 pointed out that travel and tourism contributed 5.8 billion U.S dollars to the global economy in 2021. Due to its profitability, many countries are motivated to invest in policies that help the industry grow. This is one of the proofs when it comes to tourism as one of the industries that are currently of top concern. It is a necessity to mention the hospitality industry as one of the most influential sectors. We must admit that all tourists seeking a journey must find accommodation before embarking on their journey. That is the reason why the growth of hospitality is always linked with the development of tourism. The more the tourism industry develops, the more efforts the hotel industry has to make to keep up with that development. Additionally, it requires significant innovation in order to compete with other types of accommodations that are consistently growing. In the process of its development, the hospitality industry brings positive impacts on some aspects of life, such as economics, employment, culture, and many others, but on the other hand, it also leads to negative effects, one of which is environmental destruction. As such, the question is which should the hospitality industry tackle first: growth or the ill effects it has on the planet? There is no contradiction between these two issues. In the long run, they can be addressed simultaneously as part of a long-term plan.

Indeed, this problem has been raised for years. A research by M.E.Gustin and P.A.Weaver discussed how the operation in the hotel industry brings bad effects to the environment: water usage, waste generation, energy consumption... (Gustin & Weaver, 1996) After that, Siti Nabiha affirmed the role of hotels in environmental responsibility: “The hospitality sector, one of the largest sectors in the tourism industry, has a major role to play in ensuring that at a minimum, operations do no affect the environment.” (Siti-Nabiha et al., 2014) In fact, in

¹ Sustainable Development strategy by UNWTO (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/rcljTd> (consulted on 07-12-2022)

² Global tourism industry – statistics & facts by Statista Research Department (22-11-22). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/ARnbfj> (consulted on 01-12-2022)

recent years, almost hotel brands started to focus on this aspect, with their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. However, this is often put in the interest of hotel groups, as well as the hotels belonging to these groups, rather than other small individual hotels. As a result, the scope of this study is primarily limited from upscale to luxury hotels belonging to large hotel chains.

While those types of hotels are going green or even greener these days, some do not use it as a great point which can attract customers. In contrast, some appear to be greenwashing as a result of excessive marketing. They talk about the positive activities they bring to the environment many times more than what they really did. The purpose is to assuage guest's guilt and their guilt, too. But when looking at reality, it is the fact that they have actually taken action for the environment, more or less. Their main concern should be to balance what they do with what they communicate to their customers. So which is the judicious way for hoteliers in the same time can protect the environment and attract customers. This is the starting question that arose in my mind: "***How would hotels market themselves through their environmental strategy?***". As a result of answering this question, I can get an idea of the hotel's environmental and marketing strategies. Then, from a theoretical and practical standpoint, I can evaluate their actions and compare what has been done and what has not been done. Thus, I can see successful strategies for environmental issues, which can be used to find out what marketing directions are suitable for the hotel today.

Through reflection on this starting question, I would be able to contextualize the link between environmental issues and hotel marketing strategies in the first part of this dissertation. The purpose of this part is to analyze their relationship and the points connecting them. In this regard, I will study the marketing methods that the hotel has implemented and, at the same time, seek out research on marketing strategies that are considered suitable for the hotel industry in the near future. In addition, it is also necessary to understand the environmental issues that are of concern to the hotel industry in particular, and the tourism industry in general. It would be helpful if I could see what actions this industry has taken in relation to the environment, as well as their future environmental goals before working with the second part.

As part of the second part of the dissertation, I will focus on the hypotheses I have drawn and developed based on the research documents that I have analyzed. In the first chapter I will

bring out the problem statement in a more detailed manner: *The methods for hotels to turn their environmental strategy into selling points that attract more customers*. Afterwards, my next chapter explores how hotels can use marketing to educate consumers. As a result, customers will then become used to the idea of always connecting their everyday actions to the environmental problems that could result from them. Our goal should be to catch the customer's attention, making them care about the issue we want to emphasize. Consequently, they tend to appreciate the work done by the hotel and make a conscious decision to use the services offered by the hotel. After that, I will describe how hotels place nature at the heart of the guest experience. It is then, in some way, transformed into their unique selling point. Following the awareness of the importance of our environmental issue, the next step for hotels is to create a lasting impression on customers. It will be a unique selling point to help customers prioritize a hotel when looking for services. Lastly, I will discuss the use of green marketing as part of a hotel's CSR program in the third chapter. Through this, it not only helps engage the consumption but also builds the hotel's credibility. This is what hotels have also paid attention to, to fulfill the CSR targets that they have set. In contrast, when I put myself in the shoes of a consumer looking for products and services, I do not see hotels utilizing these positive points for communication with their consumers. Thus, the hypotheses and arguments that have been put forth throughout this section have led to the third part of the dissertation.

M2.

**PART I: MARKETING AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IN
HOSPITALITY**

Introduction of part 1

Throughout my research, I have come to understand that there is a close relationship between environmental concerns and customer concerns in hotels. There is a strong focus on the environment in both short-term and long-term goals for hotels. One of the reasons for that concern is because hotels understand that their operations cause damage to the environment and nature. And the more they ignore it, the wider the wound will become, which makes it a mandatory requirement to have a plan to minimize and partially heal this wound. Hotels are also a business, thus revenue and customer satisfaction are their top priorities. Despite pursuing other goals, they cannot ignore the immediate goal of attracting new customers and retaining existing customers to generate revenue and profits. There is no need to weigh these two issues; hotels can accomplish both goals at once: using environmental actions as a weapon to attract customers. It is not only hoteliers who care about the environment but also consumers. What hotels need to do is connect the needs of customers with their own needs. Having a clear understanding of the terms we will encounter will enable us to formulate the following arguments with sufficient background knowledge.

As soon as I understood the definition of each aspect in the field of study as well as the components that are associated with them, it will be easier for the next part to link it together. In order to achieve this, I must determine how each aspect has been researched in the past. The results of the studies and their development will allow me to find common ground between the two and connect them. While learning from other research, I asked myself the following questions to ensure that I remain focused on my research objectives: What have the hotels done to protect the environment? Based on the existing research, what is the appropriate approach for hotels to communicate with customers?

CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

In the opening chapter of the dissertation, I want to raise environmental issues, based on existing research papers to understand the concept that I want to study. Here, I will learn about the environmental effects on the hotel industry and the actions they have taken to address these problems. Besides, I also want to understand how customers care about environmental issues. Those are the most general views so that I can initially understand the problem that I want to aim for.

1. The impact of environmental issues on the hospitality industry

1.1. Environmental problems caused by hospitality industry

Environmental refers to the surroundings, which comes from the medieval French word "environ". At its most basic level, the environment is what surrounds us in the sense that we are surrounded by it. In its most common definition, the environment is usually understood in relation to the natural world in the most literal sense of the word. It is still used by some people to refer to things such as "work environment", "business environment", etc. as well as to describe the surrounding circumstances and conditions that are present around the situation. However, within the scope of this research, the environment is understood as a concept derived from common sense, and as a concept that does not change over time, that is a concept derived from biophysical systems. It is the environment where the hospitality industry operates, including natural environment such as water, air, resources,...

Environmental resources are anything associated with the environment that humans and communities can use. Ishmael claimed that within the hotel industry, environmental resources include water, energy, food, climate, forests, minerals and culture (Ishmael Mensah, 2019).

Water consumption is a huge problem in every hotel: customers need water for drinking and cleansing while hotels need water for their operation as a fundamental resource. These operation actions that need water can be counted are laundry, cooking, swimming pool, gardening, cleaning, ... and guest use. Sustainable Hospitality Alliance when talking about this issue estimated that: "In some locations, the average hotel guest uses eight times more

water than the local community”³. Indeed, Sumedha Naik compared two research to prove the differences in water consumption between hotel guests and local people. He found the estimation of Salen (1995) that 100 urban families use 15000 cubic meters for two years, in contrast, the research of Holden (2000) pointed out the same amount of water used by 100 luxury hotel guests in less than two months (Sumedha Naik, 2024). Energy is consumed in many hotel activities, such as air-conditioners, lighting, hot water, devices in guest rooms, swimming pool, and cooking, ... In the same research, he also quoted Gossling et al (2005) when discussing about the average energy consumption by hotel guests is more than local residents. He explained it is because of they have a wide range of energy intense facilities, such as bars, restaurants, pools and more spacious rooms. He emphasized that a hotel emits an average of 20,6kg of carbon dioxide per night (Sumedha Naik, 2024).

Waste is another serious environmental issue. There is a research estimated that on average, a guest produces 01 kilogram of waste per night of stay⁴. The waste created in hotels is generated not only from the guest room but also in the operating department of the hotel such as the kitchen (food waste, cans, glasses, bags and boxes, oils...) and from the housekeeping department (plastic tubes from amenities, cleaning materials...). Each year, hotels are estimated to produce approximately 289,700 tons of waste, of which 79,000 tons of food waste (Bhajan et al., 2022).

With the above issues such as energy consumption, water usage, waste management, hotel operations is responsible for climate change. Hotels create significant carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions generated by their operations. The energy that they used in hotels, as mentioned above, is from fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas,... emit greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane. In an in-depth interview conducted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Dr. Eric Chan of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management claimed that 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from tourism, a big part of this figure comes from the hotel industry⁵.

³ Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. Only one Earth – what can hospitality do to protect it? (05-06-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/aVkxDi> (consulted on 07-03-2023)

⁴ Stop Food Waste, Food waste in the hospitality industry (17-04-2013). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/EeEKcJ> (consulted on 08-03-2023)

⁵ Hong Kong Poly, Saving the Planet, One hotel at a time (28-06-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/fuwJYS> (consulted on 09-09-2023)

In summary, there are many possible environmental problems, which can be directly or indirectly caused by the hotel. Obviously, to head to long-term development and a sustainable future for the industry, hotels can not take these problems for granted, they need to put them under control and minimize the impacts as much as possible.

1.2. Benefits of the hotel industry when dealing with environmental issues

Hotel operations cause negative impacts on the environment, on the contrary, environmental problems also cause damage to the hotel industry in some ways. So naturally, if these problems are solved, not only the hotel industry but also many other aspects such as nature, community... will receive corresponding benefits, from different perspectives.

As far as environmental protection is concerned, the hotel industry's actions will contribute greatly to the process of preserving nature and protecting biodiversity. Since hotel operations cause harmful environmental impacts as mentioned above, when these actions are controlled to minimize negative impacts, hotels can play a significant role in reducing the risk of climate change, preserving natural resources, animals, forests, etc. Environmental concerns of leading hotel groups (Accor, Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott...) include natural disasters such as droughts, floods, rising sea levels and rising temperatures (Pierce, 2021). These are things that humans cannot decide because they are nature, but humans can take actions to help avoid it: protect the environment to protect planet, and protect themselves.

Being a branch of tourism, the hotel industry's concern for the environment will be a significant contribution to the development of the tourism industry. The hotel sector is an essential part of tourism and is responsible for the development of sustainable tourism. As a result, we could think of protecting the environment as a first step towards maintaining sustainability in the tourism industry. According to Booking.com's 2019 sustainable travel report, 72% of travelers believe that taking action and making sustainable travel choices now is vital for saving the planet for future generations. The majority of people who make this decision are between the ages of 46 and 55, followed by millennials (Booking.com, 2019).

From a social perspective, the hotel industry is interconnected and has a direct impact on people, especially local communities. Hotels' environmental actions can generate positive cultural and social impacts such as enhanced quality of life, job creation, improved public health, education opportunities, support for the local people... (Masa'deh et al., 2017). By

reducing waste, hotels help to prevent pollution which can harm human health. Apart from this, they also preserve natural landscapes in order to ensure biodiversity and to maintain natural **resources for the benefit of communities (forests, rivers, etc.)**. The **most incredibly** valuable thing that hotels gain from their act of protecting the environment is that they build connections with the local community. Having strong relationships with local residents can help boost the tourism industry's image.

In the context of a business, protecting the environment also helps the hotel itself in many different directions. First of all, hotels have the ability to improve their reputation in order to attract more quality customers, so they can create their positive image (Bhushan et al., 2018). In an economic sense, environmental actions can help decrease hotel costs, increase revenue, and increase profitability in the long run (Scanlon, 2007). As an additional benefit, protecting the environment can also be a very effective strategy to gain a competitive advantage. The hoteliers can increase their allure to customers who are sensitive to nature with the help of this strategy, and that will boost their market potential (Graci, 2008). Furthermore, the quality of services relevant to environmental actions is consistently improved (Perramon et al., 2022).

2. Customer's considerations when choosing accommodation

2.1. Factors influencing customer choice

Throughout history, there have been a number of studies and surveys conducted with the aim of understanding customers' needs. This was done in order for them to determine what will be of interest to customers before they made a decision to book a hotel room. For hoteliers, it is very vital to understand the needs of customers, because that way, they can make development strategies, operational policies that will improve their services and improve their ability to reach customers. A study from a couple of years ago showed that the factors that influence the decision of people when searching for vacation accommodations (Oktadiana & Kurnia, 2011):

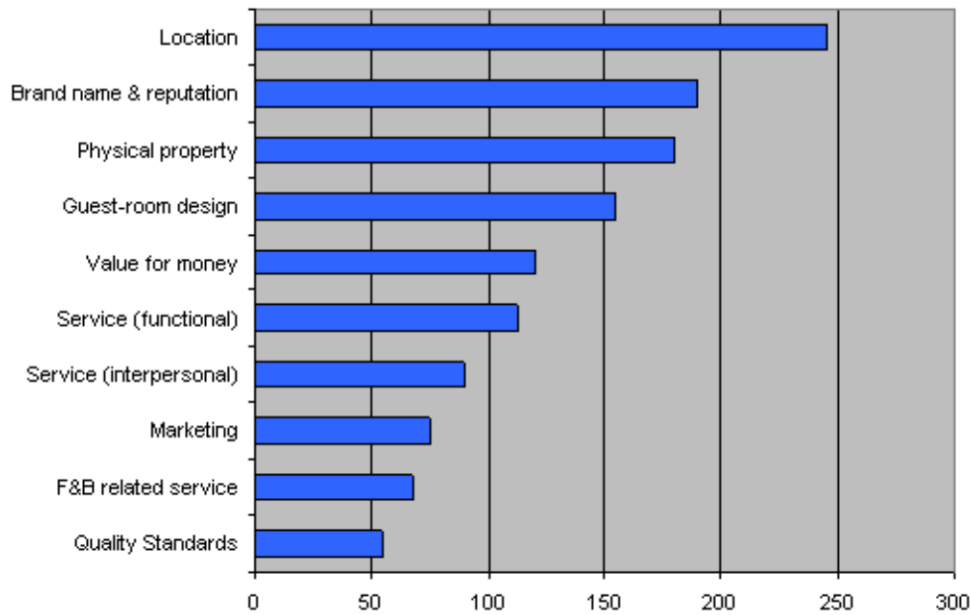


Figure 1: Top-ten attributes driving the hotel-purchase decision

(Source: Oktadiana and Kurina, 2011, p.517)

The problem, however, is that this study was done 12 years ago, which is why it is no longer completely relevant to the needs of customers today. During Kearney’s survey of 1000 customers conducted in 2020, a trend was observed that customers have another concern about the environment, which has been brought into their minds every time they make a purchasing decision. Nearly half of the customers say that since the pandemic, they care more about the environment. 11% of them have completely switched to choosing environmentally claimed products. ⁶

This truth about environmental concerns is once again confirmed in Booking.com's 2022 sustainable travel report. Their numbers are convincing: 81% of travelers who joined the survey agreed that sustainable tourism is critical to them. Globally, 35% of travelers believe that an accommodation's sustainability efforts play an important role in helping them make a decision about accommodation. Even though 70% of all global travelers stated that they have no intention to use sustainable travel practices in their travels, they still tend to choose places to stay that care about this issue despite not intending to.

⁶ Industry Dive, Consumers still care about sustainability amid pandemic, report finds (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/GuZtqq> (consulted on 11-03-2023)

In short, when deciding to choose accommodation for their vacation, customers in addition to looking for basic information such as location, reputation, design, services, quality, and price, they also assess the level of concern for the environment, and the level of sustainability of this place. Although it is a recent interest, it tends to develop strongly and is increasingly being prioritized by customers.

2.2. Level of customer's environmental concerns

In recent years, nature has brought a lot of signs and alarms that people must pay attention to environmental problems. Therefore, 2023 is identified as the pivotal year for sustainable action. An analysis of the trend by Nielsen indicated that in 2023, consumers will be holding brands responsible for progressing the world's state of sustainability⁷.

A TripAdvisor survey in 2022 revealed that on average, 65% of survey respondents believe sustainable travel has become more imperative since the pandemic. But when looking back at the actions they take, 59% respond that they have not yet acted on sustainability. Nearly half of the respondents are worried about their carbon footprint, while the rest, more than half do not think about it at all⁸. Thus, it can be speculated that the majority of people are interested in sustainable tourism, but do not know how to work with it. Compared with the Booking.com report analyzed above, we can confirm that one of the first things customers do when thinking about sustainable tourism is choose a hotel that meets these criteria.

Besides, it is can not be denied that the customer's awareness and information about the environment influence their intentions. In this vein, depending on a hotel's eco-friendliness and sustainability rating, guests who care about this tend to be willing to pay more (Navarro & Aranda, 2020). The number of these customers is increasing day by day, it gradually becomes a trend of living so people are segmented into a group of customers called LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability). They are a particular market segment who have a sustainable lifestyle, environmental friendly living. They are generally composed of a relatively upscale and well-educated population segment⁹. People with this lifestyle do not discriminate by age, but they share the same passion for the environment, the earth, health...

⁷ Nielsen, Trend watch 2023: Sustainability (07-12-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/NoBucW> (consulted on 11-03-2023)

⁸ TripAdvisor, Report: Tripadvisor releases seasonal travel index results (June – August 2022) (09-05-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/RcYqSZ> (consulted on 12-03-2023)

⁹ Wikipedia (online). Available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LOHAS> (consulted on 12-03-2023)

They use products that are not harmful to health and do not affect the environment (Seočanac, 2019).

3. Environmental actions taken and will be taken by hotel industry

According to the sustainable goals of United Nations, the UNWTO also sets the 2030 sustainable journey¹⁰ with 17 objectives:



Figure 2: Sustainable Development Goals of UNWTO (source: UNWTO)

These goals are aimed at ensuring that the tourism industry operate in a sustainable way. In the scope of my research, to focus on the environmental aspect, I select these below objectives as the goals which are related to environment, reduce the impact on the environment and contribute to the preservation of natural resources:

SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation;

SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy;

SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production;

¹⁰ UNWTO, Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals. Available at <https://tourism4sdgs.org/the-platform/> (consulted on 08-03-2023)

SDG 13 – Climate action;

SDG 14 – Life below water;

SDG 15 – Life on land.

3.1. SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation

With this goal, the requirement for the tourism industry is to ensure clean water and sanitation for everyone. The task set for the tourism industry is to have appropriate and safe measures in the rational use of water sources, wastewater management, and pollution control. The hospitality industry holds the key to carrying out these tasks.

To accomplish this task, each hotel group will have different solutions, aiming for the common goal of reducing water intensity. Some hotels choose to use a measurement tool to control the amount of water being used, thereby providing more specific management measures (Accor, 2021). As a result, according to a report in 2021, Accor group recorded that their hotels reduced the average water use of guests per night by more than 25% per night compared to the previous year. In addition, some apply technology to deal with water leaks, setting standards in water management (Marriott, 2022). This application has helped Marriott hotels achieve an estimated savings of over 425 million gallons of water globally in 2021. Especially, with Hyatt Corporation, in addition to managing the amount of water used, they also regenerate the water source. They have a water recycling system which is a gray water recycling loop. This is explained very well in an interview with Shauna Decker in 2019¹¹. They withdrew 31 million cubic meters of water in managed hotels (Hyatt, 2021).

3.2. SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

SDG 7 aims to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, improve energy efficiency, and facilitate the deployment of renewable energy. clean energy solutions. The goal is to address the challenge of providing universal access to energy, as well as minimizing the negative impact of energy use on the environment.

¹¹ Seattle 2030 District, Greywater Reuse at the new Hyatt Regency (14-10-2019). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/sGRkkB> (consulted on 12-03-2023)

The operation of the tourism and hospitality industry requires a large amount of energy. Therefore, this is an issue that hotel corporations are very concerned about, most of which are ranked first in the environmental reports of large hotel groups. Actions taken at hotels include changing and upgrading lighting systems, renewing aging energy-intensive heating or cooling systems, and applying technology to install automated systems for better control over energy usage. At the same time, using renewable energy is also an option applied by many hotels. As Marriott reports, they note that hotels and owners invest in on-site renewable energy solutions. This is also a profitable point for business operations, by helping to increase energy and cost control. "The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands (Male, Maldives) installed over 2,000 solar panels on-site, generating approximately 3,000 kWh daily. The system is expected to save the hotel over 200,000 liters of diesel and reduce carbon emissions by 650 metric tons annually"¹². The story is similar to Four Seasons hotels and resorts, which focus on developing renewable energy to reduce emissions related to energy consumption. In 2021, 15% of hotels and resorts belonging to this group reported using renewable energy. The group also confirmed that they will include this item in their global portfolio, preparing for a larger-scale deployment of renewable energy (Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts, 2021).

3.3. SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

This sustainable development goal has an objective is to deal with unsustainable consumption and production patterns, which contribute to environmental degradation, resource depletion and climate change. The goal encourages and promotes responsible consumption and production, it relates to reducing waste generation, decreasing food waste and losses and implementing sustainable procurement practices.

Hotels solve this problem by taking a variety of actions in different areas, not limited just to minimizing waste, they also increasing recycling and composting. Four Seasons has taken the step of eliminating single-use plastic from the customer experience, which is also part of the group's commitment to phase out all plastic amenities by the end of 2022. In addition, they have partnered with suppliers in the spirit of a low-waste, low-carbon, closed-loop delivery system (Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts, 2021). To address food waste, Marriott uses several types of food waste metrics. Taking into account just eight hotels in Africa and the Middle

¹² Marriott, 2022 SERVE 360 REPORT: Environmental, Social, and Governance Progress, p.16. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/PilbFT> (consulted on 12-03-2023)

East, by using the Winnow food waste solution system, they have reduced an average of about 15,300 kg of food waste per hotel in 2021 (Marriott, 2022). In addition, the reuse and recycle food waste is also used very effectively by hotels, they innovated to use food that would have been potentially discarded, such as London Heathrow Marriott created fresh jam from passion fruit skin or JW Marriott Hanoi made carrot cake from carrot juice pulp.

3.4. SDG 13: Climate action

The tourism and hospitality industries are both actors and victims of climate change. The industry, therefore, plays a leading role in responding to climate change. SDG 13 focuses on urgent actions to avoid climate change and its impacts. Possible actions include: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing the use of renewable energy, increasing climate resilience...

As Hyatt reports in 2021, they manage their greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing energy efficiency at their hotels, creating or purchasing renewable energy solutions. Some hotels under this group have used solar panels to generate energy. In addition, to calculate the number of greenhouse gases emitted from all types of energy, they use Hyatt Eco Track to measure, so they have effective and timely measures for each activity. In particular, Hyatt contributed to the development of the Hospitality Carbon Measurement Initiative, a carbon footprint calculator, which is available on the Sustainable Hotels Alliance website. To promote environmental behavior throughout the hospitality industry, Hyatt also participated in an assessment study by the Cornell Hotel Sustainability Standards. Next, Hyatt cares about the origins of food, offering a Guide that helps to design menus that are good for guests, for the community, and for the planet. One of the theories is reducing meat consumption, which is good for health as well as reducing carbon emissions (Hyatt, 2021).

3.5. SDG 14: Life below water

For comprehensive and sustainable development, the hotel industry also needs to pay attention to the conservation and preservation of vulnerable marine ecosystems. The goal is to reduce marine pollution, protect marine and coastal ecosystems, promote sustainable fisheries management,... Thereby helping to address the urgent need to protect, restore the health and productivity of the oceans and marine ecosystems, which are so important to human-being and the planet.

Marriott's 2021 report highlights three activities it focuses on: Protecting Turtles, Improving Fisheries, and Clean Up Seaweed. Marriott hotels in the Caribbean and Latin America have organized programs to protect turtle nesting sites. They also educate guests about the importance of conserving nesting sites and their surroundings, helping to promote a safe ecosystem in turtle habitats. A very impressive number that Marriott has recorded is that they have successfully released about 70.000 turtles since the start of the program through the end of 2021. At the same time, Marriott also works with WWF to support the Fisheries Improvement Project globally. Then, with the spread of seaweed in some oceans wreaking havoc on the hospitality industry, Marriott has partnered with The Ocean Foundation to support the Sargassum Emissions Reduction Pilot Project (Marriott, 2022).

3.6. SDG 15: Life on land

The next UNWTO goal focuses on protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, forests and biodiversity. These factors are all essential factors of the tourism industry, they are one of the biggest reasons to help develop a destination's tourism, that is why the hotel industry can not bother it.

With the objective of strengthening commitment to biodiversity, Accor has launched a program to restore significant ecosystem benefits to support biodiversity called "Plant for the Planet". Performance results for 2021 report that Accor hotels have planted 10 million trees (Accor, 2021). In the Marriott operation, they recognize that mangrove forests play a very important role in protecting the coast, providing livelihoods for communities, storing carbon and at the same time nourishing the sea. The activity reported by this group is that Sheraton Cebu Mactan Resort (Cebu, Philippines) in cooperation with Olango Island Eco-Tour Association planted 500 mangrove forests, 500 trees to restore areas affected by storms (Marriott, 2022). As for the Four Seasons hotels and resorts, they emphasize choosing environmentally friendly suppliers and ensuring their commitment to sustainability. They aim to find sustainable food and drinks that are locally sourced. They claim to have worked with The Humane League to reinforce their commitment to sourcing only cage-free eggs (Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts, 2021).

Thus, it can be clearly seen that paying attention to environmental issues and taking actions with the aim of protecting nature brings many benefits. It not only brings positive impacts on the environment, to the community, but it also helps develop the tourism industry in general. This is the hotel's own strength in both the economy and reputation aspects. Customers' level of environmental concern is an important factor for hotels to consider when developing environmental practices and marketing strategies. By prioritizing environmental protection and promoting their sustainability efforts, hotels can appeal to environmentally conscious customers and contribute to a more responsible and sustainable tourism industry.

Almost all large hotel groups have been taking many appropriate and urgent measures to address environmental issues affecting hotels and their stakeholders. The way they deal with the problems can be different, can have immediate or long-term effects towards the common future of the community. But in general, they are all on the way to joining their hands to solve natural problems and protect the planet.

CHAPTER 2: FROM MARKETING TO GREEN MARKETING

In this chapter, I explore the marketing strategies used in the hospitality industry. Then I attached the environmental theme to marketing, which one might call environmental marketing or green marketing. From here, I have enough information to evaluate the similarities and differences between a conventional marketing strategy and a green marketing strategy.

1. Marketing strategies in hospitality industry

According to Kotler, the definition of the word “marketing” is: “Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and society, resulting in strong customer relationships that capture value from the customers in return.”¹³

Through his book, the author presents a simple model of a five-step marketing process as the figure below:

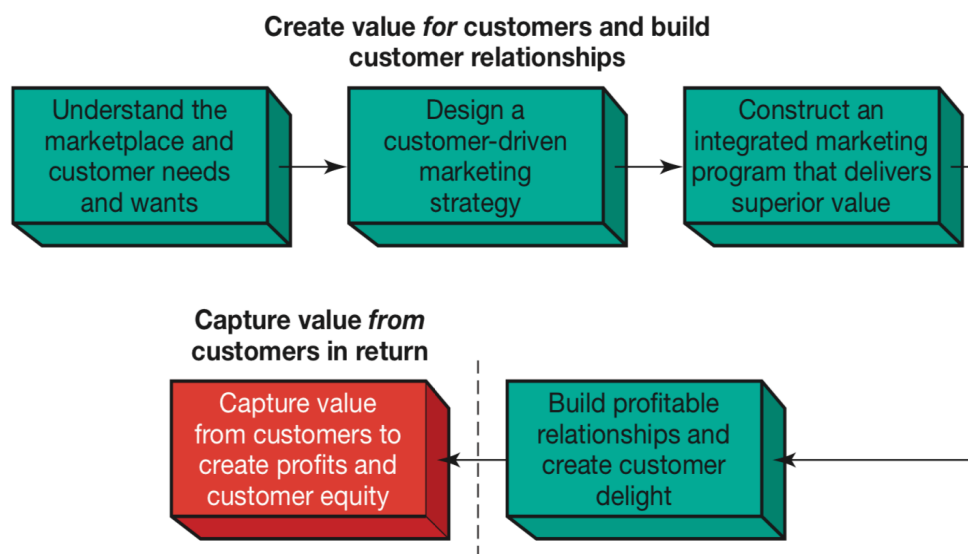


Figure 3: Five-step marketing process model (Source: Kotler, 2014, p.11)

In this process model, the first four steps (blue) are the mission of the business, what they need to do to understand their customers, thereby creating value up to customer's needs and building relationships with them. In the last step (red) is the result that businesses receive

¹³ Philip R.Kotler, Marketing for Hospitality and Toursim (edition 6th), p.11

from the outstanding value they bring to customers. As such, they create value for customers, and then derive value from selling to customers (Kotler, 2014).

1.1. Segmentation – Targeting – Positioning in hospitality industry:

To start any marketing campaign, the first step a marketer need to do is to identify the customers, understand what they need, what they want, and center on the customer. In fact, in the market there are many types of customers, equivalent to different requirements. Usually, it is difficult for a business to meet the needs of all customers. Therefore, they always have to choose a group of customers that are considered the most potential for the products and services they provide. From there, they set up a campaign to offer the most appropriate actions to the selected group of customers. This process is done in turn through the following steps: segmentation, targeting, positioning (before positioning, some marketers can determine the difference between each market through differentiation).

A market consists of many customers, they have unique requirements for each type of product or service. The first and foremost task of marketers is to divide a mixed market into groups of customers who have something in common. There are various criterias to categorize customers, for example based on geographical location, age, gender, occupation, psychology or buying habits. Determining the factors to divide the market into groups of customers also need to be considered in order to be the best match with products and services (Kotler, 2014). This process, known as **market segmentation**, lays the groundwork for the next steps in their strategy. Hotels can use segmentation to identify the needs and preferences of different customer groups and develop tailored marketing messages and offers that resonate with each segment.

After having a market divided into separate customer groups, businesses will select one or a few customer groups that they consider the most attractive and potential. This action is **market targeting**. At this point, businesses will choose the segment that they think will create the greatest customer value and they maintain it, or they can also choose several segments that have a common basic point of need. As Kotler presents in his book *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, he asserts that most companies when they first enter the market will choose to focus on one segment, then they will add other segments after the success with the first selected segment. Big businesses will want to find a way to cover all markets. This is

very true for large hotel groups, as they gradually expand the market and provide more services which are suitable for different customer segments, such as besides luxury or up-scale hotels, they added budget hotels that offer services at more economical rates.

Finally, once the business has selected the target market, they will need to move to the product **positioning** step. That is the position where businesses make their products special and attractive in the eyes of customers, different from their competitors. This requires businesses to develop a unique market position for their products, which is the reason why customers come and choose to use the products that businesses provide. Kotler has defined "Positioning is arranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinct and desirable position relative to competing products in the target consumer's mind"¹⁴. Thus, it can be understood that through this positioning step, businesses understand where their products are in the market, visualize product's image in the minds of consumers, thereby offering tailored marketing activities to turn people in their target market into their customers

Thus, with the goal of focusing on customer needs, the marketing strategy starts from this core then gradually forms a broader view. Segmentation - Targeting - Positioning is the first step for businesses, so that they are able to build an effective marketing strategy step by step. After finding their target audiences and defining their position in the market, the business has enough basis to move on to the next stage, which is the Marketing Mix according to the theory of Kotler and Armstrong (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007).

¹⁴ Philip R.Kotler, Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism (edition 6th), p.109

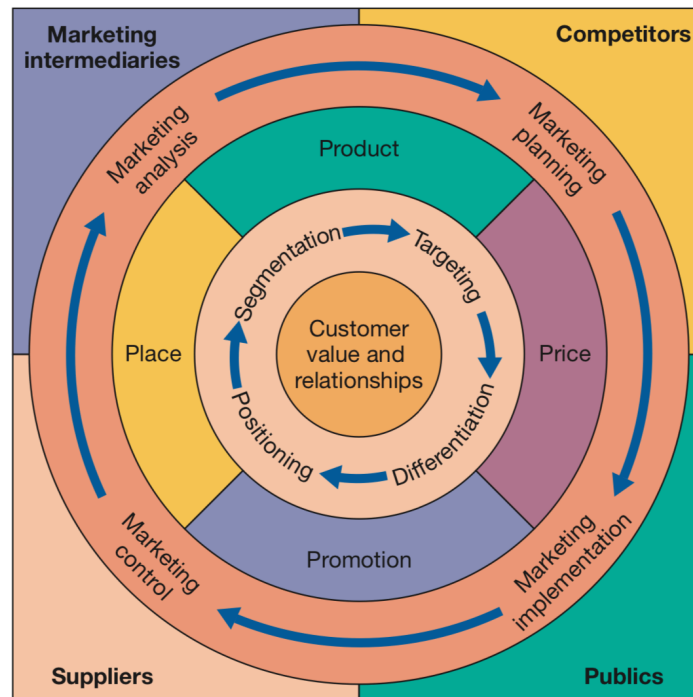


Figure 4: Managing marketing strategy (Source: Kotler, 2014, p.109)

1.2. Marketing mix 7Ps for hotel industry:

Along with the constant development of society, there are many different marketing tools that businesses can choose, the best known is the Marketing Mix 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion). However, the hospitality industry is considered as a service sector, so marketers have extended the Marketing Mix into a more niche category for this industry, including 7 elements:

- **Product:** This element in its own right is what is transacted with the customer, which in the hotel industry includes all the experiences that the hotel provides to the customer. They are accommodation, food and beverage, amenities, and other accompanying services that customers received during their experience at the hotel. There is a perception that customers rarely pay for the service they receive, but rather for the level of satisfaction they have (Doaa Salman et al., 2017). Therefore, the services that the hotel provides must be developed and adjusted to meet the wishes and satisfy the needs of the guests.

- **Price:** This is a very important element for the daily operations of service businesses, including hotels. The pricing factor determines the revenue and profit of the hotel, and also shows the quality of the services. In order to set the price, the hotel needs to consider many

factors, in addition to the required fee, market demand, the level of competition, amenities and services offered.

- Place: Place is where the hotel uses to convey the message to the customer. It can be social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok,... It can also be OTAs channels like TripAdvisor, Booking.com.... Or the hotel's website can also be considered a place. In addition to digital communication channels, locations can also be offline communication channels where customers can find the hotel's service and information.

- Promotion: Promotion can be seen as a method for hotels to convey information about their products/services to customers, creating awareness, interest and desire for customers to act¹⁵. It includes all the solutions that businesses can implement, such as advertising, marketing, communication, direct or indirect sales through mass media or social media channels. This is considered as a tool to communicate with customers, after having the right product, the right price and choosing the right place.

- People: For a service business such as a hotel, the People is an important element, playing the most significant component in determining the development of the business (Lily Lin, 1999). The reason is that almost all products or services offered for customers are received, processed and performed by hotel staff. They interact with customers and in the eyes of customers, they are the "face" of the hotel. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in training and developing human factors, which affect customers' perception of the quality and service provided. Their knowledge of products and services must be assured, their access to information should be optimized, and their attitudes should always be taken into account.

- Process: For any service, the basic thing to ensure consistent service quality is the process. Those are all procedures and systems that hotels use to provide their products and services. They help the job go smoothly in the shortest time, minimizing the appearance of unnecessary problems. The operation process of a hotel is a combination of many processes that need to be followed, including the check-out process, check-in process; housekeeping procedures; maintenance procedures...and many other operating procedures. The purpose of these processes is to ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction.

¹⁵ Oxford College of Marketing (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/CwlKen> (consulted on 14-03-2023)

- Physical evidence: According to the Oxford College of Marketing, "Physical evidence provides intangible indications of the quality of experience a company is providing"¹⁶. They explain it as physical evidence that customers can see, such as building design, interior decoration, living rooms, amenities... This also includes websites, digital media channels and other hotel marketing materials.

2. Marketing methods applied in upscale to luxury hotels belong to hotel groups

Hotels from groups often have a lot of marketing methods to choose from, but they need to ensure that those methods have to fit with requirements that are in line with the group's standards and guidelines. Among them, there are some useful marketing methods that are chosen by many multinational corporations, for example branding, influencer marketing, social media marketing, loyalty programs, event marketing,...

2.1. Branding

In the hotel industry, customers typically associate the corporation's brand name with the products and services. These usually occur with large groups or companies with global reputations, including Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, ... Then, customers often base their decisions on the company's brand perceptions to make purchase decisions (Kim & Kim, 2004). At the same time in their article, they also concluded that branding is an effective marketing program that fosters consumer trust. From there, customers are willing to pay a higher price for the products and services from those brands. This is completely applicable in the hotel industry, especially hotels with brands built by international hotel groups. Moreover, branding is also an effective method of retaining old customers. Returning customers have higher brand awareness and brand loyalty (Liu et al., 2017). This is the reason why branding is considered effective in the marketing strategy of luxury hotels.

2.2. Influencer marketing:

In a recent thesis on influencer marketing in the hotel industry, the author asserted that: influencer marketing has the main purpose of increasing sales, helping customers perceive products and services, at the same time it also helps to improve the brand image (Waldburg-Zeil, 2020). The research also argues that influencer marketing is capable of providing 11

¹⁶ Oxford College of Marketing (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/CwlKen> (consulted on 14-03-2023)

times more return on investment (ROI) than other classical forms of marketing. The challenge for hotels when they use this marketing method is that they have to find the right influencers, because the hotel's target customers need to be the audience of selected influencers (Waldburg-Zeil, 2020).

Hilton hotel group have been successful with the combination of influencer marketing and event marketing, they created the Hilton@Play events to attract the younger generation of travelers. This music event is for loyal customers of the corporation (HHonors). However, the event features young artists like Nick Jonas (in 2015) or Michael Bublé (2023), so it also gets to the point of the artist's fans. Thus, the hotels have collected a group of young customers just as the goal of expanding the guest file they have set out¹⁷.

In addition, with the increasing number of travel influencers, Influencer Marketing is growing stronger. Only in the tourism industry, the tourist destination Norway's Trolltunga had 800 guests in 2008, the number becomes 100,000 people according to the statistics in 2018¹⁸. Although the effect of this marketing method on the hotel industry is difficult to analyse, the significant increase in the figure has also revealed the pronounced capabilities of this marketing method.

2.3. Social media marketing:

In this era of development, the use of digital technology to support marketing has been extremely popular (digital marketing). One of the most focused and invested digital marketing campaigns by businesses is social media marketing. With the number of social media users counted at 4.48 million users¹⁹, it is clear that social media marketing is a must for hoteliers. The emergence of social media makes hotel customer service more than just in the hotel itself. Outside of hotels, customers expect hotel interactions directly on social media sites. For example, when they leave a comment, suggestion or complaint on a hotel's social media platform, they want to receive a response from the hotel, and the hotel will be able to fix the problem immediately. In an interview with Diana Trowbridge (Vice President, Owner &

¹⁷ Hilton Honor, Get behind the music (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/crfXGE> (consulted on 17-03-2023)

¹⁸ TRT world, Roundtable Instagram tourism: is social media ruining travel? (2020). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/XKHKhs> (consulted on 13-03-2023)

¹⁹ Brian Dean, Social Network Usage & Growth Statistics: How many people use social media in 2022? (10-10-2021) Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/latldT> (consulted on 18-03-2023)

Franchise Relations and Brand, Marketing & Digital for Marriott International Caribbean & Latin America), she revealed that: “We are looking to find ways to connect with our guests, to listen to their feedback, and to help them have amazing, memorable travel experiences. Social media helps us do that”²⁰.

Upscale to luxury hotels all have their own websites, where they post official information about their businesses, services, products, as well as ongoing promotions. For hotel websites, usually the information is provided only one way, meaning that the customer can view the information but it is not a tool to communicate with the hotel. Therefore, besides developing websites, the hotels must have other social networking platforms. A 2010 study found that 75% of hotels use Facebook and Twitter as the two main social media platforms in their communication campaigns (Lanz et al., 2010). This number has made a lot of difference compared to today because of the emergence or breakthrough of many other platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, Youtube ... Facebook is currently still one of the wise choices for upscale to luxury hotels, because it is the platform with the most users. Luxury hotels use Facebook as a tool for brand building (Thirumaran et al., 2021). Another study has proven that Instagram has a great impact on driving purchase intention and luxury value perception (Amelia & Hidayatullah, 2020). Along with that, the number of Instagram users has also continuously increased in recent years. Therefore, this is the reason that hotel corporations are also very interested in this platform when it comes to marketing issues. Twitter also occupies a huge place on this playing field. It focuses on delivering short content, grabs the attention of potential customers who like to read short captions, and is known for its quick sharing, making Twitter a priceless tool for customer relationship²¹. Besides, it is impossible to ignore LinkedIn with a great connection ability, hoteliers can focus on this platform in developing B2B customers. Youtube is not a new platform, it is very popular not only for creating content but also for advertising. There are many hotels that use Youtube as a tool to convey messages to their customers. Moreover, today, this platform has a Youtube feature for users to create short videos of about 15 seconds, making it easier than ever to create promotional videos and communicate with customers. TikTok can be considered "baby" in social media platforms, but the level of growth and influence of Tiktok in recent years is extremely surprising. As a

²⁰ Alex Temblador, How the Decade's rise of Social Media changed travel (24-12-2019). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/IUtlIK> (consulted on 18-03-2023)

²¹ Travel Traction Marketing, Social Media Marketing for Hotels – A guide for 2023 (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/EcvQKh> (consulted on 18-03-2023)

result, the number of Tiktok's users is growing, making it gradually one of the platforms that hotels group keep an eye on. Marriott, for example, launched the #30stays300days campaign on TikTok in early 2022 to encourage users to share their experiences at their hotels²².

2.4. Loyalty programs:

Loyalty program is a strategic tool to help hotels retain customers, encouraging them to use the hotel's services (Tanford, 2023). According to the annual reports of hotels, the number of customers applying for membership programs is constantly increasing: IHG Group reported that in 2019 there were 100 million members joining the IHG club; Marriott revealed 125 million members in its Marriott Bonvoy loyalty program (Shin et al., 2022). Loyalty program operates under the mechanism that customers who join in a hotel's loyalty members will receive bonus points each time they use services provided by hotels in that chain. Depending on how close they are, they receive different discounts and rewards. Those bonus points can be deducted for the next use of the service, or redeemed with hotel partners.

3. Green marketing

3.1. The appearance of Green Marketing

The origin of green marketing comes from the wave of environmental concerns in the 1970s. Along with the movement of time, this concept also gradually changed (M. J. Baker, 2003) (Michael J. Baker, 2003). Since then, the book has defined "green marketing": "The holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way"²³.

Traditional marketing is about developing products at an acceptable price to meet customer needs, communicating information and product strengths to customers in a convincing way. Green marketing, in addition to the main goal of conveying a message to customers, has other requirements:

- Products must be developed on a balance between customer requirements with quality, practicality, efficiency, acceptable price, and at the same time create a minimum impact on the environment;

²² Marriott Bonvoy, Travel the World – On Us, 30 Stays 300 Days (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/psIjYn> (consulted on 19-03-2023)

²³ Michael J. Baker, The Marketing Book (5th edition), p727 (consulted on 19-03-2023)

- Products must have high quality and environmentally friendly images, related to the product's characteristics and the manufacturer's achievements in environmental protection (Meler & Ham, 2012).

Thus, green marketing can be understood as activities carried out to exchange and facilitate the products and services provided to meet the needs and wants of customers in a way that causes as little as possible the negative impacts on the environment.

In the same conference paper, the author outlined how green marketing is applied in practice, through environmentally friendly strategies, they listed out 5 main components:

- Create and develop new market segments that care about the environment;
- Based on environmental standards to monitor and evaluate all activities in the market and existing products;
- Redefining product quality and packaging strategy;
- Redefining communication strategies with the public, with environmental organizations, with countries...;
- Develop new environmental standards from which new initiatives come up;
- Embrace eco-friendly product labels.

Green marketing should not be a new marketing method, but it should be pursued with a greater vigor, because it includes environmental dimensions, affects social aspects and also helps businesses in terms of economics (Mishra & Sharma, 2014). To effectively implement green marketing, Mishra and Sharma's research also presented 7 "golden rules":

They first refer to the customer, with the task of **knowing your customer**, making sure that customers have awareness about the problems you are concerned about and they are interested in which your products are solving. After identifying your customers, the next step for businesses is to **educate customers**, so that customers not only know and understand that you are protecting the environment, they also need to be aware of the importance of protecting the environment in general, and of your product in particular. The next rule **genuine and transparent**, which means that the business is actually taking the environmental actions they stated in their marketing campaign, and the rest of the business's activities need to be consistent with the environmental things. Then, the author mentions **reassure the buyer**, which is to make consumers believe in the product and the contribution that the product is

making to the environment - that is what keeps customers choosing the product. An important thing for businesses, not just marketing, is to **consider product prices**. There are many eco-friendly products that will cost more due to better ingredients, but you still need to make sure it's an affordable and worthwhile price. Referrals are not enough, customers need to have the **opportunity to participate**, which means businesses personalize the benefits of environmental actions, by allowing customers to experience and join them. Finally, brands need to **recognize the shift in customer expectations**. Customers expect to receive products that are pocket-friendly, minimizing the environmental impact that affects their own lives (Mishra & Sharma, 2014).

3.2. Greenwashing and how to avoid

Greenwashing is a loop of advertising and marketing to deceive and convince the public that a company/organization's products, services, goals, and policies are environmentally friendly²⁴. In other words, it means that the actions of businesses do not match what they market: they claim that their products protect the environment, but in fact that product makes no contribution, not to mention there are harmful to the environment. If linking greenwashing with green marketing has been analyzed above, it can be seen that greenwashing is when a business does not comply with golden rule number 3 - genuine and transparent. The term "greenwashing" was first coined in 1986 by Jay Westerveld, who associated it with the fact that hotels offered guests to reuse towels as a water-saving strategy, without taking any more serious actions. He believes that this is not enough to contribute to the environment (Netto et al., 2020). Continuing with that argument, the authors cited research by Nyilasy et al. about the continued increase in greenwashing activities affecting consumer trust, making it difficult for them to distinguish what is a real green marketing campaign. Thus, green skepticism has grown with green marketing and hindered green marketing (Nyilasy et al., 2014).

When learning about ways for marketers to avoid being caught in the greenwashing trap, Forbes offers three advices²⁵:

1- Put in the work: That is, businesses to avoid greenwashing must really take "green" actions. First of all, it is the marketer who needs to understand the operation of the business, the

²⁴ Wikipedia. Available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenwashing> (consulted on 19-03-2023)

²⁵ Rhett Power, 3 ways businesses can avoid greenwashing (21-08-2022). Available on <https://tinyurl.vn/grwXFG> (consulted on 20-03-2023)

partners involved and the regulations that can affect the operation. From these insights, businesses can set internal goals, measuring the effectiveness of their environmental activities. Businesses also need to report the progress of this activity to customers, partners, and investors. They can go through the verification of another trusted organization to increase the transparency of the report;

2- Stop using vague language: This advice is aimed at reminding businesses to invest in content, be careful in the use of language. The use of generic words will make customers not fully feel the environmental friendliness of the product. Forbes suggests that instead of using words like "green, natural or eco-friendly", businesses should include specific numbers like percentages to convey more detailed information to customers. Besides, marketers also need to pay attention to accidental greening when using words that have specific rules ("compostable", "biodegradable" or "plastic-free");

3- Release the need for perfection: Businesses do not need to expect perfection in numbers or actions, because customers expect more honesty than perfection. Businesses need to communicate exactly what they have done, acknowledge problems, be honest and take responsibility for what they do. By doing so, businesses will easily build consumer trust with their products and brands.

As such, the difference between green marketing and another normal marketing campaign is the focus of the product, which is environmentally friendly products and services. When doing green marketing, marketers must be careful with the greenwashing trap

Conclusion of part I

In this first part, through the study of previous documents, I understood the environmental issues that hotels are facing. Besides, the reference to the annual reports of some international hotel corporations also showed me what the hotel groups, the upscale and luxury hotels have done, are doing or planning to do in the short upcoming. Those environmental actions follow UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals for the tourism industry set for the year 2030.

This part allowed me to understand the marketing steps, marketing tools and marketing strategies being applied in hotels, as well as the term "Green Marketing" for promoting the environmental products/ services.

All the works from the literature review helped me create a theoretical framework, which is a premise for me to continue developing research problems and finding hypotheses for the starting question. The analysis in this first-year dissertation will aim for concepts, methods, and finding global common answers. It will be a pedal for the dissertation in my second year to enter the hotel market in Hanoi, Vietnam - where I have the opportunity to observe and do empirical research through my internship.

**PART II: MARKETING STRATEGY
FOR THE HOTEL'S
ENVIRONEMNTAL PERFORMANCE**

Introduction of part II

The concerns when born, they need to be resolved, before more consequences occur. It also happens in the hotel industry, besides performing actions to face environmental issues, they also need to communicate and promote customers about their actions, for the purpose of general and sustainable development (Yadav et al., 2016). Furthermore, these actions significantly affect the image of the hotel in positive a way, which leads to a magnificent impact on consumers' intentions. So it is clear that the actions for the environment of the hotel can be seen as one of the effective weapons for their marketing strategy. Therefore, in this chapter, I want to create a bridge between environmental actions to marketing strategy in upscale to luxury hotels. This is the research problem that I bring up in my dissertation which will be analyzed in the second part. I want to go from the common problems of the environment and marketing, to find the similarities, then connect them together and put them in the context of an upscale to luxury hotel.

From that research problem, the starting question is posed: *How would hotels market themselves through their environmental strategy?*. To answer this question, I give myself three hypotheses. Thus, the goal of this part 2 is that I will analyze and research those hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Educating customers to link environmental issues with their daily habits.

Hypothesis 2: Personalizing guest's experience, make it be a unique selling point.

Hypothesis 3: Creating green marketing campaign as a part of CSR strategy, not only can engage green consumption but also build the hotel's credibility.

CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO GREEN MARKETING: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO ASPECTS

The first task I set for Part II is to link the two theoretical frameworks established in the previous section, thereby summarizing the research problem.

1. Target audience of this marketing strategy

1.1. Customers of upscale to luxury hotel

Luxury hotels are divided into 3 categories, including: Luxury major (luxury brands of a major integrated chain); Luxury exclusive (luxury brands of a small/medium sized exclusive luxury chain); Upper upscale (upper upscale chains)²⁶. The common point of these 3 items is that they all bring a high-class living experience to customers. Therefore, they provide special and exclusive services and amenities to their guests. Luxury hotels often offer a wide range of premium features, personalized services... and come with a high-end price. As a result, these hotels do not aim to provide services to all customers, but they set out for themselves separate customer segments, with characteristics and purchasing habits consistent with the products they offer.

The hotel industry uses very effectively to segment customers by income. The segment of customers who will choose services at luxury hotels are those with good income or more. This is confirmed in a recent study of Chinese tourists - arguably due to the country's large population. Figures show that 37% of consumers prefer high-star hotels, of which 47% of high-income customers express a strong desire to choose luxury hotels²⁷.

Psychographic segmentation is a large segment, divided into many smaller segments, with characteristics including: social class, lifestyle, personality. Psychographic segmentation is a very productive way for hoteliers to understand the needs of their customers, it is more appreciated than basic demographic and geographic information. Segmentation in this way helps hotels tailor their services, as well as communication strategies (Hafner & Grabler,

²⁶ Dital Luxury Group, The world luxury index Hotels: the most sought-after luxury hotels (2013). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/sFaXIG> (consulted on 23-03-2023)

²⁷ Evelyn Cheng, CNBC Travel, What do Chinese travelers want? Luxury “star-rated” hotels, says new survey (09-02-2023). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/gaAWZZ> (consulted on 23-02-2023)

2015). Kotler demonstrated that social class has a strong influence on consumer preferences, such as transport, clothes, home furnishings, leisure activities, etc. These influence consumption decisions. For example, the middle and upper class will choose afternoon tea at the Ritz-Carlton instead of a local pub (Kotler, 2014). The same goes for them when deciding on accommodation. The lifestyle segment is being chosen by more and more marketers. Lifestyle is formed by many factors: age, income, culture, social class, life experience... Consumers consider lifestyle as a way to express their identity, so they seek products and services that match their values and interests, and also reflect their personality (Rajak, 2023). Personality gives hotel marketers market segments that they can rely on to create products and services tailored to the chosen customers²⁸. For example, for introverted customers, hotels can provide private accommodation services, while for extrovert customers, social activities or hotel events will be a plus.

Behavioral segmentation is divided into several groups depending on customers' knowledge, attitudes, usage habits, and reactions to the products. There are many marketers who consider these to be the core aspects of market segmentation (Kotler, 2014). In the hotel industry, behavioral segmentation can be based on service usage habits at the hotel, or the frequency of guests travel or the frequency of using the hotel's services. Behavioral variables can be useful for planning hotel's service and enhancing hotel's customer experience (Talabi, 2015). The behavioral variable could be that business customers will tend to use the service more often due to their job requirements, but for travelers, they only visit the hotel once per year. In addition, some business guests often stay for a long time due to the nature of business trips, others could stay for a shorter time. Therefore, understanding customers' consumption behavior can be considered as a key, helping hotels to better understand customer needs, then build services that satisfy their needs, and improve hotel quality as well as customer experience.

For a more thorough screening, besides those segmentations mentioned above, it is necessary to consider these segments by tourist audiences. Customer persona of upscale to luxury hotels divided by amenities are listed into the following groups: Luxury travelers, Leisure travelers, Business travelers, Wellness travelers, and in some cases, Family travelers (normally more suitable for resorts).

²⁸ Dan Fleetwood, Psychographic segmentation: Definition, Variables, Examples and Advantage (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/lyDfpO> (consulted on 24-03-2023)

1.2. Target audience: environmental sensitive customer

The mindset of tourists is changing more and more, and green travel (or sustainable tourism) is gradually becoming a trend among travelers, hoping to lessen the negative impact on the environment (Hederer, 2022). According to an online survey by Statista, published in April 2022, they confirmed that 81% of global travelers believe in the importance of green travel. The survey was conducted with more than 30 thousand tourists over 18 years old, in 32 different countries ²⁹:

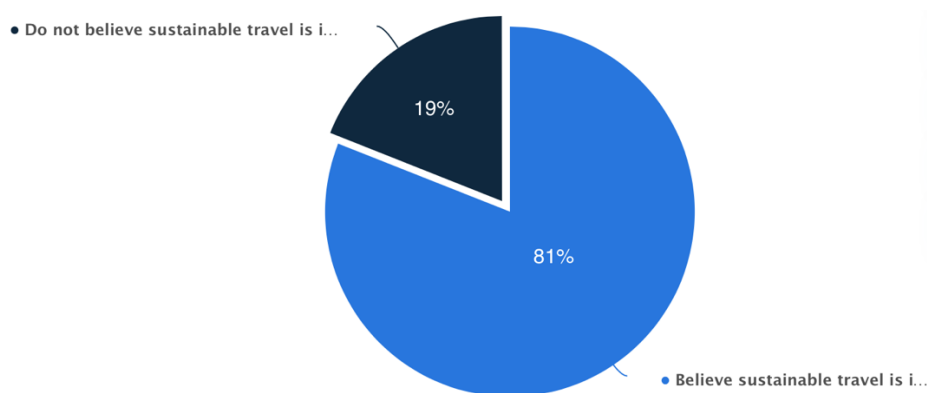


Figure 5: Travelers believe sustainable travel is important worldwide (Source: Statista)

Another survey found that nearly 86% of travelers are willing to pay more for an eco-conscious accommodation. In which, although it is a small number but it is also interesting, 3.6% said that they only book when the hotel is an environmentally practice hotel ³⁰. From the above results, it can be seen that green travelers are a growing tribe of guests that hotels need to pay attention to. The number of these travelers will continue to rise with the increasing level of environmental awareness, as well as with the bigger seriousness of environmental problems, reminding people not to be indifferent.

To conclude, for the target audience of upscale to luxury hotels, people who care about the environment is not only the customers that they have always been aiming for, they also need to attract environmentally sensitive customers at the same time. In fact, these are not

²⁹ Statista, Share of travelers that believe sustainable travel is important worldwide in 2022 (04-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/NnoSTo> (consulted on 24-03-2023)

³⁰ Operto, 85,6% of Travelers say they would pay more for an eco-friendly choice of a hotel (22-06-2021). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/IuQyRV> (consulted on 24-03-2023)

independent customer segments, they are gradually mixed together, following global environmental trends. The mission of the hotel environmental strategy is to attract potential customers while expanding the pool of leads by addressing the interests of existing customers.

The table below is based on the analysis of Isis Darios to summarize the customer persona of green strategies for hotels³¹:

	Who they are	What they expect	Where they stay	How to help
Green travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eco-conscious - Sustainability-minded - Aware of carbon footprint - Want to minimize impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eco-friendly accommodations and amenities - Look for authentic commitment to sustainability 	Accommodations that are environmentally conscious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be transparent - Give information
Luxury travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have higher expectations - Willing to spend more money on experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excellent and impeccable service - High-end amenities - Utmost attention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global brands - Luxury properties - Offer unique experiences, beautiful accommodations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connect to private tour group - Knowledge of local restaurants - Exceptional services
Leisure travelers (vacationer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casual traveler who travels one or two times per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy access to tourist attractions - Relax and recuperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best value accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel tips, guiding tips
Business travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-related trips - Less price-sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tight schedules - Efficiency and self-service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branded hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restaurant and other business service information

³¹ Isis Darios, Cloudbeds, 10 types of guests (examples for building guest personas) (21-01-2020). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/pdgzYx> (consulted on 24-03-2023)

				- Laundry and room service
Wellness travelers	- Pursuit health and well-being - Stick to healthy eating habits	- Food and activity align with health goals	- Properties that equipped to fulfill health goals - Have active wellness programs	- Offer wellness activities such as yoga, spa treatments, fitness class, ...
Family travelers	- Multiple generations (parents, kids...)	- Get the most value - Space suitable for children	- Child-safe environments - Kid-friendly venues	- Breakfast offered, restaurant easy to access - Babysitting services - Family-friendly services

Customer personas of marketing strategy in luxury hotel

2. Marketing strategy for environmental actions of hotels

Environmental practice hotels will quickly become permanent in the public mind, providing a greater competitive advantage in the future. Research by Nelson A. Barber confirmed that to do this, hotels not only need to participate in environmental activities, they also need to actively communicate their activities to customers through a potent marketing strategy (Barber, 2014).

2.1. Green marketing mix

With a marketing strategy for environmental actions, choosing the right tool is a necessity. Therefore, instead of using the marketing mix as conventional strategies, to accommodate environmental concerns, hotels need to link every component to the problem. The term Green marketing mix first appeared by Bradley in 1989. Then after, it linked every aspect of the 7Ps

to environmental issues, distinguished by the term "green" for the service industry (Rainanto et al., 2020).

Green product: As mentioned in the previous section, products in the hotel industry can be the products or services they provide. To ensure the green factor, this product or service must be environmentally friendly, not harmful to the environment (Madhunimasha & Pathmini, 2021) or cause minimal harm to the environment. Rainanto cited Kirgiz's 2016 research to describe products that are considered eco-friendly, are products made from recycled materials, the production that produces less approved and hazardous waste, biological support, consumed minimum energy, generates less waste.

Green price: Most consumers agree to pay a higher price for a product if they know the added value of that product. Value added can be performance, functionality, design. Environmental benefits can be considered an advantage, a factor that determines the value and quality of the product (Kalama, 2007). Environmentally friendly products are often more expensive than other products because it includes environmental protection expenses. Most consumers also agree that this environmental cost should be included in the product price (Osman et al., 2015).

Green place: Locations are places where products can be purchased, which can be physical stores or virtual stores (Madhunimasha & Pathmini, 2021). For an environmentally friendly product, it needs to be distributed in a suitable place, without any contamination. Businesses must ensure that their distributors care about the environment and demonstrate that they have a green distribution strategy (Kalama, 2007). The physical locations that hotels can choose include natural or eco-friendly attractions (parks, beaches, nature reserves). In addition, the hotel itself is considered as a green place for marketing if it has sustainable, eco-friendly designs or incorporates green features into the existing facilities. Partners of hotels will also be an ideal marketing location, they are travel companies, organizations or agencies that care about the environment. Virtual stores are online channels, social networking platforms, OTAs, hotel websites... where hotels can post information about services, and attract environmentally aware customers.

Green promotion: Green promotion, according to a study in 2011, demonstrated activities that provide authentic product information in a way which does not harm the material and moral

interests of the consumer (Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011). One of the important tools is the advertising message which attracts the desire of consumers who care about the environment (Ankit & Mayur, 2013). Green promotion aims to touch consumers' purchasing behavior by encouraging them to buy products that are not harmful to the environment, and at the same time directing their attention to the beneficial results this action brings to them and for the environment (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). The green promotion includes 3 main contents (Osman et al., 2015):

- Products are promoted as environmentally friendly;
- The company is willing to invest in environmental campaigns and promote products that care about the environment;
- The company uses recycled materials for advertising.

Green people: Participating in a green strategy, people are not only consumers who care about environmental issues, but also hoteliers, the participants of the marketing campaign. Hotels are adopting green human resources management to build organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment (Alyahya et al., 2022). The concept of green human resource management is focus on sustainable human resource management. Typical actions include promoting the use of ecological resources to emphasize environmental sustainability, improving human resource behavior, and raising the sense of responsibility for environmental health. Practicing green human resource management pays attention to treating employees fairly, thereby greatly benefiting the reputation and performance of the business. Plus, it's also effective because it empowers employees (Fazlurrahman et al., 2021).

Green process: Green process has a positive impact on product innovation, thereby helping to improve the financial performance of the business (Xie et al., 2019). The process of sustainable production aims to achieve the same output with less input, thereby reducing total consumption, waste and impact on the environment (Singh et al., 2018). In another word, a green process in hotel marketing strategy refers to the internal processes of the hotel designed to minimize the impact on the environment while operating. This includes energy use, waste management, procurement processes, etc. These processes are the inputs that result in green products or services. This can be instrumental in promoting the hotel's environmental strategy.

Green physical evidence: Green physical evidence in hotels refers to the hotel's tangible assets that are met to promote the sustainability and eco-friendliness of the hotel. Levynna et

al cited Prakash for this definition: matters relating to form and style, visible to the naked eye, intended to convey expected value to consumers in the form of cleanliness, speed, physical design, use of technology or other benefits, all contribute to environmental protection (Levynna et al., 2018; Prakash, 2002). Therefore, green physical evidence can include the architecture and design, landscaping, signage and amenities of a hotel.

2.2. Implementation of marketing actions for environmental strategy

After determining the audience that the marketing strategy wants to target, as well as analyzing the elements in the Marketing Mix, hotel marketers will have a more comprehensive view to begin the next step: implementation. "Green" is not a fixed consumer trait, therefore hotels should take specific actions to create a great importance for people to choose green products or services instead of others (Walsh & Dodds, 2017). So the problem here is to figure out which methods will help hotels turn their environmental strategy into a selling point that attracts more customers. Conversely, when doing environmental marketing for a hotel, a unique selling point of the hotel will emerge. For hotels operating in the environmental sector, this competitive advantage is even stronger, because it sets them apart from their competitors. Moreover, environmental-based competitive advantage provides superior financial performance for hotels, in addition, market efficiency also contributes to financial performance (Leonidou et al., 2013).

A study by Yuchin Hsieh surveyed the websites of the top 50 hotel companies to show that their corporate website provides an effective platform to develop their image and communicate with their shareholders with regard to their sustainability commitment (Hsieh, 2022). This is a very fertile way to inform guests about the hotel's environmental strategy. However, today, providing information for customers to search and read will sometimes put the hotel in a passive position. Instead, they can actively give information, skillfully convey environmental messages to their customers, in order to attract environmentally sensitive customers, and at the same time convince other groups of customers to pay more attention to this issue.

Attracting more customers with environmental marketing is the goal that this dissertation wants to achieve, with the desire to answer the question "How would hotels market

themselves through their environmental strategy?". I give responses corresponding to three hypotheses, so that through those three hypotheses, I can find answers that match the questions posed, which can be applied to environmental marketing campaigns at upscale to luxury hotels. Three hypotheses will be presented in turn in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2: EDUCATING CUSTOMER TO AWARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

To manage an eco-friendly strategy, hotels should first seek out customers who believe it is important to engage in green activities. Besides, hotels also need to actively educate customers about the importance of being environmentally friendly (Baker et al., 2014) . Education is perhaps the best tool to increase people's understanding of their impact on the environment (Jhawar et al., 2012).

1. Provide information

One of the ways to increase customer awareness is to provide them with information so that they understand the environmental issues and the hotel's efforts to address those issues.

1.1 Highlight the environmental problems

Millar and Baloglu in their article raised the issue of consumer skepticism about eco-labels mentioned in numerous studies. As such, they assert that hotels need to prioritize certain regulations of the hotel industry, or at least indicate factors for guests to understand the picture of environmental hotels. They assume that some labels can give guests a basic idea of what products/services are offered at a hotel and what to expect when staying at an environmentally conscious hotel. Green certifications help convey a message to customers and educate people about the green hotel industry (Millar & Baloglu, 2011). However, hoteliers also need to pay attention to how they use green certification labels as a marketing material, they should review standards, avoid abuses that cause hotels to fall into a greenwashing trap as analysed outlined in the first part.

Hotel's educational effort should be based on means-end theory, where the customer decides to buy a product or service, and get value in return. To explain this statement, Baker et al. use towel reuse as an example, they think that instead of saying towel reuse helps to save water so that cost-cutting which makes guests feel little benefits they get from what they do, the hotels should communicate with more specific messages about how towel reuse reduces water consumption and reduces environmental pollution (Baker et al., 2014).

A study that surveyed 343 travelers found that just over 19% of respondents stated that hotels educate their customers. This is the leverage for the affirmation "the hotels must make their guests an integral part of their environmental management activities"³². Before guests check in at the hotel, the customer should be informed that the environmental program is being implemented at the hotel, and what the guest is expected to do. Providing bulletin boards at the front desk and advice directly from staff is also an effective method. Customers who are engaged verbally and answer questions are more interested than simply reading information (Mensah & Mensah, 2013).

In addition, environmental information also needs to be displayed on social media sites. In fact, there are a number of large hotels or hotel groups that publish these environmental data and information, the documents are available to search online. However, it is not easy to find such documents. For example, when I searched for actions that Hyatt has contributed to the environment, I actually had to search for their Global Reporting Initiative and read the whole thing. What I want to say is, information is always available to search for, but it is only for those who are really looking for it, not widely available to all potential customers. Another example when considering the Voco St. David's Cardiff (UK) from IHG group, they call themselves "a hotel built on sustainability"³³. On the hotel's official website, they have a separate section about experiencing a sustainable stay. There, before customers decide to book a room, they can see all the information about the "sustainability" that the hotel strives for: bedding made from 100% recycled materials; amenities in large format to reduce waste from plastic, use large glass bottles of water instead of plastic bottles. In addition, Voco St. David's Cardiff also highlights the application of sustainability in other services such as wedding, spa, air conditioning, electric car charging station and electric bike station. Hotel marketing can consider storytelling as a productive approach to providing environmental information for customers.

1.2. Green certifications

In a research paper that I have read but can not remember the source, the author stated that green certifications not only identify a product or service that meets certain criterias, but also

³² Mensah and Mensah, International Tourists' Environmental Attitude towards Hotels in Accra, Journal of Tourism Vol. 8, No. 2, p68 (2013). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/gTfjDk> (consulted on 27-03-2023)

³³ Voco St. David's Cardiff hotel website. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/vxReLF> (consulted on 28-03-2023)

a guarantee of the product's quality by a third party. Green certification in the hotel industry has three goals (Geerts, 2014):

- Encourage hotels to offer green activities;
- Improve hotel profit potential;
- Hotel recognition for potential customers.

The green certifications have vital impacts on green practices of other industries and fields (Luo & Fan, 2019), as well they can be potential elements for marketing activities.

One of the most widely discussed certification programs is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) developed by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) (Millar & Baloglu, 2011). Their priority is to certify buildings which are proven to save money, improve efficiency, lower carbon emissions and create healthier places for people. They are critical to addressing the climate crisis, meeting ESG goals, enhancing resilience, and supporting more equitable communities. LEED categories can also contribute toward meeting the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals³⁴. Certification has four levels, with the order is Certified - Silver - Gold - Platinum.

Thus, in general, whether or not you know well about the organization providing the green certification, a hotel that is guaranteed to be environmentally friendly by another organization also gives a more objective and impressive view. Continuing with the Voco St hotel example. David's Cardiff, they also announced on their official website that they have a Green Key certification for their high environmental standards, followed by a Green Engage certification from IHG for designing, building and running more sustainable hotels.

Nowadays, Google is still considered as the most used search engine: accounting for more than 80% of Desktop Search Engine Market Share Worldwide (February 2023)³⁵. The fact that the hotels actively note "sustainability" in their Google Business Profile is also an action worthy of attention. By this way, the hotels will keep their guests informed of the actions they are taking in terms of sustainability. This is both a commitment to the customers and a motivation for the hotels to follow the published commitments. In this sustainability section, they can highlight the certifications they have achieved, the actions the hotels have taken to be

³⁴ LEED, Mission and Vision (online). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/QNiAbj> (consulted on 28-03-2023)

³⁵ Statcounter GlobalStats, Desktop Search Engine Market Share Worldwide (02-2023). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/CdQVXj> (consulted on 28-03-2023)

energy efficient, save water and reduce waste. Alternatively, they can also claim their sustainable sourcing.






<p> Eco certifications</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hilton LightStay ✓ ISO 50001 ✓ ISO 14001 	<p> Energy efficiency</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Energy conservation programme ✓ Energy from carbon-free sources ✓ Energy-efficient heating and cooling systems ✓ Energy-efficient lighting
<p> Water conservation</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Water-efficient taps, toilets and showers ✓ Towel and linen reuse programme 	<p> Waste reduction</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recycling programme ✓ Food waste reduction programme ✓ Composts excess food ✓ Soap and toiletry donation programme ✓ No polystyrene food containers ✓ No single-use plastic water bottles or straws
<p> Sustainable sourcing</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responsible purchasing policy ✓ Organic food and beverages ✓ Locally sourced food and beverages ✓ Responsibly sourced seafood ✓ Organic cage-free eggs 	

Figure 6: Sustainability section on Google Business Profile (Ex: Hilton Cardiff)

2. Offer activities for the customers to participate in

Once the customers are in-house, it is possible for the hotels to seek a way to educate customers about the hotel's green programs, then convince them to join in yours. This approach helps the customers be aware of the environmental issues, inform them the reason behind and explain to them how to contribute (Tzschentke et al., 2008). To continue this confirmation, another study affirmed that emphasizing the importance of environmental practices then cooperating with them to involve in green behaviors can raise customer's awareness. Not only the room sales can increase but the corporate responsibility of guests participating in green programs can upheave thanks to educational efforts (Han et al., 2011).

In this section, I want to center on in-room environmental activities that hotels could ask all customers to join them. Some actions that are taken in many hotels are energy conservation, water saving, recycling, using sustainable amenities, green housekeeping....

Energy conservation in the hotel industry should begin with electricity saving as it is the main energy cost for a hotel. Despite the fact that there are many hotels that have installed energy-efficient light fixtures and green equipment to reduce cost to be more sustainable, hoteliers still need to encourage customers to the awareness of conservation (Chang et al., 2016). Indeed, although renewable resources are applied in some hotels to create electronics, it is not the case that savings can be ignored. At the moment of this study, almost all hotels use the key card-controlled switch that automatically turns off unnecessary lighting, air conditioning and ventilation systems when customers are not present. However, the key system is no more effective as some guests intentionally keep a key in the switch, and actually the guests did that as per my observation when working in some hotels. As such, the efforts to achieve sustainability of hotels will have more meaning if their guest understand the aim of actions and give them a hand to solve the problems.

In recent years, in order to order to save water and energy, hotels have given their guests the choice of whether they want to wash their towels and bed linens daily. The American Hotel and Lodging Association estimated that this requirement reduced the amount of laundry by 17%, along with a drop in costs for water, drainage, energy, and labor ³⁶. To increase this number and improve customer attitudes toward saving water, hotels need to develop their messages to guests about this issue. A number of actions have been taken such as: placing cards and announcements with water-saving information in the rooms, placing informational printed materials to encourage guests to reuse towels, posting ideas and reasons for the actions on social media platforms.... This kind of messages will demonstrate that saving water can help prevent resource depletion and protect the planet. This also create environmental consciousness and change guests' behavior to a more sustainable consumption.

Above, the analyzes are just about the most basic and practical actions that hotels can encourage their guests to play a part in their protecting environment journey. The fact that the hotel publishes their achieved numbers with a clear change, and the level of contribution to

³⁶ Rachel Nuwer, Reusing hotel towels actually does make a difference (25-02-2014). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/dHUrjh> (consulted on 28-03-2023)

the environment from the environmental actions of the customer should also worth to be considering. Because it does not just motivate existing customers, it also helps attract and persuade new customers to join. Real numbers will be more impressive than generic text content.

Thus, hypothesis one focuses on analyzing the application of customer education in the marketing process as a method to communicate about a hotel's environmental activities. This includes providing guests with information about the activities the hotel has done, the customer's contributions when participating in these activities. At the same time, hotels should also consider providing environmental activities for guests to participate in, which will help environmental practices become more practical.

CHAPTER 3: PERSONALIZATION CUSTOMER' ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES

Chapter 3 corresponds to my second hypothesis, which illustrates personalizing guests' environmental experiences to turn them into a hotel's unique selling point. I analyze this hypothesis in two aspects, firstly putting nature at the center of customer experience, then applying experience marketing to impress customers.

1. Putting nature at the center of guest experience

1.1. Applying nature in hotel's physical evidence.

Green physical evidences are those clear objects that customers can see and feel the environment in them. Moreover, not only just evidence for guests, they play a significant role to spur green action to nurture employees' green behaviors. The business could gain a differentiation advantage thanks to this motivation (Tiong et al., 2017). The green physical evidence is highly relevant to the service business, helps drive the business to a differentiation advantage. To build a more impressive green physical evidence, the business therefore should commit to creating a comfortable environment with carefully chosen furnishings and colors, designing the facilities, and so on (Tiong et al., 2017). Upgrading and creating this green appearance are even more important for the hotel industry, because the entire facility is the face of the hotel and is how customers envision the hotel. Besides contributing to the hotel's environmental strategy, greenalization hotel's physical evidence will definitely bring a great content for marketing. A green building can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 62% in comparison with a traditional building, as well, it helps improve air quality and prevent indoor pollution. Furthermore, green buildings can boost productivity, well-being and health of people³⁷.

One of the actions that hotels have applied a lot is to change the lighting system to LED lights to save electricity, and use renewable resources such as solar panels. One of the actions that are widely applied by hotels is to change the lighting system to LED lights to save electricity, using renewable resources such as solar panels. The most typical is the Four Seasons Hotel Hampshire, a hotel rated by Forbes as green, not greenwashing. They are equipped with LED

³⁷ Sazan Rahman, The Conservation Green buildings can boost productivity, well-being and health of worker (01-02-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.com/5ytt89v5> (consulted on 29-03-2023)

lighting systems, have a cogeneration plant and combined heat generation to generate electricity for consumption. At the same time, the hotel claims to use 100% renewable electricity³⁸.

There are many articles arguing about whether or not to continue the existence of minibars in hotels' guest rooms. In fact, green hotels should look directly at the problem of electricity consumption of minibars: whether it is an occupied room or an empty room, that small refrigerator still needs to be plugged in, because it is necessary to ensure the drinks/food inside it to be kept cold. Many large hotels such as Marriott, Hilton and Hyatt decided to phase out the hotel minibar from their hotels, the recognition of which is because they are not cost-effective³⁹. However, from an environmental perspective, this should be a good point for marketing because it contributes to reducing electricity consumption, instead of just being about business. A more sustainable solution suggested by Green Travel Blog: remove the minibar but still ensure convenience for customers as the original purpose of these mini-fridge, hotels can provide a Snack Bar on hotel premises (maybe in the lobby or reception area) with organic snacks that everyone can help out 24 hours a day⁴⁰.

Green hotels can also help themselves to be greener by advocating for customers to use sustainable transportation. Transport causes atmosphere pollution as it releases huge amounts of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere⁴¹. The plan to promote green mobility has four priorities: 1- promote walking and cycling; 2- promote public transport and share transport mode; 3- reduce the use of conventional fuel vehicles; 4- promote the use of electric vehicles. The objectives of these pillars are to improve guest's experience and behavior, raise awareness about green ability and of course, reduce the carbon footprint to save nature (ADI Associates, 2020).

³⁸ Carton Reid, Forbes, These Eco 5-star hotels prove that Greenwashing doesn't have to be standard (09-01-2023). Available at <https://tinyurl.com/y6f8m75y> (consulted on 02-03-2023)

³⁹ Aileen Graef, UPI Business News, Hotels are phasing out the minibar (02-05-2014). Available at <https://tinyurl.com/yd44ax4y> (consulted on 29-03-2023)

⁴⁰ Nadine Weiland, Green Travel, Blog, Sustainable alternatives to the minibar (27-11-2020). Available at <https://tinyurl.com/5ddfmt4c> (consulted on 29-03-2023)

⁴¹ EcoFriend, Hotels are now focusing on eco friendly transport service (02-07-2017). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/xrMffl> (consulted on 29-03-2023)

1.2 Implement recycling programs

Recycling is a great way to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfills and promote sustainability. The first important benefit of recycling is the reduction in purchasing costs, waste disposal, energy consumption and negative impact on the environment. Next, recycling helps conserve natural resources. Reuse, Reduce and Recycle are three processes that assist hotels in waste management (Mohan et al., 2017). When it comes to the benefits of this program, the study asserts that if a hotel is a green hotel, the message will be conveyed to all potential guests that the hotel's management, employees, and corporations all contribute efforts and believe that environmental protection is an important factor in hotel operation. This message plays a strategic role in gaining the loyalty of old customers and attracting new customers' interest in hotel services (Mohan et al., 2017).

For food waste treatment, composting is considered a useful method. Composting is a mixture of ingredients used as fertilizers for plants and to improve the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil. It is commonly prepared by decomposing plant and food waste, recycling organic materials and fertilizers⁴². Food waste should be sorted from the beginning, composting can use different methods depending on the ability of each hotel. This compost is an organic fertilizer which can be used in the hotel garden to maintain the fertility of the soil (Mohan et al., 2017). As mentioned in the previous section about environmental activities that have been carried out at hotels, JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi is a hotel that has implemented recycling food waste as an effective marketing campaign. Although their recycling is incomplete and only solves a very small part of food waste, in return they consider the creation of new dishes (carrot cakes) from the use of discarded ingredients as valuable marketing content. The reaching rate of the post about this program on the hotel's Facebook page received good responses, showing that they have initially succeeded in using the environmental action itself as a marketing material⁴³. In addition, for upscale to luxury hotels providing breakfast buffet service, excess food from breakfast is a common occurrence. For dishes that have never been served or are still on the plate, hotels may consider reprocessing or transforming them into ingredients for employee meals, thereby cutting down on waste.

⁴² Wikipedia (consulted on 29-03-2023)

⁴³ JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi, A sustainable growth – Climate action starts here (11-02-2023). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/mLGTJ> (consulted on 12-03-2023)

In addition, for some items that are difficult to recycle and reuse on hotel premises such as plastic bags, plastic bottles, metal cans, etc., the hotel can choose to partner with local organizations, who are likely to use and will need the products. This not only saves the hotel from having to deal with waste from these items, but also supports local businesses and protects the environment.

Sustainable amenities is an aspect that many hotels care about. In fact, many hotels are now opting for sustainable amenities for in-room toiletries such as bottles of shampoo, shower gel; wooden toothbrushes or bamboo combs; cotton slippers,.... In coordination with the hotel's concern for the environment, the hotel's staff should also know the effect of this action (especially housekeeping staff). Since then, the hotel can be more complete in educating customers and receiving positive feedback from guests (Bobbett, 2010). Hotels now place signages and some printed materials in guest rooms to explain and encourage environmental actions, this should be promoted and studied for creating a higher level of impact on customers.

2. Incorporating experience marketing into hotel operations

2.1. Effect of staff attitude on customer experience

"Customers remember experiences, not your brand logo"⁴⁴. This is really fits with the hotel industry, because after a stay, what makes customers remember the most is the experience they have at the hotel. People play an important role in hotel operations, those people are hotel staff, who communicate directly with guests from the moment they first arrive at the hotel (bellman staff opens the door to welcome them) to when they say goodbye to the hotel. Apparently, the constant communication between hotel guests - hotel staff makes the staff's performance strongly influence the customer's experience. Employee attitudes are an essential part of the customer experience, leading to customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the products or services they are provided (García-Barriocanal et al., 2010). In particular, the friendliness of the staff is often identified as an important characteristic of a hotel (Bagnera, 2017; Lagiewski & Perotti, 2021). The experience of prompt service is also recognized by customers as an important quality (Briggs et al., 2007; Lagiewski & Perotti, 2021) . Staff

⁴⁴ Martin Zwilling, Forbes, Customer remember experiences, not your logo brand (31-08-2013). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/VUefjH> (consulted on 29-03-2023)

empathy through personalized experiences was also identified that having an influence on customer experience (Chen & Tabari, 2017; Lagiewski & Perotti, 2021).

As such, green human resources is an area worth investing in by hoteliers. Hotels should share their green culture with potential employees, to ensure that applicants understand the hotel culture and are willing to participate in environmental programs in the workplace. Next, environmental training sessions to upgrade employees' skills and knowledge are indispensable. Employees who personally follow ecological environment friendly practices will take similar actions in the workplace, more committed to the hotel's environmental concerns (Chan et al., 2014).

Thus, customer experience is a combination of Products and People, thereby Promoting the hotel image in the customer's mind, building positive experiences, as a lever for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Once customers are loyal to a hotel, they tend to recommend and share, so the marketing of the hotel is successful by word of mouth.

2.2. Culinary experience with "green" is the key

The culinary experience at a hotel that cares about the environment and is trying to become greener should also take the environment at its core. This experience refers to an eco-friendly approach to food, thereby creating an eco-friendly meal; focusing on promoting sustainability, reducing waste and prioritizing the use of locally sourced foods. It involves incorporating environmental considerations throughout the entire the process through which brings dining experience for guests, from the selection and input of ingredients, to the preparation and disposal of leftovers. As for handling food waste, the above chapter has partly mentioned and given solutions, so in this section, I only focus on selecting and entering ingredients.

To stick with the sustainable goals, sourcing locally from local farmers and producers is the cornerstone⁴⁵. Locally sourcing products reduces the environmental impact of CO2 emissions that come from long-distance transport of produce and food products. Moreover, supporting local products will help the locals in general, as well attract customers who want to explore the destination by eating local foods. It is a win-win option, good for the environment - the local community and the hotels themselves. Chefs are now changing their traditional cooking

⁴⁵ Maryam Mesbah, Sea Going Green, 3 Upcoming Trends for Sustainable Food Experiences (10-12-2020). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/iYmMeh> (consulted on 30-03-2023)

techniques, opting for healthier cooking methods by replacing fats and sugars with new flavors. Some chefs center exclusively on vegetables and “natural cuisine” that also generate pleasure (Batat, 2020). In this way, they can both secure local supplies and respect indigenous ingredients. When researching sustainable luxury food experiences, Batat pointed out the pillars that chefs, restaurants, and hotels need to put their eyes on:

Motivation	Pillars	Dimensions
Intrinsic/ Internal	Pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing food sensory and experiences -Pleasing guests while offering them healthy food - Enhancing food socialization - Food storytelling and authenticity
	Plate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pesticide free food ingredients - Respectful booking techniques - Reducing fat and sugar for healthy and creative cuisine - Offering natural cuisine - Reducing portions to prevent overeating - Meat free menus
	Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopting eco-friendly interior design - Using recycled material - Banning the use of plastic - Enhancing the use of eco-friendly detergents and cleaning products - Reducing energy and light consumption
Extrinsic/ External	People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing employee’s well-being and training - Prompting food cultures and exchanges among communities - Connecting consumers, farmers and food actors - Providing food and taste education to children - Helping small family businesses: local farmers, suppliers and producers

	Planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing food waste - Adopting and promoting short circuits - Respecting seasonality - Considering animal welfare - Recycling
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Pillars of sustainable luxury food experiences by Batat ⁴⁶

Recently, urban farming onsite is more popular in the hotel industry. Notably, Grand Mercure Paris Boulogne of Accor group, started a vertical urban farm spanning more than 350m² on its rooftop since 2017. The harvest seasons of this garden are not only provide ingredients for the hotel, but they can also share fresh products like fruits and vegetables with locals in the neighborhood. This is part of the hotel's sustainable development plan, to offer healthy and sustainable produce while simultaneously eliminating food waste⁴⁷.

Nowadays, in this era of technological development, customer's reviews are considered to have magnificent influences on the reputation of the business. Travelers not only search for information but they actively share their experiences as co-creators or co-distributors on review websites (Chung & Koo, 2015), so as hotel's customers. Therefore, hotel industry marketers should consider guest's reviews as one of their key strategies. And the more satisfied a customer is, the better their reviews will be, in other words, the better the customer experiences, the higher the hotel's reputation.

As such, one of the methods that can be considered as accessible to guests is to turn the guest experience during their stay into a memorable one. From that point, hotels' activities impact customers' emotions, let them feel the actions performed and remember them through unique experiences.

⁴⁶ Wided Batat, Pillars of Sustainable Food Experiences in the Luxury Gastronomy Sector: A Qualitative Exploration of Michelin-starred chefs' motivation (2020) p.8. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/OPYGCD> (consulted on 30-03-2023)

⁴⁷ Accor, The Mercure Paris Boulogne houses a vertical urban farm... (22-09-2017). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/RIEPsR> (consulted on 30-03-2030)

CHAPTER 4: APPLY GREEN MARKETING AS A PART OF CSR STRATEGY

In order to call for hotels to act for the environment, UNWTO and IFC (International Financial Organization - World Bank Group) coordinated to launch a series of webinars with the theme of Government Incentives for Green Hotels. Accordingly, the government will support green buildings in eight categories: Tax incentives; bonus density; expedited permitting; grants and loans; technical assistance; net metering; public campaigns and legislation (UNWTO, 2020). Therefore, hotels themselves also need to have programs designed to encourage guests to contribute to their environmental activities.

1. Incentivize environmentally-friendly behavior

1.1. Tangible incentives

Many hotels offer a financial incentive for customers to engage in green behavior. These incentives typically are in the form of discounts, coupons that can be used at the hotel's food and beverage outlets, or loyalty points (which can later be redeemed for cash or for services of hotel's partner) (Line et al., 2018). These types of tangible incentives have been very successful in motivating customers to engage in eco-friendly activities (Barber, 2014). In this regard, the typical hotel group is Starwood Hotels and Resorts, which operates more than 1,200 hotels in 100 countries under 11 different brands, including St. Regis, Sheraton, Westin and W Hotels. Their client incentive program is cited as a prime example in numerous articles and research articles. In specific, they run a program called Make a Green Choice, which allows all customers to opt out of housekeeping. Specifically, when customers choose not to clean their room or reuse towels, they will be awarded with loyalty points and vouchers valid for use at the hotel's restaurants. Starwood Hotels and Resorts reported that 6.4 million people participated in the program, which just calculated from 2009 to 2015⁴⁸.

In short, it is more than efficient for a tool that has been used in marketing strategies at many hotel groups, now can be used to combine advertising for the operating environment. It is both to help retain customers, and to hit the market psychologically to be a thanks for

⁴⁸ Amy Zipkin, The New York Times, Hotels Embrace Sustainability to Lure Guests and Cut Costs (27-04-2015). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/yVJiAz> (consulted on 30-03-2023)

environmentally conscious customers, and encourage other customers to practice environmentally friendly habits.

1.2. Intangible incentives

In addition to the fact that financial incentives actually work in promoting green customer behavior, incorporating intangible incentives adds a competitive edge to hotels. Intangible incentives can be rewards that guests are unable to see, it can be a donation to a non-profit organization committed to promoting the environment in the name of the customer; or it can be a green badge, eco-friendly status for guests (Line et al., 2018). According to a 2018 study by Line et al, they also show that intangible incentives are more actively engaged for customers with a high preference for luxury. Then upscale to luxury hotels clearly should not ignore this tactic. More than recognition and appreciation can be shown through green badges, the hotel's highlighting of the positive impact that customers are making on the environment can be seen as a feel-good factor, bringing a sense of joy and pride to customers. Especially for environmentally conscious customers, exclusivity should be a wise choice. Hotels may offer guests special access or benefits only available to customers who contribute to the hotel's environmental activities, such as eco-friendly tours, excursions, etc...

2. Partner with environmental organizations

Corporate with environmental organizations is a good way for hotels to demonstrate their commitment to the environment and sustainability. This can help hotels build credibility with customers who value environmental responsibilities. There are many approaches and activities for hotels to collaborate with these environmental organizations, which can also communicate these activities as part of the hotel's CSR campaign.

2.1. Joining and supporting

There are a number of organizations that will offer environmental programs to hotels, when hotels join and complete the program, they will be certified for the eco-friendly actions they have taken. One of the most recognized programs for Green Hotels & Resorts is TripAdvisor's Green Leader. The program directly assesses environmental sustainability,

highlighting facilities with green practices. This recognition will be available on TripAdvisor, distinguished in bronze, silver, gold and platinum⁴⁹.

In fact, in addition to the certifications that hotels can receive, participating in environmental protection activities with non-profit organizations will also bring reputation, image and increase customer trust in the green level of the hotel. Hyatt opted to participate in the Tourism Action Coalition for Sustainable Oceans, established in 2020 with the goal of helping the tourism industry build resilience in coastal regions around the globe. Next, they are members of the Business Advisory Board of the Office of Marine Protected Areas, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which aims to promote responsible tourism and recreation in ocean parks. Moreover, Hyatt has been working with the World Wildlife Fund for nearly a decade to increase sustainable seafood supply and protect biodiversity (Hyatt, 2021). If all this information is widely published on the social networking sites of the corporation or Hyatt's hotels, it will certainly bring credibility to them, especially in shaping customer minds that their hotels are green hotels.

Donating or sponsoring to environmental organizations would be a good idea for hotels. This donation can be taken from the cost savings from reducing energy and water consumption, becoming a tool to promote the environmental behavior of customers. Or to continue tangible incentives for guests, hotels deduct guest rewards to contribute to organisations, on behalf of the customer and in the name of the customer.

2.2. Co-organizing outdoor activities

Not only supporting and participating in the organization's activities, but hotels can also coordinate with environmental organizations to jointly build practical programs, connecting customers with the natural environment. As published by Marriott Corporation, with the goal of clearing seaweed to remove carbon, Marriott teamed up with The Ocean Foundation (TOF) to support the Insetting Carbon Through Sargassum Mitigation Pilot Project. Then, they reported that Marriott properties continue to support local programs and host events to protect and enhance ecosystems. For example, in 2021, over 200 cleanup projects were conducted by properties and Marriott Business Councils in the U.S (Marriott, 2022). Jumeirah - an iconic

⁴⁹ Nicolas Frangos, Corporate Social Responsibility: Environmental Management and Sustainability Strategies for Hospitality Organisations (04-05-2016). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/PceQyL> (consulted on 31-03-2023)

hotel in Dubai - implemented the Turtle Restoration Project, releasing the animals back to their natural habitat after recuperating. While turtles are being treated, customers can see them in the lagoon and feed the turtles. Thus, customers partly visualize clearly the activities of the hotel, the hotel is also more successful in educating and raising awareness about the environment of guests⁵⁰.

In addition, the hotel should coordinate with the locals to organize cultural and natural discovery activities, creating a unique feature in hotel services. These discovery activities besides helping the hotel connect with the locals and learn about the local culture, they can partly understand the environmental contribution that hotel guests and the hotel have put up to bring to the local community. The more practical the programs, the closer they are to locals and nature, the higher the touch ability, the more customers will actively see the effect of what they have done. As a result, they are more motivated to practice green behavior.

3. Measuring and reporting environmental performance, available both for guest and for hotel

One important aspect of environmental sustainability in the hotel industry is performance and environmental sustainability indicators. These figures allow the hotel to see and evaluate the management approach, environmental performance achieved, and make timely changes if necessary. The lack of periodic environmental reporting and the publicity of these reports will show that the performance of the hotel's environmental activities is very poor and low, or even does not exist (Duric & Topler, 2021).

Up to now, the leading multinational hotel groups are still doing this well, they all have their own methods to measure performance, for example, the Hilton group uses the HER system (Hilton Environmental Reporting).); Hyatt has Hyatt Eco Track to collect and analyze sustainability data; Marriott created the Marriott Environmental Sustainability Hub (MESH) as their internal environmental reporting platform; and so on.

The issue I want to address is how they publish their documents and reports. Currently, according to observations and research on corporate websites, these reports are usually made annually, and the results are often very long PDF files, sometimes difficult to find information. And more importantly it is the result of the whole hotel group. To make it easier

⁵⁰ Jumeirah, The Turtle Rehabilitation Sanctuary. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/KTEdrZ> (consulted 01-04-2023)

for customers to access, hotels can consider adding monthly or quarterly reporting updates, and track the progress of that implementation compared to the target set at the beginning of the year. The figures should be presented clearly and the information should be to the point, short and concise so that guests can effortlessly grasp the main idea. These contents need to be widely posted on social networking sites of hotels, applying SEO in marketing so that the information is could be found by customers, especially environmentally conscious customers.

Ideally, the hotels' innovate measurement tools include detailed measurements, to be specific, they can calculate the environmental contribution of each guest. For example, it reveals that in-house guest of this room has saved how many percentages of water consumption compared to an average guest room. The number shown will probably make guests feel proud, like a score they get after each stay, and maybe they will be motivated to break the record of savings per hotel stay.

In summary, as part of CSR strategy in hotels, communication about social and environmental responsibility of hotels, green marketing can bring significant benefits to hotels. Not only does it help promote eco-friendly products and services, green marketing also demonstrates the hotel's commitment to sustainability, and the hotel's contributions to the environment, thereby building a better image for hotels, while engaging customer consumption.

Conclusion of part II

In the second part of this dissertation, I have analyzed three hypotheses in order to solve the starting question posed.

With chapter 1 of this part, I rely on the theoretical framework outlined in the previous part, problematize to summarize my research problem. I use "green marketing" as a bridge to link from environmental concerns to the marketing campaign of hotels. I suppose from this problem, I will find a solution on how to turn environmental activities into the hotel's unique selling point.

In chapter 2, I focus on the first hypothesis about educating customers, helping them to raise their environmental awareness to understand and voluntarily participate in the environmental activities offered by the hotel. I choose providing information and providing activities for guests as the way hotels should apply to educate customers.

By this chapter 3, the second hypothesis is dealt with. I offer personalized customer experience as a key method. Hotels can put nature at the core of the customer experience, and as a result practice experience marketing to attract and convince guests.

Finally, I work with the third hypothesis, which is applying green marketing as part of a hotel's CSR strategy, which is not only helps promote green consumption but also increases the hotel's credibility. Analyzing this hypothesis, I give three arguments corresponding to the three approaches. First, hotels offer rewards for environmentally friendly behavior. Second, the hotel partners with environmental organizations, joining them to support the goal of saving the planet. Last but not least, the hotel needs to measure environmental activities, and the measurement results should be easy for guests to access, in order to confirm the effectiveness of environmental activities that both the hotel and the guest have achieved.

**PART III: RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY AND FIELD OF
APPLICATION**

Introduction of part III

In the first part of this dissertation, I have relied on the existing literature to build a theoretical framework around the topic of environment and marketing in the hotel industry. These theories and interrelationships between the two led me to the research problem clarified in the second part.

To highlight the problem I want to study, in this second part I link the two main themes together, posing the starting question, "How would hotels market themselves through their environmental strategy?". I focused my analysis on the three hypotheses which I used to answer the question above.

Thus, in parts one and two, I mainly use theory as an analytical tool. In this third part, I go into practice to clarify the problem of the thesis. The first chapter will be devoted to presenting the area of research to which my hypotheses can be applied. Then, in chapter 2, I focus on my chosen method, which is a case study analysis of the Hilton hotel group. Finally, the last chapter will be an introduction to the research perspectives that I will continue in Master 2.

CHAPTER 1: THE FIELD OF APPLICATION

To verify my hypotheses, I chose my research field is platforms where hotels actively update or provide official information. All of these platforms are digital platforms, which can be easy to search online and still include full information about other promotion programs applied at the hotel, co-organized programs with partners and loyalty programs as well.

These is also the places where customers will visit to seek for and consult information about the hotel before deciding a reservation.

1. Website

Looking back to the 2000s, the growth in the size of the Internet and the World Wide Web was mainly driven by two “big trends”: online search engines and social media channels (Slevitch et al., 2015; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). And since then, having a website for your business has become more and more popular. Nowadays, many large and medium-sized businesses have their own websites, and in the hotel industry, with upscale to luxury hotels belonging to international groups, almost all of them have hotel websites, which are close to as a compulsion. The typical experience of a customer browsing a hotel website primarily consists of searching for content, processes, and social satisfaction, which, when satisfied, leads to a hotel reservation (Slevitch et al., 2015). Thus, it is clear that the hotel website has a clear role in turning a customer's search action into a purchase action.

Because the scope of the research is luxury to upscale hotels belonging to hotel groups, in the context of these hotels, there will be two types of websites for customers to find information: the group's website and the hotel's website.

1.1. Group's website

Hotel group websites can have a significant effect on the success of the group's business. These websites often serve as a central hub for all hotels of the group. Hotel group's website provides information about their group, their establishment, their stories, their hotel brands,.... Besides, there are information about the report (such as CSR report), the programs, the events... which are occurred, ongoing and will be held.

Browsing group's website gives customers with a view of the business, know the vision, the mission and goals that business want to achieve. By providing a user-friendly and informative website, hotel groups can improve their online visibility, attract more visitors to their website, and ultimately drive more bookings and revenue.

In addition, a well-designed and informative website can enhance the brand image and reputation of the group, making it more attractive to potential customers. It can also be a valuable tool for promoting the loyalty program, showcasing special offers and packages, and providing travel tips and destination information to customers.

1.2. Hotel's website

For hotels belonging to groups, most hotel websites must comply with the standards and have a similar design to the group's website. Hotel websites often provide information about properties, including location, included services, amenities, available offers, and reservations.

Furthermore, the hotel's website often has a chatbot/online chat to answer guests' questions. The fact that customers visit the hotel website provides the hotel with a lot of information, about the conversion rate, the bounce rate to study customer behavior for their next marketing activities. It also allows hotels to provide a personalized experience to guests by displaying relevant offers, promotions, and packages. Moreover, an interactive and responsive website that works well across different devices can enhance customer satisfaction and improve the hotel's online reputation.

2. Social media platforms

As mentioned in part 1, hotels use many different social media platforms to communicate with guests. However, within the scope of this research, I focus on exploiting Facebook and Instagram as the two social networks with the highest percentage of users.

2.1 Facebook

Many hotels have taken advantage of Facebook to interact positively and intimately with their target customers. With Facebook, hotels not only provide information and direct booking functionality, they also encourage conversations, interactions, building relationships and staying in touch with guests (Phelan et al., 2013).

Hotels also provide a link on their website to connect to the hotel's official Facebook Fanpage. The reason for this is that social networks can further assist the hotel in providing interactive information to potential customers (Phelan et al., 2013). Gen Y is ready to participate in promotions and other online activities, while Baby Boomers and Gen X update marketing messages via email marketing and website (Dickey & Lewis, 2010; Phelan et al., 2013; Strutton et al., 2011).

Another thing that makes Facebook gradually become a mainstream tool in marketing is its high popularity, especially when using Facebook's advertising tools, it will help the popularity of the fanpage or that content reach a large number of people. In addition, the appearance of short videos called reels with appropriate hashtags, capturing the Facebook algorithm and user psychology will help the hotels connect with potential customers who have the same interest with the issue shared by hotels.

2.2. Instagram

Instagram was founded in 2010, and in 2012 was acquired by Facebook. With over 800 million subscribers in 2018, Instagram promotes user interaction. It is used by many hotels wishing to promote their brand, products and services⁵¹. Instagram is a means for hotels to easily reach the younger generation of guests, who gradually become the hotel's potential customers – Millennials and Gen Z.

Instagram gives hotels the opportunity to increase their popularity and attract interested people. A 2014 study showed that using Instagram allows 58 times more engagement per follower than Facebook, and 120 times more than using Twitter⁵².

With Instagram, hotels can build their own online reputation, increase sales with call-to-action content and platform capabilities like calls, direct messages, click to see the link. .. Next, from interactions, like, share, re-up, repost, hotel marketers can also create their own community in order to broadcast the diversity of the stays offered at hotels and the overall services they provide, as well as motivate customer to upload picture or video to share about staying experiences.

⁵¹ Laura Yee Kui Choi, The role of Instagram in the Hospitality Industry (18-01-2020). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/bCxnyc> (consulted on 02-04-2023)

⁵² Nate Elliott, Forrester, Instagram is the King of Social Engagement (29-04-2014). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/KJkpYb> (consulted on 02-04-2023)

3. TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is an American website founded in 2000 by Stephen Kaufer and Langley Steinert. Stephen Kaufer is currently the site's general manager. TripAdvisor is a travel platform that aggregates consumer advice and reviews on hotels, restaurants, resorts and rentals in different cities and regions around the world (Criado, 2022). This exchange of information, recommendations and hotel reviews turns TripAdvisor into a valuable electronic word-of-mouth platform for hotels.

Hotels can use TripAdvisor in their marketing strategies in several ways. First, claiming and optimizing hotel's TripAdvisor profiles can help to increase their visibility on the platform and improve their rankings. Next, hotels can actively manage and respond to reviews, both positive and negative, to engage with their guests and show that they are committed to providing excellent customer service. Especially, hoteliers can use guest's reviews to understand their customers to fix their products and services, so that they can catch customer intentions in order to design a suitable marketing strategy.

To promote sustainable tourism, TripAdvisor launched the GreenLeaders program in 2013. Hotels that care about the environment and are building and operating environmentally friendly activities can join the program to receive a badge on their TripAdvisor profile (Yu & Jai, 2017). This badge represents the level of participation in eco-friendly activities, its display as well as a sign to attract interested customers.

4. Google Business

Today, using Google to search has become very global and familiar to people of all ages. Google My Business, or GBM for short, is an easy-to-use platform that allows businesses to manage their Google Business Profiles. Managers can access GBM from any electronic device (computer, smartphone, ...) to communicate with customers, engage customers, update content and manage their hotel they appear in Google search results⁵³. Google Business allows hotels to manage their online presence, update information about their property, respond to guest reviews, and showcase photos and videos. Having an up-to-date and

⁵³ Kim Campbell, Cvent, How to Optimize Google My Business for Hotels (23-09-2022). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/YuNZMM> (consulted on 02-04-2023).

engaging Google Business profile can help hotels attract potential guests, improve their online reputation, and increase their visibility in search engine results.

In another word, GMB is a free online tool provided by Google that enables businesses to manage their online presence across Google, including search engine results pages, Google Maps, and Google+. With a Google Business profile, businesses can provide customers with their key information such as address, phone number, business hours, website, photos, reviews, and ratings. This information is displayed prominently in Google search results and on Google Maps, making it easier for customers to find and connect with the hotel. Additionally, customers also can leave comments and reviews on the hotel's Google Business provides so the marketers have one more ability to interact with customers through messages and reviews.

Researching the digital media platforms that the hotel has will help me analyze part of the hotel's communication strategy. This is also the means for potential customers to easily access the hotel, so the analysis process through digital marketing will be closer to the customer's search and purchase journey.

CHAPTER 2: RESEACH METHODOLOGY: CASE STUDY

In this section, I present the reason why I chose the research methodology is the case study, and then explain why I chose Hilton and the hotels belonging to this group as the study cases. As a result, I analyzed the two selected hotels according to the field of study stated in the previous section. All of these analysis applies only in relation to environmental issues. After analyzing, I compare with the three hypotheses I have raised so that I will be able to test my hypotheses.

1. Choice of methodology

1.1. Reason for choosing the method

In sociological research, to collect research data, people are often divided into two most common research methods, namely qualitative and quantitative.

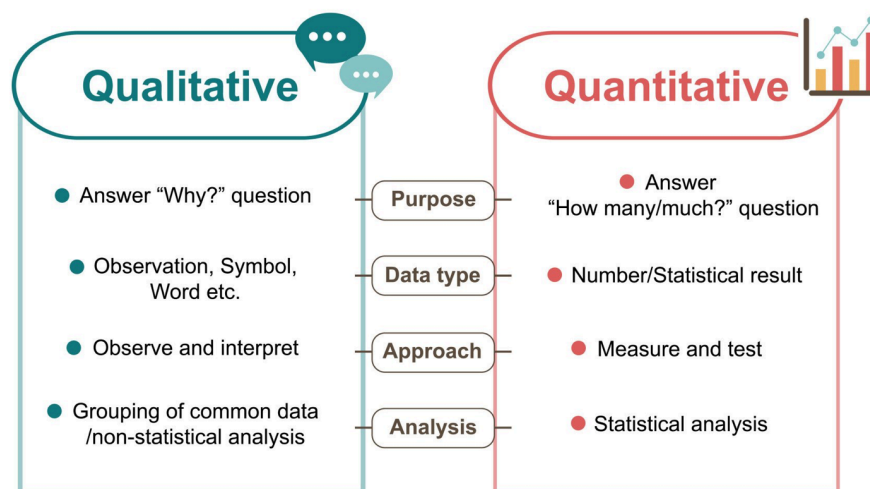


Figure 7: Types of research design⁵⁴

According to the analysis by PhD Saul Mcleod, the qualitative approach seeks to explain 'how' and 'why' in a particular phenomenon or behavior, set in a particular context. In contrast to it, quantitative research involves the process of objectively collecting and analyzing numeric data, making predictions and generalizing results to a broader population.

⁵⁴ Saul Mcleod, Qualitative Vs Quantitative Research: Methods and Data Analysis (updated on 30-03-2023). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/ZcbPdr> (consulted on 02-04-2023).

Within the scope of this dissertation, I choose Case Study as a qualitative research method, to provide an in-depth analysis of a specific object, in this case are hotels belonging to the Hilton group. I want to base on this research to gain specific knowledge of a real hotel corporation and study how their hotels are dealing with and implementing marketing for environmental strategy.

1.2. Reason for selecting the cases

1.2.1. Choosing Hilton as a case study of hotel group

As mentioned in the previous sections, I want to focus on environmental issues and environmental marketing in luxury hotels to upscale hotels belonging to corporations. As such, choosing an international hotel group like Hilton is a meaningful choice for me.

Hilton is "one of the world's largest, fastest-growing hospitality companies"⁵⁵. At the time of this dissertation, Hilton has 19 brands in 123 countries and territories with 7165 properties worldwide. Talking about the values of this business, they divided it into 6 words stuck with the name of the hotel group: Hospitality - Integrity - Leadership - Teamwork - Ownership - Now. In concrete, they want to insist that they are passionate about delivering exceptional guest experiences, they always do the right things and be the leader in their industry and community. Hilton's brands include: Waldorf Astoria; LXR hotel and resorts; Conrad hotels and resorts; Canopy by Hilton; Signia by Hilton; Hilton hotels and resorts; Curio collection by Hilton; DoubleTree by Hilton; Tapestry collection by Hilton; Embassy Suites by Hilton; Tempo by Hilton; Motto by Hilton; Hilton Garden Inn; Hampton by Hilton; Tru by Hilton; Spark by Hilton; Homewood Suites by Hilton; Home2 Suites by Hilton; and Hilton Grand Vacations.

As one of the leaders in the hospitality industry, Hilton is committed to promoting responsible travel and tourism globally. They launched a strategy on environment, society and governance, which is called 'Travel with Purpose'. The hotel group affirms to integrate of this strategy in all business activities, including operations, supply chain and engagement with the community (Hilton, 2021).

⁵⁵ Hilton, Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/OlvJyw> (consulted on 02-04-2023).

1.2.2. Choosing hotels as a sample of analyzing

With the object of research being hotels, I choose two hotels belonging to the Hilton group for samples. The first one is Conrad Washington DC which ranks first in the list of 10 Best Eco-conscious Hiltons Around the World⁵⁶. The second one that I choose is Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates, which is also on the list and moreover, this hotel is based in Asia, and has the same brand as the hotel that I will have an internship in this summer. I believe that selecting these hotels will be my leverage for the observation and collecting data for my dissertation in Master 2.

According to information provided by the group, **Conrad Washington DC** is located in the heart of downtown Washington D.C, a modern urban oasis with sustainability at the heart of the hotel's operations. Conrad Washington DC provides a luxurious stay experience for its customers. When highlighting typical hotel environmental characteristics, the actions listed include:

- Reducing the burden on the city's stormwater drainage infrastructure and improving water quality, the hotel uses rainwater to irrigate outdoor courtyards and cool air conditioners;
- Integrate training on food waste in kitchen operations;
- Launched Summit the Roof at Conrad - a new rooftop concept that promotes an environmentally and socially friendly food and beverage approach.

Opened in 2015, **Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates** is located close to Dubai's most popular shopping mall, the hotel has been operating with sustainability in mind since its early days. Environmentally friendly activities of the hotel emphasized by Hilton group contain:

- Achieved LEED Platinum certification for ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship;
- Reduce water consumption and solve Dubai's water scarcity problem with gray water recycling system;
- Take advantage of the sunny climate of the area to generate renewable energy for the hotel with solar thermal panels;

⁵⁶ Destination Spotlight, Hilton, Sustainable Travel Bucket List: 10 of the Best Eco-conscious Hiltons Around the World. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/dCoNVt> (consulted on 03-04-2023).

- Applying technology in managing energy consumption effectively, adjusting energy consumption in accordance with the hotel operation.

2. Analyze the case study

2.1. *Conrad Washington D.C*

*Hotel website*⁵⁷: Right from the hotel's opening greetings, Conrad Washington DC mentioned their LEED Gold Certified building, as an issue that the hotel always cares about and is committed to striving towards sustainability in travel and hospitality through daily operations. Of course, they then attached a hyperlink to their Sustainability Story. Next, when choosing Dine, talking about Food and Beverage services, they also affirm that all hotel's outlets always incorporate sustainability efforts, and again link to Sustainability Story for customers to access if interested. However, the hotel's existing offers do not address environmental issues, and in the Discovery section, they also only introduce artificial tourist attractions without suggesting natural sightseeings in the city. In the document Sustainability Story, Conrad Washington DC emphasizes their achievement of LEED Gold Certification for their sustainable building, by meeting and exceeding the standards of several categories of construction, including Water, Energy, Materials, Environmental Quality, Innovation and Regional Priority. “During construction of the Conrad, over 90% of construction and demolition waste was diverted from incinerators and landfills through recycling and repurposing. Roughly 27% of construction materials were derived from recycled products and 20% of the materials were locally sourced (within 500 miles)”⁵⁸. After that, the hotel introduces its green roof and stormwater management. Thanks to the garden that helps insulate the building, reducing the energy demand from the heat and air conditioning systems. As well, the vegetation filters and recycles rainwater use 97,49% rainwater helping reduce the amount of runoff into the city's stormwater infrastructure. The rainwater captured is used to cool for air conditioning. Conrad Washington DC also encourage their customers use public transport or take advantage of several bikeshare and scooter to decrease carbon footprint. Part of the electricity consumed at the hotel is from renewable energy through Renewable Energy Credits which primarily supplied by wind farms in Texas. The hotel installed modern water and energy saving appliances in guest rooms, which helps reduce water consumption by

⁵⁷ Conrad Washington DC. Available at <https://conradwashingtondc.com> (consulted on 03-04-2023)

⁵⁸ Conrad Washington DC, Our Sustainable Story. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/FervPi> (consulted on 03-04-2023)

24,7% and energy consumption by 17,8% in comparison with the similar buildings. In the operation of restaurants, the hotel aligns with a more sustainable approach. They highlighted that 100% of to-go packaging is eco-friendly. In addition, they eliminated the use of single-use condiments, plastic straws and plastic spoons. To treat food waste, they cooperate with a local business to compost food scraps. For the leftover food, they use it for employee cafeteria or donate to a food donation center. Specifically, to eliminate excess oil, Conrad Washington DC partnered with Mahoney Environmental to recycle all cooking oil.

Social media platforms: The two social networking sites studied are the hotel's Facebook and Instagram, whose accounts are Conrad Washington DC and conradwashingtondc, respectively. Hotel marketers post content on these two platforms quite regularly, averaging 3 posts a week in the form of photos or videos. In addition, on Instagram, they use the story function to repost stories about experiences in the hotel shared by customers. The content that the hotel posts on Facebook and Instagram is mainly to introduce services, dishes, exhibitions or suggest tourist places in the city. However, one strange thing is that although Conrad Washington DC is a hotel committed to sustainability, their content published in the past 1 year rarely mentions this. Only in the posts introducing the restaurant's signature dishes or new dishes, they mentioned local food sources. Even on March 25, there was an event called Earth Hour 2023, this hotel did not respond or call for this. When searching until April 22nd, 2022, the one thing that really took the environment as the center is a picture and a short caption to celebrate Earth Day⁵⁹. Thus, it can be seen that, although Conrad Washington DC always emphasizes sustainability in operation, moreover they are also listed first in the top of eco-conscious hotels by Hilton, but their communication does not address their environmental actions.

TripAdvisor: When accessing the TripAdvisor account of hotel named Conrad Washington DC⁶⁰, it is similar to the hotel's social media platforms: no emphasis on their being an eco-friendly hotel. Out of 206 photos posted by the manager, only one photo that shows the hotel's green space, but it is only a small corner not the entire impressive terrace which has a total of 7,626 square feet of vegetation. In other words, the Conrad Washington DC hotel has a very strong advantage to attract customers who care about the environment, even those who do not

⁵⁹ Conrad Washington DC Instagram account. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/mHNZLZ> (consulted on 03-04-2023)

⁶⁰ Conrad Washington DC TripAdvisor profile. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/Uvqzsv> (consulted on 03-04-2023)

care too much, this strength of the hotel still can make them admired. However, it seems that the hotel does not care about this issue, they do not use it as a marketing tool, nor do they give information for guests through platforms that are visited by many customers such as TripAdvisor.

Google My Business: When searching for hotels on Google, the hotel's website shows up first without any Ads. Information about the hotel is located in the right corner, which is the display section of Google My Business.

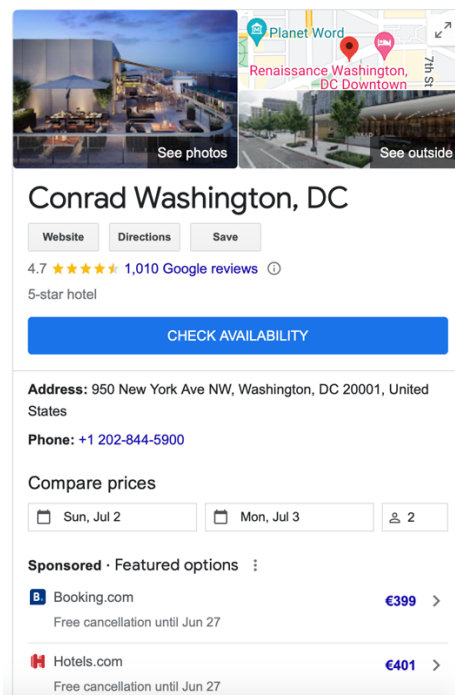


Figure 8: Conrad Washington DC - Google My Business

The images are divided into categories by hotel management, including At a glance; Bedroom; Bathroom; Exterior; Interior; Amenities; Food and Drink. The image of the hotel's green space is still very few, but it is the first and main image displayed when searching for Conrad Washington DC. A special feature is that on Google My Business, the hotel is recognized by Google as environmentally sustainable, so the Sustainability category is always available for interested guests to read. The sustainability credentials listed by the hotel include eco certifications; water conservation; sustainable sourcing; energy efficiency and waste

reduction⁶¹. Although these contents are still very sketchy compared to the analyzed Sustainable Story document, this can be considered as one of the hotel's efforts to label and show guests their commitment to sustainability.

2.2. Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates

Hotel website⁶²: The website of the Hilton Garden Inn Dubai hotel follows the brand design, it is totally simple with very little information. Most of the information is in the form of images, and the brief contents. Although the hotel has the honor of achieving LEED Platinum certifications - a very proud title and demonstrating a strong commitment to the environment, the hotel's website makes no mention of this. If the information search experience on the website is considered the only thing customers look for before booking, then it can be said that the hotel does not have enough information to convince customers with environmental concerns. Because customers cannot find any information that environmental related on the hotel website. All the things they have is about hotel's products, hotel's services, hotel's offers without "green color".

Social media platforms: The hotel's Facebook account is named Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates, and the Instagram account is named hiltongardeninndubaimoe. Although the hotel does not introduce much or has much content to engage the customer for the environment, the hotel still shows that they always put this issue in their concern. The hotel does not miss a single occasion to honor the earth, including Earth Hour, Earth Day, World Health Day. Especially, when the hotel received the LEED Platinum Certification, the hotel made a 3-minute video⁶³ to communicate about this, including interviewing the management board, explaining the certification and affirming the efforts of the hotels to benefit the environment. However, this video was posted more than two years ago, meaning that without actively searching, customers will not be able to know about this content. The "share" feature may be applied, for the hotel to reaffirm the importance of caring for the environment, both to inform customers and to promote the hotel's image.

⁶¹ Conrad Washington DC Google My Business, Sustainability. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/ntFwBe> (consulted on 03-04-2023)

⁶² Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirats. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/ibzdDT> (consulted on 04-04-2023)

⁶³ Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates (23-03-2021). Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/kJgKTR> (consulted on 04-04-2023)

TripAdvisor: Although there are no green space photos posted on the hotel's TripAdvisor profile⁶⁴, however, in every frame there is the appearance of green: the hotel is decorated with many plants, the natural landscape painting. In addition, the main color of the furniture is light brown and green, which helps people when looking at them will feel very close to nature. Except for this, all remaining content provided is not related to the environment and the environmental certification that the hotel has. I read the first 50 comments displayed, most of them complimenting the hotel on location, building, facilities, cleanliness, friendliness of the staff. And surprisingly, none of the comments mentioned the environmental as something that impressed the customers, either in terms of physical evidence or services offered.

Google My Business: Like Conrad Washington DC, the Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates is also recognized by Google for its Sustainability⁶⁵. Regarding environmental certifications achieved, Hilton Garden Inn lists the five certifications they have, including Green Globe, Hilton LightStay, ISO 50001, ISO 14001 and LEED. Regarding water conservation, the hotel claims that it has a separate organization to audit water consumption, has water-efficient toilets and implements a reuse towel program. At the same time, they are very efficient in electricity consumption with a green building design, audited by independent organizations, having a power-saving equipments, and a charging station for electric vehicle. The hotel also focuses on sustainable sourcing through local and organic food and beverage supplies, responsibly sourced seafood and eco-friendly toiletries. Waste reduction is the last thing mentioned, with programs like recycling, reduction, donation,...and a number of other activities.

2.3. Check the hypotheses

	Conrad Washington DC	Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates
Hypothesis 1: Educate customer		
Providing information	Yes	Yes

⁶⁴ Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates TripAdvisor profile. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/rezBPp> (consulted on 04-04-2023)

⁶⁵ Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates Google My Business, Sustainability. Available at <https://tinyurl.vn/zRxPQB> (consulted on 04-04-2023)

Offering activities for guest to participate	Yes	Yes
Hypothesis 2: Personalization environmental experiences		
Putting nature in guest experiences	Yes	Yes
Experience marketing	Yes	N/A
Hypothesis 3: Apply Green marketing as a part of CSR strategy		
Incentive	N/A	N/A
Partner with organizations	Yes	N/A
Measuring and reporting	Yes	N/A

Test the hypotheses in the study cases

Hypothesis 1: As analyzed above, although the two hotels have a form of providing information to customers, it is incomplete and the information is not provided in different communication places. The two hotels also did not touch on the environmental programs for guests to apply, not to mention the reuse of towels, because this is so common and widely applied in the hotel industry. Both hotels have LEED certifications to attest to their eco-friendliness, so they should promote this. Staying at a green hotel will develop guest loyalty, guests will be more likely to return and recommend the hotel. To reiterate, the managers of these two hotels should make every effort to communicate with guests about their commitment to sustainability, especially when they are eco-labelled by a third party (Merli et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 2: Both hotels receive LEED certification for their building design, which means that the inclusion of nature in the guest experience is guaranteed. Conrad Washington DC's garden is a popular venue for guests, also chosen for parties. It means that the green space that the hotel provides is very well recognized by their guests. But in order for guests' environmental experience to be more qualified, in addition to using carefully selected and locally sourced food, the hotel needs to convey that message to guests. In addition, according to guest's reviews, it can be seen that the customer service provided by the staff is highly commendable, if the hotels pay more attention to environmental training, the service will have more competitive points.

Hypothesis 3: Regarding the issue of incentivizing customers for the environmentally friendly actions they take, regrettably, hotels currently only apply Hilton's loyalty program, and these points until now are only based on expenses consumer spend on the products or services they use. About the Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates hotel, the fact that they provide very little information in terms of their contribution to the environment. As for the Conrad Washington DC hotel, they do list in their report other organizations they work with, including donations and recycling. They also had measurements, which in turn reported contribution numbers in form of percentages to make it more impressive.

To sum up, it can be seen that, although the two hotels are both interested in environmental problems and received a LEED certificate, the information provided by the Conrad Washington DC hotel is more complete, so it seems that they contribute and commit engage more in environmental protection. On the other hand, the Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates although received the higher certificate, and is also the highest rating of LEED, but because there is not much specific communication information about this, it is difficult to feel the hotel's green level.

CHAPTER 3: CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH IN MASTER 2

Master 1's dissertation is the background I built for my two years of research. There are theoretical frameworks to analyze the problem I want to solve, to initially visualize the answers as well as how the problem is being solved in practice. It was also a stepping stone to lead me to my Master 2 research, to put my research into practice in a real working environment.

1. Research Perspectives

The research in the first year brought me certain results for the problem posed, but there were also limitations. First, it is not enough to analyze the literature, there is still a lot of knowledge that needs to be exploited and explored further. Second, the use of case studies only provides analytical results, has not been able to put the problem into practice and answer the effectiveness of each hypothesis. Therefore, continuing study for the second year is essential.

It will be more complete if in the next research I can include other services of the hotel (such as restaurants, conferences, ...) or take into account B2B customers. However, there will also be difficulties if the research problem is too broad, so I need to consider more for the scope of research next year. However, the research topic of the hotel's marketing for environmental programs will continue for M2.

2. Finding an internship

In order to be able to do a more in-depth and practical research, I sought an internship at a hotel that would satisfy the research audience I had set out at the beginning. The hotel I chose to do my internship with is the Hilton Garden Inn Hanoi, belonging to the Hilton group and a 4-star hotel under the Hilton Garden Inn brand. I chose the location in Hanoi because this is where I was born and raised, and also the market that I understand the most because I have worked in the hotel industry here. I hope that my research can help hotels see the importance of environmental marketing, thereby also motivating them to take more environmental actions and commit to sustainable tourism development in the region.

I will be interning in the marketing department, which I believe will be the ideal environment for me to observe and test the applicability of my first year research.

3. Data collection in Master 2

The data collection method that I wanted to implement first in my Master 2 study was observational. Having the opportunity to get hands-on exposure to the research context will help me gain more valuable insights and judgments. At the same time, I would like to conduct a survey with the hotel's customers, with their consent and the permission of the board of managers. I think that if I can do this, I can understand the psychology of customers and their real concerns for the environment, thereby proposing more suitable solutions.

At the same time, I would like to have some interviews with experts in the field of tourism, they may be Vietnamese tourism researchers, marketers working at some hotels in the Hanoi market, managers from other departments in the hotel to have a more objective view of the level of customer engagement... I think consulting with researchers and professionals will help me a lot in testing my hypotheses.

Finally, I present in this section my Gantt chart, based on which I can closely follow working progress and adhere to the set time. However, some timelines may change, depending on the actual research situation.

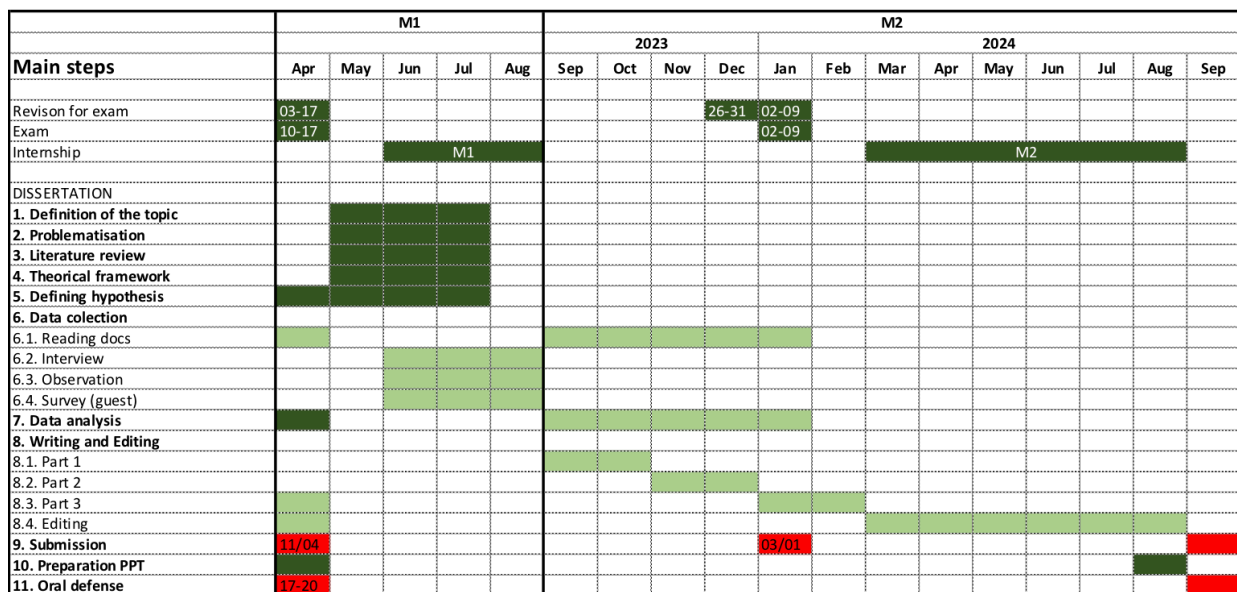


Figure 9: Gantt chart

In the last chapter of this part, I have illustrated the plans and ideas I choose to do for Master 2's research, in fact there may be changes in the research process or methods.

Conclusion of part III

As a conclusion, part 3 and also the last part of my dissertation has done its job: to indicate the field of the study, apply the research methodology and plan the research for the following academic year. The research scope I selected was the communication platforms of upscale to luxury hotels, I tested my hypotheses through the case study of two Hilton hotels. This research method helps me analyze the fact that hotels which considered to be environmentally committed have taken actions to convey the message to guests, the difference between the level of information provision and how influential to environmentally friendly image of the hotel. From the results of this research, I can see the shortcomings and limitations of the thesis, so that I am able to determine for myself what needs to be overcome and supplemented for the following research.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Nowadays, sustainability is increasingly focused as a development trend, a goal that all industries are aiming for, including the hotel industry. To achieve this sustainability, one of the prerequisite tasks is to deal with environmental problems. Hotels have been taking actions to reduce environmental impacts and protect natural resources. However, the hotel's one-sided efforts will never be enough without the cooperation of customers. The hotels encourage guests to participate in environmental behaviors is not only helping the hotel, but also building sustainable tourism, and saving the planet for everybody. Thus, the application of environmental marketing or green marketing is a must in order to engage customers environmental consumption.

If the hotels have environmental actions, have certain contributions to the environment, but they do not provide this information, their guests will not be able to know. Customers' perception of environmental activities in the hotel will have a positive influence on customers' booking intentions (Baker et al., 2014). Therefore, the first hypothesis as the solution is to educate the customer, including providing them with information and actions to take in a specific way, accompanied by a clear explanation so that the customer understands the goal of the actions, in turn helping to raise customers' environmental awareness. Customer education can also start by raising employees' awareness of green knowledge (Geerts, 2014), because hotel staff are the closest to customers during their stay. This also contributes to the second hypothesis since employees play an important role in the guest experience. The rest of the second hypothesis points to the application of "green" to culinary, in order to provide a unique customer experience. In fact, according to the case study, hotels have applied this, with organic products, sourced locally or from environmentally committed suppliers. However, this needs to be communicated more clearly, and the service also needs to be designed in the way that the customer can actually feel this, not just hear it. Finally, to motivate customers, it is advisable to have reward programs for environmental behavior. Especially for hotels from international groups, this could be considered as part of a loyalty program. At the same time, hotels need to measure their contributions, and find ways to report this (through annual reports, or through the content of social media posts, etc). Reporting is also a method to affirm the sustainability of the hotels, ensuring actions are taken and results are not greenwashing.

The selection of a research case study that is a hotel belonging to the same group and the same brand with the hotel for the internship helps me visualize the general picture of the problem, lays down the first bases to prepare for the observation and collect data during practice. Applications to test the effectiveness of the first-year study can also be made during this internship.

The first dissertation is built mainly through theory, although it is difficult and general, it is a solid foundation for me to narrow the problem to the Hanoi market and check its applicability in my area of interest. Furthermore, the process of doing this dissertation also helped me solidify my decision to choose a career.

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TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Top-ten attributes driving the hotel-purchase decision.....	17
Figure 2: Sustainable Development Goals of UNWTO (source: UNWTO).....	19
Figure 3: Five-step marketing process model (Source: Kotler, 2014, p.11).....	25
Figure 4: Managing marketing strategy (Source: Kotler, 2014, p.109).....	28
Figure 5: Travelers believe sustainable travel is important worldwide (Source: Statista)	42
Figure 6: Sustainability section on Google Business Profile (Ex: Hilton Cardiff)	52
Figure 7: Types of research design.....	75
Figure 8: Conrad Washington DC - Google My Business	80
Figure 9: Gantt chart.....	86

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
SUMMARY.....	6
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	8
PART I: MARKETING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IN HOSPITALITY.....	11
Introduction of part 1.....	12
CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS.....	13
1. The impact of environmental issues on the hospitality industry	13
1.1. Environmental problems caused by hospitality industry.....	13
1.2. Benefits of the hotel industry when dealing with environmental issues	15
2. Customer's considerations when choosing accommodation.....	16
2.1. Factors influencing customer choice	16
2.2. Level of customer's environmental concerns.....	18
3. Environmental actions taken and will be taken by hotel industry	19
3.1. SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation.....	20
3.2. SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy.....	20
3.3. SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production.....	21
3.4. SDG 13: Climate action.....	22
3.5. SDG 14: Life below water.....	22
3.6. SDG 15: Life on land.....	23
CHAPTER 2: FROM MARKETING TO GREEN MARKETING.....	25
1. Marketing strategies in hospitality industry	25
1.1. Segmentation – Targeting – Positioning in hospitality industry:	26
1.2. Marketing mix 7Ps for hotel industry:.....	28
2. Marketing methods applied in upscale to luxury hotels belong to hotel groups	30
2.1. Branding	30
2.2. Influencer marketing:	30
2.3. Social media marketing:	31
2.4. Loyalty programs:.....	33
3. Green marketing	33
3.1. The appearance of Green Marketing	33
3.2. Greenwashing and how to avoid	35
Conclusion of part I.....	37
PART II: MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE HOTEL'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE.....	38
Introduction of part II.....	39

CHAPTER 1: FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO GREEN MARKETING: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO ASPECTS	40
1. Target audience of this marketing strategy.....	40
1.1. Customers of upscale to luxury hotel	40
1.2. Target audience: environmental sensitive customer.....	42
2. Marketing strategy for environmental actions of hotels	44
2.1. Green marketing mix	44
2.2. Implementation of marketing actions for environmental strategy.....	47
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATING CUSTOMER TO AWARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	49
1. Provide information	49
1.1 Highlight the environmental problems	49
1.2. Green certifications.....	50
2. Offer activities for the customers to participate in	52
CHAPTER 3: PERSONALIZATION CUSTOMER' ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES.....	55
1. Putting nature at the center of guest experience	55
1.1. Applying nature in hotel's physical evidence.....	55
1.2 Implement recycling programs	57
2. Incorporating experience marketing into hotel operations	58
2.1. Effect of staff attitude on customer experience	58
2.2. Culinary experience with "green" is the key	59
CHAPTER 4: APPLY GREEN MARKETING AS A PART OF CSR STRATEGY..	62
1. Incentivize environmentally-friendly behavior	62
1.1. Tangible incentives.....	62
1.2. Intangible incentives.....	63
2. Partner with environmental organizations.....	63
2.1. Joining and supporting.....	63
2.2. Co-organizing outdoor activities	64
3. Measuring and reporting environmental performance, available both for guest and for hotel	65
Conclusion of part II	67
<i>PART III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FIELD OF APPLICATION.....</i>	68
Introduction of part III	69
CHAPTER 1: THE FIELD OF APPLICATION	70
1. Website	70
1.1. Group's website.....	70
1.2. Hotel's website	71
2. Social media platforms	71
2.1 Facebook.....	71

2.2. Instagram	72
3. TripAdvisor	73
4. Google Business	73
CHAPTER 2: RESEACH METHODOLOGY: CASE STUDY	75
1. Choice of methodology	75
1.1. Reason for choosing the method	75
1.2. Reason for selecting the cases	76
1.2.1. Choosing Hilton as a case study of hotel group	76
1.2.2. Choosing hotels as a sample of analyzing	77
2. Analyze the case study	78
2.1. Conrad Washington D.C.....	78
2.2. Hilton Garden Inn Dubai Mall of the Emirates	81
2.3. Check the hypotheses	82
CHAPTER 3: CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH IN MASTER 2	85
1. Research Perspectives.....	85
2. Finding an internship	85
3. Data collection in Master 2.....	86
Conclusion of part III.....	88
GENERAL CONCLUSION	89
REFERENCES	91
TABLE OF FIGURES	98
TABLE OF CONTENT	99

Hotel marketing strategy in the environmental context

ABSTRACT

As an important component of the tourism industry, the development of the hotel industry is always linked with the development of tourism. In the process of its growth, the hospitality industry brings positive impacts on some aspects of life. On the other hand, it also leads to negative effects, one of which is environmental destruction. As a result, hotels are going green or even greener these days. They do care for the environment, but at the same time, they can not forget the goals of the business, such as attracting more customers and engaging their consumptions. Indeed, hotels can do both objectives by using their environmental programs as marketing weapons. This dissertation wants to point out some approach that hotels can save the planet and convince customers through environmental messages.

Key words: hotels, hotel marketing, environment, green marketing, environmental marketing, sustainability.

Stratégie marketing hôtelier dans le contexte environnemental

RÉSUMÉ

En tant que composante importante de l'industrie du tourisme, le développement de l'industrie hôtelière est toujours lié au développement du tourisme. Dans le cadre de sa croissance, l'industrie hôtelière a un impact positif sur certains aspects de la vie. D'un autre côté, elle entraîne également des effets négatifs, dont la destruction de l'environnement. C'est pourquoi les hôtels deviennent verts, voire plus verts, de nos jours. Ils se soucient de l'environnement, mais en même temps, ils ne peuvent pas oublier les objectifs de l'entreprise, tels que l'attraction de nouveaux clients et l'augmentation de leur consommation. En effet, les hôtels peuvent atteindre ces deux objectifs en utilisant leurs programmes environnementaux comme des armes de marketing. Cette dissertation a pour but de mettre en évidence certaines approches permettant aux hôtels de sauver la planète et de convaincre les clients par le biais de messages environnementaux.

Mots-clés: hôtels, marketing hôtelier, environnement, marketing vert, marketing environnemental, durabilité.