The e–marketing strategy for Hotel Astoria

Focussing on search engine optimization, review management and social media

By Christophe Liefers
Barcelona, 09 October 2015
# Thesis Report

*Including a research and advisory part*

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Preface

In front of you, you find the research and advice report for Hotel Astoria. This report describes the most successful e-marketing strategy for the hotel and the way in which this strategy needs to be implemented. The objective of this report is to increase the occupancy level during the off season. This report is written in the context of the final project for my studies Tourism Management at the Hospitality Business School in Deventer, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

This report is written in commission of Mr Camps, manager of Hotel Astoria. I have experienced this final project as educational and challenging. The research part was the most difficult part for me and the most time-consuming part, both the creation of an entire action plan and carrying out the field studies.

During one field study I had the possibility to visit three best-practice hotels in the field of e-marketing. I gained a lot of information and I learned a lot as well. For this reason I would like to thank Mrs. Ravensbergen (Hotel Radisson Blu), Mr. Weijman (Hotel De L’Europe) and Mr. Lewis (WestCord Fashion Hotel). Furthermore, I have carried out an interview with an expert in the field of e-marketing who works in Barcelona. Because of circumstances, I needed to do this interview by Skype. However, I gained a lot of useful data and for this reason I would like to thank Mr. De Chica (Ateknea Solutions).

I would also like to thank Hotel Astoria in general, because thanks to the receptionists, I had the possibility to carry out my questionnaires in front of the reception. Furthermore, I would like to thank my client, Mr. Camps, for his cooperation during this period. I also would like to thank my research teacher, Mrs. Logger, for the useful consults. Beside this, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor and examiner, Mrs. Bernasco – Otten, a lot for the useful feedback, critical comments and cooperation during my thesis period.

Christophe Liefers

Barcelona, 09 October 2015
Management summary

This thesis project is written for Hotel Astoria, which is located in Barcelona. Mr. Camps is the client and also the manager of the hotel, for whom this thesis is written. The advice objective is “To contribute to the increase of the occupancy level during the off season for Hotel Astoria by presenting an e–marketing plan about the most successful e–marketing strategy and the implementation of this strategy.” The related advice question which is answered in the advisory part is “How can Hotel Astoria implement an e–marketing strategy so that the occupancy level rises during the off season from November till March?”

First desk– and field studies need to be carried out. The main research questions are defined as follows:

Desk research:
- What does the hotel industry in Barcelona look like?
- What are trends & developments with regard to hotel e–marketing?

Field research:
- What is the internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria with regard to a hotel bookings?
- In which way is Hotel Astoria able to distinguish itself from the competitors with regard to search engine optimisation (SEO), review management and social media?
- What are success factors in the field of e–marketing according to an expert?

These questions were set up by means of the theoretical framework. E–marketing was divided into the three most important forms, respectively SEO, review management and social media. In the theoretical framework these forms were disentangled and defined. The theoretical framework ends with the relationship and operationalisation of the three mentioned forms.

Afterwards, the desk research was carried out. In this research the two questions were answered by means of reports, articles and other sources. Both the tourism industry in Barcelona and the trends & developments with regard to e–marketing are represented in this chapter.

The next step was to carry out the field studies. First of all, the questionnaire and the interview guides were set up, which was done by means of the operationalisation. Then the interviews were carried out with the Radisson Blu Hotel, Hotel De L´ Europe and the WestCord Fashion Hotel. During these interviews, knowledge was obtained about the way in which these hotels use e–marketing. All three hotels mentioned SEO, review management and social media as the most important forms. The fourth interview consisted of questions about e–marketing and the corresponding forms. This interview was carried out by an expert and this expert gave a lot of useful information, which was seen as an extra, but resulted in strong evidence.

The next step was to make analyses. The questionnaires were inserted in the program which is called SPSS and the interviews were analysed by means of coding. After, a conclusion was made of the analyses and this conclusion led to recommendations, which were the starting point of the advice.
The final recommendations for the implementation plan are defined as follows:

**Search engine optimization policy**

- Focus on the hotel website (design, attainability, content and multimedia)
- Create content which is snackable, shareable and sharp
- Focus mainly on Google, including paid advertisements (Google Add words), Google Analytics and Book on Google

**Review management policy**

- Ask guests to leave a review by means of incentives and send an email with further instructions afterwards
  - Focus mainly on Tripadvisor
  - Respond to every single review
  - Respond only in English

**Social media policy**

- Focus on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Post about discounts/promotions (non-paid advertisements), about background information and/or activities in the city
  - Promote tourist attractions
  - Promote local activities and events
  - Post every two days

As shown, Hotel Astoria should focus on SEO, review management and social media. The advice is for the hotel to adopt a gradual approach of these e-marketing forms. In the implementation plan the most important corresponding tasks are discussed, which lead to the implementation of a successful e-marketing strategy.

In the last chapter the financial implication is represented. The most important costs concern an e-marketing manager, an outsourced website company and Google Add words.

Once Hotel Astoria has implemented this e-marketing strategy well, the hotel should be able to generate a higher occupancy level during the off season, respectively 70% each month, from November till March.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter a general introduction is given. Firstly, the background information of the client is described. Secondly, the reason for this e-marketing plan and the relevance for the client are described. Afterwards, the objective of the advice and research are introduced, including the advice- and research questions. The last part of this chapter consists of a reading guide to the remaining thesis.

1.1 The client

Mr. Camps is the client this e-marketing plan is written for. His hotels and apartments are part of the Derby Hotels Collection. This chain is located in Barcelona, Madrid, London and Paris, which include hotels and apartments. The specific organisation department to which this report refers is called Hotel Astoria, located in Barcelona. Hotel Astoria is a three-star hotel, situated in the Eixample neighbourhood. The hotel has 117 rooms and has several facilities, such as a 24-hour reception, a restaurant, a lobby, a conference room, a swimming pool and a gym (to get an impression, a photo impression has been attached in appendix I). Furthermore, guests and locals have the possibility to enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner in the hotel (Hotel Astoria, 2015).

The mission of Hotel Astoria is to offer a night in the hotel with the best quality of service, hygiene and food, and to make the guest feel welcome. The vision of the hotel is to offer a reliable place for their guests, on the one hand to attract existing guests and on the other hand to attract new guests. The reason for this, is to increase the occupancy level. The objective is to achieve an occupancy level of 70% during all months of the year. This percentage is just a bit higher than the average of Barcelona (Turisme de Barcelona & Diputació de Barcelona, 2014).

Mr. Camps is the manager of Hotel Astoria, Hotel Balmes and the apartments Balmes Residence and Aramunt, all of them located in Barcelona. Because of his position, he is very knowledgeable about the hotel industry in Barcelona.

Barcelona is a popular destination for many tourists worldwide. In 2014 over 7.8 million tourists visited the city, which was a new tourist record (Cordero, 2014). Barcelona has a wide range of accommodations with approximately 400 hotels. The city offers more than 70,000 hotel beds each year (Turisme de Barcelona & Diputació de Barcelona, 2014). The average hotel occupancy level in Barcelona in 2013 was 67.5% (Turisme de Barcelona & Diputació de Barcelona, 2014). Hotel Astoria had an average occupancy level of 69.8% in 2013, which may be defined as very positive. However, during the winter months (from November till March) the occupancy level decreases enormously. In these months the occupancy level varies from 33.2% in January to 57.9% in March. Furthermore, a decrease in the occupancy level has been seen since 2012. In 2013 the average occupancy level was 69.8% and in 2014 it decreased by 1.3% to 68.5%. The occupancy levels are represented in appendix II. The number of tourists is lower during winter periods. The hotel finds it difficult to attract the tourists who are visiting the city during these months, because of the competition. Barcelona consists of 115 three-star hotels, which contribute to the competitive character among the hotels (Turisme de Barcelona, 2015).

"With almost three billion internet users worldwide e-marketing has become very important for businesses (Smart Insights and TMF&A, 2015).” Hotel Astoria has its own website and is also
using email marketing. However, e–marketing has a wide variety of forms and Mr. Camps wants to know what the most successful e–marketing strategy is and in which way this strategy needs to be implemented. In this report, e–marketing is the main core concept and is elaborated more and more in detail. This report is relevant for Mr. Camps, because a correct and well–founded e–marketing strategy contributes to the increase of the occupancy level of Hotel Astoria during the off season and this is exactly what Mr. Camps needs.

1.2 Advice objective and advice questions

*The objective in:*
An advice which describes the most successful e–marketing strategy and the way in which this strategy needs to be implemented.

*The objective of:*
The increase of the occupancy level during the off season for Hotel Astoria by advising on a successful e–marketing strategy.

*Advice objective:*
The advice objective is to contribute to the increase of the occupancy level during the off season for Hotel Astoria by presenting an e–marketing plan about the most successful e–marketing strategy and the implementation of this strategy.

The advice questions that are answered within the advisory part of this e–marketing plan are defined as follows:

- How can Hotel Astoria implement an e–marketing strategy so that the occupancy level rises during the off season from November till March?
  - In which way should SEO be implemented?
  - In which way should review management be implemented?
  - In which way should social media be implemented?

1.3 Research objective and research questions

In this e–marketing plan, different desk– and field studies have been carried out. Therefore, a research objective needed to be set up, which is defined as follows; To contribute to the e–marketing plan for Hotel Astoria by obtaining and developing knowledge in the field of e–marketing strategies by means of existing information and practical experience.

The related central– and sub questions for both the desk– and field research are defined as follows:

*Desk research:*

- What does the hotel industry in Barcelona look like?
  - What type of hotels does Barcelona offer?
  - What type of tourists visit Barcelona?
  - What are these tourists looking for?
  - In what ways is the city promoted?
• What are the trends & developments with regard to hotel e-marketing?
  – What are the trends & developments with regard to SEO?
  – What are the trends & developments with regard to review management?
  – What are the trends & developments with regard to social media?

Field research:

• First field study: What is the internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria with regard to a hotel booking?
  – In which way are search engines important to the guests of Hotel Astoria?
  – In which way do these guests use search engines?
  – In which way do hotel reviews influence the booking behaviour of the guests?
  – To what extent are social media important within the booking process?

• Second field study: In which way is Hotel Astoria able to distinguish itself from the competitors with regard to SEO, review management and social media?
  – In which way do best practice hotels use the internet in relation to their guests?
  – In which way do these hotels use SEO?
  – In which way do these hotels use review management?
  – In which way do these hotels use social media?

• Third field study: What are success factors in the field of e-marketing according to an expert?
  – What influence does SEO have?
  – What is the influence of review management?
  – What influence does social media have?

1.4 Reading guide
This chapter presents a general introduction of the e-marketing plan. The next chapter consists of the theoretical framework in which the core concepts are disentangled. The theoretical framework ends with an operationalisation of the core concepts, which is the guideline for the field studies. The third and fourth chapter represent the methodologies for both the desk- and field research. The results of the first desk study are elaborated in chapter five, which represents the hotel industry in Barcelona. In chapter six the trends & developments with regard to e-marketing and specifically SEO, review management and social media are represented. The outcomes of the questionnaires are analysed in chapter seven and the outcomes of the interviews in chapter eight. Afterwards, a conclusion has been written in which the research questions are answered. In chapter ten the research has been discussed with regard to the validity and the reliability. The next part of the report consists of the advisory part. In this first chapter, different options are described and evaluated, which have led to the final recommendations. The next chapter represents the implementation plan of these recommendations. Afterwards, the financial implication of the e-marketing strategy is described. The report ends with an afterword, which includes a reflection on the day-to-day practice, as well as a reflection on the value of the thesis for the industry in general.
2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework is set up. First of all the descriptions of the search engines and the research criteria are given. The next step is the description of the search terms (which can be retrieved in appendix III) for each of the core concepts and the definitions of the core concepts. This is done in terms of different definitions from different authors. All the definitions are attached in appendix IV. Furthermore, the relationships between the core concepts are described and the last part of this chapter consists of an operationalisation of the core concepts of the field research.

2.1 Search engines and criteria

The search engines which have been used to elaborate the core concepts are www.google.com, www.scholar.google.com, www.saxionbibliotheek.nl and the corresponding search engine called EBSCO HOST. The different search terms which have been used for both the theoretical framework and the desk research can be retrieved in appendix III. The criteria which have been used to select the sources are called the AAOCC-criteria. Each source has been investigated and checked by the AAOCC-criteria. The chosen sources all satisfy the requirements with regard to the AAOCC-criteria, which can be retrieved in appendix V. In the appendix, there is one example attached, which shows the way in which the criteria are implemented.

2.2 Definition of e-marketing

The first core concept which is defined, is e-marketing. E-marketing can be defined in many different ways. Ahuja et al. (2015, p. 304) defined e-marketing as "A connection between the modern communication technologies. Electronic marketing is dealing with technologies and principles via the internet. It also helps to promote the brand over the internet and e-marketing refers to all the activities a business presents using the World Wide Web. On the one hand to attract new customers and businesses, and on the other hand to retain them. Interaction with your customers and the promotion of your brand via the World Wide Web are the most important elements within this definition.

Another definition of Gupta et al. (2015, p. 6) says that "Online marketing is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the internet to promote the business to its customers. According to Gupta et al. (2015), e-marketing includes email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, many types of display advertising and mobile advertising." As mentioned, e-marketing includes different types of online marketing forms which could be used by businesses to promote the company via the internet.

"The process of marketing a brand is considered as e-marketing" according to Thederhoost & Sahibuddin (2013). They also mentioned that e-marketing includes "The operations a company is undertaking using the World Wide Web focusing on new customers, maintaining customers and expanding the brand. Examples of digital marketing include websites, social media, YouTube videos and banner ads. E-marketing is considered as equal to traditional advertising, the difference is that it applies to digital services. Conversely, e-marketing is considered as a form of inbound marketing and the goal for people is to find businesses via the internet."

Interacting with your customers and promoting your brand via the World Wide Web could be defined as e-marketing, with attracting new customers and maintaining customers as a focus.
This form of marketing includes different types of online platforms and is also called inbound marketing.

### 2.2.1 Advantages of e–marketing

The first core concept, e–marketing, is disentangled and it is important to draw up the advantages of using e–marketing within the hotel industry.

The advantages for the hotel industry when using e–marketing, according to an article on the website of Zeendo (2013) are defined as follows:

- "Information is rapidly available"
- "It saves money"
- "It is easier to expand your business from a local market to a national/international market"
- "It is easier to measure on the internet."

### 2.2.2 Forms of e–marketing

In paragraph 2.2 different definitions are conducted about the main concept e–marketing. The three definitions each argue that e–marketing consists of different forms, which are attached in figure 1.

![Figure 1: E–marketing forms (WebWorks, 2015).](image)

The figure shows that e–marketing consists of different forms and according to an article on the website of Business News Daily (Brooks, 2014) the most important forms of e–marketing are emails, websites, blogs, SEO, social media and review management. This information was assembled through a study from the marketing research firm Ascend2, in which 333 companies around the world were surveyed. This study also showed that businesses have a wide range of motivations for using e–marketing. Increasing customer engagement, increasing sales and brand awareness were the most important reasons.

### 2.2.3 E–marketing and the hotel industry

According to the website of ETOURISM, e–marketing is essential in the hotel industry and hotels need to implement an effective e–marketing strategy (ETOURISM, 2015). Internet users expect to find information with just a few clicks. A strong internet presence is not only a necessity, but it
will be crucial to survive in the future. Three facts according to Tambourine (2014) are defined as follows:

1. “Internet travel booking has been increased by 73% over the past five years
2. Almost 60% of affluent travellers book travel plans online
3. 87% of travellers use the internet for the start of their travel research.”

With this in mind, promoting your business to attract and maintain customers via the internet is essential, because almost all travel plans start online. In figure 2, the hotel booking process is presented.

**The Last Mile of the Hotel Booking Process**

![Hotel Booking Process Diagram](image)

Figure 2: Hotel Booking Process (Starkov, 2014).

The figure shows that travellers start their travel research and travel planning on the internet in search engines, like Google and Bing. Travellers also look for online travel agencies (OTA’s) like Booking.com and Expedia.com. Another source for doing travel research and planning, is to visit the webpage of the corresponding hotel. The last travel research and planning source is called Meta, with platforms like Tripadvisor and Trivago.

The next step in the hotel booking process is the decision verification in which travellers are going to make their decision more clear. Amongst other things, this is done via word-of-mouth advertisement with friends and family. As the internet is enormously popular, travellers actively visit different social media platforms to get more information about the hotel they are researching. The last source of decision verification is called Meta and in this case Tripadvisor is used as an example.

The booking of hotels itself also takes place via different platforms. Online travel agencies like Booking.com and Expedia.com, and the Meta platforms like Tripadvisor and Trivago are the most popular platforms for booking a hotel according to Starkov (2014). Before, the booking also took place on the hotel website itself and via the voice channels, but now online travel agencies and Meta platforms are the most popular.

The hotel booking process has now been identified and different important platforms, including search engines, online travel agencies, hotel websites, Meta websites and social media are highlighted. The next step is to look in which way these forms are matching a hotel e--marketing strategy.
2.2.4 Hotel e–marketing strategy
In appendix VI a hotel e–marketing strategy is introduced. The model shows different elements of e–marketing that are important to design a well implemented e–marketing strategy. This e–marketing strategy starts with SEO, including pay per click, affiliates, ads and conversion rate optimization (all these tools are explained in appendix VI). The left box has a connection with direct sales and the hotel website. The quicker a hotel is found on the internet, the faster the hotel will be booked. Furthermore, a hotel’s website will be visited more frequently when the hotel is quick and easy to find on the internet. As shown in the strategy, travellers’ reviews (third box) are both connected to the second box (direct sales & hotel website) and to the fourth box (online travel agencies). Reviews influence the booking behaviour of the potential guests and their final decision to book a hotel with one of the online travel agencies. In this strategy, social media have an ‘overall’ role with regard to e–marketing. Every single step should be connected to one or more platform(s) of social media, to promote the hotel worldwide.

2.3 Definition of SEO
Quick search through the search engine google.com and the booking website booking.com, showed that Hotel Astoria did not appear quickly. In appendix VII a table is attached, which shows that Hotel Astoria was not easily found on the internet. Because of that reason, SEO is one of the main concepts in this research. SEO can be defined in many different ways and the website of Search Engine Watch came up with five different definitions, which can be summarized as: “SEO is the ongoing process of producing optimized content with keywords the audience is searching on and by doing so the web presence of the business become more visible (LaRiviere, 2013).” According to an article on the website of Entrepreneur (2015) SEO is “The process of becoming more visible on the World Wide Web as a website by ranking high in the search results of a search engine.” In this research SEO is defined as “The ongoing process of producing optimized content with keywords the audience is searching on and by doing so becoming more visible as a website by ranking high in the search results of a search engine.” Chadha (2012) has developed a SEO model (attached in appendix VIII) which uncovers the most important elements; business analyses, keyword research, site architecture, content development, link building and analyses & reporting. These elements are used throughout the report.

2.4 Definition of review management
When a hotel knows how to work with SEO, the reservations will increase (direct sales). However, the sales of reservations are not only about SEO, but also about the reviews of travellers or in other words review management as shown in appendix VI. The model in the appendix mentions that 41% of travellers read reviews before booking a hotel and 88% of these travellers trust the reviews, according to an article on Search Engine Land (Anderson, 2014). In appendix IX a figure is attached which shows that reviews have increased over the past few years. The main websites for writing and reading reviews are Tripadvisor.com and Booking.com. As a hotel it is important to get as much as possible reviews on these websites. After a small research that is conducted, Hotel Astoria does not have many reviews on the different review websites in comparison to other hotels in Barcelona. For that reason, review management is one of the main concepts in this research. Review management entails establishing, maintaining, repairing and monitoring the publicly available online information about a business, according to an article on the website
of Reputation Communications (Wilkinson, 2013). According to the website of Brand Yourself (2015), review management is “The process of controlling what shows up when someone ‘Google’s’ a company’s name.” In this research, review management is defined as “The process of controlling, establishing, maintaining, repairing and monitoring the available information and reviews of a business.”

2.5 Definition of social media
The last concept within this research, which can be retrieved in the hotel online marketing strategy, is social media. Before, during and after the booking process social media is crucial, according to Carmelon Digital Marketing (2014). In appendix X the circle of trust is attached, which shows that guests of hotels are posting reviews and recommendations on different platforms of social media. Social media influence the users (potential guests) in their decision of booking a hotel night. Two facts about social media, according to Carmelon Digital Marketing (2014) in the hotel industry are:

1. “52% of travellers changed their travel plans based on social media posts
2. 50% of companies in the hotel industry agreed that they have generated bookings via social media platforms.”

Social media is important when it comes to booking a hotel night and as Hotel Astoria does not have any channels of social media, this is also one of the main concepts in this research.

According to Moran (2011), social media is “A collection of online tools and platforms which people are using to share media, perspectives, experiences, insights, opinions, profiles and content. Furthermore, they facilitate conversations and interactions online among groups of people.” Odden (2011) mentions social media as “A technology that facilitates collective wisdom, engagement, creation and sharing.” Finally, Pulizzi says that (2011) social media “Is all about leveraging online tools that promote sharing and conversations, which ultimately lead to engagement with current and future customers and influencers in your target market. The key to success for social media campaigns, is having a content marketing strategy that involves the distribution of valuable, relevant and compelling content that promotes the behaviour you are looking for that will ultimately drive your business.” In this research, social media is defined as “The way in which a company is able to promote and sell via online platforms. The purpose of social media is to have an interactive, open source and user controlled internet platform. Sharing experiences, working together, sharing knowledge and increasing the market power of the specific organization are the guidelines (Moran, Odden & Pulizzi, 2011).”

2.6 Relationship among the core concepts
The focus of the e-marketing strategy is on SEO, review management and social media. These three elements have been chosen, because they are the most useful for Hotel Astoria at this moment. Firstly, the hotel needs to become more findable on the internet, which can be achieved by SEO. Secondly, when travellers have retrieved the hotel on the internet, they will start doing research on different review websites. It is then important for the hotel, to have as much reviews as possible and this could be achieved by review management. Thirdly, social media is important, because 52% of travellers changed their travel plans after reading social media posts and according to the circle of trust, social media are in all the stages of the booking process.
**E–marketing** consists of different forms which can be implemented in a business’ **e–marketing strategy**. A hotel’s **e–marketing strategy** starts off with the hotel being found on the internet, in different **search engines** and **booking websites**. For this reason **SEO** is of great importance in the hotel booking process. When the traveller has found the hotel on the internet, he/she will start to read **reviews** on the internet to verify their decision. This means a hotel should have as much as possible **reviews** on the internet, which could be achieved by **review management**. **E–marketing** and **social media** are related to each other, because today travellers use **social media** to read different posts, but also to share experiences of their hotel stay. **Social media** is influencing the booking decision of the potential travellers, as shown in the circle of trust in **appendix X**.

### 2.7 Operationalisation

The operationalisation of the core concepts of the field research is attached in **appendix XI**. In the operationalisation, all the different core concepts are elaborated more and more in detail by means of the theoretical framework. Each single aspect of the operationalisation can be traced back in the theoretical framework. Finally, two tree diagrams have been set up, which indicate the elements of both the first field study and the second/third field study.

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**3. Methodology desk research**

In this chapter, the methodology of the desk research is elaborated. First of all, the objective and related questions are described, followed by the description of the research methods used for the desk research.

### 3.1 Objective and questions of desk research

The objective of the desk research was to make a contribution to the e–marketing plan for Hotel Astoria by obtaining and developing knowledge in the field of e–marketing strategies by means of existing information.

The related questions were defined as follows:

- What does the hotel industry in Barcelona look like?
  - What type of hotels does Barcelona offer?
  - What type of tourists visit Barcelona?
  - What are these tourists looking for?
  - In what ways is the city promoted?

It was important to describe the hotel industry in Barcelona, because at a later stage the general hotel industry in Barcelona has been compared with the results of the field research. Specifically, the way in which these results could play along with the hotel industry in Barcelona.

- What are the trends & developments with regard to hotel e–marketing?
  - What are the trends & developments with regard to SEO?
  - What are the trends & developments with regard to review management?
  - What are the trends & developments with regard to social media?
The trends & developments in the hotel industry with regard to SEO, review management and social media were important to depict, because they were one of the guidelines for setting up the questionnaire and interviews guides.

3.2 Research methods
The data for both the first and second desk research question have been collected by means of existing information on the internet into reports, articles and other sources.

3.2.1 Search engines, terms and criteria
The search engines which have been used are www.google.com, www.scholar.google.com, www.saxionbibliotheek.nl and the corresponding engine called EBSCO HOST. Furthermore the criteria that have been used to select the sources are called the AAOCC–criteria. Each source has been investigated and checked by the AAOCC–criteria. The chosen sources satisfy the requirements referring the AAOCC–criteria, which can be found in appendix V. In the appendix one example is attached to see in which way the criteria have been implemented. The search terms which have been used within the different search engines can be retrieved in appendix III.

4. Methodology field research
In this chapter the methodology of the field research is represented. First of all the objective and related questions are described, followed by the description of the research methods used for the field studies.

4.1 Objective and questions of field research
The objective of the field research was to make a contribution to the e–marketing plan for Hotel Astoria by obtaining and developing knowledge in the field of e–marketing strategies by means of practical experience.

The related questions were defined as follows:

- What is the internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria with regard to a hotel booking?
  - In what ways are search engines important to the guests?
  - In what ways do the guests use search engines?
  - In what ways do hotel reviews influence the booking behaviour of the guests?
  - To what extend are social media important within the booking process?

It was important to see the ways current guests of Hotel Astoria behaved on the internet when booking the hotel stay, because Hotel Astoria should adapt its e–marketing strategy to its guests.

- In what way is Hotel Astoria able to distinguish herself from the competitors with regard to SEO, review management and social media?
  - In what way do best practice hotels use the internet in relation to their guests?
  - In what ways do these hotels use SEO?
  - In what ways do these hotels use review management?
  - In what way do these hotels use social media?
To see in what way other hotels have implemented their e-marketing strategy was significant for Hotel Astoria, because by doing so, the hotel got an impression and ideas for its own e-marketing strategy.

- What are success factors in the field of e-marketing according to an expert?
  - What influence does SEO have?
  - What influence does review management have?
  - What influence do social media have?

The interview with an expert has led to a confirmation of the results of the first two mentioned field studies. The interview was seen as an “extra”, but resulted in strong evidence.

4.2 Research methods
The field research did both contain quantitative and qualitative field studies. The field studies were all about obtaining information of practical experience within the field of e-marketing and for this reason the field research has been defined as descriptive. In a descriptive research, the approach is to describe the variables and test the relationship between those variables (Brotherton, 2008, p. 12).

4.2.1 Research method for first field study
The first field study (the internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria) has been carried out using questionnaires. The reason for having chosen a survey and specifically a questionnaire, is because of time and the potentially high number of respondents. By means of the questionnaire a high number of respondents respond in a short time (Brotherton, 2008, p. 132). The questionnaires were given when the guests did their check-in and after this, the guests were able to hand in the completed questionnaires at the reception. In return for their effort, the guests received a card for renting a bicycle for free for one day at Budgetbikes. The reason for this, was to attract the guests to fill in the questionnaire and due to that, the response numbers would be higher.

To have a representative and reliable study a percentage of 95% was needed, which means 480 questionnaires needed to be collected (Creative Research Systems, 2015). The guideline with regards to the number of questionnaires in this field study was approximately 200, as far as 480 respondents was not achievable. The questionnaire consisted both closed and open questions and could be defined as semi structured, in which both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. The reason for this was that the objective of this field study not only sought for a factual nature, but also sought for information to underlying reasons (Brotherton, 2008, p. 135). The questionnaire and the corresponding explanation are attached in appendix XII, in both the English and Spanish version.

The research population in this field study was defined as the current guests of Hotel Astoria. This group has been divided into two smaller groups, in particular leisure– and business guests. To ensure the respondents were both leisure– and business guests, the questionnaire took place during two weeks. The sampling design was defined as probability-based and specifically simple random. In fact, this means that every guest had the same probability to be chosen and to fill in the questionnaire (Brotherton, 2008, p. 169). The outcomes of this field study have been imported in the SPSS program (SSCC, 2015) and afterwards they have been analysed. By means
of these analyses relationships could be made, which led to conclusions. In appendix XIII an explanation is attached in which the research methods are described more extensively, as well for the second and third field study.

4.2.2 Research methods for second and third field study
The second and third field study (respectively the e–marketing strategies of three other hotels and the perspective of an expert in the field of e–marketing) have been obtained by means of interviews. The reason for having chosen a case study and specifically interviews, is because in–depth interviews could be conducted (Brotherton, 2008, p. 122). This is a research method in which a conversation with the respondent took place. In these interviews, ideas and views about SEO, review management and social media were discussed. The interviews consisted of open questions, in which qualitative data have been obtained.

The second field study (the interviews with three hotels) consisted of three interviews. The structure of each interview guide was the same. However, during the interviews the respondents had the possibility to go more in detail about a specific aspect, which he or she thought was really important. As a reason of this, it was important to interrogate on this specific aspect, which was seen as an advantage of in–depth interviews. The interviews had a length of approximately 30 minutes. The hotels and specifically the marketing managers who have been interviewed are:

- Mrs. Magriet Thönnissen – Raddinson Blu, Amsterdam
- Mr. Mark Weijman – De L´Europe, Amsterdam
- Mr. Pieter Lewis – WestCord hotels

An explanation for having chosen these hotels can be retrieved in appendix XIV.

The third field study (the interview with an expert) consisted of one interview, with three different elements, respectively SEO, review management and social media. The interview had a length of approximately 30 minutes. The expert who has been interviewed is:

- Mr. Pablo de Chica

An explanation for having chosen this expert can be retrieved in appendix XIV. The interview guides for the interviews and the explanation are attached in appendix XV. The four transcripts are attached in appendix XVI.

5. Hotel industry in Barcelona
In this chapter the first desk research question and the related sub questions are answered by means of existing information on the internet into reports, articles and other sources. The hotel industry in Barcelona is described extensively in this chapter with regard to the behaviour of tourists and hotels. All provided information has been gathered by means of official documents and reports of Barcelona Turisme (2015). In appendix XVII all related tables and percentages are attached.

5.1 Tourism in Barcelona in general
Since the Olympic Games in 1992, Barcelona has seen the number of tourists increased strongly.
New hotels, new neighbourhoods, new infrastructure and new tourist attractions were created by means of the Olympic Games (TurismeBCN, 2015). Barcelona’s popularity among tourists grew and today more than 7.8 million tourists visit the city each year. It is a well-known destination worldwide for leisure, business, training, studies and events. With a percentage of 52.5% in 2014, leisure is the biggest purpose for travellers to visit Barcelona. Business has a percentage of 39.6% and the other purposes share a percentage of 7.9% (Barcelona Turisme, 2015).

5.2 Tourists and hotels
52.6% of the tourists who visited Barcelona in 2014 comes from Europe. 20.5% of the tourists comes from Spain and the rest, 2% comes from other countries all over the world. France, England and the United States are the most important countries if it is about the percentage of tourists coming to Barcelona, respectively 8.6%, 8.6% and 8.3% (Barcelona Turisme, 2015). The majority, 63.3% of the tourists are male, due to the many tourists who come to Barcelona for business purposes. The age group who visits Barcelona most often are aged between 25–54 years. The most chosen means of transport is the airplane with a percentage of 78.6%. The main reason for this, is because the airport of Barcelona (Barcelona – El Prat Airport) is well connected to both European and intercontinental cities. Barcelona consists of 373 hotels which are located over the city. The majority of hotels are four-star, totalling 158. The second place is for the three-star hotels, at 115.

5.3 Sightseeing in Barcelona
The top 10 of the most appreciated aspects in Barcelona according the tourists are architecture, culture, leisure/entertainment, public transport, infrastructure, character/kindness of local people, safety in the city, shopping, hotel/accommodation and restaurants. The touristic bus has been used the most among the tourists, with a number of almost two million each year. The Barcelona card has been used 135,000 times among the tourists. With this card the tourists are able to travel for several days with all the public transport. Barcelona walking tour has a number of almost 15,000 tourists, who have joined the paid walking tours through the city. Furthermore, the majority of tourists consults the different tourist information points (cabins), when they would like to get some information during their stay. The tourist offices are also popular, but most of the time a visit to a cabin works faster, because there is almost never a long queue.

The top 10 of the most visited places according Barcelona Turisme (2015):
1. Sagrada Familia
2. Park Güell
3. El Born Centre
4. Aquarium Barcelona
5. Museum FC Barcelona
6. Poblet Espanyol
7. Park Zoològic
8. Historical Musem
9. La Pedrera
10. Casa Batlló

Barcelona is ranked in sixth place in the top 10 of the most visited cities in Europe. Besides this, the city is ranked in fourth place with regard to the amount of international tourists.

5.4 Carrying capacity and objectives
Barcelona is a well-developed city and tourist destination. The carrying capacity has already been exceeded, because in one year, more tourists visit the city than the number of inhabitants. For this reason the government and tourism board of Barcelona try to find different solutions to solve the corresponding consequences. An example of what the new mayor of Barcelona has established, is a moratorium for one year on new hotel permits (Hospitality Business News,
The main reason to do this, is because the mayor wants to retain more tourists coming into the city.

The tourism board of Barcelona, called Barcelona Turisme, has several objectives for the upcoming years, which take the carrying capacity into account. The five most important objectives are defined as follows:

- “To boost the financial impact of tourism and to attract new tourists who are able to spend a high amount of money
- To promote the identity of the city as a tourist attraction
- To bring solidarity among the tourists and local people and vice versa
- To ensure the geographical distribution of tourism
- To strengthen the public and private promotion model (Barcelona Turisme, 2015).”

6. Trends & developments of e–marketing

In this chapter the second desk research question and the related sub questions are answered by means of existing information on the internet into reports, articles and other sources. The most important trends & developments with regard to e–marketing and specifically SEO, review management and social media are described.

6.1 Trends & developments of e–marketing

The hotel industry is constantly renewing and for this reason hotels need to invest time and money to adapt their strategies to their customers’ expectations. Demography, economy, society, technology, ecology and politics contribute to the newest trends & developments within the hotel industry. However, in this report, e–marketing is the main concept and the focus is specifically on SEO, review management and social media. For this reason, the most important trends & developments with regard to these forms are elaborated.

In the field of e–marketing trends & developments occur all the time. Nowadays, mobile hotel bookings are becoming more and more popular (Shields, 2015). This just means to be able to book a single room or multiple accommodations from your smartphone within a relatively short time. Shields (2015) also mentioned that companies in the hospitality industry should focus on “tech–savvy amenities and features.” Offering the latest and greatest amenities for guests is hereby the guideline. A touch screen which operates as the controller of the room (for television, lighting, curtains and thermostat) is one of the newest developments, for example.

In 2014 a webinar called “Big, bold, and visual: what you need to know about hotel marketing in 2015” was held in the United States. Peter (2014) came up with different trends & developments to watch for in 2015. One trend is about the fact that hotel guests would like to be connected to the internet wherever they are. By using the internet, guests can browse and buy anytime and anywhere. The website mentioned four important categories in which guests can interact with the hotel; mobiles, wearables, usables and invisibles. Peter (2014) also mentioned that everyone is a publisher now, which means hotels need to create content on the internet which is easily findable. Peter (2014) mentioned three different elements content needs to consist of. Content needs to be “snackable, shareable and sharp.” Snackable, in terms of easy to read, easy to scan and the content should deliver an easy message. Shareable, in terms of sharing photos via the internet, because hotel guests would like to see where they are going to. Sharp, just means that
guests would like to get their questions answered as soon as possible. Sharp also consists of large, bold and clear content. The last trend, according to Peter (2014) is about customer insights. Hotel guests are leaving digital footprints on different platforms on the internet. On the one hand it can be seen as positive for the hotels, as far as all these data highlight customer behaviours, wants and desires. The hotels need to play along with this information and by doing so, the hotel is able to attract more guests. On the other hand it could be both positive and negative, because current guests of hotels can share their experience with the hotel across all the internet. Mostly, negative experiences are posted more often rather than positive ones (Peter, 2014).

4Hoteliers came up with the top ten hospitality industry trends for 2015 (Rauch, 2014). The most important trends are listed here. According to Rauch (2014), it is time to transform customer service into a combination of high–tech and high–touch. This is about the way in which information is personalized via online platforms. This means that hotel guests want to find information quickly and easily. They do not want to get too much information, but just the necessary elements. Therefore, hotels need to have a clear website, booking page and/or mobile application, with only the most important information (Rauch, 2014).

Travel industry reviews are not only posted on Tripadvisor anymore. Booking websites like Booking.com and Expedia.com are becoming more important with regard to reviews. Furthermore, reviews are shared via social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube (Rauch, 2014). The last important trend, according to Rauch (2014), is about real time marketing. With modern technologies, hotels are connected to their guests all the time. When guests have questions, they are able to ask them directly via different forms of social media. It is important the hotel interact and respond as soon as possible to the guests (Rauch, 2014).

A trend which has been seen over the last year is the personalisation of web presence (NetAffinity, 2014). Guests want to visit websites, which are personalised to them and the guests want to feel that they are part of the hotel experience. Hotels are able to do so by means of developing tailored content and targeting customers on their preferences and online behaviour (NetAffinity, 2014). Another trend according to NetAffinity (2014), is to spread a hotel brand via all channels. An average traveller’s research journey takes 24 days, from the travel research to the booking itself. This journey includes 21.6 touch points, which means a traveller returns to different channels approximately 22 times. For this reason, it is important a hotel invests time in the promotion on all the different channels to become as much as possible visible (NetAffinity, 2014).

6.1.1 Trends & developments of SEO
According to NetAffinity (2014), Meta search is gradually becoming an effective channel for hoteliers. However, hotels still need to find the best way to deal with Meta channels, like Tripadvisor and Trivago.com. The challenge for hotels, is to generate more hotel bookings via these Meta channels. Another trend according to NetAffinity (2014), is about the way in which search engines will be of importance in the future. Not only a channel like Google will be staying important, but also other channels within the field of e–marketing will become important if it is
about SEO. From now on, the hotels need to focus on the overall guest experience across all the channels (NetAffinity, 2014).

6.1.2 Trends & developments of review management
According to a research of INC (Hendricks, 2014) five statements are defined as follows:
- “85% of consumers claim to read online customer reviews for local businesses.
- 37% of consumers use the internet to search for local business at least once monthly.
- 65% of consumers prefer brands that have a collection of good online reviews.
- 79% of consumers consider online reviews to be equally as trustworthy as personal recommendations.
- 71% of consumers say positive reviews increase their trust of a business.”

According to Hendricks (2014), review management is the secret key to success. With reviews, hotels can make the difference among their competitors. Hotels needs to encourage their guests to write reviews on review websites, blogs and social media. By doing so, potential guests will be informed about the hotel, but also about the current experiences with the hotel (Hendricks, 2014).

6.1.3 Trends & developments of social media
Hospitality marketing; a blog by Cvent came up with different trends & developments (Ola, 2014). First of all, Ola (2014) argued that content needs to be user-generated. In fact, this means that hotels need to start with campaigns, allowing their guests to participate on different channels of social media. An example is to allow guests to upload photos or short videos of their experience with the hotel. In return, the hotel will receive priceless feedback and loyalty.
Furthermore, this form of marketing could not be executed by the hotel itself (Ola, 2014). In this article Ola (2014) also mentioned the three elements of social media content, namely snackable, shareable and sharp.

7. Internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria

This chapter represents the results of the first field study in the form of analyses. The program which is used to insert the questionnaires is called SPSS and by means of this program analyses are made. The pie- and bar charts which are acquired from this program are attached in appendix XVIII.

7.1 Characteristics of the current guests of Hotel Astoria
As shown in figure 1, 58.1% of respondents are females. The respondents are aged between 18-64 years. However, the most considerable age group is aged between 18-44 years. The respondents came from all over the world, as shown in figure 3. The most important nationalities in order are French, Spanish, English, Dutch, American, German and Italian. Approximately 87.6% of respondents booked a hotel night with a leisure purpose, compared to only 12.4% of respondents who visited the hotel for business reasons. Of the 210 respondents, 97 respondents stayed for 3-4 nights in the hotel, as shown in figure 5. The average level of education among the respondents with 41.4%, is a bachelor’s degree. The second most important level of education with 28.6%, is a master.
7.2 Travel research/planning with regards to search engines

A significant amount of respondents has started the research and planning for the hotel stay more than one month before the visit, respectively 67 out of 210 respondents. 148 out of 210 respondents have started their research and planning one up to three weeks before the real visit. Over 51% of respondents have started their travel research and planning in search engines according to figure 8. The second most important platform to start the research and planning is an online travel agency and the third place consists of Meta platforms. The main reason for the respondents to start their research and planning in search engines is the easy accessibility to these engines. To start the research and planning directly on a website of an online travel agency or on a Meta platform is more difficult. The main reason for this is because of knowledge. If someone wants to visit an online travel agency or Meta platform directly, he/she needs to be acquainted with these platforms. Otherwise, he/she will never find directly the specific platform. With search engines, someone is able to discover different online travel agencies and Meta platforms, which are provided by the search engine itself.

The most important search engine among the respondents is Google, with 188 out of 210 respondents. The second and third search engines which are important to the respondents are Yahoo and Bing, with respectively 16 and 7 out of 210 respondents. 39 out of 210 respondents have mentioned that they also used other search engines. These other search engines consist of websites like Booking.com and Trivago.com, which could be seen as online travel agencies and Meta platforms.

In figure 10 a table is attached, which shows the keywords which have been used by the respondents within the different search engines. Almost 60% of respondents have searched with really general keywords like Hotel Barcelona, Hotel in Barcelona, Hotels Barcelona and Hotels in Barcelona. As a result, the majority of respondents did not look for specific aspects for their hotel stay in Barcelona. When tourists use keywords which are really general, this means it will be harder to get found on the internet as a hotel. The hotel needs to be unique and needs to try to distinguish itself from the other hotels on the internet.

Of course, some respondents also came with some exceptions like Pet Friendly Hotel Barcelona, Derby Hotel Barcelona and Barcelona Ramblas Hotel. When these keywords appear on the hotel website, the probability to end high in search engines is more guaranteed.

In figure 11 the most important criteria that have been used among the respondents are presented. The three most important criteria are price, district and review score. Beside this, star rating, facility and room facility are also seen as important criteria among the respondents.

7.3 Decision verification with regards to review websites

In total 96 out of 210 respondents have mentioned that reviews had a big influence on the booking of the hotel night. These respondents gave a four on a scale of five. 53 respondents gave a three and 46 respondents gave a five. Only 15 respondents gave a one or two with regard to the influence of reviews on the booking. As a result, the respondents care about the way in which other guests have experienced the hotel and their opinion influenced the booking of the respondents.
As shown in figure 13, almost 72.4% of respondents ranked TripAdvisor as the most important review website. It is well-known worldwide and for tourists, it is the platform to express opinions about everything with regard to the hotel, both positive and negative. Hotels, on the other hand, need to show guests that they care about them by responding to reviews.

TripAdvisor has several requirements to end higher on the website, which of course include the amount of both positive and negative reviews. Trivago was visited by almost 32% of the respondents and other websites like Booking.com and local websites as well.

The majority of the respondents, respectively 76.2%, have read both positive and negative reviews. This means the respondents have attached great value to all different kinds of reviews, and they influenced their booking behaviour. 22.3% have read only positive reviews and just 1.4% read only the negative reviews. In general, the respondents liked to see what former guests have said about Hotel Astoria.

The respondents have mentioned that reviews are reliable in general, with a percentage of 62%. Furthermore, 15.2% of respondents have said that reviews are very reliable. In total, 2.9% thinks that reviews are unreliable and very unreliable. 20% of all respondents have mentioned that they do not have an opinion and they are neutral. For the majority of respondents, the reliability is very high with regard to reviews in general. Reviews do not only consist of a written judgement, but they also consist of a response of the corresponding hotel. This is as important as the review itself.

Finally, 109 respondents have indicated to write a review after their visit. However, 101 respondents have indicated not to write a review. This means, a large percentage cares about reviews and reviews are important to them, but at the end they will not write a review. The main reasons for them to not write a review, is because of time and laziness. Furthermore, some respondents have answered this question with the reason that they never write reviews. In general, less reviews means a lower reliability, which means potential guests are not 100% sure if they can trust the reviews, which are written and they will doubt about booking the hotel night. Therefore, it is important hotels encourage their guests to write reviews.

7.4 Decision verification with regards to social media

Over 52% of respondents have used channels of social media. Hotel Astoria does not have its own social media channels, so the respondents have visited channels of social media of the covering chain, Derby Hotels Collection. The chain itself does have its own social media channels. The three channels which have been used the most among the respondents are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Other channels which are also used, are YouTube, Google and Pinterest. Beside this, the business respondents have used LinkedIn as well as a social media channel. More than 32% of respondents have mentioned that social media is important on a scale from very important up to not important. With almost 13%, the neutral group is in second place. In general, the percentage of respondents who have mentioned social media as important is higher than the respondents who have mentioned social media as not important.

The majority of respondents who used social media did only share photos of their stay, as shown in figure 21. Both photos and videos have only been shared by six respondents. The rest of the respondents did not share anything.
7.5 Booking of the hotel stay
Most of the respondents have booked their stay via an online travel agency, respectively almost 65%. Bookings via the hotel website itself have a percentage of over 18%, followed by bookings on Meta platforms with almost 14%. The majority of the respondents has booked the stay from one week up to three weeks in advance, with a percentage of 38.6%. Some respondents also have booked their stay just a few days in advance, but this is just a little percentage.

8. Research results of the interviews
This chapter represents the results of the second- and third field study in the form of analyses. First of all, the outcomes of the interviews from the three hotels are compared and analysed. The second part of this chapter consists of the analyses of the interview with the expert. In appendix XIX the coding of the second field study is attached.

8.1 E–marketing in general according to the three hotels
The definition of e–marketing was for all three the interviewees the same; “E–marketing includes SEO, review management and all channels of social media.” Only Hotel De L’Europe has come up with an additional definition of what e–marketing means to the hotel. The hotel separates e–marketing into online marketing and e–commerce. Online marketing is about the visibility of the hotel on the internet and the way in which the hotel is able to influence its online presence. E–commerce includes SEO and search engine advertising (SEA) (Weijman, 2015). As mentioned, the most important forms which are used among the hotels are SEO, review management and social media. Beside this, booking channels, newsletters and Google Add words are considered as important as well.

The three hotels all have the same direction with regards the objective of e–marketing. To create brand awareness, to encourage guests to come back (loyalty), to attract new guests and to encourage the guests to book the hotel night on the hotel website itself. Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned that interaction and involvement with the guests is really important.

The information which is provided by means of e–marketing consists of general information about the hotel, like meals and rooms. Furthermore, activities, events and information about the city are published by means of e–marketing. The WestCord Fashion Hotel works also with newsletters, which are sent twice a month. One letter to inform the guests about the background information about the hotel, in combination with hotel offers. The other letter includes only hotel offers (Lewis, 2015). All three hotels avoid publishing many offers and discounts, because they have discovered that guests do not like this. Personalised content is much more popular among the guests.

Hotel De L’Europe adapts all the content to the specific facilities and corresponding target group within the hotel. So for example the bar is visited by a different target group than the restaurant. For each facility the hotel adapts the content to the specific target group and by doing so, the guests feel treated personally. Furthermore, LinkedIn is used as a special channel for the business market, which is also done by the other hotels.

8.2 SEO according to the three hotels
SEO is defined as a form of e–marketing which allows the hotel to end high in the rankings, with
the condition of a good implementation according to all three hotels. Lewis (2015) mentioned that SEO is always ongoing and the hotel needs to update the content of the website constantly. Ravensbergen (2015) mentioned that keywords on the website are of great importance, otherwise the potential guests will never find the hotel.

According to Weijman (2015), SEO is connected to the next four elements; design, attainability, content and multimedia.

For all three hotels the objective of SEO, is to end higher in the ranking in the different search engines. Furthermore, a better visibility on the internet is seen as an objective among the hotels. Weijman (2015) spoke also about an advantage of SEO, namely the fact that the hotel is able to see what each spent ‘euro’ has delivered. By means of SEO, hotels are able to know how many rooms are booked, how many nights are booked and finally how many guests have booked.

The most important search engine among the hotels is Google. The reason for this, is because this search engine is worldwide well-known and almost everyone who starts a research or planning, uses this search engine as starting point. Hotel De L´Europe focuses also on Bing and Yahoo, because the majority of the guests of this hotel come from outside Europe.

Hotel Radisson Blu and De L´Europe both have mentioned that the key to success, is a combination of paid and non-paid advertisements. Furthermore, content needs to be adapted to the keywords the guests search for. According to Lewis (2015), the website is not written for search engines, but for your (potential) guests. When a hotel brings forth to provide the correct information and tries to be unique, the probability to end higher in the ranking is more guaranteed. Above all, the hotel needs to visualise the hotel experience as good as possible on the internet.

8.3 Review management according to the three hotels
Review management is a source to receive information and feedback from guests. Furthermore, a clear overview of guests’ experiences is outlined in the different reviews websites. Lewis (2015) circumscribed review management as the hotel’s uncovering, because guests are able to give their opinion about everything.

The main objective of review management is to respond to all the reviews, according the three hotels. By doing so, the guests feel treated more personally. Another objective, is to end as high as possible on the different reviews websites, which can be retrieved by having a large number of positive reviews. Furthermore, the reliability will be higher when more reviews are written on a review website (Lewis, 2015).

The most important review website is Tripadvisor for all hotels. Ravensbergen (2015) also mentioned Booking.com and Expedia.com as important platforms to receive reviews. Hotel De L´Europe and the WestCord Fashion Hotel both have their own review website. To encourage the guests, to write a review after their stay, all three hotels have online questionnaires, which are sent afterwards. Furthermore the guests are asked at the reception desk to share the outcomes of the questionnaire on a website like Tripadvisor.

A personalised adapted experience is important for guests. Therefore, the reviews need to be responded in same the language. The Radisson Blu Hotel and Hotel De L´Europe do this, the
WestCord Fashion Hotel responds mostly in English. Furthermore, it is important to check daily all the incoming reviews and respond as soon as possible. Hotel De L´Europe responds to reviews based on the degree of negativity. The higher the degree of a negative review, the higher the comment is positioned to the employee who responds. The WestCord Fashion Hotel has a meeting once a month in which the effects of reviews are discussed. During this meeting the hotel compares the amount of reviews, compares the reviews to other months and compares the reviews with other hotels (competition).

All hotels deal in the same way with negative reviews. It is important to respond as soon as possible to negative reviews, because the hotel is able to change the negative elements into more positive ones (Lewis, 2015). The hotel really needs to do something with reviews and the hotel is able to do, just by responding to every review. Like this, the negative review will be highlighted, but on the contrary the hotel has the ability to already solve the problem partly.

In general, reviews are not shared on the internet, because guests will think that the hotel posts positive reviews and omits the negative ones. It is too effusive to only post positive reviews and it is counterproductive.

8.4 Social media according to the three hotels
Social media is defined in different ways among the three hotels. For Radisson Blu, social media are all the online channels which are used to communicate and be interactive with the (potential) guests. De L´Europe thinks that social media is not about your website, which means the hotel does not need to give too much information within the posts on the different social media channels. Social media is an exclusive inside look in the hotel, which gives the guests the ability to see more background material of the hotel. According to Lewis (2015) of the WestCord Fashion Hotel, social media is a way to get closer with (potential) guests and the hotel is able to represent the atmosphere of the hotel on the different channels of social media.

The most important social media channels for all three hotels are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google +, YouTube and LinkedIn. All hotels have the same objective, namely to tell a story which is visualised together with a photo. The hotels want to share the hotel experience and atmosphere. Furthermore, the hotels want to be interactive with the guests and they want to meet their needs as soon as possible. The provided information is mostly background information about the hotel, because the hotels have seen that this is liked the most. Guests would like to see photos with a story about a new facility, an employee or an event for example. Of course these posts should always be connected to the website itself.

All hotels promote the city as well and they all have a connection with the tourism board IAmsterdam. The reason to promote the city as well, is because guests would like to know what is going on in the city and therefore the tourism board always has the correct information. The hotels post every two days on the different channels of social media. It is important not to get outdated and therefore a post every two days is advised. However, the hotel should not post something just because the hotel need to. Of course, as always, within every post a real story needs to be announced.

8.5 E-marketing according to the expert
According to De Chica (2015), e-marketing is the ‘modern´ traditional marketing. Because of
the online tools, the industry has better analytics and furthermore the industry is able to measure all data. With the same techniques, the same strategies, but with better online tools the industry is able to do so. E-marketing all depends on the target group and therefore the related strategy.

The most important forms of e–marketing which De Chica (2015) has addressed are inbound marketing, social media, SEO, SEA and review management. For hotels it is important to attract guests to the hotel website and to keep a good reputation. The reason for this, is because a higher volume of guests to the website, result in a higher turnover, because of more bookings via the hotel website itself (De Chica, 2015). De Chica (2015) has mentioned different advantages of e–marketing. The most important one is called success in the upcoming years. When a hotel does not work with e–marketing, it will not survive in the next years. When hotel guests do have a good experience with the hotel, they will write positive reviews, which will finally lead to a more positive image of the hotel (better reputation).

8.6 SEO according to the expert
SEO means to create good content, which is well adapted to the digital environment. Furthermore, this content needs to satisfy the requirements of the different search engines. Like this, hotels will end high in the ranking in search engines, which leads to the increase of brand awareness as well as sales (De Chica, 2015).

The most important search engine for hotels is Google. Beside this, there are several Meta platforms like Booking.com and Trivago.com, which hotels need to recognize as important as well. When a hotel publishes the right keywords, which the (potential) guests looks for on the website, the ability to get turned up is higher.

The key to success for hotels to end high in the rankings in search engines consists of different elements. First of all the hotels need to be as trustful as possible, with regard to the provided information on the website. It is important this information is true, because guests do not like it when they arrive to the hotel and then it turned out to be that the provided information does not meet the reality. So, the content needs to be true and as well adapted to the (potential) guests. Another element is called SEA, which just means to advertise in the different search engines and Meta platforms. A combination of the content and paid advertisements is the key to success (De Chica, 2015).

8.7 Review management according to the expert
Review management is everything for companies. If a hotel wants guests to repeat their visit, they need to have a good online reputation. All the SEO techniques and objectives need to be clear and true. Furthermore, a well written content and the right keywords contribute to get a good or better reputation.

To encourage the guests to write a review, a hotel needs to give incentives to its guests. Just because guests need to be convinced to write a review, as far as a large number of guests do not want to invest a lot of time in it. Even with online questionnaires, which are sent afterwards, hotels do not receive that much response. Guests rather prefer to write a review on one of the reviews websites, which are independent of the hotel. However, guests need to be stimulated to write a review and this could be done by the hotel itself. An example is to ask with every check–
out if the guest wants to write a review and resend this review within an email to the hotel. Then the hotel can offer the guest a special discount. This will stimulate the guests to write a review (De Chica, 2015).

The perfect situation would be that all hotels respond to every single review, but unfortunately in reality it does not work like this (De Chica, 2015). The bigger hotels do have the resources to do so, but the medium and small sized hotels do not. These hotels are like a robot and respond to every review in the same way and furthermore, most of the time the hotels respond really late. This would result in a bad reputation and therefore, it is necessary to come up with a different action plan. What hotels could do, is for example to focus more on the communication channels. This could be done by means of the social media channels. As far as this form of e-marketing is really transparent, this could work well. The reputation is really important and with the right tools, a hotel is able to increase awareness and keep the reputation safe (De Chica, 2015).

8.8 Social media according to the expert
Social media is the new medium of communication to the (potential) guests. The objective is to gain new clients, but also to keep existing clients. Social media is really transparent, which makes it even more important. Guests are able to ask questions all the time by means of the different social media channels. Another option which social media has, is the fact that hotels are able to create advertisements on the different channels. Furthermore, a hotel is able to bring a segment into social media channels. An example could be seen in LinkedIn, which is more used among the business guests (De Chica, 2015).

The most important forms for the hotel industry, which De Chica (2015) has mentioned are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. However, this all depends on the target group of the hotel. When the hotel is visited more by business guests, it is better to focus as well on LinkedIn. In general, the posts which are liked the most, concern photos with background information about the hotel, employees, guests or events in the city.

9. Research conclusion
This chapter represents the conclusion in which the research questions are answered. First of all, the desk research questions are answered, followed by the field research questions. Furthermore, the interrelations among the results of the different field studies are described. This conclusion leads to recommendations, which are the starting point of the advice.

9.1 The hotel industry in Barcelona
Barcelona has about 400 hotels, located all over the city. The majority of hotels are four-star, totalling 158. The second place is for the third-star hotels with a number of 115, to which Hotel Astoria belongs. Because of the competition, it is important Hotel Astoria distinguishes the hotel on the internet, which could achieved by creating unique content.

More than 7.8 million tourists visit the city annually. The majority of these tourists comes from Europe, and primarily from France. The city is visited mostly by males with a percentage over 63%, which is due to a large number of business guests. The age group who visits Barcelona are aged between 25–54 years. The outcomes of the questionnaires of Hotel Astoria represented almost the same tourist. The hotel is only visited more by females than males. This is probably
caused, because more leisure guests visit the hotel rather than business guests. The reason for this, is because of its location, surrounded by all the tourist highlights.

The most important elements which are appreciated among the tourists are the architecture, the culture and the leisure activities. Furthermore, the three most visited places are the Sagrada Familia, Park Güell and the centre of El Born. Hotel Astoria is situated in the middle of the city centre with all the previously mentioned highlights surrounding it. A well-implemented e-marketing strategy should promote these highlights as well.

The tourism board in Barcelona aims to boost the financial impact of tourism, to promote the identity of the city as a tourist attraction and to bring the tourist and locals together. Hotel Astoria is able to remodel these objectives into its e-marketing strategy, just by means of the correct promotion with these goals in mind (Barcelona Turisme, 2015).

9.2 Trends & developments
The most important trend in e-marketing is that content needs to be “snackable, shareable and sharp.” Snackable, in terms of: easy to read, easy to scan and the content should deliver an easy message. Shareable in terms of sharing photos via the internet, because hotel guests would like to see where they are going to. Sharp just means that guests would like to get their questions answered as soon as possible (Peter, 2014). Furthermore, the content of the e-marketing strategy needs to be as personalised as possible (NetAffinity, 2014). Not only a search engine like Google will be of importance in the future, but Meta platforms will be as well. For this reason, it is important hotels focus on the overall guests experience across all the channels. If it is about review management, Hendricks (2014) noticed this form of e-marketing as the secret key to success. Hotels are able to make a difference among their competitors, just by encouraging their guests to write reviews on websites, blogs and social media. Social media need to be user generated, which means hotels first need to start with campaigns that encourage the guests to participate on the different channels, according to Ola (2014). Hotel Astoria should adapt to these trends & developments, because they will be important in the near future.

9.3 Conclusion e-marketing
E-marketing is defined as the traditional marketing, but then with the newest online technologies, according to De Chica (2015). First of all, it is important to understand your target group, for which the hotel write its e-marketing plan. Without e-marketing a hotel will not survive in the future. The interviewed hotels agreed with this and for all of them SEO, review management and social media are the most important forms. The objectives for the hotels are defined as; creating brand awareness, encouraging guests to come back, attracting new guests and encouraging guests to book via the hotel website itself. Hotel Astoria only uses e-mail marketing, which is considered among the three interviewed hotels and the expert as old fashioned. Therefore, Hotel Astoria needs to find a way to combine its e-mail marketing together with the other mentioned forms of e-marketing.

9.4 Conclusion SEO
Creating content which is well-adapted to the digital environment, is considered as SEO according De Chica (2015). By doing so, the hotel will create brand awareness and finally more
sales. The three interviewed hotels invest a lot of time and money in SEO, because it is a way to become more visible on the internet. As far as hotels aim to have a good occupancy level, it is important to end as high as possible in both search engines and Meta platforms. The interviewed hotels use both paid and non-paid advertisements. The key to success is to create a content which consists of the keywords the guests look for. Weijman (2015) added four elements to SEO; design, attainability, content and multimedia. The current guests of Hotel Astoria use Google as search engine and these guests have inserted general keywords. The three most important criteria that have been used are review score, district and price.

9.5 Conclusion review management
According to De Chica (2015) review management is everything for hotels. By means of reviews, guests are able to tell everything about the hotel on different review websites, but also via channels of social media. Lewis (2015) even mentioned reviews as the uncovering of the hotel. The three hotels see review management as a source to receive information and feedback from guests. The hotels respond to every single review, because this creates interaction and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the reviews need to be responded in the corresponding language, because this creates a personalised content. Tripadvisor is seen as the number one review website, whereas Meta platforms like Booking.com and Trivago follow close behind. The guests of Hotel Astoria agree with this, because Tripadvisor is the most used review website among them. The reviews influenced their booking behaviour a lot, both positive and negative reviews.

In general, reviews are seen as important among the current guests of Hotel Astoria. However, only half of the respondents have written a review. The other part have not written a review, because of time and laziness. To avoid this, the three interviewed hotels have several incentives to encourage the guests to write a review. Hotel Astoria needs to encourage the guests as well to receive more reviews, which will result in a higher reliability and finally in a higher occupancy level during the winter period.

9.6 Conclusion social media
Social media is the new way of communicating with your guests (De Chica, 2015). All three hotels agreed with this. Furthermore, the hotels see social media as a way of being interactive with the guests. By means of social media guests are able to get an exclusive insight in the hotel and like this the guests will receive more background information. The hotels avoid publishing too many promotions, because this is counterproductive. The reason for this, is because that guests like to see more personal material rather than discounts. The most important channels of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and for the business guests LinkedIn. The hotels post about every two days, just to stay updated and interactive with the guests. 50% of the current guests of Hotel Astoria use social media. Hotel Astoria does not have its own channels, which means the guests have visited the channels of Derby Hotels Collection itself. The chain consists of a large number of hotels and apartments and therefore the chain does not post often about Hotel Astoria. Because of this, it is important Hotel Astoria creates its own social media channels. The guests who used social media, have considered social media as important and the majority will only share photos.
10. Discussion of the research

In this chapter the construct, internal and external validity and the reliability of the research are discussed on the basis of strong and weak points with references to the research literature.

10.1 Objective of the research

The objective of the research has been accomplished, which means that knowledge has been obtained and developed in the field of e-marketing strategies by means of existing information and practical experience. This knowledge has led to concrete conclusions, which have led to concrete recommendations for Hotel Astoria. With these recommendations and the related e-marketing strategy, Hotel Astoria is able to get a higher occupancy level during the off season.

10.2 Construct validity, internal validity and external validity of the research

The theoretical framework ended with an operationalisation of the core concepts within this report. This operationalisation gave a clear overview of what should be measured during the research. During the desk research, the employed concepts coincided, as mentioned in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the interviews with the hotels and expert have led to a confirmation of the right interpretation of the core concepts, just because their vision of the core concepts matched the theoretical framework and the desk research. For this reason the construct validity is considered as high (Brotherton, 2008, p. 213).

The internal validity of the research is also seen as high, because the research avoids confounding (American Hippotherapy Association, 2015). The obtained information by means of the interviews, coincided, which benefits the internal validity. Furthermore, the outcomes of the questionnaires in general, matched each other.

The interviews with the three hotels do all have a high external validity, because they all mentioned the same elements which are important for a hotel’s e-marketing strategy. If the researcher would interview other hotels, the most important obtained knowledge would be the same. The interview with the expert in this case was more subjective. The reason for this, is because the expert had a more general vision of e-marketing and not specifically focussed on the e-marketing of hotels.

10.3 Reliability of the research

In the beginning the first field study needed to consist of 400 questionnaires. Finally, 210 questionnaires have been filled in. The reason to have less questionnaires than indicated, is because of the fact that the reception only got 20 questionnaires back within two months. Probably the receptionists did not encourage the guests to fill in a questionnaire or they even did not tell a questionnaire was going on. Then, after these two months, the researcher had the possibility to return to Barcelona to do the questionnaires by himself. Unfortunately, he only had two weeks for doing the questionnaires, because of time. Finally, he received 190 questionnaires within these two weeks, which is considered as a high level of response. Just because, the completed questionnaires matched each other, the reliability is still considered as high.

The interviews with the hotels and expert should all take place in Barcelona, as far as Hotel Astoria is located in this city. Because of personal circumstances, the researcher was not able to be in Barcelona at that time. Therefore, emails were sent to different three star hotels in
Barcelona, but no hotel did respond. Then, four and five star hotels were informed about the interviews, but again the hotels did not respond. Because of time, a solution needed to come forward and finally hotels in Amsterdam were approached. Luckily, these hotels did respond. Because three hotels in Amsterdam have been interviewed, the results could be considered as not reliable. However, if it is about e-marketing, the hotels in Europe use the same forms and strategies in general and therefore this research is considered as reliable as well.

11. Recommendations

In this chapter the recommendations for Hotel Astoria are represented. First of all the advice objective and advice questions are listed once more, as far as these will be answered within this chapter. In the next paragraph the target group for Hotel Astoria is defined, because the hotel should focus on this group within its e-marketing strategy. The next paragraphs contain several recommendations which could be implemented by Hotel Astoria. By means of several criteria, which are represented in paragraph 11.6, the final recommendations for Hotel Astoria are revealed in the last paragraph of this chapter.

11.1 Advice objective and advice questions

The advice objective is to contribute to the increase of the occupancy level during the off season for Hotel Astoria by presenting an e-marketing plan about the most successful e-marketing strategy and the implementation of this strategy. The related questions are defined as follows:
- In which way should SEO be implemented?
- In which way should review management be implemented?
- In which way should social media be implemented?

This objective and related questions need to be taken into account all the time during the advisory part, because these questions will be answered within this part.

In the next paragraphs different options are represented, which could be implemented by Hotel Astoria. These options are divided into the three main forms, respectively SEO, review management and social media. Subsequently, these options are evaluated by criteria of Hotel Astoria and finally in the last paragraph the final recommendations are given, which are the guideline for the implementation plan. First of all, the target group is described, as far as the e-marketing strategy needs to be adapted to this group. In appendix XX a table is attached which gives an overview of all the options Hotel Astoria has.

11.2 Target group for Hotel Astoria

By means of the questionnaires and by a confirmation of Mr. Camps, the target group for Hotel Astoria is defined. It is important to understand the target group well, because this group will be taken into account during all the advisory part. The target group for Hotel Astoria consists of guests who are between 18–44 years old, come from Europe and visit Hotel Astoria for leisure purposes. Furthermore the guests stay in the hotel for 3–4 nights and their average level of education is a bachelor’s degree.

11.3 Options SEO

SEO could be implemented in several ways. At the moment the hotel does not work with SEO and therefore it is important it will be implemented gradually. By means of the questionnaires and interviews, Google came forward as the most important search engine. Therefore, one option
could be that Hotel Astoria should focus mainly on Google. Another option could be that the hotel will focus on Google and as well on Bing and Yahoo. Furthermore, Hotel Astoria could focus on online travel agencies like Booking.com and Expedia.com. The fourth option is to focus as well on Meta platforms like Tripadvisor and Trivago.com.

The website itself is also really important, because the more bookings via the website, the higher the turnover. The reason for this, is because hotels need to pay commission to online travel agencies and Meta platforms. The ideal situation should be that the guests start their research/planning in a search engine, find the hotel website directly in that specific search engine and finally book the hotel stay via the hotel website itself. Therefore, the hotel website needs to have a good design, an easy attainability, a personalized content and several multimedia. The general content should be unique in terms of "snackable, shareable and sharp." Furthermore, this content needs to be as much personalized as possible, because today guests care a lot about a personalized content.

With SEO, hotels are able to use both paid and non-paid advertisements, which are considered as another option. All respondents of the interviews have mentioned that a combination of both paid and non-paid advertisements is the key to success. As a hotel it is important to see in which way the guests have retrieved the hotel, which keywords they used, which criteria they used and when they clicked through to the website. This could be achieved and discovered by means of Google Analytics. The last option contains the new feature which Google will have, namely Book on Google. In the upcoming months/years Google will introduce its own booking channel. Guests will have the ability to directly book via this search engine. For Hotel Astoria this could be a great opportunity, because Google asks little commission, in comparison to online travel agencies and Meta platforms. The seven options of SEO for Hotel Astoria and the evaluation of the criteria are defined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria -- Options</th>
<th>Budget (1–5)</th>
<th>Time (1–5)</th>
<th>Guidelines Derby Hotels Collection (YES/NO)</th>
<th>Innovative / Unique (YES/NO)</th>
<th>High attainability (1–5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google - Paid advertisements - Google Analytics - Book on Google</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google, Bing and Yahoo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online travel agencies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta platforms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel website</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalised content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.4 Options review management

The respondents of the interviews have all mentioned that reviews are everything for hotels. Therefore, hotels need to play along with reviews. First of all, it is important to focus on review websites. One option could be that Hotel Astoria mainly focuses on the review website, Tripadvisor. This website is seen as the most important, both for the guests of Hotel Astoria and the respondents of the interviews. Another option is to focus on other websites like Booking.com and Trivago.com.

Because reviews are important, it could be useful to have a special program in which all the reviews are entered. With this program, the hotel is connected to all the different review platforms, which means the hotel does not need to go to each single platform all the time.

The incoming reviews are written in different languages, because the guests of Hotel Astoria have different nationalities. So far, not every single review gets response, which means the hotel does not create personalisation. Based on the interviews with the hotels, it is important to respond to every single review. This creates a feeling of personalisation, which is considered as really valuable among the guests. Furthermore, Hotel Astoria could start to respond the reviews in the corresponding language.

More reviews on the different review platforms means a higher reliability for the guests. This simply means that guests would like to read as much reviews as possible, because only then they will trust what has been said about the hotel. This could be achieved by encouraging the guests to write a review, which could be done in different ways. One option is to just tell the guests with every check–out to write a review on one of the review websites. Another option could be to inform the guests with every check–out and to send an email afterwards to ensure the guest will not forget to write a review. Hotels Astoria also could work with incentives for the guests, when they will post a review on one of the review websites. This could be achieved by informing the guests with every check–out and afterwards an email will be sent with information about the procedures. The incentive could contains a discount for the next stay, for example.

The nine options of review management for Hotel Astoria and the evaluation of the criteria are defined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria -- Options ↓</th>
<th>Budget (1–5)</th>
<th>Time (1–5)</th>
<th>Guidelines Derby Hotels Collection (YES/NO)</th>
<th>Innovative / Unique (YES/NO)</th>
<th>High attainability (1–5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tripadvisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripadvisor, Booking.com and Trivago</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.5 Options social media

Social media are considered as the new way of communication and interaction with your guests. The most important channel is Facebook and one option for Hotel Astoria is to focus only on this channel. The next option contains the channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which are the three most used channels in general for hotels and for the guests of Hotel Astoria as well. LinkedIn could also be implemented by Hotel Astoria, as far as the hotel receives a small amount of business guests. Finally, if the hotel wants to be really active with regards to social media, the hotel could focus on more platforms, like YouTube and Google+ as well.

Once having chosen the right channels to use, it is important to decide what information needs to be provided by means of social media. Hotel Astoria has different options when it comes to providing information. One option could be that the hotel only post about discounts and/or promotions. Another option could be that the hotel focuses on more background information of the hotel and/or activities in the city. The last option concerns a combination of discounts/promotions, and background information and/or activities in the city. Another option which could be implemented within the e–marketing strategy, is about the tourist attractions. A strength of Hotel Astoria is the location, because the hotel is located in the city centre and the hotel is surrounded by all the tourist attractions. For this reason, Hotel Astoria could focus as well on the tourist attractions within its social media policy. Another option in this paragraph is about the objectives of the tourism board of Barcelona. Within the e–marketing strategy, Hotel Astoria could take these objectives as well into account. The most important objective is to bring the local people and tourist together, which could be achieved by promotion about local activities and events. Hotel Astoria is able to do so, just by a social media policy which highlights these activities and events as well.

For Hotel Astoria it is really important that the social media channels stay up–to–date and therefore the hotel could post every two days on each channel. Another option is to post one day something on Facebook, the other day on Twitter and the last day on Instagram and so on. The eleven options of social media for Hotel Astoria and the evaluation of the criteria are represented in the table on the next page.
11.6 Criteria of Hotel Astoria

Hotel Astoria has several criteria for the implementation of the e-marketing plan which represents the most successful e-marketing strategy. For this reason not all the options are relevant to implement, as far as the criteria need to be taken into account.

The first and most important criteria is the budget. Hotel Astoria is part of Derby Hotels Collection and this chain has a certain amount of budget provided to Hotel Astoria for marketing. Hotel Astoria needs to spend this money in a clever way, which means the right choices need to be made with regard to the use of the specific forms. As a reason of this, the e-marketing strategy will consists of elements which are considered as reasonable if it is about the costs.
Mr. Camps would not mind to hire an e–marketing specialist, who would work in the hotel in this field. However, Mr. Camps mentioned that it is important that he needs to be informed and involved all the time about the progress and corresponding tasks. Mr. Camps also mentioned that the hotel does have the recourses to invest in an employee, who will start to work in the field of e–marketing.

Hotel Astoria is part of Derby Hotels Collection, which means the hotel needs to follow the guidelines of this chain. Mr. Camps has mentioned that the e–marketing strategy needs to fit the chain’s mission and vision. These are defined as follows:

Mission → to offer a unique hotel night, which combines art, culture and luxury with the best quality of service, hygiene and food, to make the guest feel welcome.
Vision → to offer a reliable place for their guests, on the one hand to attract existing guests and on the other hand to attract new guests.

Two other criteria of Hotel Astoria, which Mr. Camps has addressed, are about an innovative and unique e–marketing strategy. Mr. Camps would like to have a different e–marketing strategy than all the other three–star hotels. Of course, some elements will be the same, but for example the fact that the hotel has a museum in the lobby could be part of the e–marketing strategy.

Mr. Camps would like to implement an e–marketing strategy, which contains the most important elements with the highest attainability, with the budget and time in mind.

11.7 Final recommendations
Almost 30 different options have been discussed in the paragraphs above, which could be implemented in the e–marketing strategy for Hotel Astoria. The advice is for the hotel to adopt a gradual approach. The criteria mentioned above have been taken into account and all the options are evaluated. The final options are represented in the blocks below, into recommendations for SEO, review management and social media.

Search engine optimization policy

- Focus on the hotel website (design, attainability, content and multimedia)
- Create a content which is snackable, shareable and sharp
- Focus mainly on Google, including paid advertisements, Google Analytics and Book on Google

Review management policy

- Ask guests to leave a review by means of incentives and send an email with further instructions afterwards
  - Focus mainly on Tripadvisor
  - Respond to every single review
  - Respond only in English
12. The e–marketing strategy for Hotel Astoria

In this chapter the implementation plan is represented. This implementation plan includes the e–marketing plan which is about the most successful e–marketing strategy and the implementation of this strategy. First of all, the implementation of SEO, review management and social media is explained and in the last paragraph of this chapter the e–marketing strategy for Hotel Astoria is displayed by means of a tree diagram.

12.1 Main objective of the e–marketing strategy

The main objective of this e–marketing strategy is to contribute to an occupancy level of 70% during the off season for Hotel Astoria. To achieve this objective, the e–marketing strategy contains of the most important forms; SEO, review management and social media. These forms should be implemented by Hotel Astoria. For each form, the corresponding goals, tasks, measurements, and revised policies are described.

12.2 Implementation of SEO

In this paragraph the implementation of SEO is described by means of the PDCA cycle.

12.2.1 Goals (P) of SEO

The goals of SEO are defined as follows:

- Generate 50% more visitors to the hotel website within six months
- End on the first two pages of Google within twelve months
- End at least on the 10th page within twelve months

12.2.2 Planning (D) of SEO

To reach these objectives and to have a well–implemented SEO policy, several tasks should be undertaken by Hotel Astoria. The elements of the SEO model used in paragraph 2.3 are the main steps which should be undertaken by Hotel Astoria to develop a well–implemented SEO policy. These steps are defined as follows:

1. Business analyses
2. Keyword research
3. Site architecture / content development
4. Link building
5. Analyses / reporting

The first two steps have already been carried out. The business analyses have shown that Hotel Astoria was not well findable on Google. The keyword research has shown that the guests of Hotel Astoria have used general keywords to find the hotel. For this reason Hotel Astoria should

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**Social media policy**

- Focus on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Post about discounts/promotions (non–paid advertisements), as well about background information and/or activities in the city
  - Promote tourist attractions
  - Promote local activities and events
  - Post every two days
first start to focus on step three, site architecture and content development. Subsequently, step four and five should be carried out. In the table below, the steps and related tasks, time planning and responsible are defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Time planning</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Site architecture / content development | **Task 1: Update the website**  
- Design: change the colours  
- Attainability: link the website to other platforms, for example Google Maps  
- Content: add catch words, add tourist attractions and local events  
- Multimedia: add photos on the background, add social media channels | Week 1 & 2         | Outsourced website company     |
|                               | **Task 2: Keep the website up-to-date**  
- Play along with the newest trends & developments on your website  
- Update the design, attainability, content and multimedia regularly | Check the website once a week to see if it is still up-to-date | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Link Building                 | **Task 1: Start to focus on Google** | Every day          | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
|                               | **Task 2: Introduce Google Add words**  
- Create Google Add words: write adds, choose search terms, set a daily budget | Week 1              | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
|                               | **Task 3: Renew your adds twice a month**  
- Make sure your adds are also up-to-date and change them twice a month | Check the add words twice a month and renew them if necessary | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
|                               | **Task 4: Connect the hotel to Book on Google** | Directly when Book on Google is available in Europe | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Analyses / reporting          | **Task 1: Connect the website with Google Analytics**  
- Create an account  
- Set up properties  
- Follow instructions to set up web tracking  
- Add reporting views  
- Allow other users to see reports  
- Set up goals  
- Link Google Analytics to Google Add words  
- Browse the solutions gallery | The website should be connected directly to Google Analytics. Once a month a meeting is needed with Mr. Camps to discuss the results | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |

**Explanation:**

In the first two weeks Hotel Astoria should start to change the website, which should be carried out by an outsourced company. Of course, Mr. Camps should be strictly involved in this process. A copy of the hotel website of Hotel Astoria is attached in appendix XXI, which shows the hotel should work on it. An example of a best practice website is attached in appendix XXII. Hotel Astoria should use this website as a guideline. Moreover, the hotel should start to focus on Google, Google Add words and Google Analytics from the beginning. The corresponding tasks should be carried out by an e-marketing manager. The next step is to keep both the website and Google up-to-date. The website should be updated once a week, Google Add words should be
updated twice a month and the outcomes of Google Analytics should be discussed once a month with the management team of the hotel. Once Book on Google is available in Europe, Hotel Astoria should start to work directly with this only travel agency and should focus all the time on it.

12.2.3 Evaluation (C) of SEO
Having carried out the mentioned tasks, the hotel should be able to achieve the objectives of SEO. The e–marketing manager should pay close attention to the progress of the amount of visitors to the hotel website. He should check every week the amount of visitors and check if the number is rising. Finally, in six months the number of visitors should be 50% more than the moment of the implementation of SEO. To end high on Google is not an easy process and therefore the objectives of ending higher on Google have a time period of twelve months. Again, the e–marketing manager should check every week the progress with regard to the ranking on Google.

To ensure the objectives will be achieved it is important to have once a month a meeting with the management team, in which the achievement of the two objectives will be discussed. Furthermore, the e–marketing manager should meet Mr. Camps weekly, in which the progress of both objectives is discussed. Google Analytics could be used as a measurement tool and the outcomes could be used as the guidelines for the meetings.

12.2.4 Revised policy (A) of SEO
When Hotel Astoria discovers that the two objectives are not achieved, the hotel should adapt its SEO policy. What the hotel could do, is to start again from the starting point, business analyses. Then by means of Google Analytics, the keywords which are used among the visitors could be retrieved. Subsequently, the website should be adapted in such a way, that it meets the keywords used by the visitors. The next step is to use more Google Add words and to become more visible on Google.

12.3 Implementation of review management
In this paragraph the implementation of review management is described by means of the PDCA cycle.

12.3.1 Goals (P) of review management
The goals of review management are defined as follows:

- End on the 70th place on Tripadvisor within twelve months
- Receive 30% more reviews on Tripadvisor within six months

12.3.2 Planning (D) of review management
To reach these objectives and to have a well–implemented review management policy, several tasks should be undertaken by Hotel Astoria. These tasks are visualised in the table on the next page.
### Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Time planning</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Start to focus and stay focussed on Tripadvisor</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Encourage guests to write a review</td>
<td>With every check-out, so every day</td>
<td>Receptionists Hotel Astoria Receptionists Hotel Astoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ask guests with every check out to write a review and they will receive a discount the next stay</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Send an email with the instructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Once having received they review, send the guests the discount</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Respond each review</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Read the incoming reviews carefully</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Respond them personally on Tripadvisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– If the review is really negative, try to contact the guests by email or phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4: Respond each review as soon as possible and in English</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Respond the reviews within max. 24 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Respond each review in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation:**

First of all, Hotel Astoria should start to focus on Tripadvisor as review platform. This will be the main responsibility of the e-marketing manager of the hotel. Subsequently, Hotel Astoria should encourage the guests to write a review on Tripadvisor. The employees responsible for this should be the receptionists, because they should tell the guests with every check-out to write a review. The next step which should be undertaken is to send the guests an email which highlights the writing of a review, but also contains further instructions for receiving the discount. This task should be carried out by the e-marketing manager of Hotel Astoria. The next task is to respond each review as soon as possible (max. 24 hours) and in English. This is seen as another task for the e-marketing manager and he should pay close attention to this every day. An example in which way the review should be responded is attached in appendix XXIII.

#### 12.3.3 Evaluation (C) of review management

Once the mentioned tasks are carried out, the hotel should be able to achieve the objectives of review management. It is important that the e-marketing manager checks the amount of reviews weekly. These weekly results should be discussed with Mr. Camps, because he wants to be closely involved. Beside this, Hotel Astoria should discuss the amount of reviews during the meeting, which will be organised once a month with the management team. The amount of reviews could be compared to the months before, but also to the competition, should be looked at. Finally, Hotel Astoria should be around the 70th place on Tripadvisor within twelve months, whereas it is now placed on number 122 (Tripadvisor, 2015). Furthermore, the hotel should receive 30% more reviews within six months.

#### 12.3.4 Revised policy (A) of review management

When Hotel Astoria will not achieve the mentioned objectives, the hotel should revise its review management policy. What the hotel could do, is to encourage the guests to write a review already before their stay. Once a guest has made the reservation, the hotel could send a
confirmation email which highlights the importance of reviews. Furthermore, the hotel could place banners in the hotel rooms which will promote the importance of reviews. By doing so, the guests are informed all the time about writing a review. Another possibility to revise the review management policy, it to start responding reviews in the corresponding language, which will make it even more personal.

12.4 Implementation of social media
In this paragraph the implementation of social media is described by means of the PDCA cycle.

12.4.1 Goals (P) of social media
The goals of social media are defined as follows:

- Create a platform of social media channels in which at least 50% of the guests are connected within three months
- To receive as many likes as possible (which lead to interaction with your guests)

12.4.2 Planning (D) of social media
To reach these objectives and to have a well-implemented social media policy several tasks should be undertaken by Hotel Astoria. These tasks are visualised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Time planning</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Task 1: Start to focus and stay focussed on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram  
  - Create an account on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram  
  - Insert all the hotel information  
  - Create a design which is similar to the hotel website | Every day | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Task 2: Post about promotions, background information and events  
  - Promotions → for example about a special package  
  - Background information → for example about the employee of the month and new features within the hotel  
  - Events → for example the Mobile World Congress or FC Barcelona | At least once a week | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Task 3: Promote tourist attractions  
  - Highlights → promote the highlights and tourist attractions of Barcelona and surroundings | At least one post per week about one highlight / attraction | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Task 4: Promote local activities / events  
  - Local activities / events which bring the locals and tourists together → post about neighbourhood festivals, food markets and second hand markets | At least one post per week about these activities / events | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |
| Task 5: Post every two days  
  - Stay up-to-date on the different social media channels and post at least every two days to stay visible. | Post at least every two days | E-marketing manager Hotel Astoria |

Explanation:
First of all, Hotel Astoria should start to create accounts for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

45
This is the responsibility of the e-marketing manager of the hotel. The most important posts contain information about promotions, background information and events. Therefore, the e-marketing manager should consult different sources of Barcelona Turisme, to retrieve the latest information. Subsequently, Hotel Astoria should post about the highlights and tourist attractions in Barcelona and surroundings, once a week. Beside this, the hotel should also stimulate the guests to visit local activities and events, because this will bring the locals and tourists together. The e-marketing manager should post at least once a week about these activities and events.

12.4.3 Evaluation (C) of social media
Having carried out the mentioned tasks, the hotel should be able to achieve the objectives of social media. It is important the e-marketing manager checks every week the number of guests who have been connected to a channel of social media. Furthermore, the e-marketing manager should pay close attention to the amount of likes which have been received. Subsequently, the e-marketing manager should discuss the progress once a week with Mr. Camps. On a monthly basis, the progress should be discussed in the meeting with the management team. In this meeting the amount of likes could be compared to the months before, but also to the competition. Finally, Hotel Astoria should try to connect at least 50% of its guests to the channels of social media and should try to get as many likes as possible.

12.4.4 Revised policy (A) of social media
When the two objectives of social media will not be achieved, the hotel should adapt its policy. This could be achieved, by for example changing the content of posts. When the hotel discovers that background information is liked more, the hotel should start to focus more on these posts rather than posts with promotions. When less than 50% of the guests are connected to a channel of social media, the objective will not be achieved. The hotel should then promote its social media channels in a broader way. By email, banners and on Google for example.

12.5 The e-marketing strategy
When the three main policies are implemented, the related objectives should be achieved. Finally, an occupancy level of 70% during the off season will be achieved when all policies will be carried out in a proper way. Every month (November – March) the occupancy level should be one of the main items for the meeting with the management team. The occupancy level should be compared to the years before and hopefully a rising will be seen. When this is not the case, the hotel should look closely to each single policy and adapt this policy by means of the mentioned instruments. These are discussed in the paragraphs which highlight revised policy.
13. Financial implication

In this chapter the financial implication of the e–marketing strategy is represented. First of all, the expected costs are described. Subsequently, the expected income is represented and finally the feasibility of the advice is described.

13.1 Expected costs

The most important costs for the implementation of the e–marketing strategy for Hotel Astoria concerns the e–marketing manager. It is important for Hotel Astoria to invest time in seeking an e–marketing professional, who will start to work full–time for the hotel. In appendix XXIV a document is attached with the job description and the requirements.

The average costs for an e–marketing manager in Spain are defined in the table below. All costs are gross amount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Dollar (USD)</th>
<th>Euro (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E–marketing manager in Spain per year</td>
<td>$43.300 per year (1 USD = 0.89 EUR)</td>
<td>€38.650 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E–marketing manager in Spain per month</td>
<td>43.300 / 12 = $3.600 per month</td>
<td>38.650 / 12 = €3.200 per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data have been retrieved from the website of MOZ (2014), which indicate the average salaries worldwide. In appendix XXV a figure is attached which shows the average costs for e–marketing managers in different countries.

The next costs concern the outsourced company, who will adapt the website of Hotel Astoria. By means of Plato Web Design (2015) the average costs of adapting the website of Hotel Astoria are calculated. For adapting the website once, the hotel will have the following costs. The prices are nett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Dollar (USD)</th>
<th>Euro (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapting the website once</td>
<td>$3.500 (1 USD = 0.89 EUR)</td>
<td>€3.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price per month</td>
<td>3.500 / 12 = $300 per month</td>
<td>3.100 / 12 = €260 per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last costs concern the Google Add words. In the table below the costs are represented according to the website of AccuBook (2015). All prices are nett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Euro (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Add words per year</td>
<td>€5.000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Add words per month</td>
<td>5.000 / 12 = €400 per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total costs for Hotel Astoria are represented in the table below. The costs are all nett and in euros.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect →</th>
<th>E–marketing manager</th>
<th>Outsourced website company</th>
<th>Google Add words</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>€3.200</td>
<td>€260</td>
<td>€400</td>
<td>€3.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>€38.650</td>
<td>€3.100</td>
<td>€5.000</td>
<td>€46.750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.2 Expected income

Once Hotel Astoria has implemented the e–marketing strategy, the occupancy level will rise to 70% during the winter months. In 2014 Hotel Astoria had an average occupancy level of 45% per month, during the off season (November till March).

If we look to the occupancy levels of 2014 (off season), Hotel Astoria had an average occupancy level of:

- January → 33%  
  224 / 5 (months) = 45% average per month
- February → 39%
- March → 58%
- November → 54%
- December → 40%
- Total → 224%

Hotel Astoria has 117 rooms, which have an average price of €60 per night. If the occupancy level will be 100%, the hotel will receive 117 (rooms) x 60 (price per night per room) = €7.000 per night. Per week the hotel would receive 7 (days) x 7.000 = €49.000 and per month 4 (weeks) x 49.000 = €196.000. Per year this would be 12 (months) x 196.000 = €2.352.000.

Because the off season counts 5 months, Hotel Astoria would receive 0.42 (5/12 = 0.42) x 2.352.000 = €988.000 in these 5 months. Hotel Astoria would receive this amount of money if the hotel would have an occupancy level of 100%. At the moment Hotel Astoria has an average occupancy level of 45%, each month during the off season, which means they receive 0.45 (current occupancy level) x 988.000 = €444.600. Once the hotel has implemented the e–marketing strategy the occupancy level should rise up to 70%, which means the hotel would receive 0.70 (potential occupancy level) x 988.000 = €691.000. This is a difference of 691.000 - 444.600 = €246.400 during the off season. Finally, the hotel would receive 246.400 (expected income off season) - 46.750 (expected costs of the e–marketing strategy) = €199.850 in one year.

13.3 Feasibility

In terms of resources the e–marketing strategy should be able to be implemented. At the moment it is the task to the management team of Hotel Astoria to seek a professional e–marketing manager to start work full–time for Hotel Astoria. If the e–marketing manager follows all the mentioned steps of the e–marketing strategy, and implements the three policies well, Hotel Astoria would be able to achieve an occupancy level of 70% during the off season. In appendix XXVI an overview of the costs and benefits of the e–marketing strategy is represented.
12. Afterword

This afterword represents on the one hand a reflection on the day-to-day practice in which the planning, organisation and cooperation with others are discussed. On the other hand a reflection with regards to the value for the industry in general is discussed.

12.1 Reflection of day-to-day practice

In the beginning of the thesis period a time planning by a Gantt Chart has been set up to have a structure during the thesis project. This time planning is attached in appendix XXVII. In the first five weeks the focus was on the thesis proposal defence, in which the action plan has been set up. This action plan included the introduction and the theoretical framework, plus the methodology of the desk- and field research. After having passed the thesis proposal defence, it was time to continue with the research itself. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances there was no possibility to continue as indicated on the time planning. I was supposed to finish my thesis about two months after my thesis proposal defence, but this was not achievable. In these months I needed to return to my hometown and I only had the possibility to do the desk research and to set up the questionnaires and interview guides. Luckily, I could also do the interviews, but then with hotels in Amsterdam. Furthermore, I did the interview with the expert by Skype. In this period I did not have the possibility to do the questionnaires by myself, so I left them in the hotel. It was the task of the reception to regulate this, but unfortunately the receptionists did not take their responsibility. Fortunately, after this period I had the ability to return to Barcelona and could start to do the questionnaires by myself. Once having finished the questionnaires, I could continue to analyse all the field studies and finally I could focus on my advice. During the last part of my thesis I could follow the time planning.

I experienced some difficult moments during the thesis semester. For example, the first three weeks I needed to change several times the objective of my thesis. This made me feel unsure and sometimes I did not know what I was doing exactly. However, I was really motivated and continued all the time. By doing so, I passed my thesis proposal defence and could start with the next step within my thesis project, which was the research part, which went relatively good. Then I needed to start with the advice part, which begun with some difficulties. For example it was difficult for me to come up with different options. In this case, the meetings with my examiner and the feedback I received, helped me to continue. My examiner also helped me to be more concise, which was another difficulty during my thesis project in general.

At the start of my thesis period I was quite doubtful if I could meet my client regularly, because of his position as manager. During the thesis project I discovered that I needed to be the initiator. This motivated me, because I wanted to inform him all the time about my progress. For this reason we met almost every two weeks. I experienced the contact with my examiner as excellent. We met every two/three weeks by Skype and I always sent my report one or two days in advance. During the Skype meetings I got really useful feedback and my examiner was really critical, which stimulated me to get the best out of myself.

Some learning points which I should do differently in the future are:
- to have a clear objective at the beginning
- to do field studies by myself (like the questionnaires)
- to be more concise when writing reports

Some learning points which I should do the same in the future are:
- to continue, even if you have some difficulties
- to stay motivated and positive
- to have a research which consists of different field studies (makes the reliability higher)

As a conclusion, my thesis period went quite fluently, in which I discovered I am a real tourism professional. A tourism professional who keeps motivated and focussed all the time.

12.2 Reflection on the value for the industry
With modern technologies e-marketing is becoming an important aspect for hotels. Without a well-implemented e-marketing strategy a hotel will not survive in the future. For a lot of hotels e-marketing is quite new and not every hotel has a special e-marketing department. This thesis project described the most successful e-marketing strategy with the focus on the most important forms, respectively SEO, review management and social media. This e-marketing plan could be implemented by a large number of hotels. Therefore, this report is very valuable for the hotel industry in general.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix I – Photo impression of Hotel Astoria
Appendix II – Occupancy levels of Hotel Astoria during off season 2014

**Percentage January:** 33.19%

![List of occupations 01/01/14 to 31/01/14](image1)

**Percentage February:** 38.88%

![List of occupations 01/02/14 to 28/02/14](image2)
Percentage March: 57.92%

Percentage November: 54.42%
Percentage December: 40.04%

Percentage 2013 / 2014:

Appendix III – Search terms for theoretical framework and desk research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Search terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-marketing</td>
<td>e-marketing, e-marketing meaning, definition of e-marketing, history of e-marketing, hotel e-marketing, what is e-marketing, use of e-marketing, elements of e-marketing, e-marketing in the hotel industry, e-marketing AND the hotel booking process and e-marketing strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine optimization</td>
<td>search engine optimization, definition of search engine optimization, hotels AND search engine optimization, using search engine optimization, search engine optimization in the hotel industry, search engine optimization AND the bookings process, important search engines, hotel search engines, trends &amp; developments search engine optimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review management</td>
<td>review management, definition of review management, hotels AND review management, what is review management, using review management in hotels, review management in the hotel industry, review management and the hotel bookings process, trends &amp; developments review management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>social media, definition of social media, what is social media, social media AND hotels, using social media as a marketing tool, social media in the hotel industry, the impact of social media for hotels, social media AND the tourist, use of social media in Barcelona, social media statistics Spain, social media statistics Catalonia/Barcelona, trends &amp; development social media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix IV – Definitions core concepts

In this table three different definitions of the core concept e-marketing are set up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahuja, Alavi, Lamba &amp; Bansal (2015).</td>
<td>“E-marketing has become a link between modern communication technologies. E-marketing, also known as electronic marketing applies marketing technologies and principles via the internet. It helps in the process of marketing a brand over the internet and increasing its reach ability. E-marketing involves all the activities an enterprise presents through the World Wide Web in order to attract new customers and businesses and retain them. E-marketing makes use of these same technologies specifically as a logical extension to fulfil the traditional market of creating, communicating and delivering to customers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gupta, Sharma, Singh &amp; Srivastava (2015).</td>
<td>“E-Marketing, also called online marketing or Internet advertising, is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the Internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. It includes email marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
media marketing, many types of display advertising (including web banner advertising) and mobile advertising. Like other advertising media, online advertising frequently involves both a publisher, who integrates advertisements into its online content, and an advertiser, who provides the advertisements to be displayed on the publisher’s content. Other potential participants include advertising agencies who help generate and place the ad copy, an ad server who technologically delivers the ad and tracks statistics, and advertising affiliates who do independent promotional work for the advertiser.

Taherdoost & Sahibuddin (2013).

"E–Marketing or electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the Internet. The idioms E–Marketing, online marketing and Internet marketing, are regularly swapped, and can be considered synonymous as well. The process of marketing a brand is considered as E–Marketing. It comprises both direct and indirect response marketing and utilizes a variety of technologies to assist relate industries to their consumers. By such a definition, E–Marketing includes all the operations a business accomplishes by the use of the worldwide web with intention of focusing new business, maintaining present business and expanding its brand individuality. Internet Marketing is an amazing new channel for marketing the technology’s architecture supports better tracking of Return on Investment. With using internet marketing companies are able to expand their attainment and filter their sentiments. The world of digital marketing continues to evolve and as long as technology continues to advance, digital marketing will as well. Examples of digital marketing include things like websites, social media mentions, YouTube videos, and banner ads. Distinctively, digital marketing is parallel to traditional advertising, however applying digital devices. Conversely, digital marketing is considered a form of inbound marketing and its goal is for people to find suppliers. Examples of Internet Marketing: Purchased Leads, Google Adwords, SEO, Yelp, Google Local, Facebook/Twitter, Article Marketing, Content Marketing, Email Marketing.”

In this table two different definitions of the concept SEO are set up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LaRiviere (2013).</td>
<td>- “SEO is the ongoing process of uncovering and discovering non-branded keywords that are driving organic search traffic and conversions, then publishing content optimized for those keywords.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “SEO is the process of producing optimized content that</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
is discoverable by the target audience as they progress through the buying cycle.”
- "SEO is about a prospect discovering a brand’s content and web presence through search and social, and the owner of that content being able to understand who consumed the content and the impact of the content across the organization."
- "SEO is the outcome of a content marketing strategy that makes use of highly converting keywords that your target audience is searching on."
- "SEO is the process of enhancing the visibility of a brand’s web presence in organic search."


“The process of increasing the amount of visitors to a website by ranking high in the search results of a search engine. If you want your online business to be successful, it’s a good idea to optimize your site on a regular basis to make sure it’s got a good position in the web’s top search engines. And it’s important to keep on top of the latest developments in the search engine industry and what key tactics you should— and shouldn’t— use to optimize your site to make sure it gets a high ranking with all the major search engines.”

In this table two different definitions of the concept review management are set up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinson (2013).</td>
<td>“Online review management entails establishing, maintaining, repairing and monitoring the publicly available online information about an individual or organization. With the much larger role the Internet has assumed in our lives and industry, ORM now encompasses taking ownership of your digital footprint—all of the publicly available information about you and your organization online that you have control over, either directly or indirectly. Online review management lessens the prominence of and counterbalances negative and false content. It also ensures an accurate and powerful image of you is presented online (ideally, in the top results of a Google search of your name). Done effectively, online review management is a proactive tool that reinforces your credibility and influence in supporting the issues important to you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Yourself (2015).</td>
<td>“Basically, online review management is the process of controlling what shows up when someone Googles your name. We’ll show you how to promote positive content to the top of your search results and push unwanted content (negative, irrelevant or competition) farther down to ensure that when someone Googles you, their results are populated with positive, relevant content about you.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this table three different definitions of the core concept social media are set up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moran (2011).</td>
<td>“Social media is a collection of online platforms and tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, facilitating conversations and interactions online between groups of people. Social Media is the platform/tools. Social Networking is the act of connecting on social media platforms. Social Media Marketing is how businesses join the conversation in an authentic and transparent way to build relationships.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odden (2011).</td>
<td>“With social media, I think there’s a literal definition concerning the media that people create and share online. But there’s also the notion that social media is about the technology that facilitates individuals and groups of people to connect and interact, create and share. Unlike other software that works fine with a single user, social media applications and websites work better the more people there are using them. Technology that facilitates collective wisdom, engagement, creation and sharing – that’s what I consider “social media”.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulizzi (2011).</td>
<td>“Social media is all about leveraging online tools that promote sharing and conversations, which ultimately lead to engagement with current and future customers and influencers in your target market. The key to social media working, is having a content marketing strategy that involves the distribution of valuable, relevant and compelling content that promotes the behaviour you are looking for that will ultimately drive your business. Most businesses start with the tools. Effective social media starts with a content strategy that helps to position you and your brand as the expert in your niche through provocative, informative and helpful content. Then, once that is accomplished, the social media tools are now available today that make the plan come together.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix V - AAOCC-criteria and the Implementation

Example:

Accuracy and Authority: The author is called Myles Anderson. He is the founder and CEO of BrightLocal.com. A company that provides unique and specialized local SEO tools. On the website different forms of contact with the author have been given, like his social media and email address. The website itself is an international one, because the URL is .com. Because of the author’s position he is very knowledgeable within the industry and for that reason he is publishing this article on this specific website. Another conclusion which can be made is about the fact that the text is written without errors.

Objectivity: The website is a mask for advertising, but only in the field of SEO. The page has been written to inform people about the percentage of consumers that trust reviews. Furthermore it also includes figures, tables and an extensive explanation of each one. The intended audience are the people who are interest in review management and the importance of reviews. For example hotel owners and/or hotel marketers. All the information on the website is accurate, because the website is using different statistical data.

Currency: The production of this article was in July 2014. Because of the different statistical data which has been used this article can be defined as updated. There were no dead links and the information cannot be seen as outdated.

Coverage: All the information which is needed on the website can be retrieved for free and relatively easy. Furthermore the information which is provided is depth information.

Below the AOCC-criteria are attached.

Appendix VI – Hotel e–marketing strategy

Source: Carmelon Digital Marketing (2014).

Explanation:

1. **SEO** is the practice of improving and promoting a website to increase the number of visitors the site receives from search engines according to Fishkin & Staff (2015).

2. **Pay Per Click (PPC)**, this is advertisement in search engines, applications, social media, and websites. A business needs to pay money when an internet user clicks on the advertisement. (Portent, 2014).

3. **Affiliates**: a way of selling your product by signing up other companies who market the product for a commission (Entrepreneur 2015).

4. **Ads**: putting small advertisements on different platforms like social media, websites and search engines according to an article on the website of The Wall Street Journal (Vranica, 2014).

5. **Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)**: optimizing the percentage of internet users to the website who are completion a specific action on that website, for example completing a survey or downloading an app.

All the mentioned steps above are connected with the direct sales and the hotel website. The reason for this is because the hotel aims to sell as much as possible hotel nights via the hotel website itself, because then the turnover will be higher.

The direct sales and the hotel website are also connected to the travellers reviews, because the more reviews a hotel has, the faster (potential) guests will believe the reliability of the hotel. If the hotel connects websites of reviews to its own website, guests will book faster on the hotel website itself.

The next column, which is connected with the travellers’ reviews, indicates the online travel agencies. They are of great importance for the hotels, because the majority of bookings are done via these agencies. However, the hotels need to pay a commission to these websites. For this reason the hotels prefer to gain bookings via their own website. Finally, social media is connected in all the model, as far as this of great importance of spreading the words.
Appendix VII – Findability Hotel Astoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Engine</th>
<th>Search term</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a></td>
<td>Hotel Barcelona</td>
<td>After 80 pages no results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a></td>
<td>Three star hotel Barcelona</td>
<td>1st page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a></td>
<td>Hotel Barcelona Eixample</td>
<td>6th page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Hotel Finder</td>
<td>Hotel Barcelona</td>
<td>After 30% of all the hotels in Barcelona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.booking.com">www.booking.com</a></td>
<td>Hotel Barcelona</td>
<td>17th page, out of 152 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.booking.com">www.booking.com</a></td>
<td>Hotel Barcelona 3 stars</td>
<td>3rd page (at the bottom), out of 9 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix VIII – Model SEO

![SEO Diagram](image)

Source: Chadha (2012).
Appendix IX – Importance of reviews


Appendix X – Circle of trust

Source: Carmelon Digital Marketing (2014).
Appendix XI – Operationalization

First field study:

- Travel research / planning
- SEO

- Starting time
- Starting point
- Used search engines
- Used keywords
- Used criteria
- Review influence
- Review websites
- Kind of reviews
- Reliability reviews
- Writing a review
- Use of social media
- Social media channels
- Importance social media
- Sharing a photo or video
- Booking channel
- Time of booking

- E-marketing
- Decision verification
- Social media
- Booking
Second and third field study:
Appendix XII – Questionnaire (English and Spanish version) and the corresponding explanation

What is YOUR behaviour on the internet when booking a hotel night?

My name is Christophe Liefers and at the moment I am doing research for Hotel Astoria, graduating as a student. I am interested in your booking behaviour on the internet when you booked this hotel. I would appreciate it a lot if you want to fill in this questionnaire, which will only cost 3 minutes of your time. Please tick the pane after every corresponding answer. Once you have finished this questionnaire, you can bring it to the reception and you will receive one card for renting a bicycle for free for one day at Budgetbikes.

General questions
1. What is your gender? Male □ Female □
2. Which of the following age groups do you belong to?
   18–24 □ 25–34 □ 35–44 □ 45–54 □ 55–64 □ 65+ □
3. Where are you from? ……………………………
4. What is the reason of your stay? Business □ Leisure □
5. What is the duration of your stay? 1–2 nights □ 3–4 nights □ 5–6 nights □ 7 or more □
6. Which was your highest education? GSCE¹ □ Bachelor □ Master □ Doctorate □ Other □ …………

Travel research/planning
7. When did you start with your research/planning?
   1 week before □ 2 weeks before □ 3 weeks before □ 4 weeks before □ More □ …………………
8. Where did you start your research/planning for this stay?
   Search engines² □ Online travel agencies □ Hotel websites □ Meta³ □
9. Which search engines did you use to find this hotel? (Tick max. 2)
   Google □ Bing □ Yahoo □ Ask □ Aol □ Other □ …………………
10. Which key words did you use to find Hotel Astoria?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

11. What criteria did you look for? (Tick max. 3)
   Star rating □ Room facility □ Other □ ………………………
   Property type □ District □
   Review score □ Chain □
   Facility □ Price □

Decision verification
12. To what extent did reviews influence the booking?
   1–2–3–4–5 (1 is nothing at all & 5 is a lot)
13. What review websites did you visit?
   Tripadvisor □ Oyster □ Trivago □ Holiday Watchdog □ Virtual Tourist □ Other □ ………………
14. Have you read both positive and negative reviews?
   Only positive reviews □ Only negative reviews □ Both positive and negative reviews □
15. Do you think reviews are reliable in general?
   Very reliable □ Reliable □ Neutral □ Unreliable □ Very unreliable □
16. Do you plan to write a review of this stay?
   Yes □ No □
17. If not, what is the reason of this?

18. Did you consult channels of social media before your booking?
Yes □  No □ (If not, go to question 22)

19. Which channels of social media did you use?
Facebook □  Instagram □  Other □  …………………
Twitter □  YouTube □  …………………
Pinterest □  Tumblr □  …………………
Google plus + □  Vine □  …………………

20. To what extent is social media important for you when booking a hotel night?
Very important □  Important □  Neutral □  Less important □  Not important □

21. Are you also going to share photos and videos of this stay?
Only photos □  Only videos □  Both photos and videos □  None □

**Booking**

22. Via which channel have you booked this stay?
Online travel agency □  Hotel website □  Telephone □  Meta □

23. Finally, how many days/weeks/months did you book this stay in advance?
…………………………………………………………………………………………

Here you will find the definitions of some words:
1. GSCE → General Certificate of Secondary Education
2. Search engines → For example Google, Bing and Yahoo
3. Meta → Websites like TripAdvisor and Trivago

Thank you a lot for filling in this questionnaire. You can bring it to the reception, where you will receive one card for renting a bicycle for free for one day at Budgetbikes.

Kind regards,

Christophe Liefers
¿Cuál es SU conducta en internet a la hora de reservar un hotel?
Mi nombre es Christophe Liefers y estoy haciendo una investigación para el Hotel Astoria, graduándome como estudiante. Estoy interesado en su conducta cuando hizo la reserva del hotel. Agradecería enormemente que por favor rellenara este cuestionario, el cual solo le llevará 3 minutos. Por favor marque la casilla correspondiente en cada pregunta. Una vez finalizado el cuestionario, entréguelo en recepción y recibirá una tarjeta regalo para una bicicleta gratis durante un día por gentileza de Budgetbikes.

**Cuestiones generales**
1. ¿Cuál es su género?  
   Hombre □  Mujer □
2. ¿A qué grupo de edad pertenece?  
   18-24 □  25-34 □  35-44 □  45-54 □  55-64 □  65+ □
3. ¿Cuál es su país de residencia?  
   ………………………………..
4. ¿Cuál es la razón de su viaje?  
   Negocios □  Ocio □
5. ¿Cuál es la duración de su estadía?  
   1-2 noches □  3-4 noches □  5-6 noches □  7 o más □
6. ¿Cuál es su grado académico?  
   Primaria □  Secundaria □  Licenciatura □  Doctorado □  Otros □ …………..

**Busqueda y planificación de su viaje**
7. ¿Con cuánta antelación realizó la búsqueda de su viaje?  
   1 semana antes □  2 semanas antes □  3 semanas antes □  4 semanas antes □  Más □ ………………………………..
8. ¿Dónde realizó la búsqueda de su viaje?  
   Buscadores online □  Agencias de viaje online □  Web del hotel □  Comparadores de viajes □
9. ¿Qué buscadores ha utilizado para encontrar este hotel? (Seleccione max. 2)  
   Google □  Bing □  Yahoo □  Ask □  Aol □  Other □  ………………………………..
10. ¿Qué palabras clave utilizó en el buscador para encontrar este hotel?  
   ………………………………..
11. ¿Qué criterios tuvo en cuenta para seleccionarlo? (Seleccione max. 3)  
   Estrellas □  Servicios de habitación □  Otros □ ………………………………..
   Tipo de establecimiento □  Ubicación □  
   Puntuación □  Cadena □  
   Servicios □  Precio □

**Toma de decisión**
12. ¿Cuál es la importancia que usted le da a las opiniones de otros viajeros?  
   1-2-3-4-5 (siendo 1 muy poca y 5 muy importante)
13. ¿Qué páginas de opiniones visitó?  
   Tripadvisor □  Oyster □  Trivago □  Holiday Watchdog □  Virtual Tourist □  Otros □ ………………………………..
14. ¿Ha leído tanto las opiniones positivas como las negativas?  
   Solo opiniones positivas □  Solo opiniones negativas □  Ambas □
15. ¿Cree que las opiniones en estas páginas son fiables?  
   Muy fiables □  Fiables □  No sé/No contesto □  Poco fiables □  Muy poco fiables □
16. ¿Tiene previsto escribir una opinión sobre su estadía?  
   Si □  No □

CONTINÚA DETRÁS
17. Si no, ¿cuál es la razón?

18. ¿Ha consultado redes sociales antes de hacer esta reserva?
Si □ No □ (Si no, por favor responda a la pregunta 22)

19. ¿Qué redes sociales utilizó?
Facebook □ Instagram □ Otros □ …………………
Twitter □ YouTube □
Pinterest □ Tumblr □
Google plus + □ Vine □

20. ¿Qué grado de importancia le da a las redes sociales al hora de hacer una reserva de hotel?
Muy importante □ Importante □ No sé/No contesto □ Poco importante □ Sin importancia □

21. ¿Tiene pensado compartir fotos o videos de su estancia?
Solo fotos □ Solo videos □ Ambos □ Ninguno □

**Reserva**

22. ¿Por qué canal ha realizado la reserva?
Agencias de viaje online □ Web del hotel □ Teléfono □ Comparadores de viajes □

23. Finalmente, ¿Con cuántos días/semanas/meses de antelación realizó la reserva?

Muchas gracias por haberse tomado unos minutos en llenar este cuestionario. Entréguelo en recepción y recibirá una tarjeta regalo para una bicicleta gratis durante un día por gentileza de Budgetbikes.

Saludos cordiales,

Christophe Liefers

**Explanation questionnaire:**
The questionnaire has been set up by means of the theoretical framework and specifically the operationalization. First of all a short introduction was written to inform the guests of Hotel Astoria about who the questionnaire took, what the questionnaire was about and finally what the guests would receive when they would fill in the questionnaire. The first six questions were general questions in which the guests were asked to introduce themselves. The objective of these questions was to have the ability to make a segmentation once having taken all the questionnaires.

The next subject consisted of questions with regards to the travel research/planning which can be connected to SEO. The outcomes of the first two questions indicated when and where the guests started their travel research. The outcomes of the next questions represented the way in which the guests of Hotel Astoria behaviour on the internet with regards to search engines as well to the criteria they looked for.

The next subject was about the decision verification in which the guests needed to answer questions with regards to reviews and social media. The objective was to see in which way the guests of Hotel Astoria behaviour on the internet regarding reviews as well social media. The most important goal was to obtain knowledge which represented the most considerable
channels, both for reviews and social media. Beside this, it was also important to see if guests attached value to reviews from other guests and if they would write a review of their own stay.

The last subject was about the booking itself which consisted of two questions. The outcomes of these questions represented the where and when of the booking.

**Appendix XIII – Explanation research methods**

Within the field research both qualitative and quantitative field studies have been carried out. First of all the internet behaviour of the current guests of Hotel Astoria is investigated. Secondly the way in which other hotels deal with e-marketing is investigated. The last part consists of a field study which revealed the success factors in the field of e-marketing, especially with regards to SEO, review management and social media.

The field research is all about obtaining information of practical experience within the field of e-marketing and for this reason the field research is defined as descriptive. In a descriptive research the approach is to describe variables and to test the relationship between these variables (Brotherton, 2008, p. 12). It also establishes a factual picture of the issue under investigation. According to the website of San Diego State University (Nebeker, 2015) a descriptive research is about obtaining information without changing the environment.

Descriptive researches can involve one–time interaction with groups of people or a research in which individuals are followed over time. In this field research the focus was on one–time interaction, because Hotel Astoria wanted to know the current facts with regards to e–marketing. In a descriptive research, where the researcher interact with the participant, the focus is on surveys or interviews, which both appeared in this research.

The goals of a descriptive research are defined as follows:
- Providing an accurate profile of a group
- Describing a process
- Give a verbal or numerical picture
- Finding information to stimulate new explanations
- Presenting background information
- Creating a set of categories
- Clarifying set of stages
- Documenting information (Brotherton, 2008, p.13)

Within this field research providing an accurate profile of a group, describing a process and clarifying a set of stages were the main goals.

The first field study is about the behaviour on the internet of the current guests when booking a hotel night and this was both obtained by quantitative and qualitative data. This research has been conducted by means of a survey, in which the guests received a questionnaire. The reason for having chosen a survey and specifically a questionnaire is because of time and the achievement of a high number of respondents. By means of a questionnaire a high number of respondents relatively respond in a short time (Brotherton, 2008, p. 132).

The second field study is about the way in which other well–known hotels have implemented their e–marketing strategy and this has been done by means of a qualitative research. This
research has been conducted by means of a case study. The reason for having chosen a case study is because in-depth interviews could have been conducted. As far as Hotel Astoria worked not properly in the field of e-marketing it was important to obtain information from best practice hotels with regards to e-marketing.

The third field study is about the success factors in the field of e-marketing according to an expert and this has been conducted by means of a qualitative research. This research has been conducted by means of a case study. An in-depth interview has been carried out to obtain the latest information regarding e-marketing, but also to see in which way this professional thought about e-marketing. The interview consisted three different elements, respectively SEO, review management and social media.

The data collection in the first field study has been obtained by questionnaires. The sample was self-selected. When the guests did the check-in they were informed about the questionnaire by the receptionist. He or she explained the guests that a research was going on and that a questionnaire was set up. Once the guests completed the questionnaire they could bring it to the reception and the guest received a card for renting a bicycle for free for one day at Budgetbikes. The reason for this was to attract the guests to fill in the questionnaire and like this the respond would be higher.

The questionnaire consisted both closed and open questions and is defined as semi structured, in which both quantitative and qualitative data have been obtained. The reason for this was that the objective of this field study not only sought for a factual nature, but also sought for information to underlying reasons (Brotherton, 2008, p. 135). An example of this is defined as follows:

Closed question → Which of the following social media platforms do you use before booking a hotel night?
Open question → Please state the information you are looking for on these social media platforms.

It was important to not over-use this tactic in the questionnaire, because this would take too much time for the respondent to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore the respondent would need to think more about the answer which would make it more difficult. Therefore it was important to only use this tactic for questions where it is really necessary.

The questionnaire were not interactive and therefore it was important to write a short introduction which explained the how and why of the questionnaire. Furthermore the questionnaire could not be too extensive, because both business and leisure guests would respond. When having set up the questionnaire the focus was on the respondents, which means the questionnaire was made in such a way, that it was easy for them to cooperate in completing the questionnaire. To get the respondents on side the questionnaire needed to be:

- easy to understand
- attractive to generate sufficient interest to keep responding
- easy to complete
- structured using appropriate sections

The questions in the questionnaire are defined as behavioural, as information has been collected which described the behaviour of the respondents.
The data collection in the second and third field study has been obtained by means of in–dept interviews. This is a research method in which a conversation with the respondent took place. In these interviews ideas and views about different subjects were ascertained which contributed to go more into detail about a specific subject, respectively SEO, review management and social media.

In all the interviews it was important to have an informal setting. The interview would be more flexible, open–ended, discursive and the interview would be more like a non-directive, two–way conversation (Brotherton, 2008, p. 140). The interviews took place in a face to face setting because of social cues, interaction and communication.

For the second field study, which was about the way in which Hotel Astoria is able to distinguish herself from the competitors with regards to SEO, review management and social media, three interviews took place. The beginning of each interview started the same, as far as the same questions were asked for the three hotels. During the interview the respondent did have the possibility to go into more detail about a specific aspect, which he or she thought was really important. It was then important to interrogate on this specific aspect which can be seen as an advantage of in–dept interviews.

The third field study was about success factors in the field of e–marketing according to an expert. During the interview it was important to interrogate, to obtain as much as possible relevant information. This can be seen as an advantage of an in–depth interview.

The research population for the first field study are defined as the current guests of Hotel Astoria. The sampling design for this field study is defined as probability–based and specifically simple random. In fact this means that every hotel guest had the same probability to be chosen and to fill in the questionnaire (Brotherton, 2008, p. 169). To have a representative field study it was significant to collect questionnaires from guests with different ages, but also with different motivations, like leisure or business. To ensure this, the questionnaire took place on the one hand during the week, where more business guests visited the hotel. And on the other hand the questionnaire took place during the weekend, where more leisure guests visited the hotel. In total the questionnaire took place during two weeks which have led to a more representative research.

Within the second and third field studies interviews have been carried out. These sampling designs were known as non–probability–based ones. The sampling method for the different interviews is defined as purposive sampling (Brotherton, 2008, p. 172).

For the second field study three hotels have been chosen which represented best practice hotels with regards to e–marketing. These hotels possessed the most relevant characteristics in the field of e–marketing and for this reason they have been chosen. The third field study was about the most successful factors regarding e–marketing in which an expert has been interviewed. The expert is seen as key informant and for this reason he has been chosen (Brotherton, 2008, p. 172).

The outcomes of the first field study are imported in the SPSS program (SSCC, 2015) and afterwards they were analysed. By means of these analyses relationships could be made which
led to conclusions. This is the reason for having chosen the SPSS program as a method of data analysis for the first field study.

The outcomes of the second and third field studies were analysed by means of coding. First of all the in–depth interviews were remodelled into a transcript, which made a clear overview of the asked questions and corresponding answers. Once having conducted the transcript the keywords could be separated, which was done by means of coding.

Appendix XIV – Explanation for having chosen the respondents for the interviews

Second field study:
The Radisson Blu Hotel, Hotel De L´Europe and the WestCord Fashion Hotel have been chosen for the second field study, because these hotels are best practice hotels with regards to e–marketing. All three hotels end high in search engines as well on different Meta platforms, which was discovered by means of a quick research which was carried out. Furthermore the hotels have a high position on review websites like Tripadvisor, which is probably caused by the high number of reviews and the response to each review. Beside this, the hotels probably do have incentives to encourage their guests to write a review for them. If it is about social media the hotels are all active on different channels and they post at least every two days. Furthermore a transparent and interactive environment is seen on all channels of social media. Because of aforementioned aspects the hotels were selected to do an interview with. The next step was to find the right employee who works in the field of e–marketing for the hotel. Therefore, emails were sent to the department of marketing. All hotels responded and wanted to do an interview in a face–to–face setting.

Third field study:
For the third field study one professional with regards to e–marketing needed to be found. For this field study it was of great importance to find someone who works in the field of e–marketing and then especially with the three main forms, SEO, review management and social media. Another condition was to find someone who knows something about the hotel industry as well. Finally, because this thesis is written for Hotel Astoria, which is located in Barcelona, it was important to find someone who works and lives in Barcelona and knows the city. Because of several networks in the city Mr. Pablo de Chica came in mind. He has a lot of experience in the field of e–marketing, works and lives already a long time in Barcelona and he has some knowledge of the hotel industry. For this reason an email was sent to him and he responded that he wanted to do the interview. Because of the distance the interview was carried out by means of a Skype.
Appendix XV – Interview guides

Second field study

1. Radisson Blu Hotel, Amsterdam
Interviewee: Mrs. Amanda Ravensbergen
Position: Sales Executive
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 27–07–2015, Amsterdam, Radisson Blu Hotel

2. Hotel De L´Europe, Amsterdam
Interviewee: Mr. Mark Weijman
Position: Online marketing & e-commerce manager
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 29–07–2015, Amsterdam, Hotel De L´Europe

3. WestCord Fashion Hotel, Amsterdam
Interviewee: Mr. Pieter Lewis
Position: E-commerce manager
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 17–08–2015, Amsterdam, WestCord Fashion Hotel

Introduction

- Personal details of me (Christophe Liefers, 21 years old, student tourism management, final project about e-marketing)
- Reason of this interview (to obtain knowledge in the field of e-marketing strategies by means of practical experience)
- Objective of this interview (to understand the way in which hotels have implemented their e-marketing policy)
- Context of the interview (recorded, 30-minute interview, focus is on e-marketing)

Personal details interviewee

- Could you please introduce yourself?
- Could you say something about your career so far?
- *What is your position in this hotel?

E-marketing

- What does e-marketing mean to you?
- What forms of e-marketing does the hotel use?
- Could you tell me the objective of each form?
- What information is provided by each form?
• Does the hotel use specific forms for specific target groups?

**SEO**

• What does SEO mean to you?
• Which search engines are important for the hotel?
• What is the key to success to end high in rankings?

**Review management**

• What does review management mean to you?
• What review webpages are important for the hotel?
• In which way is the hotel encouraging guests to post a review?
• In which way does the hotel deal with negative reviews?
• In which way are reviews shared on the internet?

**Social media**

• What does social media mean to you?
• Which channels of social media does the hotel use?
• Could you tell me the objective for each of these channels?
• What information does each channel provide?
• Does the hotel only post about the hotel itself or also about Amsterdam?
• How often does the hotel post something?
• Does the hotel use social media for sharing reviews?
• Does the hotel post online promotions via social media channels?

**Conclusion**

• Summarize
• Do you have anything to add?
• Do you have any questions about the research?
• Thank the interviewee
Third field study

1. Mr. Pablo de Chica

Interviewee: Mr. Pablo de Chica
Position: Marketing and communications coordinator Europe, Ateknea Solutions
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 19–08–2015, Wapenveld, By Skype

Introduction

- Personal details of me (Christophe Liefers, 21 years old, student tourism management, final project about e-marketing)
- Reason of this interview (to obtain knowledge in the field of e-marketing strategies by means of practical experience)
- Objective of this interview (to understand the way in which a professional thinks about e-marketing and then especially with regards to SEO, review management and social media.
- Context of the interview (recorded, 30-minute interview, focus is on e-marketing)

Personal details interviewee

- Could you please introduce yourself?
- Could you tell me something about your career so far?

E-marketing

- Could you give a definition of e-marketing?
- What forms of e-marketing are the most important for businesses at present?
- Regarding the hotel industry, which forms of e-marketing do you recommend?
- What are the advantages of using e-marketing?
- Does e-marketing also have any disadvantages?

SEO

- Could you give a definition of SEO?
- Which search engines are the most important for the hotel industry?
- What should a hotel do in order to end high in search engines?
- Is it always necessary to pay to end high in search engines? If not, what alternatives are there?

Review management

- In which way would you describe review management?
- What should businesses do to encourage their guests to post reviews?
- What should hotels do in order to deal with negative reviews?

**Social media**

- Could you give a definition of social media?
- Which channels of social media are important to promote your business online?
- Which channels of social media are important in the hotel industry?
- What kind of information needs to be provided by social media?
- Do you think it is important hotels also post about the city or only about the hotel itself?

**Conclusion**

- Summarize
- Do you have anything to add?
- Do you have any questions about the research?
- Thank the interviewee

*Explanation interview guide:*

The interview guide has been set up by means of the theoretical framework and specifically the operationalization. First of all a small introduction was given at the start of each interview, in which the interviewee was informed about the interviewer, the reason, the objective and the content of the interview. The reason for this was to make everything clear for the interviewee.

The next step within the interview was to ask the interviewee to introduce him/her. Furthermore he/she was asked to tell something about his/her background, as well to tell something about his/her current position. The main reason of this was to know the interviewee better.

In the next subjects the first question was all the time the same, namely giving a definition of the corresponding forms. The objective was to understand the way in which the hotels and the professional thought about the three main forms and what each form meant to them.

The first subject was about e–marketing in which six different questions were asked. The outcomes of these questions represented the way in which the three hotels and the professional think, act and behaviour in the field of e–marketing. It was important to discover what forms are used the most by these hotels and therefore a tactic which was used is to interrogate.

SEO was the next subject within the interview. The goal was to obtain knowledge about the way to success to end high in the rankings on search engines.

The next subject was about review management in which the goal was to discover the most important review websites. Moreover it was important to discover the way in which the hotels deal with reviews with regards to the encouragement and the dealing with negative reviews.
The last subject was about social media, the last form which was discussed during the interviews. The objective of social media was to obtain knowledge about the most important social media channels which are used by the hotels. Furthermore an important aspect was to discover what information is provided by means of social media.

Within the conclusion all the three subjects were discussed once more, just to ensure all the information was given. Furthermore the interviewee was able to ask questions and a word of thanks was given.
**Transcript 1:**

**Interviewee:** Mrs. Amanda Ravensbergen  
**Job interviewee:** Sales Executive  
**Interviewer:** Christophe Liefers  
**Date and place:** 27–07–2015, Amsterdam, Radisson Blu Hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Could you please introduce yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>I am Amanda Ravensbergen. I work since two years at the Radisson Blu hotel in Amsterdam on the sales department. In general my duties are social media and e-commerce in the corresponding department. A few weeks ago I had trainings in this field. My function is called sales executive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>And what did you do before this job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>I am graduated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>And what did you study? In which field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>I studied hotel– and event management at the TIO in Amsterdam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, so the same direction as me. Now we will continue to the first subject, which is about e–marketing. Could you please give a definition of e–marketing? What does e–marketing means for the hotel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>E–marketing means all social media channels, all review websites and all booking channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, and for example websites as Google?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, Google and SEO is also e–marketing for us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Which forms of e–marketing does the hotel use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>What do you mean exactly with forms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>For example social media or review management, so the different review websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, we answer all the reviews on review websites. So we use review websites, social media channels and booking channels, like for example Booking.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok. What about the objectives for each of the e–marketing forms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>The objective of e–marketing is to create brand awareness, to encourage guests to come back, but also to attract new guests, which could be described as loyalty. Another objective is to encourage guests to book a hotel night on the hotel website itself, instead of Booking.com by means of brand awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and why does the hotel prefer this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Because we need to pay commission to websites like Booking.com. Finally, we have more turnover if guests book via de hotel website itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and does this have effect via e–marketing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, e–marketing has effect because guests get acquainted with the chain Radisson Blu in general. So as well for other Radisson Blu hotels. Beside this, guests will end up directly on the hotel website itself, instead of websites like Booking.com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and the hotel also have an own Facebook, not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>Yes, we have one Facebook account of Radisson Blu in general and we have one Facebook account for the Radisson Blu hotel in Amsterdam in particular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>Ok and does the chain Radisson Blu also gives orders to the hotel in Amsterdam, with regards to e-marketing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>Yes, there are several campaigns, who are entrusted by the chain itself. Sometimes the hotel can decide by itself, but sometimes the hotel need to join in with this campaign. We also have our own publications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>Do you need to ask for permission when you want to publish something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>No, we are able to decide this by ourselves. Well, if there is a really strange publication the chain can advance the hotel. In fact the hotel has the freedom to choose its own direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>Ok. About the objectives. For example about review management. What is the objective of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>The objective of answering the reviews is to show the guests that the hotel cares about them. And also to show them that we really read the reviews, as well the positive as negative ones. Our goal is to answer personally to the guests and to show them that we really care about them. So, we never answer reviews with a general copied text, but always make them personalised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>Ok perfect, that is nice. The next question is a bit about the question before. Which information is provided by for example social media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>On every channel general information is provided. General information which is also visible on the hotel website itself. For example photos. If it is about social media, we also post about the city itself. So we want to connect the city Amsterdam itself with the hotel. For this we use for example events which are taking place in the city and conferences, but also activities which will take place. The tourist board of IAmsterdam is posting a lot of different things, so this we use as well to post. We want to inform the guests about all the activities in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>Ok, thank you. The next question is: does the hotel also use specific forms for specific target groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>Basically, every target group is able to visit each of the channels. We don´t separate different target groups in this. For example what we do separate is LinkedIn. On this channel we post vacancies or things with regards to events and companies, which means this is more a channel for business guests. On the other social media channels like Facebook or Twitter we are posting information for leisure guests. So in this case we only separate LinkedIn from all the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>So, LinkedIn is more a channels for the professionals and business guests. And the other channels are more for general and leisure guests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>The next subject is about SEO. Are you acquainted with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christophe</strong></td>
<td>What does SEO means to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amanda</strong></td>
<td>SEO is very important to end high in rankings of search engines, like for example Google. We have special software to indicate which keywords are used the most. This is partly done by the chain itself. We need to look closely for what guests are searching for in search engines like Google and...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for which keywords we get the most credits. This is important to end higher than the competitors.

Christophe
Ok. In which way is the hotel doing so? Because for example guests are searching with different keywords? But these words also need to be visible on the hotel website, not?

Amanda
Yes, the keywords need to be visible on the website itself. And the really technical story behind it I cannot explain you, sorry. Because this is the chain doing by itself. But we as a hotel can give a sign to the chain, to explain them which keywords are the most important. If these keywords are not visible yet on the hotel website, we will introduce them to the website. Like this the hotel gets higher and higher in the rankings.

Christophe
Ok. Of course you have a lot of different search engines, like Google, Bing and Yahoo. Which ones are defined as most important for the hotel?

Amanda
Google

Christophe
And beside Google?

Amanda
Only Google is seen as the most important one for Radisson Blu Amsterdam.

Christophe
What is basically the key to success to end high in the rankings?

Amanda
To end as high as possible? Well that guests are entering directly the hotel website itself. As well, that the guests are not finding for example a hotel like Marriott before.

Christophe
And for example SEO. What I have studied before, if a hotel wants to end high they always need to pay the search engine, not?

Amanda
Yes.

Christophe
The next subject is about review management. What does review management means to the hotel?

Amanda
We are talking about the review websites, right? For this hotel it is very important, because this is a source in which you receive information and feedback from the guests. Sometimes people misbehave on these websites, but mostly the guests have written fair reviews. This is also the reason we answer on every review. Negative or positive, all reviews are answered by the hotel, in the language which the review is written. Like for example if the review is written in Russian, we will react in Russian as well. To show the guests that we care about them and want to treat them as personal as possible.

Christophe
Is there a special department who carry out this task?

Amanda
Well, for example I am doing this and actually all the department of sales. Every day we check the reviews and answer them as soon as possible. If we see reviews which are for example telling us that there is not enough space in the lobby we can probably assume that this is true.

Christophe
Ok. Which review websites are the most important?

Amanda
Booking.com, Tripadvisor and Expedia.

Christophe
This are the three most important ones?

Amanda
Yes this are the three most important ones we answer. We also get reviews on Facebook and we also answer these ones. But the reviews are not that much as on the other three websites.

Christophe
Reviews are also posted and shared on Facebook or by other channels?

Amanda
No these reviews just stay on the websites itself. But on Facebook guests are able to rank the hotel as well by means of stars and they also have the
Christophe  |
---|
In which way encourages the hotel the guests to write a review? Do you have a special tactic?

Amanda  |
---|
No, the chain by itself sends questionnaires to the guests by email, to see in which way the guests have experienced their stay.

Christophe  |
---|
Are there a lot of respondents for these questionnaires?

Amanda  |
---|
Yes there are relatively a lot of respondents. We need to check the score and we need to receive a minimum of respondents. But I need to admit that we do not have a special tactic to encourage guests to write a review for us.

Christophe  |
---|
So for example you do not have a paper in the hotel rooms which tells the guests to post a review? So I can assume the guests from here are writing their reviews just because they want to?

Amanda  |
---|
Yes! There are luckily enough guests who post reviews.

Christophe  |
---|
Ok. In which way deals the hotel with negative reviews?

Amanda  |
---|
It depends how negative they are. If the review has some negative points we answer this reviews by means of telling them that we are sorry and we tell them that we will try to solve the problem. If the review is really negative we advise the guest to send the review as well by email to guest relations. Then we discuss about the way in which we are able to solve the problem. The most important part is to not discuss this on the review website itself. Because we cannot inform the guest there that they probably will get a discount or voucher. If they send an email it will be more personal and like this we can come to a solution.

Christophe  |
---|
Does this happen often?

Amanda  |
---|
Well, this does not happen often. Sometimes it happens and then we try to satisfy the guest. In fact we hope that the guests with a negative experience will tell the receptionist by the checkout that they have a bad experience. Because it is always difficult to interact via email, because you do not know when the guest visited the hotel.

Christophe  |
---|
Ok, thank you. In which way are reviews shared?

Amanda  |
---|
Our reviews are not shared on the internet. Sometimes we have a review about the restaurant. Such a review we post onIns, to inform people about the restaurant. But the general reviews about the hotel, as far as we receive a lot of positive ones (not to be arrogant), we don’t share that much. In my opinion if you share only positive reviews on a channel like Facebook, guests will think that the hotel is only posting positive ones and guests will think, where are the negative reviews?

Christophe  |
---|
I think it is really good the restaurant has its own Facebook. Do you also attract people from outside the hotel to have dinner in the restaurant?

Amanda  |
---|
Well, yes we try. The restaurant has its own entrance and because of this the threshold to enter the restaurant is lower. The hotel is situated in the middle of the centre, but this street is not a street you will enter directly, because it does not has that many shops. So, yes we try to attract many locals, by means of publishing promotions on that specific Facebook page.

Christophe  |
---|
Let us continue to the next subject, social media. One of the most important aspects of e–marketing. What means social media for the hotel?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>Social media are supported factors to create brand awareness, loyalty and to attract guests. Finally it stimulates the direct booking on the hotel website itself. For us this is really important, because this creates a higher revenue.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>The website is most of the time visible for the guests in every post?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, from the chain we have some guidelines. We try not to publish that many promotions, because we see does not work. Guests do not watch this, which means we get less views, likes and comments on these publications. If we publish for example things about the city, things about the employees, which means things which are more personalised, guests are attracted more easily. These publications will get more views, likes and comments. Like this the hotel makes a connection with a real story. Guests already see a lot of promotions online and they do not like to see more of them. That is the reason why we focus on a more personalised content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>That seems great. Could you tell me which channels are used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Facebook, which is one of the most important. Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google +, Youtube and LinkedIn are also used by the hotel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>So almost all channels are used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes almost all channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>The next question is about the objective for each of the channels of social media. Could you tell me a bit more about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>They all have the same objective, what I already told before. Only LinkedIn is different, because this channel attracts more business guests and people who are interested in events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok. What information is provided by each of the channels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Well in general all channels provide the same information. For example who we are, what we do and general photos. On Facebook, Twitter and Instagram we post also information about the city, the activities and events that happen in the city. LinkedIn provides information which is about conferences and events, mostly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, and YouTube?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, we have one cooperate video which promote the hotel. This is actually the only video on YouTube.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok thank you. Do you only promote the hotel or also the city by means of social media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, we also promote Amsterdam as a city. We try to involve Amsterdam as much as possible, because Amsterdam attracts the guests and we are in the city centre. So we try to combine hotel information together with information about the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Does the hotel have connections with a tourism board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, we have a connection with IAmsterdam, because this is the general tourism board. They have some interesting posts and we publish them as well on the different channels of social media. This information is always correct and that is the reason why we like to use this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>How often does the hotel post something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>On Facebook, Twitter and Instagram we try to post something every two days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Well, this is quite often, not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Yes, that is true. We need to post that much, because like this we will stay visible. But I need to say, we do not post because we just need to post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
something, but always with real and useful information. If the hotel would post every day something it would not be interesting anymore for the guests and they would start to unfollow the hotel. For the hotel it is of great importance to be creative and to post interesting things on the different channels, otherwise you would better not post. So in principle every two days, or sometimes three days. Because sometimes we just cannot post something, because there is nothing interesting.

| Christophe | And the guests, do they start to follow the hotel beforehand, during or after their stay? |
| Amanda    | Well, this I cannot tell you. Sometimes we see a check in on for example Facebook when they enter the WIFI. |
| Christophe | One of the last questions, is the hotel also using social media to share reviews? |
| Amanda    | No, only sometimes. But it does not happen that often. Online promotions are not published that much, because they are not that attractive. Of course when we post a nice story, we link to the hotel website. Everyone has the possibility to continue to the website. So, it is never endless. I can tell you that it is like a circle, in which the guests have the possibility to continue. For example when there is a nice blog, we post it on our Facebook and at the bottom we put the link to this specific blog. |
| Christophe | If the guest is on the website, do they see directly the links to the social media channels? |
| Amanda    | Yes they see the links to these channels directly. I do not know exactly where, but they are there. |
| Christophe | Well, we have almost finished the interview. To make a conclusion:  
  - social media is really important for the hotel, in particular Facebook  
  - guests like personal posts, so not about promotions  
  - interaction with your guests by means of answering every review in the specific language is of great importance  
  - SEO is about Google in particular and to understand the way in which guests search for the hotel by means of keywords |
| Amanda    | Yes, that is true. |
| Christophe | Do you have something to add? Something which I forgot or is really important? |
| Amanda    | No, I think everything we discussed is e-marketing. |
| Christophe | Do you have any questions about my research? |
| Amanda    | What are you going to do with this information? |
| Christophe | I will interview three hotels which will lead to a conclusion about the best e-marketing policy for hotels. Then finally I will write and advice. |
| Amanda    | What is the main question? |
| Christophe | What is the best e-marketing policy for a hotel. I also have written a theoretical framework and I did some desk research. After these interviews I hope to come to a conclusion and finally to a useful advice. |
| Amanda    | Ok, nice. |
| Christophe | I would like to thank you a lot. |
| Amanda    | Yes, a lot of good luck with your research. |
Transcript 2:

Interviewee: Mr. Mark Weijman
Job interviewee: Online marketing & e-commerce manager
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 29-07-2015, Amsterdam, Hotel De L’Europe

Person | Text
---|---
Christophe | Thank you for coming. Could you please introduce yourself?
Mark | I am Mark Weijman, online marketing and e-commerce manager of the hotel. This position is just created as a new position in the hotel, because its importance is increasing. It is a competitive competition amongst the hotels on the internet. I already did work in this field, like Google add words, Expedia campaigns and SEO.
Christophe | Ok. And before you studied? Hotel management? And beside this?
Mark | First I studied Hotel Management at the Vakschool in Wageningen. For this study I went for an internship to Austria where I worked for Starwood Hotels. After I went to a star restaurant in Bennekom where I was the assistant of the manager. Then I went to Leeuwarden, to study Hotel Management at Stenden University. For this study I went for an internship to South-Africa. After when I came back, I could start with an internship in Hotel De L´Europe. I worked in the department of marketing and especially in internal branding. After my internship I could stay as a coordinator, for social media, press and everything related to branding. Finally, I am now focussing on online marketing. We work with two employees in this department.
Christophe | Ok, that sounds great. Let us continue with the first subject. E-marketing, what does this mean to the hotel?
Mark | We separate online marketing and e-commerce, which could be defined as e-marketing. Online marketing is everything regards the visibility of the hotel on the internet and the way in which the hotel can influence its presence on the internet. This all without payments. For example to change the content of the website and to adapt the social media channels to the preferences of the guests. Of course online marketing has its advantages and by using online marketing the hotel attracts clients. However, it is not possible to measure online marketing directly. This would be the perfect situation, but unfortunately as a lot of hotels, it is impossible to measure the effects of online marketing. For example you cannot ask every guest how they found the hotel. With e-commerce this is possible. You can divide e-commerce into SEO and SEA. The organic search is called online marketing and the SEA are the advertisements. We are for example operating on Expedia. When we have a lot of advertisements on this channel, the probability to end higher is more ensured. Expedia is a channel which is used mostly by Americans and the majority of our guests comes from the United States and for this reason we are a very international hotel. Our guests also come from Russia and the South-East. We use Expedia also to put Google add words and as far as the majority of the population uses Google this is of great importance. We see the add words of Google work really effective, but of course the competition does also. For this reason the hotel needs to find the right key words. Bing is also becoming more...
Important, just like Yahoo. To attract people from Russia, we also focus on Yandex, which is a search engine from Russia. Yandex can be seen as the Google for Europeans. China also has its own search engine, but as far as China is not our potential market, we do not focus on this search engine. Within the field of e-marketing, we have different strategies and budgets. Especially with e-commerce the hotel is able to see what each spent ‘euro’ has delivered. So for example, how many rooms are booked, how many nights are booked and furthermore also how many guests have booked. Finally, you can see the turnover of every spent ‘euro’, which is called the ratio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christophe</th>
<th>Ok. As you mentioned before about the forms of e-marketing. Which other forms of e-marketing does the hotel use?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>We use review management, which is operated by guest relations. Our department only works with Tripadvisor. Guest relations uses a special program in which online reports could be send to our guests. Tripadvisor is for each hotel of great importance. We check daily our position on Tripadvisor and we answer on every review personally. If the review is four or five stars the guest relations manager answers. If the review is three stars the director of sales answers. And if the review is really negative and only one star, the general manager answers. This is really appreciated by our guests and this makes it more personal. Moreover, it fortify the online position of the hotel. We also use different channels of social media, which is mostly used for the food &amp; beverage part. For example we post about a new high tea or a new menu. At the moment we also promote Van Gogh and we introduced a special cocktail related to Van Gogh. Moreover, we promote all our different activities and facilities also on the different channels of social media. Every time the hotel posts something a connection with the website is made and the interaction with the guests is faster then.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok thank you. And which information is provided by means of these e-marketing forms?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Yes. If we look to the paid advertisements, we want to obtain brand recognition. The goal is to promote the hotel worldwide and to inform guests about our hotel. This means that people need to get involved with De L’Europe and know what the hotel is about. Furthermore they need to get informed about the quality of meals and rooms within the hotel. It is of great importance the hotel is well-known worldwide. On an international level this is already a fact, but locally people are not that familiar with hotel De L’Europe. The focus for paid advertisements is brand recognition and the focus for non-paid advertisements is on promotions and newsletters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok. As I understand, hotel De L’Europe is international already well-known, but locally the hotel needs to promote itself better and get more brand recognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Yes, that is completely true.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, thank you. And does the hotel have specific objectives for specific target groups? For example for the business market LinkedIn?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Yes, you can connect LinkedIn with the business market. With regards to social media, the hotel is active on 17 different channels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>17 channels, that is a lot, right?</td>
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</table>
| Mark       | Yes, we need to keep up all the time with these channels. Of course we are not active every day on each of the channels. We have a special calendar to
know what we need to do day by day. For each channel/content we have a related strategy. LinkedIn is mostly connected with HR, so if the hotel has a new vacancy we post this on LinkedIn. Furthermore we have a business lunch, which we promote on LinkedIn, because we want to attract the business market. We always adapt the content to the specific guest who visit the restaurant, bar or spa. In Freddy’s bar a different target group comes than for example to the restaurant. For this reason we always adapt the content to the location within the hotel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christophe</th>
<th>Ok thank you. The next subject is about SEO. What does this mean to the hotel?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Well, this is really important for the hotel, because it is constantly keeping on and your organic position on Google is extremely important. A good example of this is about our website. We would like to change the website into <a href="http://www.deleurope.com">www.deleurope.com</a>, instead of <a href="http://www.deleurope.nl">www.deleurope.nl</a>. This seems really easy, on the contrary this is quite hard to do so, due to a lot of rules and regulations. The objective of changing the website is because of a more international character. The competition in Amsterdam does already have .com and furthermore we will be more findable with .com. SEO works like this; if you start with a new domain name you are seen as the beginner and you start from zero. Then it is quite difficult to work yourself to the top. SEO is connected to some important things, like the design, the attainability, the content (the text on the website) and the multimedia. Based on this Google measures the SEO value of the website. I daily work on this field, to optimize as much as possible. For example this week is the gay pride of Amsterdam. So what we do is to play along with these kind of events. With the gay pride, we aim to be a hotel as gay friendly as possible for example. On our website we publish different things regards the Amsterdam gay pride and like this we will probably end higher in the ranking of a search engine like Google.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>So, what I understand, it is important to publish key words on the hotel website itself, to be more findable on Google?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Yes this is true. Unfortunately, we are not the strongest hotel in Amsterdam if it is about SEO. This is because we do not have a cooperate office behind us. You have different hotels who do have a cooperate office behind them and these hotels receive support from those offices. We are connected with Leading Hotels of the World, which are the 430 most leading hotels of the world. If it is up to SEO we are quite on the same level as them, but we still have a lot of competition here in Amsterdam. Because of its great importance, half a year ago the hotel preferences itself to focus more on SEO. We also discovered the paid advertisements were successful and people were interested in our product and they want to pay for it. Of course it is also important to attract people without payments. So SEO is of great importance. We do not end always in the top of the rankings, because Google searches what you look for. We try to match this as much as possible with the content we offer. So for example if a guest searches for a luxury hotel in Amsterdam on Google, I need to adapt the hotel website to these key words. Otherwise the guest in case would never find the hotel on Google. Of course other hotels in Amsterdam also put a lot of effort in SEO and sometimes Google give these hotels priority to end higher in the rankings.</td>
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</table>
Christophe: Ok. And which search engines are the most important for the hotel? As you mentioned before, Google for sure.

Mark: Yes, Google for the local market. Yahoo and Bing for the United States and Yandex for Russia. This are the main search engines which are important for us.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. As you mentioned before, the key to success is to put effort on all different aspects of SEO and like this you will probably end high in the rankings. The next subject is about review management. What does this mean to the hotel?

Mark: Review management means a lot to the hotel. If you look for example to TripAdvisor, we are ranked on place number 15. For us, this is not that special, because before we have been ranked higher. TripAdvisor has different measurements to end high on a specific position. The Toren has the number one position in Amsterdam and this is a four-star hotel. Amsterdam consists of 15 five-star hotels and The Toren is beating all the competition, even it is a four-star hotel. TripAdvisor has a special function for the management of hotels. The hotel is able to receive every month a business listing in which all the information is provided regarding to reviews on TripAdvisor. For example how many people have called, how many people clicked through and finally how many people have booked. You can connect the position of the hotel on TripAdvisor together with the amount of booked hotel nights. The hotel is also able to publish advertisements on TripAdvisor, which is called Tripconnect. However, the hotel need to pay for every single click on the advertisements. Of course this could be positive, but TripAdvisor is visited 280 million times each month and if the hotel is visited a lot of times and they did not put a limit, it costs the hotel around 50,000 up to 60,000 euros. So far, we did not publish an advertisement on TripAdvisor, just because via other channels it works as well.

Christophe: Ok. As you mentioned before, the most important review website is TripAdvisor. Does the hotel have more important reviews websites?

Mark: TripAdvisor is the most important review website for our hotel. Of course there are other review websites, but they are less important. Regarding the F&B we have different review websites, in which the restaurants are being judged. Another form of reviews is done via Leading. Guests are able to leave a comment and these comments and statistics are also sent to De L´Europe, to see what the feedback is about. Moreover we have our own online questionnaire, which is sent afterwards to the guests. We ask the guests to fill in several questions and if the questionnaire is really positive we also ask our guests to post the review on TripAdvisor.

Christophe: And does the hotel receive a lot of response?

Mark: Yes, we get a high number of response. I do not know the exact number of response, but I can guarantee that it is good enough for the hotel.

Christophe: Ok, perfect. Could you please tell me as well in what way the hotel encourages its guests to fill in a questionnaire?

Mark: Yes, when the guest leave the hotel he/she directly receives an email with the questionnaire and they are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. We also have a voucher in the hotel room which asks the guest to leave an internal review. In this review the guest needs to judge one of the employees and give them a mark, which can be seen as an internal review.
Christophe: I think this is also encouraging the guest to leave a review on a website like Tripadvisor, right?

Mark: Yes, these reviews are handed in at the reception and the reception gives it to guest relations. By doing so, guest relations knows exactly when and who has written the review and like this they can process this into their answers on a review on for example Tripadvisor.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. Could you also tell me in which way the hotel deals with negative reviews?

Mark: Well, the negative reviews are of great importance for the hotel. On websites like Tripadvisor they are counted as 1 out of 11, whereas positive reviews are counted as 1 out of 4. If you have for example 100 good reviews and only two negatives ones, you will probably be ranked really low. The higher the degree of a negative review, the higher the position will be of the employee who responds. We noticed this works well, because guests feel treated personally and seriously. If a guest judge us with only one star the experience with the hotel needs to be really negative and something really bad has probably happened. If so, the general director will answer the review with for example a free stay. Something really difficult is about the fact that no hotel is able to delete reviews from websites like Tripadvisor.

Christophe: Yes that is something which no hotel has the control over, unfortunately. Do you also write answers in the language the review is written in?

Mark: Yes, we have receptionist who are able to speak six different languages and furthermore we have one person who speaks Russian. So, yes all answers are in the corresponding language.

Christophe: Yes, I think this is really important, as far as the hotel is able to give the guest a really personal feeling by doing so.

Mark: Yes, that is true.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. The reviews, are they also shared on the internet?

Mark: No, we do not do this. Of course this is possible, to post for example a banner on the hotel website of Tripadvisor. The main reason we do not work with this is because of negative reviews and we are not able to respond directly. As far as everything is visible on the internet we think it is not good to connect all your reviews with the hotel’s website.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. The next subject is about social media. What does social media means for the hotel?

Mark: Well, when I started to work here the hotel was quite placid with regards to social media, which was 1.5 – 2 years ago. Social media is really important for the hotel, even so I have my preferences. The hotel is really expressive and it is connected to the Rijksmuseum. Instagram works pretty well for the hotel, because via this channel guests are able to see images and this is seen as attractive nowadays. We also use Facebook and we try to post every two days, as far as we do not want to inform our guests every day about the hotel. We use Facebook to inform our guests about the city, new restaurants, nice activities and also campaigns. We only do not post like and win campaigns, because they are forbidden by Facebook. We post about every single department (restaurant, bar and spa) in the hotel and they all have their own channel. Furthermore we have a general LinkedIn account and we do have a Pinterest account, which is not really my thing. We have a special calendar to work on all these channels.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. Could you now please tell me the objective of social media?
Mark  Yes. First of all social media is not your website. So the hotel does not need to give a lot of information in its posts. Social media is for us an exclusive inside in the hotel, in which guests are able to see what is going on in the hotel. The majority of people who are friends with the hotel or liked us are from abroad. So, yes we are for example promoting to have a cup of coffee in our bar together with a photo, however this does not have a lot of effect, because of the ‘friends’ abroad. It is really hard to earn money from a marketing perspective with social media, to see what the turnover is. With social media we try to involve our guests with the hotel and try to be as personal as possible. We post about employees, anniversaries etc. Furthermore we also post about our connection with Van Gogh, the gay pride and all these highlights.

Christophe  Ok, thank you. The next question is actually about your previous mentioned aspects. What does the hotel post on social media channels? As I understood, the hotel tries to be as personal as possible and tries to tell a story with a photo. Furthermore the hotel connects itself with the city and tries to promote all important activities in the city. Do you also work together with a tourism board?

Mark  Well, we have our own department in the hotel, which is seen as the encyclopaedia of the city Amsterdam. They know everything with regards to events and the newest trends in the city. Furthermore we have a connection with IAMsterdam, who provides us all information about events, as well for 2016. So we are able to put all this information on the calendar, to know exactly what, when is happening. And with social media the hotel is also able to schedule all events in advance. This means you just schedule your posts in advance, which will be published on the specific day by the social media channels itself.

Christophe  Wauw, that is quite handy and easy. How often does the hotel post something?

Mark  We try to post something every day. It is not necessary this is all the time about the hotel, but as well about the restaurant or bar.

Christophe  Ok, that is pretty often, but important I think.

Mark  Yes, that is true.

Christophe  Do you also share reviews by means of social media?

Mark  Well, we do not share other reviews by means of social media. So, we do not share reviews of Tripadvisor on Facebook. However, Facebook has its own application to write reviews and of course we show them to other guests and we respond to them.

Christophe  Ok, thank you. Does the hotel also promote campaigns by means of social media?

Mark  Yes, for example room campaigns or the gay pride with its entire package.

Christophe  And does it have effect?

Mark  Well, actually not. Then the question is why do you do it then? Simply, just spread the word, which means the hotel needs to be visible all the time and try to involve the (future) guests. Most of the time people already made plans, however these people see the hotel works on different events in the city and this feels reliable. When guests see a hotel website is outdated, apart from the cheap rooms or whatsoever, they will not search anymore for this hotel. For this reason it is just important to stay visible, even if the
guests do not book a hotel night. The main objective is to create a connection with the guests.

**Christophe**

Ok and what is liked the most?

**Mark**

When persons with a photo and a story are posted, they are liked more. So for example a photo of a painting, is nice, but the hotel does not create interaction with the guest. And I have heard somewhere that a women between 30 and 35 years old creates the most likes. However, in this hotel the most important posts are with photos, people and their story. Every morning I receive a list of publications of other hotels in Amsterdam and their posts and more and more selfies are posted by them. The question is then, does De L’Europe needs to do this as well? We think not, because then we will copy the other hotels, so we just need to be unique in our posts on social media channels.

**Christophe**

Ok. Now I will come to the conclusion. SEO means to be active on all different aspects of search engines.

**Mark**

Yes, Google looks to the accessibility of the website, which just means how accessible the hotel is for their guests, design, multimedia and content.

**Christophe**

Ok, and this content needs to be really personal, right?

**Mark**

Yes, the content needs to be adapted to the guests. This is also the aim of Google. For the hotel the objective is to sell rooms, but Google is there to respond your question.

**Christophe**

Ok. Then about the reviews. As I understood, Tripadvisor is the website to success with regards to reviews. And as I asked before they reviews are responded by means of how negative or positive they are. So for example if a review is really negative the general director will respond and if the review is just a bit negative, an employee of guest relations will respond.

**Mark**

Yes, that is true.

**Christophe**

Ok, and social media, with Facebook as most important channel.

**Mark**

Yes, together with Instagram.

**Christophe**

Yes, that is true, because of its possibility to share photos and videos. Do you have something to add about e–marketing? Something what is really important and I probably forgot?

**Mark**

No, I think I told you everything about e–marketing. One thing, e–marketing is quite new in the hotel branch and not a lot of employees in this branch are specialized in this field. I think a lot of hotels have not implemented yet a well done e–marketing policy and with just a little adaption a hotel is able to do so.

**Christophe**

Maybe this is something for me in the future to work on. I would like to thank you a lot for this interview, I appreciated a lot that you have helped me and made some time free for me.

**Mark**

Yes, my pleasure.
 Transcript 3:

**Interviewee**: Mr. Pieter Lewis

**Job interviewee**: E-commerce manager

**Interviewer**: Christophe Liefers

**Date and place**: 17-08-2015, Amsterdam, WestCord Fashion Hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Thank you for coming to this interview. My name is Christophe Liefers, 21 years old and student of Tourism Management. My final project is about e-marketing. The reason of this interview is to obtain more knowledge in the field of e-marketing. The objective is to understand the way in which hotels have implemented their e-marketing policy. It will be recorded, it will take approximately 30 minutes and the focus is only on e-marketing. Could you please introduce yourself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>My name is Pieter Lewis, 38 years old and I studied Hotel Management in Tilburg. For this studies I did an internship in Paris at the front office. In the beginning of my studies I thought I would be going to work in the food &amp; beverage part of the hotel, however I worked in the office part. After I did an internship for Golden Tulip in Purmerend at the front office as well. After I continued working at the front office and I moved to Amsterdam, to work for the Golden Tulip there. After I went to Art Hotel Amsterdam, as reservation employee and later on I became manager of this department. Then when the chain WestCord rose up, I became revenue manager for all the chain, which I have done till 2009. Then I moved to Israel together with my partner, because of his job. At that time revenue manager was more and more separated into revenue and distribution, which could be seen as working on several channels. Moreover the focus came on the own website of the hotels itself. Because for a lot of years hotels outsourced this to websites as Booking.com and Expedia.com, but at that time hotels needed to do this by themselves. Of course it is necessary that these websites work still for us, but we did not gave the guests another alternative and we did not focus on our own channel. At the moment we have 15 hotels of WestCord only located in The Netherlands. When I moved abroad WestCord and I found a solution to keep on going to work for them. In Israel I worked virtual for WestCord hotels and during this period the role of e-commerce manager rose up. In the beginning when I was abroad I was still working as revenue manager, together with a college who was situated in The Netherlands. And I need to say, to work via a virtual way was for me really nice, because I was better concentrated. Of course there are also disadvantages of working virtual. After 2.5 years I moved to San Francisco, because my partner needed to go there. This meant 9 hours of time difference and the question was then if I had the possibility to stay working for WestCord hotels, just because the working times are different. The solution was to wake up earlier and some of my colleges in The Netherlands worked a bit longer. I just returned from the United States and the WestCord management was really pleased I came back. At the moment it is not only a bit of online marketing or e-commerce, the management decided to give me the name of e-commerce manager and now we have our own department of</td>
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e-commerce together with one assistant. Of course this department will grow little by little, but at least we have a starting point.

Christophe: This sounds really interesting and you have a lot of experience. Moreover you have seen a lot of the world. We will directly continue to the first subject, e-marketing in general. What does e-marketing mean to the hotel?

Pieter: E-marketing is partly creating brand recognition. At the moment we are quite famous, but we can still promote our brand more. This is done via advertisements, newsletters and SEO in general. Moreover the conversion is really important of the hotel website. We try to generate as much as possible bookings via our own website, because this means more turnover. Moreover reliable websites in general are visited more often than just a simple no content website.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. Could you please tell me which forms of e-marketing are used the most by the hotel?

Pieter: Yes, I just told you about the newsletter, which we send twice a month to our guests. Moreover we work with add words as advertisement tool, because they are seen as one of the most important. Beside this, we also use social media. We see social media work as a brand recognition tool rather than generating turnover.

Christophe: Yes, that is what I have heard more often. Social media is really important nowadays for hotels, but is more often used to involve the guests with the hotel.

Pieter: Yes, for sure. So, it is really important not to post too much about discounts, because people will not appreciate this. The perfect situation is to have a mix of this, both to promote the hotel with nice discounts and packages, but as well to promote the hotel as an experience in general. For example I had a trip between two hotels in Amsterdam and I saw so many nice things on my way. I made a photo reportage and I published this on several social media channels, which was leading to a lot of likes and response. We also try to publish things behind the scenes. By doing so, guests get an exclusive insight in the hotel. Moreover, we use social media as well to gain brand recognition. We have a program which is called Revenate, which is a review management system. With this system we can see all the reviews of all different channels, as well from social media as from review websites. Like this we are all the time informed about all incoming reviews and we are able to respond as soon as possible. The system gives a clear overview of all the reviews and like this we receive feedback, which we can process in our policy. Moreover we are able to respond within this program, which means we do not have to go to each of the channels to respond.

Christophe: So this means the hotel has one system in which all the reviews are received? So as well from TripAdvisor for example?

Pieter: Yes, TripAdvisor as well, which is a really important one and we also work with them together. In fact, all websites are connected to this system, even the smaller websites, as well the different social media channels. When we receive a negative review we are able to respond directly within a short time of period. Like this negative reviews can be transformed into a bit more positive ones, just because the hotel respond directly and shows the guest interest. As a hotel it is important to be open and transparent with regards to reviews, as far as the majority of the guests will appreciate this.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christophe</th>
<th>Ok, thank you. Could you please tell me what information is provided with e–marketing?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes as I told you before, the focus is mainly on the things the hotel offers. So for example we promote the hotel together with events which take place in the city. Another example is about the newsletters which are sent twice a month. The first newsletter is for example with more background information in combination with nice hotel offers and packages and the other newsletter is only focussed on hotel offers. The most important thing for WestCord is not to become a sale hotel, quite the opposite the hotel wants to come forward as a classy hotel. We always try to avoid using the word discount, because we just want to sell our product with the corresponding price and we want to communicate this to our guests. As a matter of fact you will not see the hotel on websites like Groupon or Vakantieveilingen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>So the hotel want to come forward as a classy hotel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes indeed, it is like what you see is what you get. And the majority of our guests do not hesitate to pay a bit more for a more luxury stay, as our hotel is associated with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, thank you. Does the hotel also use special forms of e–marketing for special target groups? Like LinkedIn for business people?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes, we work with LinkedIn, but at the moment we do not have the focus yet on this channel. The channel which we focus the most on is Facebook in general and Pinterest, because the hotel is able to visualize itself. Moreover we use Twitter as covering channel, which is linked to the other channels of social media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, that is great to hear. The next subject is about SEO. What does this mean to the hotel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>We focus mainly on Google, because this search engine has the most penetration. I mean, I think 97% of Dutch habitants use Google as starting point of their search. So we decided to put the focus on this channel. We do not work with Bing and Bing advertising for example. At the moment we just started to change the website, because the old website does not meet the needs of what SEO asks for. So it is really important to do this as soon as possible, because we noticed that we are diminishing in the search results. SEO is always ongoing, which means it never ends. So, the hotel is always busy with updating the website and writing news texts. And then at a certain moment the hotel noticed that the website was too old, which was caused by new demands of Google. This means SEO is always in the spotlight. Once a month we have a meeting together with the sales and revenue department. This meeting we call ’spin days’, in which six employees lock themselves up for two days without mobiles and internet connection. In these two days we speak about all the related e–marketing things so far. For example we start up search websites, revise the hotel website and so on. So each month we have once a meeting to discuss all the related things. Of course these tasks are also carried out during normal working hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, thank you for the explanation and what a good idea to come once a month together for two days without connection and do a brainstorm session. I think this keeps the hotel updated. As you mentioned before, the most important search engine is Google? The focus is mainly on this search engine?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pieter: Yes, indeed.

Christophe: What is according to you the key to success to end high in the ranking on search engines?

Pieter: Finally, you write your website for your guests and not for search engines. If you as a hotel bring forth to provide the correct information and to be unique, you will probably end high in the rankings. As an organization you need to visualize yourself as good as possible on the internet, by for example using multimedia like movies and photos. According to me this is the best way in the end.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. The next subject is about review management. You just talked about it. What means review management to the hotel?

Pieter: Review management is very important for us. By means of the system, which is called Revenate it became easier for us to respond on both positive and negative reviews. We have seen this is appreciated by our guests and we see the reviews become more positive all the time and moreover we receive higher marks. In Amsterdam approximately 300 hotels are connected with Tripadvisor and we are placed on number 31. If you take in account that the hotel is not directly located in the city centre, this score is quite good. In general review management is of great importance, because the hotel uncovers itself. People can tell everything about the hotel. However, if you know the product is good, the rooms are clean and the staff is doing their job properly you are able to do a lot with this. Besides, review management also gives you an insight in the negative points and like this you are able to improve. As a matter of fact we invested a large amount of money in review management.

Christophe: Ok, the system sounds really interesting, I have never heard about it. Could you also tell me which review websites are the most important?

Pieter: The number one, as for all hotels is Tripadvisor. However, we also started up our own review website. When the guest leave the hotel he/she will receive an email two days later which asks for a review in which he/she tells us how he/she experienced the stay. We divide all these reviews to the different review websites. A part of these reviews will go to Tripadvisor, another part to Zoover and so on. By doing this we have a mix of the different review websites and we have seen this result in more reviews and more reviews result in more reliability for the guests. If your mark is a 4.8 out of 3000 reviews, this will almost be 100% reliable. If it would only be about 10 reviews it would not be reliable at all.

Christophe: Yes indeed, the more reviews, the higher the reliability.

Pieter: Yes, we try to create as much as possible volume. And like this we benchmark ourselves with the competition.

Christophe: Yes as you mentioned this is one of the ways to encourage the guests to write a review. Do you also have other ways to encourage the guests?

Pieter: Our staff at the reception desk ask most of the time to the guests to leave a review on one of the review websites. However, the hotel needs to be careful not to ask effusive much and therefore it is important the encouragement is natural. So this is mainly the way we encourage our guests.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. Could you also tell me in which way the hotel deals with negative reviews?

Pieter: Yes, that is a good question. We also receive negative reviews, like the majority of the hotels. Of course things happen which are not that positive,
which is normal and this happens in every hotel. This could be about external factors, like a few weeks ago. We organized an event in the hotel and it escalated completely. Because the organisation sold too many tickets for the event. Consequently, the guests who had dinner at that time and who had a drink in the bar were annoyed by all these attendees. We received a lot of negative reviews because of this. Beside this, it is also possible things do just not go well in the hotel and then it is our duty to respond to these reviews. If you would ignore these reviews, guests would think you do not have any respect, you are not interested or you just do not know how to deal with these reviews. We have noticed, according the statistics that if we respond on negative reviews, it has a positive effect. It is important to show other guests you have responded on all the reviews and to show them you have the guts to respond and do something with the reviews. On the one hand you highlight the negative review to respond to it, but on the other hand you have the possibility to already solve the problem partly.

Christophe  And who does respond to the reviews? Is this done by a special department?

Pieter  The first responsibility is for the hotels itself, because they all have their own account names and passwords for Revenate. Once a month we have a meeting in which we discuss all the reviews. We talk about the amount of reviews, we compare them to the other months and we look as well to the competition. Furthermore we also look to the percentage of respond. Like this we see monthly what is going on with all the reviews. The less active you are with regards to reviews, the less profit you have. The more engaged the hotel is and the more the hotel respond, the more you will raise in the rankings.

Christophe  Ok, thank you. And these reviews, are they responded in the language they are written in?

Pieter  That is a really good question, because I am not always there we they respond the reviews and most of the time I only see the statistics. I would say yes, but now I need to tell you that I am not sure if every employee is that good in German or French. What I know is that the city hotels have a more international character and they respond for sure in English.

Christophe  Ok and these reviews are they also shared by channels of social media?

Pieter  No, not really, because we think this has a counterproductive approach. I need to tell you that a few weeks ago we had a really playful post, in which a child had painted and she told a story about the hotel. These kind of things we do, but this is more playful. We never share a review which is judged with a ten for example, because the guests will then only see the positive part and not the negative ones, which will lead to unreliable posts.

Christophe  Ok that is clear, thank you. The next and last subject is about social media. Could you please tell me what social media mean to the hotel?

Pieter  It is a way to become closer with your (potential) guests and furthermore the hotel is able to represent the atmosphere of the hotel by means of social media. Beside this, the hotel is able to stay in contact directly with the guests, if for example someone says something about the hotel, if it is positive or negative. Like this, we have the chance to be interactive within a relatively short time of period. It is also a good way to see in which way people think about you.

Christophe  Ok and which social media channels are the most important for the hotel?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pieter</th>
<th>Facebook for sure, because of our target group. Our target group is between 30 and 70 years old and Facebook is used the most among this target group. So the focus is mainly on Facebook.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and what about other social media channels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>We use Twitter as well. We always schedule our social media posts and Twitter is used as starting point. After they will be redirect to other channels of social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and does the hotel also use Instagram?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>We do have Instagram, but so far we do not use it that much. If it is about photos we use Pinterest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, thank you. And the different posts, are the both about the hotel or as well about the city?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes, most of the time we also post about the city, in which we always connect the hotel in the post. We try to post events or tourist attractions on our social media channels and within these posts we always put our website, because we want to make our posts measurable. Just because it does not make sense to put things which you cannot measure. Of course we will not receive 100 bookings, but we always tag the posts. On a yearly basis we can get wind of how many people went to our website and by means of Facebook we have the ability to see this. Furthermore Google Analytics has the ability to give the hotel statistics about how many people has clicked trough, what their research was about and for how many time they stayed. For this reason we always put a link in our posts to the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok that sounds interesting. Do you also work together with for example IAMsterdam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>We do not work necessarily together, but yes we do repost things of them, when they post a nice photo for example or there is a special event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok and how often does the hotel post something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Well, in general we try to post everyday something and we always schedule this one week in advance. If there has something changed with regards to this post, we will adjust this. So if something has changed regarding an event or a certain happening we always try to adjust the post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok. And does the hotel also post promotions via social media channels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes and what I mentioned before, we do not want to force ourselves to put that many promotions. For sure we have our discounts and packages and especially the latter is nice, because the guest books several things for a good price. The discounts are always displayed on our website and they are highlighted in the newsletters. Moreover we will post the newsletter together with the special package mentioned in the newsletter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok, thank you. Now I would like to summarize all aspects which we have discussed. If it is about SEO, Google is mainly the biggest and most important search engine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>And if you meet the requirements of Google, you will end higher in the rankings. That is how I can formulate it, not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Ok. And beside this it is of great importance to adapt the hotel website to the search methods of your (potential) guests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter</td>
<td>Yes, you are right.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christophe: Review management, in which TripAdvisor is the most important one in general. To get as many reviews as the hotel wants, the hotel does encourage its guests to write one, what is really important for a hotel. Moreover the hotel reacts on every incoming review, no matter if the review is positive or negative. By doing so, the hotel shows that it cares about their guests and like this the guests feel faster attracted to go to the hotel.

Pieter: Yes, it has everything to do with being transparent and therefore it is important to have a large number of reviews. The more reviews, the more reliable the score is of the reviews in general.

Christophe: Yes, indeed. And then about social media. Facebook is the channel to reach your (potential) guests.

Pieter: Yes, you are right.

Christophe: Do you have something to add to this interview? Something you think I forgot?

Pieter: No, I do not think so.

Christophe: I think the three forms we discussed are the most important one, right?

Pieter: Yes the three forms we discussed are for our hotel the most important ones.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. Do you have some more questions?

Pieter: Yes, what is the final objective of your final project?

Christophe: Yes I am doing interviews with three different hotels and one with a marketing manager. Finally, I need to come up with an e-marketing plan, in which the best e-marketing policy is written.

Pieter: Ok, that seems interesting.

Christophe: I would like to thank you a lot for doing this interview with me and I appreciated it a lot you could find some time for me.

Pieter: My pleasure.

Third field study

Transcript 1:

Interviewee: Mr. Pablo de Chica
Job interviewee: Marketing and communications coordinator Europe, Ateknea Solutions
Interviewer: Christophe Liefers
Date and place: 19-08-2015, Wapenveld, By Skype

Person | Text
--- | ---
Christophe | Thank you for coming to this interview. First of all I will introduce myself. I am Christophe Liefers, 21 years old and I am studying tourism management. My final project is about e-marketing and the reason of the interview is to obtain more knowledge in the field of e-marketing strategies by means of practical experience. And the objective is to understand the way in which a professional thinks about e-marketing and then especially with regards to SEO, review management and social media. The interview will be recorded, it will take approximately 30 minutes and the focus is only on e-marketing. Now I would like to ask you to introduce yourself and tell about your background.
Pablo: Thank you Christophe. My name is Pablo de Chica and I am European specialist in strategic communication. I studies at the European university here in Barcelona. I always worked in the field of marketing and communications for over eight years now. I worked in different field in both the public and private sector. I started with the EXPO Zaragoza in 2008 and by now my last job was marketing and communications coordinator Europe at Ateknea Solutions.

Christophe: Ok, sounds great. You have a lot of experience so far, right?

Pablo: No, because I still consider myself as a junior, but I think I can give a lot of information in this interview.

Christophe: Ok, perfect. Let us continue to the first subject, which is about e–marketing in general. Could you give a definition of the term e–marketing? What does e–marketing means to you?

Pablo: Ok, from my point of view, e–marketing is just the marketing nowadays. What I mean is that e–marketing is just the evolution of normal marketing. So, I would say in a few years I am sure we will not talk anymore about e–marketing or digital marketing. Right now, with online tools we have better analytics and we are able to measure all the data. Before it was impossible to do so, but actually it are the same techniques, the same strategies, but now we have better tools, better analytics and a lot of new names to say almost the same. As I want to mention it has developed really good and fast. But the strategy, the technique and the way of doing marketing continues to be the same than before, but nowadays by the internet.

Christophe: Ok that is really clear and I did not hear this before. I think it is interesting. Could you tell me about the e–marketing forms and what are the most important ones for businesses at the moment? So, I talk about SEO, social media and also e–mail marketing.

Pablo: Ok, well I need to tell you as I told you before. I started with my career at the EXPO Zaragoza 2008 in the field of digitalization. It was the beginning of social media acquired to businesses. And I did also in Europe institutions in Brussels, which was the beginning of the use of all these social media and digital marketing strategies for implementing a new for instance review management strategies for the institutions. Depending on your strategy, if you want to brand your company or if you want to gain clients. Leads is the new name for clients, public or target group. It is really different the strategies you use if you want to increase brand awareness or if you want to gain leads. In depends on the industry. Right now, the most important thing I see, is all about the lead management issues for private companies applying digital marketing. This is the most important thing, what is called right now inbound marketing since two or three years ago. So, we, the professionals are now talking about the importance of inbound marketing.

Christophe: Ok, thank you. And regarding the hotel industry, which forms of e–marketing are the most important for this industry?

Pablo: As a see now, it is good to implement a good inbound marketing strategy. Which means you use a lot of platforms, so inbound marketing, social media, SEO, SEM and different platforms. E–marketing means to gain public and traffic to your website and/or landings websites. Of course for hotels it is important to gain guests and therefore it is important to know your leads. In this case I think we can cope with two objectives, on the one hand the hotel needs to have a really good reputation and on the other hand inbound...
marketing means to achieve really good results with regards to the number of guests.

Christophe

Ok, thank you. I think it really interesting, because in the three interviews I did with the hotels, they all told me about brand recognition and brand awareness, as you tell me as well. What are the advantages of using e–marketing according to you?

Pablo

If you are not in the process of digitalisation, your company can be dead in a couple of years. All companies and institutions put a lot of effort in digitalisation, both private and public companies. In my opinion and I am not an expert in this field, hotels need to implement an e–marketing strategy otherwise they will not be successful in the coming years if it is about the occupancy level. So, first of all the reputation of the hotel, what is really important. Secondly, I think it is even more important to gain guests. Finally, this will lead to more guests in the hotel. When the hotel guests do have a good experience, they will write a positive review, which will lead to a more positive image of the hotel on the internet. So, it is really important to implement a good e–marketing strategy, for getting a better reputation and for getting more clients. We cannot mix and marketing is not online for reputation, but also for gaining clients and for gaining sales.

Christophe

Ok, that seems to be clear. Then I would like to focus on the next subject, which is about SEO. What does this mean to you? What is your definition of SEO?

Pablo

SEO is all that techniques that are used for researches, like all those tools, like Google and of course others. However, here in Europe the most important one is Google and beside you also have Yahoo and Bing for example. Actually what it means is what I told you before, it is just to create good content, really well adapted to the digital environment. For me SEO is just to write your content on your online spaces and tools.

Christophe

Ok, perfect.

Pablo

So, if you write well you will get high positions on Google. And if you get a high position on Google, you will both increase brand awareness as well as sales.

Christophe

Ok, thank you. And if it is about SEO, which search engines are the most important for the hotel industry?

Pablo

Yes, you can have special search engines for each single industry. So, you need to be well–known to have a good position all the Meta platforms and for sure you need to have a high position on platforms like Google. For this you need to make good content with good keywords. If you do not have this, you will not end on the first page of Google and if you are not on the first page of Google, Booking or Trivago, you will see a decrease in the occupancy level. The reason of this is because the public will not find you on the different search engines and Meta platforms.

Christophe

Ok, I think a hotel’s position on the internet, is really important to get as many bookings as possible, right?

Pablo

Yes the position is the most important thing.

Christophe

Ok, thank you. Could you also tell me what the key to success is, to end high in the search engines? I just notices, you told me about the content, which needs to be adapted to the needs of your guests. So your website needs to consist of the right keywords. Otherwise Google will never put you
high in the rankings, because the keywords are not visualized on the website. Is this how I can see it?

Pablo

For instance for a hotel, what I am telling since the beginning. Before there was no internet and every hotel had its own marketing plan in which the hotel promoted itself with the corresponding strengths. Nowadays this is done by means of the internet and Google is of great importance within this field. As a hotel you need to present your website as trustful as possible and you cannot publish things which are not true. I will put an example with an outside pool of a hotel. Ok, if the hotel has a good outside pool, the hotel will have for sure a keyword like outside pool. The content on the website needs to include information about the pool, the hotel needs to make clear that it is good for summer and the hotel needs to its segment(s). It is important to focus not on every segment, but maximum on a few. For marketing it is not good to have a mass market, because you are not able to create content that suites to everyone. Of course it is good for sales, because you will receive a lot of different segments, but it is not good for marketing. Another aspect of SEO is called SEM, in which a hotel put the focus on advertisements. If a hotel wants to be on the first page of Google or other search engines, it is not only about a good content, if you have resources, it is really important to pay for add words or advertisements. This will help businesses to end higher in the rankings.

Christophe

Thank you for this explanation. It is nice you tell me about the advertisements, because for my next question I want to ask if it is always necessary to pay to end high in search engines? I think in some way it is necessary to pay, not?

Pablo

In my opinion, it is really necessary. From my professional experience it will increase your sales if your company publish advertisements. I think a combination of SEO and SEA are really important. You cannot miss one of them. So from my point of view it is really necessary to implement both at the same time.

Christophe

Ok, thank you. I think it is really clear with regards to SEO now for me. Now I would like to continue to the next subject, which is about review management. In which way would you describe review management and what does it mean to you?

Pablo

Reputation is everything nowadays for companies, no matter about which field we are talking. Reputation is everything, because if you want that your guests come back to your hotel you need good reputation. All you SEO techniques and your marketing objectives need to be clear and it needs to be true. For example you cannot tell your (potential) guests that your hotel has the best pool in the city and then finally you just have a ten square meter pool. The next step to get a good reputation is to write correctly with the correct keywords. We use the example of the pool. So on the website of the hotel please specify what kind of pool it is and for who it is intended. This means you need to be coherent in your content on all different platforms as well, which will lead to a good/better reputation. Of course the staff also need to do things well, but now we are talking about marketing. In terms of marketing please tell the truth and try to segment the hotel.

Christophe

Ok, thank you. Let us continue with review management for hotels. If it is about a website like Tripadvisor, what should the hotel do to encourage its guests to post reviews? Do you have any ideas?
Pablo: Well, as I told you before it is about telling the truth as a hotel. If you give information about for example the pool and you inform your guests that this pool is mostly for adults (because there is chill out music and drinks etc.) the adults who visit the hotel will be pleased. As a reason of this they will be happy about their stay, because everything which was written on the hotel website was truth. Like this these guests will write a review for the hotel, which will influence other (potential) guests as well.

Christophe: Yes I understand what you mean about being true on the internet. But in which way is a hotel able to encourage their guests to write a review?

Pablo: The hotel always need to give incentives to its guests, because nowadays people do not want to invest a lot of time in these things. So, for good incentives you really need to encourage people at the end of their stay. Before people were asked to fill in a questionnaires (paper) just at the reception desk. A few years ago this was done by sending emails with the questionnaire, but unfortunately hotels did not get a lot of response. Right now your guests are writing everything about your hotel on a lot of different platforms for reviews, which are independent to the hotel. So, what a hotel is able to do so, is to ask the guest to write a review on one of those websites. If they will write this review you can offer them a special discount for example. So, when the hotel does the check out with the guest, the receptionist should ask for all the contact details of the guest and later on, when the guest has published a review, he/she will receive an email with special promotions.

Christophe: Ok, thank you for this idea. Do you also think it is important to respond to every single review, no matter if they are positive or negative?

Pablo: In reality it does not work like this, because of time and money. Of course it should be the best option and if you have enough resources please do it, because this will increase your reputation a lot.

Christophe: Yes I understand you point. In the three interviews I did with the hotel I noticed that all the hotels respond on every single review they receive. The reason they do so is because of interaction with the guests and the fact that the guests feel treated really personal. I am sure the hotels in case have a lot of resources to do so and that is why.

Pablo: Of course. The big hotels have. However, the medium and small sized hotel do not have these resources. From my experience these latter hotels are like a robot in responding on reviews and most of the time they respond the reviews really late. This is really bad for the reputation. What I would recommend is to increase the communication channels. Instead of investing a lot of time in personal one to one emails (if a hotel is able to do so, please do), the hotel needs to be really active on for example social media. All different channels of social media are really transparent and this could be both positive and negative. However, if a hotel knows how to manage it properly the hotel is able to increase awareness and keep the reputation safe. It is really important a hotel seeks for the right employee to do so, because it is not just a simple thing to implement. Professionals in the field of e–marketing will have the most experiences in this field are they will probably do this job properly.

Christophe: Ok, that is clear for me, thank you. Let us continue to the next and last subject, which is about social media. What does social media means to you? What is your definition of social media?
Pablo  | Social media is the new way of communicating to your clients. To communicate means to gain new clients, but also to keep your existing clients. Social media is also a way to show transparency to your clients, which is really important. It is really good for a hotel to invest money in a good community manager, not just someone with no experience. By means of all the communication channels of social media your guests are able to ask questions at any time. On social media you are able publish advertisements as well, which are called add words. If you use this well, you will have a good return on investment. One more thing which is really good about social media is the ability of segmenting your target group. Each channel of social media has its own target group like for example LinkedIn does have. However, there are also channels which are meant for several target groups.

Christophe | Ok, thank you. Which channels are the most important for the hotel industry do you think?

Pablo  | Well, it depends on your target group. E-marketing is nothing without old marketing, with regards to the strategies and techniques. First of all you need to know your public, to segment your hotel. Once you have segmented your hotel is able to see what channels are used by the guests. If you are a big hotel, for sure you have all the resources to invest on all the different social media channels. However, when you are a medium or small sized hotel you probably need to focus on only a few social media channels.

Christophe | Thank you. Could you also tell me what information needs to be provided by social media?

Pablo  | It depends as well on your segmentation, but in general background stories with pictures are liked more often than promotions or discounts.

Christophe | Ok, thank you. As a conclusion I can see that e-marketing depends on the segmentation and your target group. Once you know, you are able to adapt all the content to this specific target group. So we talked about three different subjects and they are all depending on your target group.

Pablo  | Yes, that is the most important thing.

Christophe | Do you have something to add?

Pablo  | No, I would like to thank you for this interview. I hope you will highlight my given information and again you need to know, no e-marketing without targeting your target group.

Christophe | Ok I would like to thank you a lot for taking the time and having done the interview with me. Thank you.

Pablo  | My pleasure.
Appendix XVII – Tables and percentages tourists Barcelona

**Table 1: number of tourists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touristes</td>
<td>1,732,902</td>
<td>3,141,182</td>
<td>7,571,786</td>
<td>7,874,941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pernoctacions</td>
<td>3,141,182</td>
<td>7,571,786</td>
<td>10,457,886</td>
<td>12,845,078</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: purposes of visit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total tourists*</th>
<th>All tourists*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacances</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: nationalities of tourists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total tourists*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>1,616,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalonia</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4.9</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>400,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe*</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>4,141,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
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</tr>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>488,416</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
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<td>Other Europe</td>
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<td>23.4</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>7,874,941</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: gender of tourists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total tourists*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hombres</td>
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<td>59.5</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mujeres</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: age of tourists

Table 6: means of transport by tourists

Table 7: hotels

Appendix XVIII – Analyses first field study

**Figure 1:**
What is your gender?
Valid Percent

**Figure 2:**
Which of the following age groups do you belong to?
Frequency

**Figure 3:**
Where are you from?
Frequency
**Figure 7:**

When did you start your research/planning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 week before</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 weeks before</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 weeks before</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 weeks before</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 8:**

Where did you start your research/planning for this stay?

- Valid Search engines: 51.00%
- Valid Online travel site: 10.50%
- Valid Hotel websites: 25.51%
- Valid Media: 14.29%

**Figures 9:**

Which search engines did you use to find this hotel? (Google)

- Google: 165
- Bing: 144
Figure 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which key words did you use to find the hotel?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Barcelona</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation in Barcelona</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona Centre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona Centre Hotel</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona Centre Pool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona City Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona Eixample</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.3</td>
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<td>.5</td>
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<td>.5</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Price 1</td>
<td>Price 2</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
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<td>29.5</td>
<td>51.0</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>57.6</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>61.4</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>61.9</td>
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<td>11.0</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.3</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Offer Barcelona</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Trips To Barcelona</td>
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<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures 11:
Figure 12:

To what extent did reviews influence the booking?

Frequency

Values

Valid 1  Valid 2  Valid 3  Valid 4  Valid 5

To what extent did reviews influence the booking?
Figure 13: What review websites did you visit? (Tripadvisor)
Percent

Figure 14: Have you read both positive and negative reviews?
Percent
Figure 15: Do you think reviews are reliable in general? Percent

Figure 16: Do you plan to write a review of this stay? Frequency
**Figure 17:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not want to</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not write reviews</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't like to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't want to do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never do</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is not useful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not important for me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is quite subjective</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many rating match my rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never done so far</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
<td>24.8</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>29.7</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>81.2</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not useful</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing special</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nothing special to share</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy Reasons</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too lazy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are in a hurry</td>
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<td>.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Missing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>210</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 18:** Did you consult channels of social media before your booking? Percent

- Yes: 47.63%
- No: 52.37%

**Figures 19:**

1. **Which channels of social media did you use? (Facebook)**
   - Frequency graph showing the distribution of responses.

2. **Which channels of social media did you use? (Twitter)**
   - Frequency graph showing the distribution of responses.

3. **Which channels of social media did you use? (Instagram)**
   - Frequency graph showing the distribution of responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which channels of social media did you use? (Pinterest)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>94.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which channels of social media did you use? (Other)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 20:**

![Figure showing the extent to which social media is important for hotel booking](image-url)
Figure 21: Are you also going to share photos and videos of this stay?

Figure 22: Via which channel have you booked this stay?
**Figure 23:**

Finally, how many days/weeks/months did you book this stay in advance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>56.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>77.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 days</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Second field study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition e–marketing</th>
<th>Radisson Blu</th>
<th>De L´Europe</th>
<th>WestCord Fashion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All channels of social media, reviews websites, booking channels and SEO</td>
<td>Separate e–marketing into online marketing and e–commerce</td>
<td>Online marketing → visibility of hotel on the internet and the way in which the hotel can influence its presence</td>
<td>E–marketing is party creating brand recognition. This is done via advertisements, newsletters and SEO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms e–marketing</th>
<th>Social media channels, review websites, bookings channels, SEO</th>
<th>Review management, social media and SEO</th>
<th>Newsletters, add words, social media, review management, SEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Objectives e–marketing | Create brand awareness, encourage guests to come back, attract new guests (loyalty), encourage guests to book on the hotel website itself | Brand recognition, promote the hotel worldwide and to inform guests about the hotel. Guests need to get involved with the hotel. | Brand recognition and promoting the hotel worldwide. Furthermore it is important to be interactive with our guests. |

<p>| Provided information e–marketing | General information which is also provided on the hotel website itself | Information about the hotel, about its meals and rooms, but also about activities | The hotels mainly provide information about the things the hotel offers. An example is the promotion of the hotel together with an event. Furthermore we send twice a month a newsletter. One in which we give background information in combination with hotel offers and the other one only with hotel offers. However, we do not want to be a sale hotel as far as we want to be a classy |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific forms e-marketing</th>
<th>LinkedIn for business guests</th>
<th>LinkedIn for business guests and we always adapt the content to the specific guests who visit the restaurant, bar or spa</th>
<th>We work with LinkedIn for the business guests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition SEO</td>
<td>Important to end high in the rankings, keywords need to be visible on the hotel website</td>
<td>Your organic position on Google is extremely important. SEO is connected to some important things, namely design, attainability, content and multimedia. The content of the hotel website is extremely important to end high in the rankings.</td>
<td>We mainly focus on Google as far as 97% of for example Dutch people use this search engine as starting point. SEO is always ongoing, therefore the hotel always need to update the hotel website regarding the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective SEO</td>
<td>To end higher in the ranking on websites like Google.</td>
<td>Especially with e-commerce the hotel is able to see what each spent ‘euro’ has delivered. How many rooms / nights / guests have been booked.</td>
<td>To end higher in the rankings on websites like Google and to become more visible on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most important search engines</td>
<td>Google</td>
<td>Google, Yanhoo, Bing and Yandex</td>
<td>Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key to success</td>
<td>Combination of searching for the right keywords and paid advertisements</td>
<td>Adapt the content of the hotel website to the keywords your guests are searching for. A combination of paid and non-paid advertisements. Google add words are of great importance as well.</td>
<td>You write the website for your guests and not for search engines. If a hotel bring forth to provide the correct information and tries to be unique, the hotel will probably end high in the rankings. Furthermore a hotel needs to visualize itself as good as possible on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition review management</td>
<td>Source for receiving information and feedback from guests</td>
<td>Review management is of great importance for our hotel to see in which way the guest have experienced our hotel.</td>
<td>Review management is really important, because the hotel uncovers itself. Guests are able to tell everything about the hotel. Like this, the hotel is for example able to work on the negative points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective review management</td>
<td>Show guests we care about them, answer all reviews personally</td>
<td>To end as high as possible on websites like Tripadvisor and also to show guests we are treat them personally.</td>
<td>To respond on every single review by means of the program Revenate. This is appreciated by the guests. Furthermore the objective is to get as much as possible reviews, because the reliability will be higher. Creating as much as possible volume is really important for us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most important review websites</td>
<td>Booking.com, Tripadvisor and Expedia</td>
<td>Tripadvisor is the most important for us. Leading (the covering company) does have its own review website in which guests are able to leave a review as well). We also have different review websites for the restaurant.</td>
<td>Tripadvisor and we also have our own review website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the guests to write a review</td>
<td>Sending questionnaires to the guests after their stay</td>
<td>We have our own online questionnaire which is send afterwards to the guests. We also ask the guests to post this review on Tripadvisor. Furthermore we have internal reviews. The guest has a voucher in his/her room and</td>
<td>With our own review website, we ask the guests after their stay to fill in the questionnaire. Furthermore our receptionists ask the guests to leave a comment on review websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding reviews</td>
<td>Respond every review in the language they are written in, sales department does, every day we check the reviews</td>
<td>We respond to every single review in the corresponding language. For the hotel it is of great importance to respond all reviews. If the hotel would ignore the reviews, guests would think the hotel does not have any respect, is not interested or just does not know how to deal with reviews. The marketing department respond the reviews and once a month we compare the amount of reviews, we compare them to other months and we look to the competition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with negative reviews</td>
<td>Small problem → tell them sorry and try to solve the problem Really negative → advise the guests to contact the guest relations by email and then we discuss about the way we solve it, with for example a discount</td>
<td>Negative reviews are of great importance. On Tripadvisor negative reviews are counted as 1 out of 11, whereas positive reviews 1 out of 4. The higher the degree of a negative review, the higher the position is of the employee who responds. If we receive negative reviews we also respond them. We have noticed that if we respond on negative reviews, it a positive effect has. It is important to show your guests you respond the reviews and the hotel really does something with it. On the one hand you highlight the negative review to respond to it, but on the other hand the hotel has the possibility to already solve the problem partly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sharing of reviews       | We do not share reviews via social media because this is effusive,                                                                                                                                              | We do not share reviews, as far as the hotel is not able to respond to negative                                                                                                                                  | We do not share reviews, because we think this has a counterproductive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>sometimes we only</strong> share good reviews of the restaurant on social media</th>
<th><strong>reviews within one second.</strong></th>
<th><strong>approach. Guests will most of the time only see positive reviews, which will lead to unreliable posts and that is why.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition social media</strong></td>
<td>All online channels which are used nowadays to communicate and be interactive with the guests</td>
<td>Social media is not your website, so the hotel does not need to give that many information within the posts. Social media is an exclusive inside in the hotel, which give the guests the ability to see what is going on in the hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most important channels</strong></td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google +, YouTube and LinkedIn</td>
<td>We work with all 17 different social media channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective social media</strong></td>
<td>Create brand awareness, loyalty and to attract new guests, stimulates the direct booking on hotel website</td>
<td>We try to involve our guests with the hotel and try to be as personal as possible. We try to post as much images with stories, because guests like this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provided information social media</strong></td>
<td>General information which is also provided on the hotel website, photos, videos, city, activities, events, conferences, we try not to post to many promotions because we have seen this does not work, guests like more information about the city or a personalized story about an employee</td>
<td>We post about employees, anniversaries, activities, events. Our objective is to inform the guests about the city and about the hotel with photos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion of the city</strong></td>
<td>We promote Amsterdam as well in our posts, we have</td>
<td>We have our own department which is like the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of posts</td>
<td>connection with IAmsterdam, we repost a lot of them because we know this information is always correct</td>
<td>encyclopaedia. We have a connection with IAmsterdam, who provides us with all the upcoming events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two days, we do not want to post just something because it is necessary, it needs to stay relevant, otherwise guests will start to unfollow the hotel</td>
<td>We need to be up-to-date and we try to post every day something. Some posts do not always have effect, but the hotel needs to spread the word, which means the hotel needs to be visible all the time and try to involve guests. It is of great importance a hotel website and the connected social media channels are not outdated. We always schedule our posts, which is possible by different channels of social media.</td>
<td>We always post everyday / everyday something. We always plan this advance and if something has changed we still can adapt the post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix XX – Options for Hotel Astoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEO</th>
<th>Review management</th>
<th>Social media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Focus mainly on Google (Google Analytics &amp; Book on Google included)</td>
<td>– Focus mainly on Tripadvisor</td>
<td>– Focus mainly on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Focus on Google, Bing and Yahoo</td>
<td>– Focus on Tripadvisor, Booking.com and Trivago</td>
<td>– Focus on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Focus on online travel agencies</td>
<td>– Use of a special review program</td>
<td>– Focus on LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Focus on Meta platforms</td>
<td>– Respond to every single review</td>
<td>– Focus on all social media channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Focus on the hotel website (design, attainability, content and multimedia)</td>
<td>– Respond only in English</td>
<td>– Post only about discounts/promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Create a personalised content which is “snackable, shareable and sharp”</td>
<td>– Respond in corresponding language</td>
<td>– Post only about background information and/or activities in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Use paid advertisements</td>
<td>– Just ask guests to leave a review</td>
<td>– Post about discounts/promotions (non-paid advertisements), as well about background information and/or activities in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ask guests to leave a review and send them an email afterwards to ensure them</td>
<td>– Promote tourist attractions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Ask guests to leave a review by means of incentives and send an email with further instructions afterwards</td>
<td>– Promote local activities and events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Post every two days</td>
<td>– Post each day on one channel and the other day on the other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix XXI – Hotel website of Hotel Astoria

Appendix XXII – Hotel website of Hotel De L´Europe


Appendix XXIII – Responding the reviews

Dear Anup0112,

First of all I would like to thank you for spending your stay in Hotel Astoria. I appreciate the fact that you like the location of the hotel, yes the hotel is surrounded by a lot of restaurants, bars and supermarkets.

I am sorry about the fact that the room was not well ventilated. We will try to work on it and solve the problem of this room. Furthermore we will try to make the room more attractive, because the room does not have any views. I am also sorry that we needed to charge the ice, but this is common for us. Maybe we could change this in the future.

Nice you recommend our hotel to other (future) guests, thank you a lot.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Camps (Manager of Hotel Astoria)
Appendix XXIV – Job description and requirements e–marketing manager

Main responsibilities:

- Plan and execute all web, SEO, review management and social media
- Design, build and maintain website, review websites and social media channels
- Measure and report performance of all the three mentioned forms and assess against the goals
- Identify trends / developments and seek for strengths and weaknesses all the time
- Brainstorm about new strategies
- Plan, execute and measure experiments
- Work close together with the manager and the management team
- Hold meeting with the manager and management team

Requirements

- BS / MS degree in marketing
- Work experience in digital marketing (at least 5 years)
- Demonstrate experience in SEO, review management and social media
- Highly creative with experience in identifying target audiences and devising digital campaigns that engage, inform and motivate
- Experience in optimising landing pages and user funnels
- Experience with A/B and multivariate experiments
- Knowledge of website analytics tools, like Google Analytics
- Knowledge of add serving tools, like Google Add words
- Working knowledge of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript development and constraints
- Strong analytical skills and data–driven thinking
- Up-to-date with best practices in online marketing and measurement
- Ability to work individual, but also in a team
Appendix XXV – Average costs e–marketing manager

![Average costs e–marketing manager graph]


Appendix XXVI – Overview costs and benefits e–marketing strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E–marketing manager</td>
<td>- A specialist, who knows what he/she is doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Someone will work on the e–marketing strategy full–time and is taking it seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Being able to implement an e–marketing strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourced website company</td>
<td>- Specialised in websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- This company knows how to deal with the content of a website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Add words</td>
<td>- Ending higher in Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Become more visible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix XXVII – Time planning by a Gantt Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>Specification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Background information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reason of the project</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relevance for the client</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Objective and question advice</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Objectives and questions research</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading guide</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research part</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>8 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Introduction  
  - Overview objectives/questions | | | | | Week 3 |
| • Theoretical framework  
  - Description search methods  
  - Relationships core concepts  
  - Elaboration core concepts  
  - Operationalization | | | | | Week 3 & 4 |
| • Literature research  
  - Description search methods  
  - Doing literature research | | | | | Week 6 |
| • Quantitative research  
  - Action plan  
  - Setting up questionnaire  
  - Collecting questionnaire  
  - Processing data  
  - Conclusions | | | | | Week 7, 8 & 9  
  Contact with first examiner, research teacher & client |
| • Qualitative research  
  - Action plan  
  - Setting up interview guides  
  - Recording interviews  
  - Processing data  
  - Open coding  
  - Axial coding  
  - Conclusions | | | | | Week 9, 10, 11 & 12  
  Contact with first examiner & client |
| • Discussing results research part | | | | | Week 12 |
| • Reflection  
  - Internal validity  
  - External validity  
  - Reliability | | | | | Week 12 |
| 3. Advisory part | | | | | 5 weeks |
| • Introduction  
  - Overview objective/question | | | | | Week 12 |
| • Alternative solutions  
  - Overview alternative solutions  
  - Overview criteria  
  - Assessment/score  
  - Best alternative solution | | | | | Week 13  
  Contact with first examiner |
| • Implementation plan | | | | | Week 14 & 15  
  Contact with client |
| • Financial plan  
  - Investment plan  
  - Financing plan | | | | | Week 15 & 16  
  Contact with first examiner |
| • Conclusion  
  - Main pieces  
  - Feasibility and realism  
  - Relevance  
  - Relationships | | | | | Week 15 & 16 |
| 4. Afterword | | | | | 1 week |
| • Reflection day-to-day practice | | | | | Week 16 |
| • Reflection value of the thesis | | | | | Week 16 |