GAY WEDDINGS IN AMSTEL HOTEL AS A NEW MARKETING STRATEGY

Thesis report

Student: Nelli Shemesh
Student Number: 344495
First Examiner: Mr. Hans Breuker
Second Examiner: Mr. Nico Kerssens
Research Teacher: Mr. Rienk van Marle
Client: Amstel Intercontinental Hotel

June, 2014
# Table of Contents

Summary ........................................................................................................................................ iv

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 5
   1.1 Background information about the client .................................................................................... 5
   1.2 Reason for the thesis project and the relevance of the thesis for the client .............................. 5
   1.3 Objective of the project ................................................................................................................ 6
   1.4 Central research questions ........................................................................................................... 7
   1.5 Global work breakdown structure of the thesis project ............................................................... 7
   1.6 A reading guide to the thesis report ............................................................................................. 7

2. Research part ................................................................................................................................. 7
   2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 7
   2.2 Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................................. 8
      2.2.1 Gay community in the Netherlands ....................................................................................... 8
      2.2.2 Same-sex marriage in the Netherlands ............................................................................... 9
      2.2.3 Wedding receptions ............................................................................................................ 9
      2.2.4 Aspects of an event organization ....................................................................................... 10
      2.2.5 Informational sources ......................................................................................................... 11
      2.2.6 “Segmentation, targeting, positioning” model .................................................................... 12
      2.2.7 Promotion ............................................................................................................................ 15
      2.2.8 Content of a SWOT analysis ............................................................................................... 16
   2.3 Methodological justification ....................................................................................................... 17
      2.3.1 Research design and strategy .............................................................................................. 17
      2.3.2 Method of data collection .................................................................................................... 17
      2.3.3 Selection of research unit .................................................................................................... 18
      2.3.4 Measurement instrument .................................................................................................... 19
      2.3.5 Method of data analysis ..................................................................................................... 21
   2.4 Results of the field research ....................................................................................................... 21
      2.4.1 Descriptive analysis ............................................................................................................ 21
      2.4.2 SWOT analysis .................................................................................................................. 22
   2.5 Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 27
   2.6 Limitations and discussion ......................................................................................................... 31

3. Recommendation ........................................................................................................................ 33
   3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 33
   3.2 Objectives of the marketing strategy .......................................................................................... 33
   3.3 Description of the marketing strategy ....................................................................................... 34
   3.4 Alternative ways of promotional activities .............................................................................. 35
   3.5 Criteria and evaluation of the alternative ways of promotional activities .............................. 37
Summary

Nowadays the issue of reaching a new target group that will increase the sales rate is the most urgent for a lot of organizations in the hospitality industry. The client of the present project, Amstel InterContinental Hotel, is not an exception. The current target group, which is elderly people with high income, does not give the hotel an opportunity to fill the banqueting outlet. During the initial meeting with the Operations Manager of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, it was found out that the client considers gay people as a new marketing segment which has high potential. This consideration is based on the fact that Amstel InterContinental Hotel already had the positive experience of holding weddings for gay couples. Moreover, there was no preconception towards gay people in the hotel among other guests or staff members.

The objective of the current project is to find out which marketing strategy will be more suitable in order to attract a new target group—gay people to celebrate weddings in Amstel InterContinental Hotel. For reaching this objective qualitative research, as well as the audit of external and internal environment, were conducted by the researcher. The qualitative research is fully based on the research literature and theoretical framework. This research helped to collect in-depth knowledge about the preferences of gay people towards wedding celebrations and about informational sources gay people use while choosing a place for a wedding celebration. The analysis of the external and internal environment showed external opportunities and threats as well as internal strengths and weaknesses that can have an influence on Amstel InterContinental Hotel while applying new marketing strategy.

The results of the qualitative research showed that gay people have quite traditional ideas and preferences towards wedding celebrations. As for the informational sources it was found out that gay people rely on the opinion of their friends and other members of the gay community. In order to get this opinion, they use personal communication with friends or communicate via Facebook.

The recommendation part of the present report is based on the theoretical framework and field research. The correlation of the present product of gay weddings that is provided by Amstel InterContinental Hotel and the references of gay people showed that there is no need to change the product in order to attract gay people. Based on that fact it is recommended to use extensive promotion within a new marketing strategy.

The sales promotion, advertising and public relations actions are recommended for promotion mix. Sales promotion includes offering a complimentary dinner for that gay couple who celebrated the wedding in Amstel InterContinental Hotel and further brought their friends to celebrate their wedding in the hotel as well. This will stimulate gay couples to recommend Amstel InterContinental Hotel as a wedding venue among their friends.

Facebook is recommended as a promotional tool because it is the most popular on-line source of information among gay people. For the public relation action, the organization of the Gay-friendly wedding fair is recommended. This fair can help to bring a gay-friendly image to Amstel InterContinental Hotel and show all the benefits of celebrating a wedding in the hotel. Implementation of the promotional strategy and the budget of the promotional activities can be found in the recommendation plan as well.
In conclusion, the marketing strategy that was carried out within the present research will create a gay-friendly image of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, which will increase the interest of gay people to visit the hotel and celebrate weddings there.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background information about the client

The client of this thesis project is Amstel InterContinental Hotel in Amsterdam. Amstel Hotel is an upper-class luxury hotel, which is a part of the InterContinental Hotel Group. It is situated in the centre of Amsterdam and attracts many celebrities and royal guests every year. Amstel Hotel provides seventy-nine rooms including twenty-four suites to the guests. Two restaurants, one of them is a Michelin-starred restaurant, as well as the A-bar, are opened for guests every day. The hotel has got many other facilities including a spa-centre, fitness-centre and meeting-rooms.

The organizational structure of Amstel InterContinental Hotel can be found in the Appendix I.

The InterContinental Hotels Group is a huge company in the hospitality business. It has nine brands in its portfolio at the moment. These brands are InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, Hualuxe Hotels & Resorts, Crown Plaza, Hotel Indigo, Even Hotels, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Holiday Inn Resorts, Holiday Inn Vacation, Staybridge and Candlewood. “The company operates 687,000 rooms in over 4,600 hotels in about 100 countries around the world, but it still wants to expand the number of the properties and come to the position of the largest hotel operator in the world” (the InterContinental Hotels Group, 2014).

The corporate website of the InterContinental Hotels Group states that the mission of the company is to create “Great hotels guests love”. The goal of the company is “to grow by making our brands the first choice for guests and hotel owners”. The strategy of the company is “to build the hotel industry’s strongest operating system focused on the biggest markets and segments where scale really counts”. (The Intercontinental Hotels Group, 2014). As a part of the InterContinental Hotels Group Amstel Hotel shares the mission statement and all the values with the company.

1.2 Reason for the thesis project and the relevance of the thesis for the client

The reason for the thesis project is the fact that the hotel has a problem of the narrow target group which is elderly people with high income due to the classical design of the hotel, high rates of the luxury rooms and non-innovative approach of the service provided. This problem causes another problem, which has a negative effect on the hotel’s revenue: not all the outlets are fully booked, especially banqueting outlets. Banqueting rooms are mostly used by business guests during weekdays at the moment, but during weekends they are not occupied. According to the Operations Manager of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, there were twenty-five wedding celebrations in the hotel last year and one gay wedding.

The thesis project is relevant for Amstel InterContinental Hotel because it is supposed to develop a recommendation to solve the problem of attraction of a new target group to the hotel. The target group will be gay couples. This target group has been chosen by the client due to the following reasons: Amstel InterContinental Hotel has got a positive experience of holding one wedding celebration for a gay
couple in the year 2013. Moreover, managers of Amstel InterContinental Hotel do not see any potential barriers to attract gay people as a new target group because the hotel has already got an experience of hosting gay people without any prejudices from the other guests and the staff members of the hotel. Positioning of Amstel Hotel as gay-friendly hotel can provide a competitive advantage and at the same time will not break the image of the hotel which already exists. Amstel InterContinental Hotel will be selected from other upper scale hotels which do not position themselves as gay-friendly hotels. The recommendations will fit with the goal of the hotel "to be the first choice of our guests and hotel owners" (the InterContinental Hotels Group, 2014). The new product – gay weddings – and suitable ways of promotion will make Amstel InterContinental Hotel the first choice in Amsterdam among gay people. The location and facilities of the hotel perfectly suit the needs of such events. On the one hand, the banqueting rooms are located far away from other facilities of the hotel, so wedding couples and their guests can feel the personal approach of the staff and will not be disturbed by other guests of the hotel. On the other hand, guests of the hotel will not be disturbed by the wedding celebration which can last till late at night. The area where Amstel InterContinental Hotel is situated is also beneficial for wedding celebrations: located near one of the most picturesque channels in the centre of Amsterdam, it gives a romantic spirit to the wedding couples and makes the day of their wedding unforgettable.

1.3 Objective of the project

Management question: Which marketing strategy when it comes to the promotion and product will help to attract gay couples to celebrate their weddings in Amstel InterContinental Hotel in order to increase selling banqueting outlets?

Amstel InterContinental Hotel has all the facilities for holding the weddings that is why focusing on gay weddings will make the hotel different from the competitors. The hotel is supposed to look at gays as a new market segment, focusing on which can be a solution to their management problem. Within the thesis assignment the new market and the potential customers of the new product will be analysed. It will be also recommended how to fit the new marketing strategy into the current position of Amstel InterContinental Hotel within the market.

Knowledge that the research part will provide: in order to create a suitable product for the gay segment their wishes and preferences should be investigated. It is also important to know how to promote this product to such target group as gay couples, so the right tools of the promotion also have to be found. The second part of the research will answer the question if Amstel InterContinental Hotel is capable of following the new marketing strategy. The second part of the field research will be formulated as the SWOT analyses.

In the advisory part, the solution to the management problem will be offered to the client. The advice will be formulated as a marketing strategy. The developing of the marketing strategy will be based on the literature and field research. The main focus of the marketing strategy will be on the description of the product of gay wedding celebrations and ways of promotion of the new marketing product including promotional tools and a message to the target group.
1.4 Central research questions

Central research questions for the Qualitative Research:
1) What are the preferences of the gay couples of the Netherlands towards the wedding celebrations?
2) Which informational sources do gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place of the wedding celebration?

The research question for the external and internal audit:
1) How capable is Amstel InterContinental Hotel in the realization of a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new market segment, which is gay people?

1.5 Global work breakdown structure of the thesis project

The global work breakdown structure that illustrates all the main steps of the current project can be found in the Appendix II to the current report.

1.6. A reading guide to the thesis report

The following report starts with the introduction which describes the client’s background, management problem, research questions and a work breakdown structure. The second part of the present report is a research part. It consists of the introduction, which includes the objectives of the research, and the research questions, theoretical framework, methodological justification and results of the research. The recommendation to the client can be found in the third part of the present report. It consists of the introduction, which includes the objective of the advisory part, followed by evaluation of the alternative solutions to the management problem, suggestions for implementation of the advice and the conclusion. In the afterword of the present report the reflection on the daily practice is discussed as well as a reflection on the value of the thesis for the industry or the field in general.

2. Research part

2.1 Introduction

The objective of the field research is to gain more in-depth knowledge about preferences of gay couples in the Netherlands towards wedding celebrations and about sources that gay couples in the Netherlands use while choosing the place for a wedding celebration in order to create a recommendation on how the marketing product of the gay wedding celebrations should look like, which promotional tools should be used by Amstel InterContinental Hotel in order to reach a targeted segment – gay couples. The second objective of the field research is to investigate how capable Amstel InterContinental Hotel is in
realization of a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new marketing segment – gay people.

**Central research questions** – there are three central research questions in the following field research. The knowledge that will be collected by the first research question will help to design a new marketing product – gay wedding celebration – based on the preferences of the targeted segment – gay couples.

The knowledge that will be collected with the second research question will be used in order to create the right advertising sources which will be a tool to reach targeted segment – gay couples.

1) What are the preferences of the gay couples of the Netherlands towards the wedding celebrations?

2) Which informational sources do gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place of the wedding celebration?

   The third research question will help to find out if Amstel InterContinental Hotel is capable of realizing the marketing strategy. The answer to this research question will be given in the form of the SWOT analysis.

3) How capable is Amstel InterContinental Hotel in the realization of a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new market segment – gay people?

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In order to create a theoretical framework for the present research the main research questions were divided into core concepts. These core concepts are: gay couples in the Netherlands, same-sex marriage in the Netherlands, types of wedding receptions, aspects of the event organization, informational sources, segmentation, targeting and positioning in marketing, promotion of the product and SWOT analysis. In the literature review below all the above mentioned core concepts are extensively described.

2.2.1 Gay community in the Netherlands

Gay community is defined by a medical dictionary as “a loosely coherent group of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals and their supporters, organizations and subcultures, united by a philosophy and culture that accepts non–traditional partnerships, lifestyles, and relationships” (The Free Dictionary, 2012).

According to the research that was conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research in The Hague in 2011 which is titled “Acceptance of Homosexuality in the Netherlands” Dutch population can be classified as the most gay–tolerant nation. Despite this, there are still some groups within Dutch society who reject homosexuality, but these groups are not numerous and smaller than in other European countries. The survey shows that “a majority of the Dutch population believe that gay people should have equal rights, but if children are involved the level of support is lower than for relationships between adults. Although the adoption legislation in the Netherlands is gender–neutral and therefore open to same–sex couples, 22% of respondents reject the idea of equal adoption rights for gay and straight
couples. By contrast, only 11% support the idea of banning same-sex marriages; 74% disagree with this idea" (Acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands, 2011).

"Amsterdam is one of the most gay-friendly cities in the world" (Richards & Wilson, 2007). The capital of the Netherlands is famous for a great variety of places where members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community are the most welcome. According to the official portal website of the city of Amsterdam, there is a wide range of gay-friendly bars including a gay-friendly cruise club, restaurants and hotels. There are also such venues as Pink Point, which is Amsterdam's official gay and lesbian information kiosk situated next to the Homomonument. Pink Point provides information on the Homomonument, as well as general information on gay and lesbian Amsterdam. Homomonument is the memorial that was established in 1979. This monument "commemorates the gay men and women who lost their lives in the World War II. This monument also commemorates all homosexuals who have been or are still being persecuted by government regimes". (Iamsterdam, 2011)

2.2.2 Same-sex marriage in the Netherlands

Same-sex marriage definition: "Same-sex marriage (also known as gay marriage) is marriage between two people of the same biological sex and/or gender identity. Legal recognition of same-sex marriage or the possibility to perform a same-sex marriage is sometimes referred to as marriage equality or equal marriage, particularly by supporters. The legalization of same-sex marriage is characterized as "redefining marriage" by many opponents" (Wikipedia, 2011).

While creating a product of gay wedding celebrations it is important to find out if there is a demand in such a product among gay couples in the Netherlands. In order to find out the rate of same-sex marriages in the Netherlands the previous researches in this field were analysed.

Same-sex marriage rate in the Netherlands was the subject of the research for many surveys that were conducted in 2011 – the tenth anniversary since same-sex marriages were officially legalised in the Netherlands. The survey that was made by Statistics of Netherlands shows "that in the last 10 years, there were 14,813 same-sex marriages. Of those couples, 7,522 were female and 7,295 were male. Since 2001, same-sex marriages have officially been recognised. In recent years, more lesbian than homosexual couples have got married: nearly 800 versus 600 in 2010.

The number of homosexual and lesbian couples living together totalled 57 thousand in 2010. One in three couples had their relationships officially registered. Nearly 11 thousand couples were married and more than 6 thousand had registered partnerships” (Statistics of Netherlands, 2011).

2.2.3 Wedding receptions

Definition of a wedding reception: "A wedding reception is a party held after the completion of a marriage ceremony. It is held usually as hospitality for those who have attended the wedding, hence the name reception: the couple receives society, in the form of family and friends, for the first time as a married couple. Hosts provide their choice of food and drink, although a wedding cake is popular."
Entertaining guests after a wedding ceremony is traditional in most societies, and can last anywhere from half an hour to many hours or even days" (Maharaja Events, 2012).

**Types of a wedding reception**

According to the Daniels and Loveless, the authors of the book *Wedding planning and management* the reception can be categorised by time of the day when it takes place. The reception can be organized in the morning, afternoon or evening.

The wedding ceremony which is held in the morning (around nine or ten a.m.) can be followed by a breakfast or lunch. The food on this reception can be served in the way of course meal or as a buffet. The menu is usually selected according to the breakfast menu which includes croissants, cheese or cold cuts, fresh fruits, omelette or eggs Benedict. A choice of juices, coffee and tea should be presented at the reception. As a morning reception is held quite early, there should be light alcoholic beverage offered to the guests. The excellent choices would be champagne, mimosas or punch.

Luncheon is a type of a wedding reception that follows the wedding ceremony organized in the late-morning or midday. This reception can be a buffet or a sit-down affair as the breakfast reception. The food that is served at this reception is usually light and includes such items as pasta, chicken, cold cuts, assorted types of cheese and fresh fruits. For those guests who require more upscale feel light seafood such as poached salmon or shrimps can be added to the menu.

A tea reception is usually a private home or a garden party which is held between two and five p.m. This type of reception follows the early-afternoon wedding. On the tea reception the beverages are mainly served. It can be soft drinks as well as alcoholic drinks. This kind of reception implies that guests will stay throughout the evening and mingle as they eat.

The cocktail reception is similar to the tea reception but a little bit more formal. This reception is held between four and seven p.m. and follows the late-afternoon wedding ceremony. Wine, champagne, beer or punch may be offered to the guests at this type of reception. Hot and cold starters may be served on the buffet tables.

The dinner reception usually begins between six and nine p.m. It is more elaborate than receptions that are held earlier in the day. Dinner frequently starts with a cocktail hour where drinks and light starters are served to the guests. A dinner reception, like the brunch and luncheon, may also be served either as a buffet or a course meal.

**2.2.4 Aspects of an event organization**

According to the "Event planning guidelines" of Oxford University there are following major aspects that have to be taken into account while organizing an event. These aspects are:

- Venue
- Atmosphere
- Food and Beverage
- Event Staff
- Special Requirements

While choosing the venue the following key factors must be taken into account: the location, facilities, the capacity and the cost. Visiting potential venues is the most effective way of finding out whether they are suitable for the particular event or activities that are planned. It can be also asked whether the similar events were held at that venue in the past and how they worked.

The atmosphere on the event will be built by the colours of the event decoration, which can bring the specific mood to the guests of the event. The colours can also show the purpose of the event and its theme. The second factor which creates the atmosphere of the event is entertainment. It must be chosen according to the purpose of the event.

Food and beverage are the third aspect which has to be thoughtfully planned by the event organizers. Food and beverage can be served in different ways. Ways of serving food and beverage are described in the paragraph 2.2.5 of the present report. While conducting the menu for the event the dietary requirements, such as vegetarianism and religious dietary requirements have to be considered, in order to be sure that there is a range of options that suit everyone.

Event staff can be categorised into event planner and the staff who work on the event itself. The event planner is responsible for working out the whole concept of the wedding ceremony, working out the budget of the wedding, choosing the right place for the ceremony, inviting professionals for the wedding ceremony (like a photographer, a host), writing the scenario of the wedding party, and coordinating the wedding ceremony. For the event planner it is important to have a detailed plan and timeline, which will help to coordinate different areas of the event planning, particularly where there are a number of people or departments involved. Communication and cooperation with the client is very important to meet all the wishes of the client and to make the event as expected or even better.

As for the staff on the event, in addition to possible catering and audio/visual needs, other staff to work at the event in stewarding or security roles have to be considered. The choice of extra staff usually depends on the number of guests that are expected and the complexity of the event. In organizing the event, the special requirements of the client have to be taken into account as well.

2.2.5 Informational sources

Personal communication channels:

According to Kotler and Armstrong, the authors of the book *Principals of Marketing* in personal communication channels “two or more people communicate directly with each other. They might communicate face to face, over the telephone or mobile phone, by email or even through Internet “chat”. Personal communications are effective because they allow for personal addressing and feedback.” (Kotler, & Armstrong, 2010)

Some personal communication channels are controlled directly by the company. For example, company salespeople contact target buyers. Other personal communications about the product may reach buyers through channels not directly controlled by the company. These might include independent experts—
consumers advocates, online buying guides and others—making statements to target buyers. Or they might be neighbours, friends, family members and associates talking to target buyers. This last channel, known as word-of-mouth influence, has considerable effect in many product areas.

**Non-personal communication channels:**

Referring to the same authors “non-personal communication channels are media that carry messages without personal contact or feedback. They include major media, atmospheres and events. Important media include print media (newspapers, magazines, and direct mail), broadcast media (radio, television), display media (billboards, sings, posters) and online and electronic media (e-mail, website, and social media).” (Kotler, & Armstrong, 2010)

Atmospheres are designed environments that create or reinforce the buyer’s leaning towards buying a product. Thus lawyers’ office and banks are designed to communicate confidence and other factors that might be valued by their client.

The events are occurrence stage to communicate message to target audience. For example, public relations department arrange press conferences, grand openings, shows and exhibits, public tours and other events to communicate with specific audience.

**2.2.6 “Segmentation, targeting, positioning” model**

In order to focus on the particular segment which in the case of the present project is gay couples it is important to support the activities that will help to acquire the new market segment with the current market theory. The most relevant model that shows which actions it is necessary to take in order to create a certain position within certain segment is “segmentation, targeting, positioning” (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010).

The main idea of the model is to show that the market is very diverse and consists of a lot of segments which may differ from each other by needs and buying practices. In this case an organization should not have a goal to appeal to all buyers in the market but to “design customer-driven marketing strategies that build the right relationship with the right customers” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

The main components of this model are segmentation, targeting and positioning. They are considered as steps that have to be taken into account in order to select the right marketing segment and create a value to that segment.

**Segmentation**

Within the segmentation, targeting and positioning model one can specify another model, which is segmentation model. According to this model customers can be segmented in different ways. “There are four variables that can be used in segmenting customer market which are geographic, demographic,
psychographic and behavioral” (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). These four variables are divided into subcategories which can be found in the Kotler’s segmentation model (Appendix III).

Although the segment was already chosen by Amstel InterContinental Hotel which is gay couples, it is important to make more specific segmentation based on demographic, psychographic and behavioral variables. To distinguish gay couples as a separate market segment is not enough, because gay couples may vary upon different aspects such as income, age, lifestyle and etc. Segmentation of gay couples can be found in Appendix IV to the current report.

Targeting

The stage of segmentation is followed by the stage of targeting. "The firm now has to evaluate the various segments and decide how many and which segments it can best serve” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

Evaluation of the segment

The evaluation can be made according to following criteria:

- Segment size and growth
- Segment structural attractiveness
- Company objectives and recourses

In case of Amstel InterContinental Hotel where gay couples were selected as a targeted segment for the product of wedding celebrations the above mentioned evaluation criteria are applied.

"Three percent of the Dutch population define themselves as gays, which are 503,850 people” (Statistics of the Netherlands, 2013). The assumption that not all of them want to get married and not all of those who want to get married will meet the criteria which are mentioned in the Appendix IV of the current project reduces the size of the segment. Although the targeted segment contains not a lot of representatives this segment is appealing for Amstel InterContinental Hotel. It is explained by the fact, that this segment is structurally attractive and meets the objectives and resources of the company. According to Armstrong & Kotler the segment’s structural attractiveness includes the intensity of the competition, existence of actual or potential substitute products, power of buyers, and power of the suppliers.

The gay segment is attractive for Amstel InterContinental Hotel because it does not contain a lot of aggressive competitors. Among main competitors of Amstel InterContinental Hotel (the list of the main competitors can be found in the paragraph 2.4.2 SWOT analysis) only Pulitzer hotel focuses on gay weddings and has a certificate for gay weddings organization.

The unavailability of substitute products in the market is the second benefit of the gay segment. According to the website which is called “Gay Weddings Destinations there are only two historical buildings where gay weddings are organized. These buildings are West Indies and Hortus Botanicus. In total there are two places in the Netherlands which can be determined as places that offer substantial product and specialize in organizing gay wedding celebrations, which is not a lot for 503,850 gay people.

In case of gay segment which, is targeted by Amstel InterContinental Hotel, the power of buyers is low due to the following reasons. Firstly, buyers are less concentrated than sellers, which means that there are more buyers than sellers. Secondly, according to the “Tourist Magazine” the segment which is targeted by Amstel Intercontinental Hotel is not price sensitive. “Research suggests that the gay consumers are relatively upscale, well-educated and free-spending' (Reaching out to the gay tourist:
opportunities and threats in an emerging market segment, 2008). Thirdly, the product of gay weddings is highly differentiated because each wedding is personal and unique. Fourthly, there is a small number of substitute products. All these reasons prove the fact that the buying bargaining power is low, which makes gay segment appealing for Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

The following reasons reduce the power of suppliers. Firstly, the suppliers are not concentrated compared to buyers. There is a wide range of suppliers in the wedding market. Secondly, suppliers cannot start to produce the product of the wedding celebrations themselves, because they do not have enough resources and capabilities. Thirdly, Amstel InterContinental Hotel as a buyer is educated about the product, because the hotel has an experience in holding gay wedding celebrations.

The choice of the gay segment goes in line with company objectives and recourses. The extensive explanation of the objectives and resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel can be found in the paragraph 2.4.2 SWOT analysis.

Selecting targeted market segment

"After evaluation different segments, the company must now decide which and how many segments it will target. "A target market consists of set of buyers who share common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve" (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

A company may choose from four target marketing strategies from broadly targeting to narrow targeting which are presented in the Figure 2.

![Figure 2.2 Target marketing strategies](image)

By choosing only one segment in the market on which all the promotional efforts will be concentrated and wishing to acquire a large market share on this segment Amstel InterContinental Hotel chooses a concentrated marketing or niche marketing strategy. It is proved by the definition of niche marketing strategy “Concentrated marketing or niche marketing– a market coverage strategy in which a firm goes after a large share of one or a few submarkets” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

Position products

Positioning of the product is the last stage in the "segmentation, targeting and positioning”model.

Different authors define the term of product’s positioning in different ways. In the book Principles of Marketing the product’s positioning is defined in the following way. “The product’s position is the way the product is defined by consumers on important attributes – the place the product occupies in consumer’s minds relative to competing products” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

Al Ries and Jack Trout in the book Positioning: The Battle of Your Mind while describing the term positioning of the product, mention the following “Position is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to a mind of the prospect” (Ries, A., & Trout, J, 2013).

In the book Contemporary marketing written by Louis E. Boone and David L. Kurtz the subject of product’s positioning is introduced as following: “Product positioning refers to consumer’s perception of a product’s attributes, uses, quality, and advantages and disadvantages relative to competing brands” (Boone, E.L., & Kurtz, D. L., 2013).
All the mentioned above definitions have the common idea that product’s positioning is inseparably connected with the customers and competitors. In other words the product’s positioning is the image that the customers have about the product, while comparing it with competing products or brands.

This image can be created by collecting the information about the preferences and wishes of the targeted segment towards offered product. Only knowing the wishes of targeted segment one can develop a product. Apart from that, the company should have the competitive advantages, which will highlight it among the competitors. In the book Principals of Marketing a competitive advantage is defined as “an advantage over competitors gained be offering consumers greater value, either through providing a lower price or by providing more benefits that justly increase prices” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

As a conclusion, it can be said that the new segment can be reached with the help of the “segmentation, targeting and positioning” model, which includes three stages. Within the first stage, which is called segmentation, the company must divide the market into segments. Within the second stage (targeting) the most appealing segment or combination of segments must be selected by the company. Within the third stage—positioning—the company must find the right positioning which goes in line with the needs and wishes of the target segment.

2.2.7 Promotion

Rephrasing Kotler, promotion is the way by which a company communicates with the consumers and buyers.

There are five major promotional tools, which all together form a promotion mix or communication mix. “Promotion mix is the specific mix of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

The marketing tools that are mentioned above can be applied all together or in different combinations in order to communicate with the customers.

Setting the overall promotion mix

In order to develop an effective promotion mix all the promotion tools have to be blended carefully. The company must exclude randomly mixed promotion tools for effective communication with the consumers. The nature of each promotional tool should be taken into account while developing a promotion mix.

When analyzing advertising as a promotional tool it should be noted that this tool has advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantages of the present promotional tool are the following. Firstly, advertising can reach masses of geographically dispersed buyers. Secondly, with the help of advertising the message that the seller wants to send to the buyer can be repeated many times. This message can be received by buyers and compared with the message of the competitors. Thirdly, advertising also allows the company to dramatize the product with the help of its expressive nature. Fourthly, this tool can be used for both – creating a long term image and pulling quick sales.

Although using advertising as a promotional tool may bring many benefits to the company communication process, the tool has some objective disadvantages, which should be noted as well.
These disadvantages are: impersonal approach of the promotional tool as well as the fact that advertising is an example of one way communication. In this case the audience does not feel that the response from them is necessary.

According to the book *Principals of Marketing*, personal selling on the one hand is the most useful marketing tool, but on the other hand the most expensive one, “costing companies several hundred euros on average per sales call” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010). Personal selling has the following unique qualities. Firstly, it involves interaction between consumer and seller, so the seller can take into account the consumer’s needs and wishes and make quick adjustments. Secondly, with the personal selling the buyer feels the necessity to listen and respond within the communication process. Finally, the effective personal selling is able to make the buyer interested in the seller for a long time and gives the seller the opportunity to build a long-term relationship by solving customer problems.

Sales promotion includes such tools as coupons, contests, free gifts, price reduction, premium offers, etc. Although sales promotion cannot build a long-term brand preference, this promotional tool can create a stronger and quicker response with the help of the following unique qualities. Firstly, sales promotion attracts the customer’s attention and provides information that in most cases leads to a purchase. Secondly, this promotional tool can be used to dramatize product offers and to boost sagging sales. Thirdly, sales promotion stimulates and rewords quick response.

Public relations (PR) in combination with other promotional tools can be very cost-effective. This promotional tool has the following unique qualities. Firstly, PR is very believable. Customers trust news stories, features, events and sponsorships more than advertising. The second quality of public relations is that the message reaches the buyers as news rather than as sales–direct communication, which enables the company to reach those customers who avoid advertising and salespeople. Finally this promotional tool can dramatize a company or a product.

There are a lot of forms of direct marketing: direct mail, electronic marketing, telemarketing, and online marketing. Direct marketing is suitable to build one-to-one customer relations and take highly targeted marketing efforts. Direct marketing has the following unique qualities. Firstly, customers feel individual approach, because direct marketing is not public and is addressed to a specific person. Secondly, it can be customized, because the message can be created in the way to appeal to a specific customer. Finally, direct marketing creates a dialogue between the consumer and seller, which makes it interactive.

Taking into consideration the unique qualities of each promotional tool, the company can develop an effective and cost-efficient promotion mix.

2.2.8 Content of a SWOT analysis

In order to develop a marketing strategy it is very important to analyse the current situation at the market. Marketing audit can be used for this purpose. According to Kotler, P., & Armstrong marketing audit is a “comprehensive, systematic, independent and periodic examination of a company’s environment, objectives, strategies and activities to determine problem areas and opportunities and to recommend a plan of action to improve the company’s marketing performance”. (Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. 2010) When learning about the situation inside the organization internal audit is used. When learning about the situation outside the organization external audit is used. All the relevant
information is accumulated, evaluated and distilled into a critique reflection the organization's primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and treats, known as the SWOT analysis. The internal audit covers the mission statement, organization’s resources and capabilities, current offerings, previous performance, business relationships and key issues. "A Strength is an internal capability or factor that can help the organization to archive its objectives, making the most of opportunities or deflecting threats. A Weakness is an internal capability or factor that may prevent the organization from achieving its objectives or effectively handing opportunities and threats, especially within the competitive context. The external audit covers political–legal factors, economic factors, social–cultural factors and technological factors (known as a DESTEP model) plus ecological and competitive factors that may present opportunities or pose threats. An opportunity is an external circumstance or factor that the organization can attempt to exploit for higher performance. A Threat is an external circumstance or factor that could inhibit organizational performance" (Woods, 2010).

2.3 Methodological justification

2.3.1 Research design and strategy

For this particular project the exploratory qualitative research was chosen. This choice was based on the type of information that the research is expected to provide. "Exploratory research is conducted to provide a better understanding of the situation. It is not designed to come up with final answers or decisions" (Brotherton, 2008). The definition of the exploratory research shows that this research design is the most suitable for the field research of the present report, because the aim of the research is not to come up with some answers or decisions, but to have an in–depth understanding about how gay people prefer to celebrate their weddings and which informational sources they usually use while choosing a place for a wedding. On the initial step of planning the current project the quantitative research has been considered as a complimentary research strategy. This consideration was further rejected due to the fact that the quantitative research does not provide in–depth understanding on the phenomena, which is essential in the present research. The quantitative research is capable of providing the researcher with the information concerning figures and numbers, which is not an objective in this case. The second research strategy was rejected due to the time limitation as well.

As the outcome of the present project is a marketing strategy for the Amstel InterContinental Hotel, and the field research is focused on gaining information about the selected target group’s preferences, the research is inseparably connected with the targeted segment. It is important to take into account requirements, preferences and wishes of the target group. Qualitative research is a useful tool, which can help to understand ideas and thoughts of gay people about wedding celebrations and criteria they find important while choosing the place for a wedding celebration by interviewing them.

2.3.2 Method of data collection

Semi–structured interviews with open–ended questions were chosen as a method of data collection for the Quantitative research.
“The primary purpose of the interview is to obtain the required information from the respondents. Interviewing is regarded as a useful approach where qualitative data is required, and more in-depth explanation is necessary. Interview increases the degree of flexibility that exists while process of collecting data is taking place” (Brotherton, 2008). Interview is the most appropriate method where little is known about the studied phenomenon yet, or detailed insight are required. Individual interviews are also particularly appropriate for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment.

Semi-structured interviews consist of few key questions that help to define the area that is going to be explored, but at the same time allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to get a deeper knowledge about the idea of the response. This format of the interview was chosen because on the one hand it provides the participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which can avoid the situation when respondent goes too far away from the topic of the interview. On the other hand it allows the participants to discover or elaborate some aspects that are important for them, but may not previously have been taken into account by the researcher while designing the interview.

2.3.3 Selection of research unit

For the selection of the data source, Convenience sampling was chosen. “Convenience sampling is the simplest form of non-probability based sampling. It is a way of selecting a sample that is available at the time and place of choice” (Brotherton, 2008). It is the only possible sampling for this particular field research because although the variables on which the sample was scored and selected were known there is not sampling frame available.

The respondents were selected according to the following criteria:
- Gay people in the Netherlands who are in the relationship at the moment
- Gay people in the Netherlands who are planning to get married
- Gay people in the Netherlands who are planning to married and have a wedding party

The respondents who met all the criteria mentioned above took part in the interviews.

In order to get in touch with the members of LGBT community of the Netherlands, the researcher used the official page of the COC organization on Facebook as a tool.

COC Nederland is a Dutch organization for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) men and women. “COC strives for the decriminalisation of sexual orientation and gender identity and for equal rights emancipation and social acceptance of LGBT’s in the Netherlands and all over the world. COC is one of the few LGBT organization that has a special consultive status with the United Nations” (COC Netherlands, 2014).

Reasons for choosing COC organization as a contact tool for the present research:
- COC is an official reliable organization
- COC is an organization that represents gay people’s rights and needs
COC is a biggest organization for LGBT in the Netherlands. It has 7000 members in the Netherlands.

Facebook was used as a tool to get in touch with the members of COC organization. The messages to the members of the official Facebook page of the COC organization were sent by Facebook. The messages included the invitation for taking part in the research by giving the interview by Skype. In the message it was also described that the research is made by the student of Saxion University of Applied Science for Amstel InterContinental Hotel. The topic of the interview was mentioned in the message as well as the way of further communication in case if a potential respondent will agree to take part in the research.

As the researcher was limited in time, it was impossible to wait long for the responses to the invitations. In this case the decision was made to send the invitations only to those members of the official Facebook page of the COC organization that showed some activity on the COC page within last six month, which means posted some information on the page or left the comments. This decision was based on the assumption that these members will reply to the invitations quickly and will show the interest in the research, because they have already showed the interest in the gay issues on the page of the COC organization. Sending messages to active members increased the rate of the response to the invitations.

Moreover, the messages were sent only to those active members of the official Facebook page of the COC organization who met the sampling criteria which were stated above. The profiles of active members of the Facebook page of the COC organization were checked by the researcher. During the profile check it was investigated if the potential respondents live in the Netherlands and have a partner.

Among members of official Facebook page of the COC organization who showed the activity within the last six month there were thirty members who met all the three sampling criteria. The messages were sent to them by Facebook. Seventeen of them were women and thirteen men. Seven people out of thirty replied to the invitation: four women and three men.

2.3.4 Measurement instrument

The operationalization of the core concepts of the present research was done in order to create an interview guide in the future. The operationalization process includes the following steps. "Within the first step of interview construction the nature of the investigation and the objective of the research must be determined" (Verwijmeren, 2010). That was already done in the paragraph 2.2.1 by listing the research questions.

As a second step of the interview construction, the first central research question was divided into two conceptual areas. The first central question of the research is "What are the preferences of gay couples of the Netherlands towards wedding celebrations?" Two conceptual areas were specified in the first research question. These conceptual areas are "Gay couples of the Netherlands" and "Wedding celebrations".

After the central research question was divided into conceptual areas, general areas of inquiry can be listed within the conceptual areas. It does not necessarily have to be specific questions, but items that may be further formed into specific questions.
In order to get information about the respondents—gay people—the interviews started with the demographical questions. The questions were based on the following areas of inquiry: gender, age, partnership status, lifestyle and education.

The second conceptual area of the first research question is "wedding celebrations". This area was broken down into the following areas of inquiry: venue (location, accommodation), atmosphere, food and beverage (F&B), event staff, special requirements. The operationalization of this conceptual area was based on the theory of event organizations, more specifically on the aspects of the event organization which were listed in the *Event planning guidelines* of Oxford University. A more detailed description of the *Event planning guidelines* can be found in the paragraph 2.2.5 of the current work. These aspects were used as a base for the interview questions about preferences of gay people towards wedding celebrations.

Although the concept of wedding celebrations was operationalized before making the interview and the questionnaires were formulated in advance, the respondents were offered to describe their perfect wedding day. This was done in order to reveal what exactly the respondents find important on the wedding celebrations and let them allocate the topics in the way they want. It was also done in order to reveal new preferences and wishes of the gay people towards wedding celebrations, which were possibly not mentioned in the questions of the interview by the researcher.

In order to break down the second research question into conceptual areas the same procedure was applied. The second central research question “Which informational sources do gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place for wedding celebration?”

The question has the following core conceptual areas: “Gay couples of the Netherlands” and “Informational sources”.

The process of dividing the conceptual area “gay couples of the Netherlands” was already described above.

The division of the conceptual area which was named “informational sources” was based on the marketing theory that describes by which communication channels the customer can receive information about the organization. The book *Principals of Marketing* by Armstrong and Kotler was used as the theoretic base. To specify, the conceptual area “informational sources” was divided into following areas of enquiry: personal communication channels and non-personal communication channels. These areas were further categorised according to the marketing theory. This means that the area that was named “personal communication channels” was divided into following categories: “neighbours, friends, family members” and “opinion leaders”. The area of enquiry that was named “non-personal communication channels” was divided into the categories “media”, which includes newspapers, magazines and direct mail and “on-line and electronic media”, which includes e-mail, websites and social media.

An interview guide for the present research can be found in the Appendix V to the present report.
2.3.5 Method of data analysis

The first stage of data analysis is documentation of the data. During this stage the recorded data – interviews was transcript into the written documents. The transcripts of the interviews can be found in the Appendix VI to the present report.

The transcription of the data was followed by the stage of categorizing the data. Open coding and axial coding were used during this stage. The axial coding can be found in the Appendix VII to the present report. Within the open coding, the interviews were divided into fragments and each fragment was labelled by the particular code or memo. Within the axial coding process the set of procedures were used in order to put data back together in different ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This was achieved through use of a coding paradigm that includes conditions, context, action/interaction strategies, and consequences.

The final stage of data analysis was a descriptive analysis where the process of open and axial coding was extensively described by the researcher as well as the main features of the collected information.

As the purpose of the present research is exploratory research there were no further data analysis because in the descriptive analysis of current research central research questions were answered by listing the preferences of the gay people towards wedding celebrations and the sources that gay people use while choosing a place for the wedding celebration.

2.4 Results of the field research

In the following chapter one can find the results of the field research. The chapter starts with the descriptive analysis where the results of the open coding and axial coding are presented, as well as the overview of the most important topics, which are based on the tree diagram with the use of the relevant quotations from the interview that were conducted during the research. The descriptive analysis is followed by the SWOT analysis, which provides the answer to the third research question and describes how capable Amstel InterContinental Hotel is in realization the marketing strategy which is based on targeting a new segment– gay people. The conclusions of the present chapter can be found after the SWOT analysis as well as a description of reliability and validity of the research.

2.4.1 Descriptive analysis

Within the following research project seven interviews were made. Four interviews with lesbians and three interviews with gays. All the respondents have a partner at the moment and have a willing to get married and celebrate their wedding. That means that all the respondents meet the sampling criteria. All interviews were started with the demographical questions in order to know background information about the respondents. The answers to the questions showed that all the respondents have a current job. All the interviewees have a social life, which means that they like to spend time with their family and friends in different ways. “Well… I like to chill with my friends. Most of the time we gather together to discuss philosophical problems or play board games” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014). “I like to hand out. When it is cold outside I like to sit on my couch or meet up with friends or
family and have coffee indoors” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014). The respondents have got different levels of education which varies from MBO to the Academic level of education.

In order to apply the open coding the interviews were divided into fragments. Each fragment was labelled with a certain code. Within the coding process descriptive, interpretative and in–vivo codes were used.

In order to do the axial coding all the codes which were created within the open coding process were grouped into categories. For each category the umbrella code was made. As the result of axial coding two code trees were created by the researcher, one code tree for each of the core concept. The umbrella codes correlated with the main categories of the core concepts developed within the operationalization process. While creating code trees the new categories were added in order to provide more in–depth analysis of the data. The extensive descriptive analysis can be found in the Appendix VIII to the current report.

2.4.2 SWOT analysis

In the process of developing a new marketing strategy it is important not only to analyze the market segment, which the company is trying to acquire, and to get the information about the wishes and preferences of this segment, but also to analyze if the company is ready to meet the requirements of the chosen segment and if the company is able to provide the segment with the required service. It is also important to find out if the marketing strategy which is based on focusing on the new segment – gay people does not have such external threats that make the use of this strategy unbeneﬁcial or simply impossible for the company.

The only way to find out if the company is ready to implement the new marketing strategy is to correlate the analysis of the market segment, its wishes and preferences with the audit of external situation on the market and internal audit of the resources of the company. In order to answer the research question “How capable is Amstel InterContinental Hotel in the realization of a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new market segment – gay people?” the SWOT analysis was carried out. It may be considered that the company is capable of realizing a new marketing strategy if it has enough human resources, informational resources, ﬁnancial resources and supply resources. In this case by the internal analysis of Amstel InterContinental Hotel it will be found out if the hotel has the staff, skills, commitment, and rewards to successfully implement the new marketing strategy in order to find out the human resources potential. In order to find out if Amstel InterContinental Hotel has enough informational resources, it will be investigated if the hotel has the data, tools and access to information to successfully implement the new marketing strategy. The ﬁnancial resources also have to be taken into account while making an internal analysis. In this case it will be investigated if the company has enough money to implement a new marketing strategy. Supply resources are also the factor which can show if the company is capable of performing the new marketing strategy. While analyzing the supply resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel it will be investigated if the hotel has the suppliers, supply systems and relationship to implement the new marketing strategy.

The external situation on the market also has an inﬂuence on the capability of Amstel InterContinental Hotel in realization a new marketing strategy. The company can be determined as capable in realization of a new marketing strategy if there are no external threats that have a negative inﬂuence on the decision to realize the new marketing strategy. The external factors that may have an inﬂuence on the realization of a new marketing strategy are political and legal factor, economic factor, social and cultural
factor, technological factor, ecological factor and competitive factor. The political and legal factor is inseparably connected with the marketing strategy where the wedding celebrations are offered to gay people as a marketing product, because in many counties the legalization of the same–sex marriages is only a topic for consideration. The economic factor plays a vital role in the situation of offering the service of a high price, especially in the post economical crisis period. The social and cultural factor is not less important in case of marketing strategy where gay people are chosen as a new target group, because of the ambiguous attitude towards gay people in the modern society. Technological factor is also important, because it has an impact on the process of providing a new product and the process of its promotion. The importance of the ecological factor depends on the organization and its position of being “green”. The analysis of the competitors shows the rate of the competition in a particular field.

The analysis of all these factors in combination with the internal analysis can show if the Amstel InterContinental Hotel is capable of performing the new marketing strategy which is based on reaching the new marketing segment–gay people.

For the relevant internal audit the researcher got in contact with the Operations Manager of the hotel and Banqueting Sales Executive and Wedding Specialist, who are specialists in this area and could provide the researcher with the information from the insider point of view. While receiving information from the members of the management team of Amstel InterContinental Hotel who were mentioned above, it was taken into account that the information they provide can be subjective. The reflection on this fact can be found in the paragraph 2.6 Limitations and discussions.

For the relevant external audit internet was used as a source of information in order to investigate all the factors which build up the eternal environment.

The process of creating the SWOT analysis was fully based on the academic literature, such as the book *Principals of Marketing* by Kotler and Armstrong and *Essential Guide to Marketing Plan* by M. B. Wood’s.

**External audit**

1) Political and legal factors

The main political factor that has a positive influence on the new marketing product and the marketing strategy in general is the fact that same–sex marriages are legal in the Netherlands. The First of April 2001 was the date when same–sex marriages were legalized in the Netherlands. From that day till now a lot of countries followed the example of the Netherlands, but there are still places on earth that reject same–sex marriages. This factor is very important for the gay couples who are planning to get married, while selecting a place for a wedding.

2) Economic factors

The analysis of the economic situation in the Netherlands showed that there is a positive tendency in the country’s economy. According to the European Commission website the Netherlands is recovering from the financial crisis. The financial indicators of the county are stabilized. The financial reports that are published on the website are based on the following financial indicators: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth Rate, Rate of Inflation, Public Budget Balance and Current Account Balance. In the report this indicators of the year 2012 are compared with the indicators of the current year. The forecast for the above mentioned indicators for the year 2015 can be also found in the report.

So it is shown that the GDP growth rate increased from –1.2 percent in the year 2012 to 1.2 percent in the year 2014 on the year over year basis. Moreover, in the year 2015 it is forecasted that the GDP
growth rate will increase in the future. There is also a positive tendency in the inflation rate. In the year 2014 the inflation rate is 0.7 percent, which is less than in the year 2012. Two years ago the inflation rate was 2.8 percent. The indicator of the Public Budget Balance also shows positive changes. The government budget deficit decreased from 4.1 percent of the GDP in the year 2012 to 2.8 percent of the GDP in the year 2014. In the year 2015 the government budget deficit is expected to be 1.8 percent from the GDP. The Current Account Balance has a tendency to increase. This means that in the year 2012 7.7 percent of the county’s GDP were invested abroad. This indicator increased in the year 2014 up to 8.2 percent. It is predicted that in the year 2015 8.6 percent of the county’s GDP will be invested abroad.

All these factors show a positive tendency in the economy of the Netherlands, which means that the country is recovering from financial crisis. This fact indicates that people feel freer in spending money in comparison with the years of the financial crises.

3) Social and cultural factor

One of the most important factor which has a positive effect on the development a product of gay wedding celebrations in Amsterdam is the fact that acceptance of gay people in Amsterdam and in the Netherlands in general is high. As it was mentioned in paragraph 2.2.2 Gay community in the Netherlands of the current project, it can be said that Dutch population can be classified as the most gay-tolerant nation. Because of the tolerant attitude and the large number of gay-friendly places, Amsterdam is a popular destination among gay people from all over the world. In this case developing a product for the gay people and targeting a gay segment is a right marketing strategy because there is a demand for the gay-friendly product in the particular destination.

The social and cultural factor, which was mentioned above, causes another social and cultural factor, which has the positive effect on implementing the marketing strategy and promotion of the new marketing product–gay wedding celebrations. This factor is the Gay Pride, which annually takes place in Amsterdam. This parade attracts a lot of gay people to Amsterdam, which is a great opportunity for promotion and advertising of the new marketing product – gay weddings. According to the official website of the parade last year 500,000 people were the participants and the audience of the Gay Pride in Amsterdam (Amsterdam Gay Pride, 2013).

The third social and cultural factor has the negative influence on developing the product of gay weddings. This factor is the negative attitude of the representatives of different religions to homosexuality. In many confessions such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism homosexuality is considered to be a sin and improper sexual behavior which is not according to the norm. Amstel InterContinental Hotel hosts guest from different countries and they represent different religions. Many of them have a negative attitude to gay couples and do not accept gay marriages. So the fact that the hotel where they stay holds a gay wedding may produce a negative experience of their staying in the hotel. That fact can harm the reputation of Amstel InterContinental Hotel among the people who do not accept the homosexuality and same-sax marriages.

4) Technological factor

The rapid development of the social media is a technological factor that has an influence on creating a new marketing strategy in the hospitality industry. According to the Forbes website, "Approximately one-fifth of leisure travellers worldwide turn to social media platforms for inspiration" (Forbes, 2014).
This means that twenty percent of the hotel’s potential customers would search the information about the hotel on social media platforms and share their experience as well. This factor has a positive effect if the company uses social media tools in the right way. By social media the information about the company can be spread at lightning speed. But it has to be taken into account that the information can be positive as well as negative. So the way that hotel reacts to the negative information on social media websites is very important, because this reaction can be judged by its potential customers. In other words, only in case if the hotel uses all the benefits of social media and manages it in the right way, the development of social media can be a positive external factor for the hotel marketing. If the hotel does not pay much time and attention to social media in its marketing strategy, it might be a negative external factor. In case of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, which is already using such social media tools as Facebook and Twitter, the development of social media can have a positive influence on the implementation of the new marketing strategy. Using social media in promotion of the new product can help to quickly reach potential customers and cover the segment which is targeted.

5) Ecological factor

Ecological factor does not have a direct influence on the product of gay wedding celebrations. It depends on the choice of the organization in positioning itself as a “green company”.

6) Competitive factor

Six hotels were named by the management team of Amstel Hotel as the main competitors. These hotels are Okura Hotel, De l’Europe Hotel, Pulitzer Hotel, The Grand Hotel Krasnopolis, The Dylan Hotel, and Conservatorium Hotel. These hotels were chosen as the main competitors of Amstel InterContinental Hotel because the hotels that were mentioned above are upscale luxury hotels, providing similar facilities as Amstel InterContinental Hotel at approximately the same price level. All these hotels are located in the centre of Amsterdam. An extensive analysis of the main competitors was made by the management team of Amstel Hotel. The analysis can be found in the Appendix IX to the current report. All the competitors have the facilities for organizing wedding celebration, but only one hotel which stays in the competitors list focuses on the gay wedding celebrations and position itself as a gay-friendly hotel. This hotel is Pulitzer Hotel, which has a certificate that officially proves that the hotel can organize gay weddings. Apart from Pulitzer Hotel there is one hotel outside Amsterdam, which is Whitton House, that specializes in organization of gay weddings celebrations. There are also two historical buildings, which are West Indies and Hortus Botanicus, that may be competitors of Amstel InterContinental Hotel in the chosen field. There are also hotels in Amsterdam that have a gay-friendly position, such as Amstad Hotel, Quentin Hotel, and Mauro Mansion Hotel. These hotels are not direct competitors of the Amstel Hotel because these hotels do not have facilities to organize wedding celebrations. This fact is quite positive for Amstel InterContinental Hotel, because the market is not oversaturated with the companies which focus on gay wedding celebrations, which gives Amstel Hotel an opportunity to acquire the large market share.

Internal audit

1) Mission and vision

As Amstel InterContinental Hotel is the part of Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG), it shares the vision and mission of the company. On the website of IHG there are following mission and vision.
Mission "We are an international hotel company whose goal is to create GREAT HOTELS GUESTS LOVE" (InterContinental Hotel Group, 2014)

Vision "To become one of the world's great companies"

Goal “We want to grow by making our brands the first choice for guests and hotel owners”

High-level strategy “Our strategy is to build the hotel’s industry strongest operation system focused on the biggest markets and segment where scale really counts”

2) The organization’s resources and capabilities

   a) Human resources

   - There are eleven FTEs (Full-time equivalent) in the Banqueting department of the Amstel Hotel. Four FTEs deal with realization of the product and seven FTEs deal with the operational process.

   - According to the Operations manager of Amstel InterContinental Hotel the team of the banqueting department has a high qualification and has a lot of experience in organization of the weddings as well as the gay weddings. The staff of the Banqueting department knows all the standards of the providing service, which is requested for the 5-star hotel.

   - There is no rewarding system in the banqueting department

   b) Informational resources

   - Amstel InterContinental Hotel uses Opera as an operating system and the system for storing information.

   - Financial resources.

   Although the financial resources for implementing the new marketing product are limited, the organization is still ready to spend money on the new products and innovative ideas. Amstel InterContinental Hotel already has examples of successful launching of the new products such as the A-Bar and Dom Perignon suite.

3) Current offerings

Amstel InterContinental Hotel offers three types of wedding package to the guests at the moment. The packages have a difference in price, menu, and the duration of the wedding celebration. An extensive description of the wedding packages can be found in the Appendix X to the current report.

Apart from a wedding package, the guests are provided with the help of a wedding planner, personalized approach to the wedding menu and wedding night accommodation.

4) Previous performance

According to the Banquet Sales Executive and Wedding Specialist of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, eighty percent of all the bookings of the wedding celebrations in the hotel last year were ceremony+reception.
There was only one wedding for "High tea package," three weddings for "Full day package" and none weddings for the "Dinner package".

5) Business relations

According to the Operations Manager of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, there is no fixed list of suppliers in term of wedding celebrations, because the hotel firstly determines the personal wishes of the guests who want to get married and after that determines a list of suppliers. There are only short-term relations with the suppliers for the period of the wedding preparation and wedding celebration.

The table with the SWOT analysis can be found in the Appendix XI to the current report.

2.5 Conclusions

In the following chapter, the conclusions that have been made after the data analysis are presented by the researcher. Within the present chapter, all the research questions are answered. The questions of the qualitative research were answered, as the preferences of gay people towards wedding celebrations are extensively described, as well as the informational sources they use while searching the place for a wedding.

The results of the SWOT analysis are also described in the chapter. Further, the results of the qualitative research were correlated with the results of the SWOT analysis. It means that the preferences and wishes of gay people were correlated with the current internal resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, such as financial resources, human resources, informational resources and supply resources and external factors, such as the political and legal factor, economical factor, social and cultural factor, technological factor, ecological factor and competitive factor. This correlation was made in order to find out how capable Amstel InterContinental Hotel is of implementing the new marketing strategy that is focused on reaching a new target segment—gay people—by offering them a special product.

1. What are the preferences of gay couples of the Netherlands towards wedding celebrations?

1.1 Preferences for the location

Location is one of the most important criteria for gay people in the process of selecting a place for a wedding celebration. As gay people are not accepted in some countries, the first criteria for the location is to be gay-friendly. If the couple opt for marriage abroad, they will select a country where same-sex marriages are legalized, and LGBTs are accepted by the culture. If a couple prefer to stay in the Netherlands for a wedding celebration the gay-friendly issue is still urgent. Although gay people are aware that they may count on a positive and gay-friendly attitude within the Netherlands, they still will go extra miles to double check if the venue is gay-friendly.

While talking about the venue, flexibility is the second valuable aspect. Flexibility means that there should be an opportunity to have a wedding reception and wedding party inside as well as outside. The respondents think that just staying inside while celebrating the wedding is quite boring and they want to enjoy the weather and the picturesque view of the nature and city of Amsterdam.

A hotel is seen by the respondents as a convenient place for a wedding celebration, because it can host foreign guests.

1.2 Preferences for the atmosphere
Although all the respondent are aware that a wedding is a very significant day in their lives, they do not want to feel an emotional and time pressure on that day and want to have a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. The guests should also be relaxed, enjoy the time and feel like at home. So the feeling of calmness is very important.

The respondents opt for bright colours on the wedding. Most of the time it is a combination of white and some other colour. Bright colours produce a peaceful and happy atmosphere, an atmosphere of the celebration.

A live band was chosen by the major of the respondents as an entertainment on the wedding celebration.

1.3 Preferences for the food and beverages

Food is seen by the respondents as an important aspect of the wedding celebration, because food is associated with hospitality. As for the type of reception, the respondents opt for a dinner reception because it is more elaborate than the receptions that take place earlier in the daytime. Although the preferences for a certain menu were not mentioned by the respondents, the availability of national cuisine is an important issue. For those respondents who were not born in the Netherlands national food is the way to share their personality with the guests.

The main requirement for beverages is accessibility. The respondents prefer beverages to be served in the open bar, so each guest can easily get the drinks during the wedding party.

1.4 Preference for the staff

The first requirement for the staff on the wedding celebration is to be gay-friendly and open-minded. There should be no problems for the staff to serve gay people because the respondents do not want to be judged for their lifestyle on the wedding day. The staff on the wedding also have to show the professional skills and behaviour.

For the event planners there are also some requirements that respondents have. First of all, the event planners should cooperate with the wedding couple and listen to their wishes and preferences. The cooperation is the most important aspect of the wedding organization process. The respondents also would like to take the management position while organizing a wedding celebration by controlling the work of the event planners from time to time. The important decisions concerning the wedding should be discussed with the wedding couple. The event planners should be professional and have a deep knowledge in the wedding industry and experience in the organization of straight as well as gay weddings.

1.5 Budget of the wedding celebration

On average, the respondents are ready to spend around 18,000 euro on a wedding celebration. The budget of the wedding will be shared between the newly-weds. The respondents are willing to spend more on the service of good quality.

2. Which informational sources do gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place for wedding celebration?
The research showed that gay people use gay–focused sources and neutral–focused sources while searching for information. While using neutrally focused sources of information the respondents will double check if the venue for a wedding celebration is gay–friendly and the country where the wedding will take place is gay–friendly as well.

The opinion of friends and other representatives of a gay community is very important for the respondents. They are more likely to have a wedding celebration in a place that is approved by people they know or celebrate a wedding in the same place where their friends had a positive experience.

Apart from that the research showed that the respondents will start their search of a place for a wedding celebration with search of the venue on the Internet on hotel ranking websites or on the official website of the hotel if the certain hotel was selected in front.

Facebook is an important source of information for the respondent, because most of them belong to gay communities on Facebook, where people can share information and experience with each other. The interviews showed that respondents rely on the information from people with the same interests.

As for newspapers and magazines, few of them were mentioned by the respondents, which are “Zijn en Zijn”, “Espresso”, “Squeeze”.

3. How capable is Amstel InterContinental Hotel of performing a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new market segment – gay people?

The audit of the external and the internal environment showed that Amstel InterContinental Hotel is capable of realizing the new marketing strategy. Although the audit of the external environment showed that there are positive as well as negative external factors that may influence the implementation of the new marketing strategy in Amstel InterContinental Hotel, there are more positive external factors.

Firstly, the fact that same–sex marriages are legalized in the Netherlands has a positive effect on realization of the new marketing strategy, because this fact enables the hotel to organize same–sex marriages and attracts gay people from those counties where same–sex marriages are rejected by the law. This statement is referred to the political and legal factor.

Secondly, the economic situation in the Netherlands may be considered as favourable for developing a new marketing product. There is a positive tendency in the economy of the Netherlands according to such indicators as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, Rate of Inflation, Public Budget Balance, and Current Account Balance. These factors show that the Netherlands is recovering from the Financial Crisis and potential customers are going to spend more money.

Thirdly, a tolerant attitude towards gay people in the Netherlands, which is a social and cultural factor, has a positive influence on developing a new marketing strategy. This factor plays an important role in the external analysis in case of developing a product for the gay segment, because the topic of homosexuality is quite sensitive in the modern society. The fact that the Netherlands is the most gay–tolerant country enables gay couples feel comfortable and not to worry about the negative attitude of the society. But on the other hand, homosexuality has never been appreciated by the church. In this case the same–sex wedding in the hotel may scare away foreign guests – representatives of those countries where homosexuality is rejected by the religion. However, the Operations Manager of Amstel
InterContinental Hotel said that it is not the issue to worry about, because the weddings in the hotel are organized separately from other guests.

The boost of social media was mentioned in the external analysis as the technological factor. This factor can be both positive and negative. It depends on how the hotel adapts its marketing activities with the new tendencies in technology. In case of Amstel InterContinental Hotel this factor will have a positive influence, because the hotel is already present on social media platforms. That is why the hotel can use the social media as one of the promotional tools for the new marketing product.

The competitive factor can be also determined as a positive one in case of developing the new marketing product in Amstel InterContinental Hotel. The competition in the field of organizing gay weddings is not high at the moment. Among six main competitors of the hotel only Pulitzer Hotel is specialized in organizing gay weddings. Apart from Pulitzer hotel there is one hotel and two historical buildings which can build a competition for Amstel Hotel on the gay-wedding market. In total there are four main competitors that are targeting the same segment as Amstel Hotel in the Netherlands. As there are not many competitors at the moment, there is an opportunity for Amstel Hotel to acquire a large market share. But the fact that the main competitors of Amstel InterContinental Hotel have banqueting facilities can be classified as an external threat because these competitors have the facilities to follow the example of Amstel Hotel and start to focus on gay weddings and build up a competition at the gay wedding market.

The internal analysis showed that there are strengths as well as weaknesses in the operation process of the banqueting department and Amstel InterContinental Hotel in general that may have an influence on the implementation of the new marketing strategy.

The following factors can be determined as the internal strength of the banqueting department. Firstly, Amstel InterContinental Hotel is located in the center of Amsterdam, but at certain distance from the crowded streets. This location enables to enjoy the isolated atmosphere of the wedding and the beauty of the historical center of Amsterdam.

Secondly, the team of the banqueting department of Amstel InterContinental Hotel has an experience in organizing straight wedding celebrations, as well as gay wedding celebrations. Moreover, the staff of the banqueting department is familiar with the standards of providing the service on the level of an upscale hotel.

Thirdly, the personal approach in organizing each wedding helps to organize the wedding as close to the guest’s whishes as possible. In this case the guests feel the personal approach and readiness of the event organizers to cooperate with them.

The following factors can be determined as internal weaknesses of the banqueting department and Amstel InterContinental Hotel in general. Firstly, there is a lack of a rewarding system in the banqueting department, which could stimulate the staff of the department to work even more productive.

Secondly, the financial resources on realization of the new marketing strategy are limited with the range of the promotional activities that can be used to implement the new marketing strategy.
All the factors that were mentioned above show that Amstel InterContinental Hotel is capable of performing the new marketing strategy. It is proved by the availability of external opportunities and internal strengths that play an essential role in the realization of the new marketing strategy.

In conclusion, correlation of the resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel and preferences of gay people were made. This correlation showed that the product of wedding celebrations does not have to be changed, because the current product of wedding celebrations meets the requirements that gay people have due to following reasons.

Firstly, Amstel InterContinental Hotel is located in the center of Amsterdam, which is called the gay capital of the world, because the Netherlands was the first country to legalize same-sex marriages. This fact makes Amsterdam appealing to gay people and meets the first requirement of the gay-friendly location. Secondly, the availability of the terrace and seven meeting rooms in Amstel InterContinental Hotel makes it possible to organize a wedding celebration inside, as well as outside. That is why guests can enjoy the view of the Amstel channel if the weather is good, or have a wedding celebration in one of the meeting rooms (three of them with the overview to the river) if there is no chance to make the wedding outside because of the weather conditions.

The current approach to organization of the wedding celebrations is flexible and can be adapted to a new market segment because it is based on personal wishes of each guest. This means that the company is flexible in terms of suppliers, business relations and internal forces. Due to this fact it can be concluded that the colors and the entertainment of the wedding can be adapted to personal wishes of the guests. It also has to be taken into consideration that, according to the field research, the choice of the colors and entertainment of gay people is quite typical for this kind of events, so it actually does not depend on the sexual orientation, but on the personal wishes that wedding couple may have. The Amstel InterContinental Hotel already has the experience of the personal approach to each guest, so it will not be a new experience for the hotel in case of gay wedding celebrations. The same can be said about the food at the wedding. The descriptive analysis of the interviews showed that gay people who are originally not from the Netherlands would opt for the national cuisine to be served on the wedding celebration. As on the website of Amstel InterContinental Hotel it is mentioned that the menu on the wedding celebration can be chosen by the guests, and there is a possibility to add the national cuisine as well, it can be concluded that there is no changing needed concerning the menu of the wedding, and the hotel can meet all the requirement of the brides in this aspect.

2.6 Limitations and discussion

The current research is based on the literature, which means that all the steps of methodological justification are following the research literature, which is *Researching Hospitality and Tourism* by B. Brotherton and *Qualitative Research* by J. Verwijmeren.

The core concepts of the present research were elaborated by the literature overview and the operationalization of these core concepts is fully based on the literature, specifically the concept of wedding celebrations was based on the *Event planning guidelines*, which were conducted by Oxford University. The concept of informational sources was based on the marketing theory of Kotler.
Moreover, the measurement instrument was fully based on the operationalization of the core concepts and was discussed with the research teacher and the first examiner. All these facts indicate construct validity of the present research.

The internal audit of strengths and weaknesses of Amstel InterContinental Hotel and the external audit of the opportunities and threats was based on the academic literature such as *Principals of Marketing* by Kotler and Armstrong and *Essential Guide to Marketing Planning* by M. B Wood.

Internal validity, which is also called creditability, shows if “the results of the field research are credible or believable from perspective of the participants in the research” (Web–based centre for Social Research, 2006).

In the qualitative research the respondent sample was chosen in the way that the conclusions can be made about female and male representatives of the gay community of the Netherlands. The fact that women and men of different ages took part in the research gave us the possibility to look at the phenomena of gay weddings and informational sources from a different point of view. However, due to the time limitation and cooperation issue only seven respondents were interviewed, which limits the internal validity of the present research.

In order to make the relevant internal audit of Amstel InterContinental Hotel the researcher contacted with Operations Manager of the hotel and Banqueting Sales Executive and Wedding Specialist. It has to be taken into account that on the one hand there was a possibility of receiving subjective information from getting in contact only with these two specialists, but one the other hand the Operations Manager and the Banqueting Sales Executive and Wedding Specialist are not interested in brightening the information up. These specialists are interested in providing the most reliable information for the research because they expect to get the recommendations, which will help to increase the quality of provided service for the new market segment.

Difficulties for conducting the relevant audit of Amstel InterContinental Hotel arise from the fact that financial data of the hotel is confidential. That is why the researcher was not able to get the concrete figures, which decreases internal validity of the research.

External validity or transferability “refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other context or settings” (Web–based centre for Social Research, 2006). According to this definition, the external validity of the current research is limited due to the following circumstances. The research sample does not represent the whole population. But the research can be repeated with the respondents who have the same sampling criteria as the respondents of the present research.

Essentially the term *reliability* is concerned with whether it is possible to obtain the same results while observing the same thing twice. In order to reach the highest reliability rate of the present research, the interviews were formulated in the way that they could not be interpreted differently.

In conclusion, it is recommended to conduct the further research in order to better investigate the phenomenon of wedding celebration preferences and informational sources. For the further investigation it is recommended to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative researches, in which the qualitative research will focus on wedding celebrations only. This can give even deeper knowledge of the
phenomena. It is recommended to investigate the phenomenon of the informational sources with the help of the quantitative research, because this type of research can help obtain information on a larger population, which can bring more reliable results.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Introduction

The objective of the advisory part of the thesis is to formulate a recommendation which will give the answer to the following management problem: Which marketing strategy when it comes to product and promotion will help to attract gay couples to celebrate the weddings in the InterContinental Hotel in order to increase selling banqueting outlets? In other words, the advice will include the clear formulation of a new marketing strategy. In the description of the marketing strategy, the recommendation about the marketing product of wedding celebrations and its ways of promotion will be offered to the client.

The recommendation part of the current report starts with setting the objectives of the marketing strategy which is offered for Amstel InterContinental Hotel by the researcher, based on the results of the literature and field research. An overview of the objectives of the marketing strategy is followed by the extensive description of the marketing strategy and reasoning of its validity and creditability.

Further the alternative ways of promotional activities and criteria for evaluation the promotional activities can be found, followed by the financial part of the advice, which includes budget of the promotional activities and analysis of the return on marketing investments. The advice is further elaborated into concrete steps that Amstel InterContinental Hotel has to take in order to realize the marketing strategy. These steps are formulated as an implementation plan, which is followed by the controlling of the performance.

3.2 Objectives of the marketing strategy

Setting the objectives of the marketing strategy is an essential step. The following objectives were set to the current marketing strategy.

Financial objective:

The objective of the current marketing strategy is to increase the unit sales of wedding celebrations by fifty percent in comparison with the previous year unit sales by adding a new customer segment – gay people in order to increase revenue of the banqueting department.

Marketing objectives:

- Acquire new customers – gay people
- Acquire fifty percent of the market share among the places that are focusing on gay wedding celebrations

All the objectives have to be reached in the period of one year.
These objectives are relevant and go in line with the chosen direction and higher-level strategies and goals of the organization (see the strategies and goals in the SWOT analysis).

3.3 Description of the marketing strategy

The correlation of the research of preferences and wishes of gay people and analysis of the resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel showed that the product of wedding celebrations does not have to be changed in order to reach the targeted segment—gay people. An extensive description of the results of this correlation can be found in the paragraph 2.5 Conclusions. Apart from the results that are mentioned in the paragraph 2.5 Conclusions it must be taken into consideration that the qualitative research showed that the preferences of gay people are very diverse and this makes it impossible to formulate a specific, well-defined product. The research also showed that gay people highly appreciate an individual approach. So each wedding has to be individual and unique. An analysis of the resources of Amstel InterContinental Hotel showed that the personal approach is what the hotel is ready to offer to the guests. It is what the hotel is specializing in.

In this case the recommended marketing strategy for Amstel InterContinental Hotel will be the following. In order to reach a new target group—gay people to celebrate weddings in Amstel InterContinental Hotel, it is recommended to leave the current approach of providing the service of wedding celebrations. This means to provide a special approach and to follow individual wishes of each guest in accordance with the standards of an upper-class hotel. In other words, the product of wedding celebrations does not have to be changed. It is obvious that Amstel InterContinental Hotel can do so because the hotel does not have a fixed list of suppliers for the wedding celebrations. So the hotel can choose the relevant supplier according to the wishes of the wedding couple. Such short-term relations with the suppliers enable Amstel InterContinental Hotel to meet all the wishes of the guests, which is necessary in case of gay segment.

In order to attract gay people to celebrate weddings in Amstel InterContinental Hotel the new marketing strategy should be focused on promotional activities. This means that the promotion should not only be more extensive, but the new message to the new target group is required as well as the new positioning of Amstel InterContinental Hotel for a new target group. The field research showed that the positive attitude towards gay people is the first criteria of selecting a place for wedding celebration for the targeted segment. It means that by use of promotion it should be stated that Amstel InterContinental Hotel is a gay-friendly hotel and gay people are mostly welcome to celebrate weddings there.

The described above marketing strategy is beneficial for Amstel InterContinental Hotel due to the following reasons. Firstly, the offered marketing strategy has a high impact on the audience. By impact, it is meant whether the targeted audience will be impacted on or exposed to by the marketing efforts of the organization. In other words it means not only the number of people within the targeted audience who will be aware of Amstel InterContinental Hotel and the product of wedding celebrations, but the number of people who will be influenced to buy the product that the hotel offers. As the high impact on the audience can be reached by promotional activities, it can be said that, that the impact of the mentioned above marketing strategy is high because promotion is the main direction of the marketing strategy. This enables Amstel InterContinental Hotel to fully concentrate on the promotion of the
product of wedding celebrations and make the promotion as effective as possible. The fact that the rate of the competition in the targeted segment is low also increases the impact of the promotional strategy on the audience. In this case gay couples do not have a lot of places to choose from. So it will be easier to attract targeted segment on the market with low competitive rate with the help of promotional activities that will be focused on that segment.

Secondly, the offered marketing strategy is beneficial for the client, because the staff of Amstel InterContinental Hotel is skillful and capable enough to realize the marketing strategy. The product of wedding celebrations does not have to be changed, and the team of the banqueting department has a lot of experience in organizing weddings for straight couples, as well as gay couples. That means that there are no barriers related to lack of skills or capabilities.

In conclusion, it can be said that according to the results of the field research the marketing strategy which is focused on the promotion of the current product of gay weddings to the new segment—gay people is offered to the client. Apart from the fact that this marketing strategy represents the solution to the management problem and goes in line with the field research of the current project. This marketing strategy is beneficial due to its high impact on the targeted audience and capability of the staff in realization of the marketing strategy.

3.4 Alternative ways of promotional activities

As the product of wedding celebration does not need to be changed in order to reach a new segment, the marketing strategy will be based on making the promotion more extensive, adjusting the promotional activities to a new targeted segment and changing the message of advertising of wedding celebrations.

The choice of promotional activities is based on the results of the field research which showed the particular sources of information that are used by the targeted segment and the criteria the respondents use to evaluate the best place for the wedding celebrations.

For the marketing strategy, three components of the promotion mix are offered to the client. These components are advertising, sales promotion and public relations. These promotional activities will help to increase the awareness of the possibility to celebrate the weddings in Amstel InterContinental Hotel within the targeted segment and show the gay–friendly position of the hotel. It will increase the pool of the targeted segment that is gay people.

The possible promotional activities are listed below. As applying all the promotional activities are above the level of the budgeted expenditures all the promotional activities will be scored on the certain criteria and the most relevant to the current situation, will be chosen.

1. Advertising

Within the advertising process, four main channels of promotion gay wedding celebrations are offered to the client:

- Internet
The advertising by the internet includes the advertisement on the official website of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, the official website of the Amsterdam Gay Pride (www.amsterdamgaypride.com), website of International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (www.iglta.com), online city-guides of Amsterdam, hotels ranking websites.

- **Brochures and fliers**

It is recommended to create brochures and fliers and place them in the gay-friendly places in Amsterdam such as gay-friendly bars, restaurants, souvenir shops.

- **Social media**

Facebook will be used as a social media promotional channel. Amstel InterContinental Hotel already has the official page on Facebook, so firstly the advertising should be placed on the official page. Secondly, the advertising should be placed on the pages of different local and international gay communities, so the information will reach the potential customers directly by appearing in their news lines on Facebook.

- **Magazines**

Although the advertising in magazines is the most expensive promotional channel from the list, this kind of advertising is seen by a lot of respondents as more reliable than advertising on the internet, that is why advertising in the magazines is added to the list of the promotional channel. The advertising will be placed in the gay-friendly magazines such as “Zijn en Zijn”, “Espresso”, “Squeeze”.

All the advertising does not matter which promotional channel was used should contain the information that Amstel InterContinental Hotel is gay-friendly hotel. The staff in the hotel is gay-friendly and the personal approach to each couple is provided.

2. **Sales promotion**

The field research of the current project showed that the targeted segment finds that asking friends and relatives is a reliable source of information. It means that Amstel InterContinental Hotel should be appealing for the friends of the targeted segment. Sales promotion is a good way to encourage customers to spread the information about the product.

For each gay couple who celebrates the wedding in Amstel InterContinental Hotel the opportunity to have a complimentary romantic dinner for two persons on their wedding anniversary will be offered. The couple will get a complimentary dinner from the hotel, if they bring their friends to celebrate the wedding in Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

3. **Public Relations**

The promotional activities which were mentioned above are focused on the immediate increase in sales, but they have to be supported by the activity that will bring long-term benefits, such as public relations.

As the field research of the current project showed that there is a lack of information about weddings in the hotels and gay weddings in general, organization of the annual Gay-friendly Wedding Fair is recommended to the client as a public relations activity. The objective of the fair is to provide gay couples with more information concerning the wedding. The information such as tips for decoration, tips for a wedding dress or a wedding costume and other tips concerning the wedding, which guests of the
fair can use as an inspiration for their wedding will be provided on the fair. As the journalists will be invited to the Gay–friendly Wedding Fair, it is expected that after the fair there will written a press release that will bring more public awareness of Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

Secondly, sponsorship of the Gay Pride in Amsterdam can be used as the public relations activity. This activity will bring the gay–friendly image to Amstel InterContinental Hotel and as a result increase the interested of gay peoples in the hotel and in the organization of the wedding celebrations in the hotel.

3.5 Criteria and evaluation of the alternative ways of promotional activities

The table below shows the evaluation of the alternative ways of promotional activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Advertising in the internet (websites)</th>
<th>Advertising by placing brochures</th>
<th>Advertising in social media (Facebook)</th>
<th>Advertising in the magazines</th>
<th>Sales promotion (free anniversary dinner for two persons)</th>
<th>Gay–friendly wedding fair</th>
<th>Sponsorship of the Gay Pride in Amsterdam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>costs</td>
<td>Approximately 1,800–12,000 euro for the whole period of realization of the marketing strategy (depends on the website, size of the advertising)</td>
<td>150–500 euro for printing 500 brochures</td>
<td>Advertising on the official page of the hotel does not require extra costs, the additional advertising on Facebook approximately from 1,800 euro for the whole period of realization of the marketing strategy</td>
<td>6,000–28,000 euro per year (depends on the magazine, size of the advertising)</td>
<td>According to the wedding dinner package of the hotel 148 euro per person (must be taken into account that profit have to be excluded of the price in order to know the costs)</td>
<td>Costs for organizing one Gay–friendly wedding fair will be 2,315 euros</td>
<td>2,500–6,000 per parade (as the Gay Pride is taking place once a year, the price is for the whole period of the realization of the marketing strategy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of the audience share</td>
<td>High (gay people who are visiting gay–focused websites worldwide)</td>
<td>Low (Local gay people who are visiting gay–friendly places)</td>
<td>High (gay people who participate in gay–focused networks on Facebook worldwide)</td>
<td>Low (local people, the audience of the particular magazine)</td>
<td>Low (only for gay couple who celebrate wedding in the Amstel Intercontinental hotel)</td>
<td>Low (gay people who live in Amsterdam)</td>
<td>High (people who visit Gay Pride in Amsterdam, around 500,000 people last year, Dutch people and tourists)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the table above the alternative ways of promotional activities are scored according to three criteria that have an influence on the decision for the best applicable ways of promotion. The criteria that are mentioned in the table were chosen in order to evaluate the most effective promotional activities and to minimize the expenditures on promotion of the product of wedding celebrations to the targeted segment - gay people. The following criteria were worked out:

- Costs of the promotional activities
- Rate of the audience share
- Special approach to the targeted segment

The first criterion which was worked out in order to evaluate the promotional activities of the marketing strategy is “Costs of the promotional activities”. This criterion is very important, because the budget for a new marketing strategy is limited and it is necessary to use those promotional activities that would be the most cost-efficient. In the table above the cost of each promotional activity is determined.

The second criterion of evaluation marketing activities is “Rate of the audience share”. This criterion was chosen because the rate of audience share indicates the effectiveness of the promotional tool in the best way. It is determined by the fact that one of the most important tasks of promotional activities is to increase the public awareness of the company and the offered product, and the rate of the audience share can indicate the number of people who can be reached by a certain promotional activity or certain promotional tool. In the table above the rate of market share of each promotional activity is described (mentioned).

The last criterion which was worked out is “Special approach to the targeted segment”. This criterion evaluates if the promotional activities go in line with the way gay people search for information and which information they find reliable. According to the qualitative research, they rely on the friends’ and
relatives' opinion. Gay people also feel that there is lack of information about gay weddings. That is why these are two special characteristics that have to be taken into account while evaluating the promotional activities.

As a result the combinations of most relevant alternative promotional activities were chosen. They are based on the evaluation that is extensively described in the table above. These promotional activities are:

- Advertising on Facebook

- Sales promotion such as a complimentary dinner for two persons on the anniversary of wedding day in case if their friends celebrate the wedding in Amstel InterContinental Hotel

- Gay-friendly Wedding Fair

Advertising on Facebook was chosen as the most cost-efficient way of promotion, because it has the best combination of cost and the rate of the audience share among the promotional activities which are offered to the client. Advertising on gay-friendly websites and sponsorship of the Gay Pride in Amsterdam also have a high rate of audience share, but these promotional activities require more financial expenditures than advertising on Facebook. That is why these activities were not chosen for the marketing strategy.

Although the Sales promotion and Gay-friendly Wedding Fair will not provide Amstel InterContinental Hotel with a high rate of audience share in comparison with the other ways of promotion, they were chosen based on the low rate of expenditures and the special approach to the targeted segment. The special approach to the targeted segment of these promotional activities is determined by the fact that these activities were specially developed for gay people.

3.6 Financial Part

3.6.1 Budget of the promotional activities

Although the advertising on the official Facebook page of Amstel Hotel does not require any additional expenditure because Amstel InterContinental Hotel already has an official Facebook page, the additional advertising on Facebook may require additional expenses. In this case the budget for promotional activities is formed by sales promotion (complimentary dinner), Gay-friendly Wedding Fair and advertising on Facebook.

While looking at the expenses, the distinction has to be made between fix and variable costs. The variable costs consist of costs for the complimentary dinner (sales promotion), costs of beverages on the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair and advertising on Facebook. The fixed costs consist of the labour payment costs for the staff that work on the Day-friendly Wedding Fair and costs for decoration in the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair.

Variable costs

The cost of advertising on Facebook starts from 150 € per month (Facebook for business, 2014). That means that for the whole period of the marketing plan, which is one year, the cost of the additional advertising will be 150*12=1,800 euros.
If the assumption is made that every gay couple who will celebrate a wedding in Amstel InterContinental Hotel will recommend the hotel as a wedding venue to their friends, that means that twelve couples will get a complimentary dinner from the hotel on the wedding anniversary. The price of the dinner package in Amstel InterContinental Hotel is 148 euros per person. It is assumed that twenty percent of that price is the profit of the hotel, which is 29.6 euros. That means that the cost of the dinner per person is 148 – 29.6 = 118.6 € per person.

It is expected that 200 people will visit the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair in the hotel. According to the Sales Executive and wedding Specialist of Amstel InterContinental Hotel, the price of one welcome drink, which will be fresh fruit juice, is 4.75 euros. The assumption was made that the hotel gets twenty percent profit by selling each fresh fruit juice. That means that the cost of one juice will be 4.75 – 0.95 = 3.8 euros.

Table 3.2 Variable costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional advertising on Facebook</td>
<td>150*12=1,800 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary dinner</td>
<td>118.6*24=2,846.4 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage on the wedding fair</td>
<td>3.8*200= 760 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variable costs:</td>
<td>5,406.4 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fixed costs

According to Dutch CAO a regular staff member has the average income of 2,000 euros per month for a full-time job of forty working hours per week. It has to be taken into consideration that the company will have extra expenses such as social charges and holiday allowance, which is forty percent of the monthly income of each staff member. In this case the total sum of the expenses of the client for one staff member for one working hour will be the following: 2,800/ (40 hours *4 weeks) = 17.5 euros per hour. If the gay-friendly wedding fair lasts for five hours, it means that the labour payment for three waiters on the wedding fair will be 17.5 euros * 3 employees *5 hours = 262.5 euros.

As a chef and a wedding planner earn more than regular staff on average, it has been assumed that their monthly income is 3,000 euros. Taking into consideration the extra expenses such as social charges and holiday allowance the total sum of the client’s expenses for a chef or a wedding planner for one working hour will be the following: 4,200/ (4 weeks * 40 hours) = 26.25 euros. The labour payment costs for the chef and the wedding planner during the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair will be 26.25*2 employees*5 hours = 262.5 euros.

As there are no makeup artist, stylist and a wedding photographer in the list of the staff of Amstel InterContinental Hotel these specialists will be invited externally. According to the Payscal website the average salary of these specialists is 500 euros per working day (eight hours). This means that for five hours of the Wedding Fair the labour payment for one person is (500/8)*5 = 312.5 euros. As there will be three external specialists, their labour payment will be 312.5*3 = 937.5 euros.

According to the Sales Executive and Wedding Specialist of Amstel InterContinental Hotel costs for the flower decoration of one table are 18.5 euros. The Wedding Fair requires decoration of five tables,
because each wedding specialist on the fair will have his or her own table where guests of the Fair can come and discuss their future wedding.

Table 3.3 Fixed costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour payment of the waiters</th>
<th>3<em>5</em>17.5=262.5 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour payment for chef and wedding planner</td>
<td>2<em>5</em>26.25= 262.5 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour payment of external specialists</td>
<td>3<em>5</em>62.5=937.5 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Decoration</td>
<td>18.5*5=92.5 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total fixed costs:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,555 €</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Return on investments

Return on investments is an important financial indicator that shows if the new marketing strategy is effective and beneficial for the company. As the marketing strategy which was chosen by the researcher as a solution for the management problem consists only of promotional expenditures, in this paragraph the return on marketing investments will be analysed.

“The return on marketing investments (marketing ROI) is the net return from a marketing investment divided by the costs of the marketing investment” (Armstrong, & Kotler, 2010).

On the one hand it is hard to make the calculation of marketing ROI according to the formula that was mentioned above, because it will be difficult to say what will be the net return of the marketing investment in the money equivalent. On the other hand, the net return from marketing investments can be measured by other indicators that are not less important for the organization, such as brand awareness, sales or attraction and satisfaction.

Thus in case of Amstel InterContinental Hotel the chosen marketing strategy will be effective in terms of return on the marketing investments due to the following reasons.

Firstly, it is estimated that the new marketing strategy will increase the unit sales of wedding celebrations by fifty percent next year in comparison with the number of wedding celebrations last year, which means that the number of wedding celebrations will increase from twenty five to thirty seven weddings in the future year. It will be done by extensive advertising, which will create a certain image of the hotel for the targeted segment. To be more specific, the advertising will create a gay-friendly image for gay people. This image will attract the targeted segment, because the gay-friendly attitude is the first criterion for gay people to choose a place for their wedding celebration.

Secondly, the promotional activities will increase the public awareness of Amstel InterContinental Hotel. That will lead to the pool of guests coming to the hotel not only for wedding celebrations, but to use other facilities of Amstel InterContinental Hotel such as restaurant Brasserie and the A-bar.

Thirdly, promotional activities of the new marketing strategy will lead to increase of customer’s attraction and satisfaction. For example the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair will attract those customers who
need advice in the preparation of the future wedding and those guests who will receive relevant and satisfying advice or get inspiration for their wedding will be satisfied.

All these factors will lead to the better position of Amstel InterContinental Hotel on the hotel ranking websites, such as “Tripadvisor” and “Booking.com”, and increase the hotel’s online reputation, because satisfied guests will possibly leave positive reviews about the hotel. According to the research conducted by the Cornell University – School of Hotel Administration – a one percent increase in online reputation of the hotel leads to an occupancy increase of up to 0.54 percent. It also leads to 1.42 percent increase of the revenue per available room indicator. It will increase the revenue not only of the banqueting department but of the hotel in general.

As the expenditures on the promotional activities are not high and make only around 7,000 euros, the return on marketing investments will be reached by Amstel InterContinental Hotel in a short time period.

The expenditures of the promotional activities in total are 7,000 euros. If it is assumed that the average profit from a wedding celebration will be twenty percent, in order to reach the break-even level Amstel InterContinental hotel has to gain revenue of 35,000 euro. This revenue will cover the costs of the wedding celebration, plus provide the hotel with 7,000 euro profit. This profit is equal to the expenditures of the promotional activities. So after reaching the revenue of 35,000 euro the hotel will start to get profit from the promotional activities, which is the return on marketing investments.

All these factors show that the marketing strategy which is recommended to Amstel InterContinental Hotel will provide the hotel with the increase in the revenue in the indirect ways. So the return on marketing investments will be reached by increase in unit sales, increase of the public awareness and increase of customer’s attraction and satisfaction. As the costs of the marketing activities are not high, the break-even level will be reached quickly. This enables Amstel InterContinental Hotel to get the return on marketing investments quickly.

3.7 Implementation of the marketing plan

The implementation plan that can be found in the Appendix XII to the present research was carried out in order to support the procedure of realization of the marketing strategy which is offered to the client by the researcher. All the main steps of implementation of the marketing strategy are clearly described in the table. Implementation of the marking strategy does not require hiring extra staff, so it can be realized by the current staff of Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

3.8 Controlling the performance

Controlling of the performance will be done in two stages. The first stage is controlling while implementing the marketing strategy. This control will be done by the Sales and Marketing Director with the help of schedules. The second stage of control will be done after the period of implementation of the marketing strategy is over, which means after one year’s time. This will be done by the General Manager in cooperation with the Sales and Marketing Director and Director of Financial and Business support by
measuring if the actual costs of the marketing strategy are the same as the budgeted costs, and analysing if the objectives which were set for the marketing strategy are reached.

The schedules control has to be done by the Sales and Marketing Director monthly during all the period of the marketing strategy implementation. The schedules controlling process includes time–defined plans for coordinating and accomplishing tasks related to a specific activity of the marketing strategy, such as advertising programs or organization of the Day–friendly Wedding Fair. Within the schedules controlling stage the Sales and Marketing Director will check whether all the activities of the marketing strategy go in line with the scheduled starting and ending dates and all the deadlines are followed by the employees who are responsible for a certain activity.

After the period of the marketing strategy is over, the second stage of controlling the performance comes. This stage will be done by the budget control. Within this controlling stage the actual expenses of the marketing strategy should be compared with the budgeted expenses, which means that it should be analysed whether the actual spending are above, below or at the budgeted level.

The last stage of controlling the performance will be done by checking whether the objectives that were set for the marketing strategy are reached in the period of one year.

The first objective is to increase the unit sales up to fifty percent in comparison with the previous year sales. The second objective is to increase the market share among the hotels which focus on gay wedding celebrations up to 50 percent.

If the examination of the performance after the period of the marketing strategy shows that there was no deviation, the marketing strategy can be repeated in the next year. In the case if deviation appears, the marketing strategy can be kept as well in order to allow more time for a definite trend to develop and to avoid acting prematurely. If the client decides to respond to deviations, it is recommended to choose changing of the promotional activities as a corrective action.

3.9 Conclusions

Based on the literature and field research the following recommendations, which will help to increase the sales volume of the banqueting department, have been worked out for the client – Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

As the preferences and wishes of gay people concerning wedding celebrations are very diverse and the concrete, well–defined product cannot be formulated, it is recommended to leave the current approach of providing the service of wedding celebrations in order to reach a new targeted segment.

The marketing strategy that was offered to Amstel InterContinental Hotel should be focused on making the promotion more extensive, adjusting the promotional activities to a new targeted segment and changing the message of advertising of wedding celebrations.

In this case the alternative ways of promotion were offered to the client. These alternative ways of promotion were scored on three criteria which are: costs of the promotional activities, rate of the audience share, and special approach to the targeted segment.
Taking into consideration the selected criteria for finding of the most effective promotional channel, it was recommended to use Facebook for advertising.

The sales promotional is based on offering a complimentary dinner to those gay couples, who celebrated their wedding in Amstel InterContinental hotel and further recommended the hotel as the wedding venue for their friends.

As a PR activity, it was offered to organize a Gay–friendly Wedding Fair. The Fair will help to make the impression of Amstel InterContinental Hotel as a gay–friendly organization in an extraordinary and playful manner. The Gay–friendly Wedding Fair will show that the hotel is ready to meet different requirements and wishes of the wedding couples.

The recommendation concerning implementation of the marketing strategy and different ways of controlling the performance were recommended to Amstel InterContinental Hotel.

As a conclusion, all the offered recommendations will help to solve the management problem of Amstel InterContinental Hotel.
Afterword

The first thing that has to be said is that the current report is the result of hard but exciting work from the beginning to the end. From the choice of the topic till the last page, the project was full of ups and downs. There were many challenges that the researcher had to overcome while conducting this report. The choice of the qualitative research was the first challenge of the thesis, because there was no opportunity for me as a student to have a course of qualitative research before working on this report. So all the information about how to conduct a qualitative research was taken from academic literature and power point presentations for that course. The research teacher of the current thesis also played an important role in conducting qualitative research.

It was also challenging to find respondents who wanted to take part in the research. After the idea to find gay people in the gay clubs was rejected by the first and second examiner, there were almost no place left where it was possible to find so many gay people at once. Fortunately nowadays there is a possibility to contact with people by social networks, which was done in order to find the respondent.

As the topic of homosexuality is quite sensitive, while conducting the interviews with gay people it was essential to make the questions in the way that gay people who were interviewed during the research did not feel some different attitude to them in comparison with straight people. This was another challenge of the current research. So this research is not only about the new marketing strategy for Amstel InterContinental Hotel but about tolerance and equal rights of all people on the earth for love and happiness.

Talking about ups of the current research, it is important to mention the attitude of the client to the current work and the client’s will to cooperate. The cooperation with the client of the thesis went smoothly and easy throughout the whole process of conducting the thesis. From the first meeting. The client in the persons of Operations Manager showed interest in cooperation. Further, the Wedding Specialist of Amstel Intercontinental hotel joined the process of conducting the thesis, by providing relevant and up–to–date information, which was analyzed in the current report.

The cooperation with the first examiner was also a big part in the process of conducting the current project. All the challenges that occurred during the process of conducting the thesis were discussed with the first examiner during the consultation and by email.

The support that the researcher was provided with has to be noted as well. First of all there was huge mental support from my parents who shared my happiness about good news concerning the current work and sadness about bad news, even though they were far away.

The support of the friends also played an important role in the process of conducting the current project. Their mental support and warm words made me believe in myself even when there some problems occurred in the process of writing the thesis.

The provided research followed by the recommendations for solving the management problem has got a considerable value for the client of the present research – Amstel InterContinental Hotel and for the Hospitality industry in general. The present report is a relevant example of how the new marketing segment can be reached. The project contains an idea that an organization may select different
segments to target even which has been never considered as the targeted ones. In this case the present report can be used as a source of inspiration for the hotels that are aiming to reach new target groups. The project shows that there are no boundaries in choosing a new targeted segment and that a creative approach should be used in the process of developing a new marketing strategy. Moreover, the project shows that a new marketing segment can be reached only by changing the positioning of the organization without changing the current product.

Everything mentioned above proves the fact of practical importance of the present report for the Hospitality industry.
Reference List

Assen, M. van, Berg, G. van den & Pietersma, P. (2009). *Key management models. The 60+ models every manager needs to know*. Harlow: Person Education


Appendices

Appendix I Organizational structure of Amstel Intercontinental hotel

- Executive Secretary
  - Jolanda Kamies

- Operations Manager
  - Jeroen van Zon

- Revenue Manager
  - Zuzana Gregorovico

- HR Manager
  - Willemijn van Norel

- Director of Finance & Business Support
  - Rutger Terpstra

- Director of Sales & Marketing
  - Dieuwke Reuvers – ad interim

- Marketing

- Restaurant Manager
  - Ronald Opten

- Banquet Manager
  - Hans Engel

- F&B Supervisors
  - Gerda Klinkers
  - Desire Rool
  - Jeroen Jochems
  - Wouter Oelof
  - Paul Oldenmenger
  - Monique Rempt
  - Gabrielle ten Hove
  - Adriaan van Rooij

- Stewarding

- Security

- Reception Manager
  - Pim de Hooge

- Chief Concierge
  - Aad van den Berg

- Duty Manager
  - Steven Meijers

- Executive Housekeeper
  - Marinke Trimbos

- Executive Chef
  - Roger Rassin

- Executive Sous Chef La Rive
  - Frank van Thiel

- Senior Sous Chef Main Kitchen
  - Jarno Robles

- Chef Patisier
  - Joost van den Hoven

- System Manager
  - Mik Visser

- Accounting Supervisor
  - Joert Zandstra

- Banquet Sales Manager
  - Loes Hooft

- Executive Secretary
  - Jolanda Kamies
Appendix II *Global work breakdown structure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical framework</th>
<th>Field research</th>
<th>Advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. To make a literature research. The following topics were used:  
- Marketing theory  
- Marketing in the hospitality industry  
- Segmentation of the market  
- Same-sex marriages in the Netherlands  
The following informational channels were used:  
- Web libraries  
- Recommended literature  
- Internet sources | 1. To formulate the research questions:  
1) What are the preferences of the gay couples of the Netherlands towards the wedding celebrations?  
2) Which informational sources do gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place of the wedding celebration?  
3) How capable is Amstel InterContinental Hotel in the realization of a new marketing strategy which is based on reaching a new market segment- gay people?  
2. To design the research strategy:  
Exploratory qualitative research.  
3. To collect data: Semi-structured open-ended interviews  
4. To analyse data:  
1) Documentation of the data  
2) Organization/categorizing of the data  
3) Descriptive analysis  
4) SWOT analysis | 1. To design the alternatives:  
To develop few variants of the marketing strategies for Amstel InterContinental Hotel based on the product, promotion and pricing.  
To select criteria for the Evaluation of the recommended marketing strategies.  
- Impact of the marketing strategy on the audience  
- Cost of the implementation of the marketing strategy  
- Return on investments  
- Barriers |
| 2. To select the literature and sources which can be applied in the project (monographers, scientific articles, statistics and etc., AAOCC criteria to be used).  
3. Record. To make a short abstract of the sources which will be used in the project.  
4. Analysis. To make a short summary of the sources which will be used in the project.  
5. Discuss. To discuss with the first examiner or the research teacher whether the theory is relevant for the project  
6. To make a reference list. |
## Appendix III Kotler’s segmentation model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Variables</th>
<th>Minor Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical</strong></td>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic</strong></td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family/Consumer Life Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychographic</strong></td>
<td>Socioeconomic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Status (education, income and occupation levels combined to indicate status)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values, attitudes and lifestyle groupings (e.g. Roy Morgan Values Segments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifestyle Characteristics (activities, interactions with others, and opinions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioural</strong></td>
<td>Purchase Occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits Sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usage Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readiness Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude Towards Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time of Purchase (e.g. early or late in product’s life cycle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Mix Elasticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship-seeking Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptions and Preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix IV Segmentation of gay couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Breakdowns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical</td>
<td>It is advised to focus on gay couples who live in the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Demographic | Age – 20–34, 35–49  
Sex – male, female  
Family size – 1–2  
Family life Cycle – have a partner, ready to get married  
Income – 75,000–100,000  
Occupation – managers  
Education – bachelor degree and higher  
Nationality – at least one representative of the pair have to be Dutch (according to Dutch law) |
| Psychographic | Social class – upper middles, lower uppers, upper uppers  
Lifestyle – achievers  
Personality – ambitions |
| Behavioral | Purchase occasions – special occasions  
Benefits sought – good service, personal approach  
Loyalty status – do not have to be loyal, as wedding is a one-time occasion  
Time of purchase – in the beginning of the product’s life cycle  
Attitude towards product – critical attitude, want to have the best for their money  
Communication behaviour – ready to communicate with a wedding specialist in order to discuss how the wedding should be organized |
Appendix V Interview guide

1. Introduction
   - Greet the respondent, thank for finding time to take part in the research;
   - Introduce yourself, introduce the subject of the research;
   - Explanation of the core aspects that will be discussed during the interview;
   - Length of the interview; explain that it will be recorded;
   - Anonymity, request for the honest opinion. The respondent will be sent an interview transcript and the final report.

2. Demographical questions
   1) How old are you?
   2) Do you have a partner?
   3) Are you planning to marry in the nearest future?
   4) Can you tell me the details of your lifestyle?
   5) What is your income?
   6) What is your level of education?

3. Discussion of the core aspects
   3.1. Wedding Reception
   
   Can you tell how does the perfect wedding should look like in your opinion?

   3.1.1. Location
   1) What will be the best venue for the wedding reception?
   2) What do you think about Amstel InterContinental Hotel as a venue for you wedding?

   3.1.2. Atmosphere
   1) What atmosphere should be at your wedding?
      - colour
      - music

   3.1.3. Reception
   1) What type of reception would you like to have?
      - Breakfast
      - Lunch
- Dinner

2) How much time do you want to spend on serving the food?

3) How should the food be served?

3.1.4. Staff

1) Which requires for the staff will you have?

- staff who organize the wedding
- staff at the wedding itself

2) Which part in the wedding organization do you want to take?

3.1.5. General

1) What other special requirements do you have?

2) Are there any aspects of your future wedding that were not named in the interview but you still want to discuss?

3.2. Informational sources

Can you describe the way how you are going to search for a place of the wedding?

3.2.1. Personal communication channels

1) Do you think that asking friends or neighbours is a reliable source of information?

2) Are there any opinion leaders in the gay community of the Netherlands? If yes, who are they?

3) Are there any on-line buying guides for gay people?

3.2.2. Non-personal communication channels

1) Which newspapers do you read?

2) Which magazines do you read?

3) Do you know any newspapers or magazines which are popular among gay people?

4) How do you know that they are popular?

3.2.3. Online and electronic media

1) Do you know any websites which are popular and widely used among gay people?

2) Which social media channels do you use?

3) Which social media channels are popular among gay people?

4) How do you know that they are popular?
4. **Conclusion:**

- Summary of the discussion
- Thank the respondent again

Interview transcript will be sent to the respondent. They can make the changes or add any information if they feel it is necessary.
Appendix VI Interview transcripts

Interview A

A: – Hello, Nicole. I want to thank you for taking the time to Skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already know, I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental Hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about the wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All the responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

I will send you an interview transcript as soon as possible, so you can make any changes or adjustment if you want.

B: – Hello. Ok, that is totally fine.

A: – I would like to start the interview with some demographical questions. Nicole, how old are you?

B: – I am twenty-five years old.

A: – Do you have a partner?

B: – Yes, I do.

A: – Can you tell me some words about your lifestyle?

B: – My life is quite boring. I work as a chef. So the work takes almost all my time.

A: – And do you have any free time? How do you spend it?

B: – Well… I like to chill with my friends. Most of the time we gather together to discuss some philosophical problems or play table games.

A: – Thanks Nicole, so now we can move straight to the topic of wedding celebrations and my first question will be: Can you tell me how does the wedding celebration should look like in your opinion?

B: – I think it has to be quite traditional. For me it is very important that my family and the family of my girlfriend will be present on the wedding celebration. I see my perfect wedding on the sunny beach. I mean the celebration will take place in the hotel, but the hotel should be located on the beach or near the beach. Actually it is the most important for me. I am not sure what else I can say.

A: – All right. Now I would like to ask questions concerning particular aspects or details of your wedding celebration. So can you tell me more details about the location of your future wedding?

B: – Oh…like a honeymoon?
A: No. I mean where exactly do you want to celebrate your wedding?

B: Oh ... by the beach will be great. I think a hotel by beach, so the hotel will host the event.

A: So the event will be organized in the hotel and the hotel itself will be located next to the beach, is that correct?

B: Yes... Oh yes... that is something for me.

A: Which atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: I do not want it to be so serious. I want a playful atmosphere. Is it an answer to your question?

A: Can you please describe it in more details?

B: Of course. Well ... not so traditional. There will be maybe a script and people should act to this script. So not like a play but everyone will have their role in the wedding and everyone can say something in the wedding. Like I said, everyone will be involved by giving the toasts or having a small game within the wedding. You know, it will be very memorable and everyone will know whose wedding they have come to and I will be like "my wedding", and they will know I am so playful, because I am a playful person.

A: Have you ever thought about a theme of your wedding?

B: Actually not. I have never thought about a theme of my wedding.

A: Do you consider your wedding celebration as a theme party?

B: Not really a theme, but just if we would have a theme it will be more Indian-style wedding, because my girlfriend is originally from India.

A: Ok. And what time of the day do you want to have a wedding reception?

B: It will start with us walking around the fire, oh no... that will be the last thing. It will start with us like two families coming together and the second day is just a reception before the real wedding. So again, food, lots of food. That is what I mean about playfulness, so I have a lot of space to put in my imagination with her culture, you know. And the third day we will actually get married. We will walk around the fire, and the last day is the day we both walk in public as just married couple. I think that is the answer to your question.

A: Yes. As far as I understood it will be a few days celebration with different kinds of reception. I mean it will be breakfast, lunch and dinner but in the different days. Am I right?

B: Oh yes, yes. And whatever hotel is lucky enough to have as will have a lot of money, I guess.

A: But it is once in a lifetime, so it is supposed to be a great event. And you said the food is very important. How should the food be served?

B: In the U form. So around the people. It will be a round buffet. And not with just Indian food but with my food, from my culture as well. So I think twice as big. And yes, the food is very important because you are celebrating your love and you want other people to celebrate it with you and the least what you can do is to feed them.
A: – Ok. And what about the beverage? Is it also important?

B: – Yes, I think people have to drink. It is a celebration of love, isn't it?

A: – So you would like to pay much attention to the food and the beverage and the way it will be served, am I right?

B: – Oh, definitely, definitely.

A: – Will you have any special requirements for the staff at the wedding itself and the staff who will organize your wedding?

B: – Yes, I guess. Of course we want more open-minded hotel, of course we have to choose maybe somewhere in Europe. Spain or something like that. Where people are more open-minded and where we could get married. And for the staff around the wedding we want them to be open-minded and willing to participate as well. I mean if they are smiling, enjoying the time I would appreciate that. It is a celebration of love and I cannot have staff members who are complaining about what sort of lifestyle these people have. I am sure that it will not happen. Everyone is young these days in the hotels.

A: – And what about the staff who organize the wedding? Are there the same requirements for them or will you have any special requirements?

B: – Oh yes. I want the staff... so the event planners you mean?

A: – Yes.

B: – Definitely I want them to be very imaginative and creative. I do not want such a grand thing. It does not have to be a big imagination but an imagination with quality. Someone who can give the details to what I have in my mind, but I cannot...how do you say it? Speak it out loud. Maybe they can make it happen. So definitely I will love my event planners to be imaginative and creative.

A: – Ok. And do you want to take part in the organization of the wedding?

B: – Actually no. It is a wedding, so I will be very busy because what we also will need is a photographer. So during the wedding I will be busy with taking photos and all these things. I really want to trust the team I hire to do the job I expect them to do. I will not be involved in the organizational process but I would like to see what they have come up with time to time.

A: – Are there any other special requirements that you may have concerning your wedding?

B: – No. I do not have any other special requirements.

A: – Ok. So now we can move to the second topic which is the informational sources. As far as I understood you have already made some plans concerning your wedding and have already found some information about the place of the wedding celebration. So can you describe the way how you are going to search for the concrete place of the wedding celebration?

B: – I guess on the hotel’s website, because the first thing I guess is a hotel. And then the event planners who deal with the gay weddings. Those two items will be the first things I will look for.

A: – So you will just google some hotels...

B: – Yes, gay-friends hotels or the hotels that have a history of having gay weddings.
A: – So the position of the hotel is also important for you, isn’t it?

B: – Yes, of course. It is also about safety of the people. You do not want to worry about anything during your wedding days. We will be very meticulous about the hotel, the location and the country where our wedding will take place.

A: – Can you tell me if you know some websites which are popular among gay people?

B: – Actually I told my lifestyle is quite boring so I barely visit gay websites. I guess, the same websites that straight people use, but we search extra to see if it is gay–friendly. So we will use “Tripadviser” or “Cheap Tickets”, “Expedia”, but we will go extra miles to see if the location is gay friendly and that will make us to go there. Also what kind of nightlife do they have, what kind of outdoor activities do they have, because gays and lesbians love to go out. So it is the same internet websites, however we will check extra if it is safe for us. I hope it is the answer to your question.

A: – Yes, thank you. The last question will be how much money would you like to spend on your wedding?

B: – Well...Me and my girlfriend have been together for seven years by now and we are ready to get married in the nearest future. We are really aiming to have four days wedding. I would say the budget for my wedding will be 20,000 euros. This is the minimum.

A: – Are you going to share the expenses for the wedding with your girlfriend?

B: – Of course. Yes.

A: – Actually that was the last question. Now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding will take place in the hotel next to the beach. You want all your guests to be involved during the wedding celebrations. You want your wedding to last four days. The food will be an important part of the wedding celebration. You want the staff to be friendly and to enjoy the process as well. The organizers of the wedding should be very imaginative and you will check time to time if they do everything right. For the informational sources you will use hotel’s websites and websites of event organizing companies. The websites will be the same that straight people use only you will pay attention if the location and the hotel is gay–friendly or not. The budget for your wedding will be minimum 20,000 euros.

B: – Yes. I think that is what I wanted to say.

A: – Nicole, I want to thank you once again for taking time for the Skype session. The interview was very helpful for my research. The interview transcript will be sent to you as soon as possible. You can make some changes or add any information if you think it is necessary.

B: – Ok. Thank you.
A: – Hello, Christian. I want to thank you for taking the time to Skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already know, I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental Hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about the wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

I will send you an interview transcript as soon as possible, so you can make any changes or adjustment if you want.

B: – Ok! That is fine.

A: – Now I will start with general demographic questions. How old are you?

B: – I am twenty-eight.

A: – Twenty-eight. Great. And we have discussed that you have a partner. She is sitting beside you. Have you ever thought about getting married in the nearest future?

B: – Yes, we did. We are not sure when. But when we got together, it was four years ago. We thought about getting married in about ten years. So... It will be in around six years.

A: – So. Is it in your plans?

B: – Yes, it is.

A: – Great! Can you tell me any details about your lifestyle? How do you spend your free time?

B: – Well. Right now we are chilling on the couch. We just cooked a dinner together. We had a dinner. I am working in the shoe shop. I like to go out for dinner, go with friends, and go shopping.

A: – Such an exciting life. A lot of things to do.

B: – Yes! Quite busy.

A: – That is nice. And what is your level of education?

B: – HBO

A: – Ok. Now we can move straight to the questions about wedding celebration. How does the perfect wedding should look like in your opinion?
B: – It should not be too big. I would like to have a small wedding with really loved ones and not all
kind of people you do not know. So more intimate. And I want to get married in a sunny place, on the
beach also, with blue sea and white sand, on the island also.

A: – That is nice. Now I would like to ask about the details which are interesting for me as a researcher.
As you have already said, the best location for you is a sunny place with the sea and the sand. Have
you ever thought about getting married in a hotel?

B: – No, I have not considered yet, but it could be.

A: – So can it be a hotel in the sunny place?

B: – Yes. Before our ceremony we could think about it.

A: – And what kind of atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: – Well. Intimate, cozy…with nice decorations, but not much of…well it has to be kept simple, not too
outrageous with too many flowers, not glittering and glamorous.

A: – Ok. Should it be more classical and traditional wedding or do you want something extravagant?

B: – Well. I would not go to the really classical one, somewhere in the middle, I guess.

A: – Ok. In which time of the day do you want to celebrate your wedding?

B: – Well. To be honest, I have never gone to a wedding, because I do not know anybody who got
married. But I prefer something in the afternoon.

A: – Nice! Someone wants to have a family breakfast or to have a lunch or an afternoon dinner, but
someone prefers to have more classical dinner. Maybe you want something else?

B: – I think dinner is nice, because it looks more serious than breakfast, but lunch is also good,
because you can finish after evening with party and drinks

A: – Ok. How much time do you want to spend on serving the food?

B: – I think that the food is very important at the wedding. Do you mean how many hours to spend on
having a dinner?

A: – Yes. Some people want to eat more, some want to dance more or do something else. How
important is it for you?

B: – Actually one and a half hour. I do not want to spend all evening sitting at the table and having the
food. I choose to have two hours for having the food and then to start dancing and having a party

A: – How do you want the food to be served? Just in a classical way of a course dinner or do you have
any other ideas?

B: – Well. It would be nice if people can talk to each other and I do not want the dinner to be served on
the tables. It is better to serve some kind of a luxury buffet. So people do not have to sit next to the
same person the whole evening.

A: – Yes. It can be annoying, especially when it is not the right person. Let’s move on to the beverage.
How do you want the beverage to be served?
B: – It should be a bar where people can get their own drinks with a barman and the waiters who are walking around.

A: – Do you mean something like a finger-food only with the drinks?

B: – Exactly yes, like that.

A: – Do you have special requirements for the staff at your wedding?

B: – They should be hospitable, helpful and nicely groomed. They should have a nice uniform.

A: – Ok. Do you have special requirements concerning the staff who organize your wedding?

B: – Do you mean wedding planners?

A: – Yes. Wedding planners, the staff in the hotel who may organize the event.

B: – Well. I would definitely require that they have some contact with us in order to discuss what we want and they of course have to listen to us, keep our wishes in mind. Communication is the most important part. They have to know what we want and they have to perform in the way that we want.

A: – Do you want to take part in the wedding organization or leave it for the wedding planners?

B: – It depends on how busy I am at that moment, but I want to be a part of it as well, to really think how we can organize it.

A: – It was the last question about the wedding celebration. Are there any aspects that I have not mentioned, but you still want to discuss?

B: – Yes! Right now I am thinking about how I see it. For us it is a couple of years left before we will get married and we really have not thought about it that specific. Things can change and also it depends on my girlfriend, also how she wants it to be, not only my wishes. That is what I wanted to add.

A: – Ok. And the second topic which I want to discuss is the informational sources. Can you describe how will you search for the place of the wedding?

B: – Well. I would look on google. If I knew which place I want to go in advance, I would straight away look for this place and look for the hotels at this place, for wedding planning companies and see what is possible in this country. But firstly I would look for the nice place to get married and of course for gay marriage too.

A: – Would you search for the gay-friendly place?

B: – Yes. Because we are not able to get married in every country.

A: – Do you think that asking friends is a reliable source of information?

B: – Yes. Definitely. If I had friends that are married and I was on their wedding and it was very nice, definitely I would talk to them about how they arranged it and I would also ask about their experience and wedding companies and it is more reliable than to ask people whom I do not know.

A: – Are there any opinion leaders in the gay community of the Netherlands? I mean some stars or celebrities.
B: – No. To be honest I am not so interested in it. My friends are on the first place.

A: – Can you tell me if there are any newspapers or magazines which are popular among gay people in the Netherlands?

B: – Yes. I have forgotten the names, let me see on google. It is called “Zijn en zijn”, it means “Her and her” and that is an amazing magazine for lesbian women. Also there are some more, but I do not remember. Also there is one “Espresso”, I do not know why it is named so, but it is for the gay people.

A: – Do you think these two magazines are popular in the Netherlands?

B: – Yes. I think they are quite popular, but to be honest I do not know gay people who really read these magazines, I think most of them are looking in the internet if they want to know places to go which are gay-friendly.

A: – Maybe there are any popular web-sites for gay people?

B: – Let me think… I am just looking on google to recognize which I have used. There are some websites for those who are single, for dating… So... to be honest I do not need them because I am not single. I can send them to you later on Facebook.

A: – Ok. I understood. You do not need dating websites anymore... That is nice to hear. I think that is all I wanted to ask. Christian, now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding will take place in a sunny place, preferably on the beach. You want a small wedding and it should be more intimate and cozy. The food will be an important part of the wedding celebration. You want the staff to be hospital, helpful and nicely groomed. The organizer of the wedding should listen to you and discuss with you what you want. For the informational sources you will use google and you will pay attention if the location is gay-friendly or not. Also asking friends is a reliable source for you. Is that correct?

B:– Yes. That is exactly what I meant.

A:– That is great. I would like to pay your attention once again that the transcript of the interview will be sent to you as soon as possible, so you can make some corrections or adjustments if you find it necessary. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Have a nice evening.

B:– Thank you. Goodbye.
Interview C

A: - Good evening. I want to thank you for taking the time to Skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already know, I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about the wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

I will send you an interview transcript as soon as possible, so you can make any changes or adjustment if you want.

B: - Good evening. That is fine with me.

A: - If you do not mind we will start with the demographical questions. What is your age?

B: - I am twenty-eight.

A: - Do you have a partner?

B: - Yes.

A: - Have you ever thought about getting married in the nearest future?

B: - Yes.

A: - Can you tell me any details about your lifestyle?

B: - I am working in the shoe shop. I am a shop manager. I love to go shopping and I like to go outside with friends, go out for dinner, I like to spend time with my family, with my sisters, with my girlfriend.

A: - What is your level of education?

B: - I have done MBO four. Do you know what MBO four is? It is the academic degree which is one level lower than HBO. I studied for being a store manager.

A: - Now we can move straight to the questions about the wedding celebration. How do you see the perfect wedding?

B: - The perfect wedding for me is when I see my wife in a beautiful dress.

A: - That is very romantic. Are there some other aspects of the perfect wedding in your opinion?

B: - I would like to get married in the warm country. The best option is to get married on the beach. I think it is very romantic. Of course I want to see my family and friends at the wedding, although it
would be very expensive to bring them all there, but it definitely worth it. I want everybody to dance on the sand in the evening and listen to the sound of the sea.

A: – Which atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: – Cozy and it should not look too cheap or glittering. It should be chic if you know what I mean.

A: – Yes. And maybe we can think about the music at your wedding?

B: – Yes, I like music and dancing. There should be some romantic music. I do not like all these modern styles of music. Just something everybody will like and enjoy.

A: – Ok. And if you think about the colours of the wedding, which colours would you prefer?

B: – Just a second. A will close my eyes and imagine my future wedding. I see white and silver colours. I think the combination of these colours is very nice for the wedding on the beach because these colours match with the blue colour of the sea.

A: – What time of the day do you want the wedding to take place?

B: – Dinner would be great.

A: – And what about the food? Do you want to pay much attention to serving the food?

B: – The food is very important at the wedding because if you do not have good food at your wedding people will start nagging that the food was not good. I want everybody to be satisfied with everything. If I can satisfy some of my guests with tasty food that is great, because it is the smallest thing I can do for them.

A: – Yes, some people come to the wedding just for the food. And what about the beverage?

B: – I do not want a lot of alcohol on my wedding, because people can get really drunk. I prefer some light drinks like champagne or cocktails. I think cocktail is the best choice to the wedding party.

A: – And how the food should be served at the wedding?

B: – I am from Turkey. I am thinking about a Turkish wedding and how people celebrate it in my country. What we do is we have the first course which is served on the table it is like cold things, salads and then after that we have like warm dishes. These are actually two courses that I would like to be at the wedding.

A: – And which requirements for the staff at the wedding do you have?

B: – The waiters have to be very friendly all day towards all the guests and they have to look good and wear nice suites and they have to be helpful. You know, it is always easy to see if people like what they are doing or not. So my main requirement – they have to like what they are doing and to enjoy the party together with the guests.

A: – And which requirements will you have for the event planners?

B: – The event planners should do what we agreed about. So no surprises, no things that are different from what we discussed. It will make me really angry if I see that they do not act according to the agreed scenario and I do not want to worry at my own wedding.
A: – Which role in the wedding organization would you like to take?

B: – Beforehand I would like to take a big part in the organization, to make sure that things are going the way I want them to go and on the wedding day I want to trust the wedding planners, let them do all the job and just enjoy the day.

A: – And the last question are there any aspects of your future wedding that were not mentioned in the interview so far but you still want to discuss?

B: – I think that the car is also very important.

A: – Can you please tell me about the wedding car? That is an interesting point.

B: – What do you want to know?

A: – What is important about the car? Does it have to be a limo car? Where do you want to go by car? It is an interesting idea. I have not thought about it yet.

B: – Yes, I want a limousine. It has to be white, it is only for two lovers. I want to use a limousine to go to the party and to go away from the party and I also want to use the car to have a drink with some best friends.

A: – Ok. That is a nice idea. The second topic will be about the informational sources. Do you use any special sources for searching the location of the wedding?

B: – Before looking for the information I would talk with my girlfriend to discuss what we want and where we want to get married and after that I will look for a destination.

A: – So if I understood you correctly you will firstly discuss everything with your girlfriend and then you will look for the places, locations, venues of this destinations and score them.

B: – Yes.

A: – While searching for the destination will you use general websites or any typical websites for gay people?

B: – I would not look for the specific gay wedding sources and I will talk to normal wedding planners company for traditional wedding and I do not need specific destination.

A: – Ok. The last question and I think it is very important. What will be the budget for your wedding?

B: – Well…It is hard to say now, but I think we will start with 25,000 euros. I can imagine that the budget can increase.

A: – Actually that was the last question. Now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding will take place in a warm county, preferably on the beach. You would like to see your friends and relatives on the wedding. The colours of the decoration will be white and silver. As for the music it has to be romantic and suitable for everybody. You see the food as an important aspect of the wedding celebration. You do not want the guests to get drunk that is why you prefer light drinks. The staff at the wedding should be friendly and enjoy the time together with your guests. You also do not want any surprises from the event planner on the wedding day. As a special requirement you would like to see a limo car. Before searching for a place of the wedding you
will discuss this issue with your girlfriend and only after that you will start to search on the internet. The budget for the wedding will be minimum 25,000 euros. Am I right?

B: – Yes, you are. That is actually all the major things.

A: – I want to thank you once again for taking time for the Skype session. The interview was very helpful for my research. The interview transcript will be sent to you as soon as possible. You can make some changes or add any information if you think it is necessary.

B: – Ok. Thank you. Have a good day.

A: – You too. Bye!
Interview D

A: – Hello, Willie. I want to thank you for taking the time to Skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already know, I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about the wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

I will send you an interview transcript as soon as possible, so you can make any changes or adjustment if you want.

B: – That is fine.

A: – Ok. So we can move straight to the questions. The first questions will be demographical questions. What is your age?

B: – I am forty-five.

A: – Do you have a partner at the moment?

B: – Yes, I have.

A: – Have you ever thought about getting married?

B: – Yes. I consider to get married.

A: – Can you please tell me any details about your lifestyle?

B: – Well... I live in Amsterdam and as Amsterdam is a gay capital of the world, as they say, I practice gay lifestyle and that means that I use some of the facilities that are for gay people in Amsterdam like the wonder...hm .... How do you call it? Gay movie. I cannot think of the word right now, but it is where they show gay movies. I go there or sometimes I go to the clubs or bars. I use gay life for going out, so to say. Of course a lot of gay people live here and I have a lot of contacts within Amsterdam gay world, so to say.

A: – And can you please tell me few words about your job?

B: – My current job is that I am a youth worker for the protestant church, for the youth organization of the protestant church. I am the Minister of that church as well and that is what I do in daily life and apart from that in my own time, but that is a large part of my life being an LGBT activist for the Christian LGBT community.

A: – And can you please tell me about your level of education?
B: – I am academically educated. At University.

A: – So that was all about demographical questions and now we can move straight to the wedding celebration. Can you please describe how the perfect wedding should look like?

B: – In my opinion it is the party of a day. And it starts with the wedding ceremony in the House of the Town Consulate, so to say. After that we move on to the church for the church wedding ceremony. And after that we move for the reception to a different location, a nice location and with some of the guests we continue for a dinner and for a party afterwards.

A: – So it will start in the morning and last till the middle of the night?

B: – Something like that, yes.

A: – You mentioned a nice location, but which location to you is a nice one? Can you describe it?

B: – Location which is authentic and in the center of the city of Amsterdam of course and to be more specific we choose West Indian house for our wedding. It is a very nice location that is more often used for these kind of things.

A: – Is it commonly used for the wedding ceremonies?

B: – Also, not only. But it is used for all kind of parties. It is also used for the wedding ceremonies.

A: – Have you ever thought about having a wedding celebration in a hotel?

B: – No, actually I never thought about it.

A: – Do you think it can be a nice wedding party in the hotel or you just totally sure that it is not a good idea?

B: – No, it could be a good idea to have a party there. It has just never crossed my mind. But I think it does not cross the mind of many Dutch people to celebrate a wedding party in the hotel.

A: – Why do you think so?

B: – Well, Dutch people are not very traditional. They can get used to new ideas very easily, but traditionally speaking hotel is not a place to celebrate your wedding. It would not cross my mind.

A: – Maybe if these parties were more advertised by the hotels and you have more information about it, you would think about it. Am I right?

B: – Yes.

A: – And can you please describe which atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: – Well, of course very welcoming atmosphere. Everybody should feel at home in whatever location: in the Town Consulate Hall or the church or the party location afterwards. It has to have a bit …Not a kitch style but more like a classical style, that is why I like it to be in the old city. So I would never go to the party center or highroads or the hotel which is just newly constructed. I will never do that.

A: – And you also mentioned before that you want a transsexual singer to perform at your wedding…

B: – Yes. Not a transsexual but she is a transvestite.
A: – Oh ok. I am sorry. Can you please explain the difference?

B: – Transsexual is someone who wants to be of the different gender, and transvestite is mostly a man who dresses in a woman's clothes. And in this case it is Dolly Bella Fler. She will not call herself a transsexual but "a living statue". But she performs also cabaret kind of shows or acts kind of comedy. And we would invite her to the party.

A: – Do you think that inviting a transgender artist will make your wedding more special?

B: – Yes.

A: – So you already told about the time of the day. So the party will last the whole day. And the reception itself will take place in the evening, am I right? Will it be a dinner?

B: – Well the reception will be right after the church wedding in the late afternoon. Then we would continue with the smaller group of people for the dinner and the party.

A: – So in the church there are going to be more of your friends and then later just few of them. Is that correct?

B: – Well the church meeting is a public meeting. So whoever wants to join can join. And in my case if I have a choice we will do it on Sunday. It is not regular in the Netherlands.

A: – And how is it done normally?

B: – Normally is will be done on the weekday, but some people who are religious choose to marry in the church and with a community present and I would like it to be like that very much as well.

A: – Do you think that the food as an important part of the wedding celebration?

B: – Of course.

A: – And how the food should be served at your wedding?

B: – The dinner should be served as a course meal. And after that small snacks for people to eat during the party.

A: – And what about the beverage? Will the drinks also be served on the tables or somehow in the different way? Maybe at the bar table?

B: – No, during the dinner on the tables and after that during the party there must be some kind of the bar, where people can get their drinks.

A: – And will the party be at the same place where the dinner will take place?

B: – The same place.

A: – And what about staff at your wedding which requirements will you have for the staff?

B: – Not any particular requirements, but at least they should be LGBT friendly. But most of them in Amsterdam I guess are.

A: – And will you have the requirements for the event organizers?
B: – Well…of course when you come with two men they are immediately aware it is a gay wedding. In Amsterdam I think it is enough to know which kind of service they have to deliver.

A: – Do you also want to take part in the organizational process?

B: – During the first preparations of course, because you have to make any choices but after that I would like to leave it to masters of the ceremony.

A: – Do you think you will have some special requirements for the whole process? For the whole celebration?

B: – Well it would be nice if any delivery of the service would also have material that is LGBT inclusive. So I would not have to stare at a lot of wedding cards that have man and woman on them, or we should not of course be surprised by a wedding cake that has a woman and a man on top of it. It could happen but I guess in the Netherlands these services are already there, but of course they should be aware of the fact that it is a gay wedding and not an ordinary wedding for this kind of reasons.

A: – Are there any aspects of your perfect wedding which were not mentioned during the interview but you still want to discuss?

B: – Not specially but maybe I got just now that it would be nice if the staff is mixed. Men and women and not only men or not only women.

A: – Can you explain why?

B: – Because I do not like single-sex staff. It is nicer for people to be served by men and women I think.

A: – Now we can move towards another topic. It will be the informational sources. Can you please describe how are you going to search for the place of the wedding celebration?

B: – That is really the matter of hear or say. I already got some information from friends, and friends from friends who organized party or me being there and thinking it is a nice location. I would not so much, only if it is necessary, search on the internet and find flyers or informational book to get media information.

A: – So as far as I understood asking friends is a good and reliable informational source in your opinion. Is that true?

B: – Yes.

A: – If we imagine that nobody of your friends got married and you have to search for another source. If we speak about the opinion leaders in the gay community of the Netherlands, maybe there are some people that you look at or you know them and you will see if they got married somewhere and you will think that it is a good place. Can you trust the opinion of such people?

B: – I would not go directly to these people but maybe through website of Amsterdam gay parade or any website of gay magazine, because mostly they advertise LGBT friendly companies. Maybe through that channel I would find services I need. I would start with gay websites and gay informational sources.

A: – Are there any bloggers who are famous within gay community?
B: – No. They do not give that kind of information. It is never about this kind of things.

A: – Do you know any gay-focused websites and magazines?

B: – One of the websites is the website of gay parade in Amsterdam or “Amsterdam Gay Pride”, which is an important source because it is partly commercial. And another important organization is COC Netherlands but they are more of the political activities organization. So they do not have much to do with marriages or this kind of things. There are some magazines that are... two glossies. One is called “Squeeze” and another one is called “Wink”. And there is also a magazine for young people which is called “Espresso “and apart from that, but I do not think that magazine is there anymore. That magazine was called “GK magazine ”, but I am not sure that it is there anymore. And there are some gay websites like gay.nl, gayromeo.nl which is a dating site. Gayromeo is Amsterdam–based I believe. Many of gay people use this dating site.

A: – And do you use newspapers or magazines or websites which you mentioned or you just know them?

B: – Some of them I use but the most important source of information for me is Facebook. I am in the few networks of people: the gay parade networks in Amsterdam, the network of some political activists, gay networks in the Netherlands and Christian LGBT network in Europe. They provide me with all the information I need. You know, the information around marriage that of course is very private and whatever I come across on Facebook from friends and people I know and sometimes flipping through magazines, because I do not really need them that much. This will do. So this is enough for me.

A: – But, for example the dating sites that you named, they are quite popular among gay people. Am I right?

B: – Yes. “Gayromeo” is very popular.

A: – Can you please tell me what will be the budget for your wedding celebration?

B: – Ops. I think it will be at least from four till five thousand euros, which is not that much for an average wedding but for me it would have to do.

A: – And would you like to share the cost of the wedding with your partner?

B: – Yes.

A: – Thank you, Willie. That was the last question. Now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding will take place in the authentic location, in the city center of Amsterdam. And you said that you might choose West Indian house. You want a classical wedding and it should start in the church and after that you want to have a dinner and a party with your friends. As a special requirement you want to invite a transgender singer. The food will be an important part of the wedding celebration. You want the staff to be LGBT friendly. The organizer of the wedding should listen to you and discuss with you what you want. Asking friends is the main source of information for you. The budget for your wedding will be at least 4,000–5,000 euros. Am I right?

B: – Yes, you are right.
A: – I want to thank you once again for taking time for the Skype session. The interview was very helpful for my research. The interview transcript will be sent to you as soon as possible. You can make some changes or add any information if you think it is necessary.

B: – Ok. Thank you. Bye!

A: – Good bye!
Interview E

A: – Hello, Robert. I want to thank you for taking the time to Skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already know, I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about the wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

I will send you an interview transcript as soon as possible, so you can make any changes or adjustment if you want.

B: – It is ok. I agree with everything.

A: – So we can start with the demographical question. Robert, how old are you?

B: – I am thirty-two.

A: – Do you have a partner at the moment?

B: – Yes, I have a boyfriend.

A: – Have you ever thought about getting married?

B: – Yes, of course. I have.

A: – Can you tell me the details about your lifestyle?

B: – What exactly do you mean with lifestyle?

A: – I mean how you do spend your free time and some information about your job at the moment.

B: – At the moment I am working as a manager in the restaurant. In a bit of free time which is left I usually spend evening with my friends. I like to meet them, just chill out with them a bit or go party with them or also not just for parting, but also for a light drink. Just really spend time with my friends.

A: – What is your level of education?

B: – HBO.

A: – We can move to the topic of the wedding celebrations. And can you please tell me how the perfect wedding should look like in your opinion? Just describe what is the perfect wedding for you.

B: – Very romantic I would say. But also simple so not too much luxury or it is really about the ceremony I would say. Like really this ... and spending rest of your life together but lots of friends, so
nothing too fancy, really simple. Having a nice dinner or a barbecue. The barbecue outside with some drinks and a big–big party in the end with all my friends.

A: – Can you tell me which location will be the best for the wedding reception, wedding celebration?

B: – Well. I do not have a specific location in mind but the location should be... they should have an option to go outside. Maybe some grass or some water, or even a beach would be amazing. The outside part is quite important for me. I do not want to spend the whole day inside, eating and parting inside. It would be great if they have an option to go outside and have some fun there. Like with a pavilion or something, or a tent.

A: – And have you ever thought about getting married in a hotel?

B: – Yes, why not? I mean there are hotels which have the outside location too, which is connected or attached. Yes, no objectives. Why should I not marry in the hotel?

A: – So if the location meets all your requirements it does not matter if it is a hotel or another venue, am I right?

B: – Yes. That is true.

A: – And can you describe which atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: – Like I said simple and relaxed. Not necessarily too luxury or too fancy. I am not really a fan of all these traditions you have with all the straight weddings, but more flexible program, something I would like. Like starting with a nice reception and just going over for some light dinner and then just really some music. I love music. So a life band would be amazing. Really relaxed. So my guests would not necessarily will be there in the suits. Smart casual or business casual would be nice, like jeans and blouse or something but not a suit like it is the case at most weddings.

A: – So no dress code for the guests?

B: – Yes, maybe. I mean instead of having those really long dresses, just summer dresses for the women and for the guys some jeans and a shirt will be nice. But it has to be a bit official, but in the relaxed way. Do you know what I mean?

A: – Yes, I understood. And if we talk about colours of the wedding, which colours come to your mind when you think about the wedding?

B: – Good question. Usually you have this white. So I really like light and bright colours and also green would be interesting. I have not really thought about it. But I think light green, white. This combination would be really nice. Summer style. That is actually summer atmosphere.

A: – And if we talk about atmosphere at your wedding, how will your guests understand that it is a gay wedding? Will there be some other details which will show that it is not an ordinary wedding?

B: – I do not think that on my wedding you will recognize, except of the fact that there are two guys getting married.

A: – So you do not want any gay details, do you?
B: - To be honest I am not in this gay scene, so I do not even know what you have in mind and what do you mean by the gay details. But no, just a simple wedding.

A: - So you just want normal, more or less classical reception, do you?

B: - Exactly, that is it.

A: - And what part of the day would you like the reception to take place. Will it be breakfast, or lunch or dinner?

B: - I think it will start around three, so afternoon for the reception. And then guests will still have time to socialize a bit, to have fun, to talk to each other, then start with a dinner. I think dinner should not take longer than two hours and then really start the party of the evening.

A: - What do you mean by the party? Do you want a party with music when all the people dance or how do you think the party will be organized?

B: - Yes, definitely. So I mean both. There should be...I do not want a lot of people just sitting around but high tables where people can socialize and stand of course and just relax a bit and dance definitely. So again live music would be great, if you have a live band and people can entertain your guests or the band that can entertain your guests, so people can dance it would be amazing, but of course on the other hand you also need some space where people will just stand and calm down a bit and those sort of things.

A: - How do you think the dinner will be served in this case?

B: - Not everything needs to be on the plates, but like a buffet on the tables when you have those plates with meat or with vegetables or something just put on the table. Not a common buffet because everybody has to get up and get down and get up, but if you have those plates on the table, like those buffet plates that would be great.

A: - So at the table where the people are sitting or standing where will be some big plates from where people can get food, but on each table the same plates, am I right?

B: - Yes. Exactly.

A: - So the food at the wedding will be served in the first part of the reception and in the second part you want to focus on the party and drinking and dancing, is that correct?

B: - I would split it into three parts actually. So first part - reception where you just stand and there are some Champaign, some drinks. Then you go over to the second part which is the dinner and the third part will be the party.

A: - How do you want the beverage to be served at the wedding celebration?

B: - For the reception there should be waiters serving the drinks, but I think for the rest of the evening and especially for the dinner the guests need to be served. The main focus for the party is that guests can just go to the bar and get the drinks themselves. And maybe for the older people there is some service available, if people are sitting down, but the main focus is really on people getting the drinks themselves at the bar.

A: - So you consider that somebody will not dance and they will just sit and relax, do you?
B: – I think some of them. Like for example my grandparents will be there or my parents. I am not sure they will be dancing all evening. They will be sitting down, but I think all my friends will not sit. No way. I know my people.

A: – Which requirements for the staff at the wedding celebration will you have? I mean the waiters at the wedding. Will you have some special requirements for them?

B: – They should have fun too. They should not be stiff. They can make jokes or those kind of things. That is all fine with me. They need to be professionals though. I was a waiter myself so I know a bit what to expect. Hospitality performance is very important. Smile, be proactive, approach to the guests. It is very important for me that I see them walking around, taking the plates and the glasses, the empty ones. Cleaning the tables in between. Those kind of things. Most importantly when it comes to the attitude, they really need to be relaxed and open, and fun loving.

A: – Will you have any requirements for the staff who organize the party?

B: – They need to be well-structured, so I would like to have a full plan or something. This is just what gives me security. I do not need to be informed like every single day or something but regular updates let’s say once a week how things are going would be nice. They need to be curious about what I want.

A: – And do you want to take part in the wedding celebration organization as well?

B: – Probably yes. Well, I think instead of me telling them what I want, they have to come up with a creative concept, because I am not the most creative person. So I will be really open for their ideas, but deeper and tighter in the organizational process I think I would not be able to resist to help them a bit.

A: – Would you like to help during all the preparation for the wedding?

B: – I would love to give them the responsibilities and to let them do it and not to do anything at all but as I am working with the events myself, I do not think I would be able to stand back completely. I think from time to time I would take something in my hands and organize something but this is not the plan. So plan is really letting them do it and that is it.

A: – So it is more like a professional …

B: – It is like a disease.

A: – Are there any aspects of your perfect wedding which were not named during our conversation but you still want to discuss?

B: – Not really. I think this is everything I know so far. Maybe there is something more what I expect from the event planners. They are to be creative and they are to be proactive, and they surprise me with their ideas. For now I thought about things that were already mentioned and may be for now no more aspects.

A: – And now we can move straight to the informational sources. Can you please describe the way how you are going to search for place of a wedding?

B: – I would start on the internet. First of all it depends on the place, the city where I would marry to be honest. I think I would first decide on the city and then I will go to the internet and check also locations. Coming back to the question about the hotels, I would start with the hotels. To check out
hotels and if they have locations for weddings, to be honest. Because it is quite handy if you have guests from outside. I have friends in Russia, in London, in Germany, in the Netherlands. So if I have a place with the hotel this would be quite useful because they can just stay in the hotel then. And obviously I will check for the event location what they offer, if they have some sort of a wedding planner or something, because I would really like to give the responsibilities away in the beginning. Even though I cannot stop planning something myself, it would feel good if you have one person really responsible for the wedding.

A: – Do you think that asking friends is a reliable source of getting information about the place for a wedding?

B: – Of course. I think I would start looking in the internet, but if I find a place I will ask my friends if they have heard about it, if they know something or if they know someone who knows someone. I think if you get information from friends or people you know or maybe people your friends know, people from your network, it is much more reliable than just looking for something on the internet.

A: – Are there any opinion leaders in gay community? Bloggers for example.

B: – I am not following any gay blogs. I know some gay stars but if you think about gay stars probably the location they have is not really affordable and as I mentioned earlier I am not really in the gay scene. So I do not have that many gay connections.

A: – So actually you will search for a place of your wedding as you normally search for any place. That means you will go to internet. But does the place have to be gay–friendly at least?

B: – Yes. As I mentioned earlier I do not want a really gay wedding. It should just be normal wedding without any gay atmosphere or something. It needs to be a gay–friendly location but does not necessarily implement any gay items. Of course if you go to the hotel and they organize a gay wedding they are always in pink or something, but obviously they have to be gay–friendly.

A: – And if we imagine that for example you find a gay–friendly hotel or any other location, but they do not have any experience of holding gay weddings. Will it be still acceptable for you?

B: – Yes, of course. I would give them a chance. And as I said it does not have to be a gay wedding. Of course they need to have experience in organizing weddings. If it is a straight wedding or a gay wedding it would not make a difference for me. I think it even would make it more interesting to be the first one. They are still fresh when it comes to ideas, innovative. Maybe even more than other hotels which have organized thousands of gay weddings already. You just get new ideas and you know that, you really have a unique wedding. Not like they say: “Please pick up your wedding. We have this and this package”.

A: – Do you know any gay websites or newspapers and magazines?

B: – As I told I am not really in this gay network. But I sometimes use an APP GRINDRER. Well, this is an app and it shows you who is around and who is gay. Sometimes you do not even recognize that someone is a gay. That is quite interesting. You can exchange ideas. It is like a chat. You even have it for straight people. It is just a gay equivalent for it.

A: – Do you think it is possible to advertise something through this app?
B: – No, you cannot put an advertising there. You need to create a profile. I do not think you can create a profile as a company. And for instance, I would not be able to chat with somebody from Saint-Petersburg, because it is just too far away. It shows you in the free version around thirty people and they need to be close to you.

A: – And the last question. What will be the budget for your wedding?

B: – I know that between thirty and forty euro per person is quite realistic for the normal wedding. So nothing too extravagant. I think it would also depend on the concept. I mean if the hotel or the event manager would amaze me with great ideas, very creative and I would love them, I would spend more money. It depends on the ideas. If I think that it is a really catchy concept, I think I would spend more money.

A: – So it will not be a fixed budget but during the preparation for the wedding the budget can grow, am I right?

B: – I think there would be a budget I would have in mind when it comes to that. I think it would be ok, if we would slightly cross the budget, if the ideas are much better than I thought. And I just want to add something about the advertising for the Amstel hotel. There are many–many brochures and magazines. I do not have any but I know if you check it on Itunes, for example on your Iphone. I think you can just type in “gay magazines” and there will pop up many magazines and some of them are quite popular and quite expensive. That would be a great idea to post an advertisement there.

A: – Thank you for the idea. And it is a good way to understand if these magazines are popular among gay people.

B: – Yes. And I think that advertising in magazines is more catchy and convincing than on–line advertisement. It shows that they would spend some money to get you. On the internet you just have so much information, so many different advertisements. As soon as an advertisement pops up I just close it, because I am not going to read in anyway and I will not trust it. I do not trust advertisings on the internet.

A: – Actually that was the last question. Now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding should be very romantic and luxury. Then you want to have a nice dinner or a barbecue outside with some drinks and a big–big party in the end with all your friends. You want the staff to have fun at your wedding. They should not be stiff. They can make jokes or these kind of things. And wedding planners need to be well–structured, so you would like to have a full plan or something. The main source of choosing a place of your wedding will be internet. Asking friends is also a reliable source for you. The budget for your wedding will be at least thirty or forty euros per person. Am I right?

B: – Yes, you are. That is everything what I wanted to say.

A: – I want to thank you once again for taking time for the Skype session. The interview was very helpful for my research. Especially thank you for your advertising ideas. The interview transcript will be sent to you as soon as possible. You can make some changes or add any information if you think it is necessary.

A: – Bye, Robert. Have a nice evening!
Interview F

A: – I will start with the introduction. I am really thankful that you made time to have this interview. My name is Nelly Shemesh. I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental Hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations and today I would like to talk to you about gay wedding celebrations. The interview should take around forty minutes. I will be taping the session, because I do not want to miss any of your comments.

B: – Ok. But is it on my name or is it just anonymous?

A: – This is what I just wanted to say. All the responses will be kept confidentially. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody and I ensure you that any information I include in the report will not identify you as a respondent.

B: – Ok. Perfect.

A: – And if you do not want to talk about something, you do not have to. You may stop the interview at any time you want. The transcript of the interview will be sent to you as soon as possible. So you can make any changes or adjustments if you feel that it is necessary.

B: – Ok.

A: – So we can start the interview. The first question will be: how old are you?

B: – I am twenty-four years old.

A: – Do you have a partner at the moment?

B: – Yes, I do.

A: – Have you ever thought about getting married?

B: – Yes.

A: – Can you tell me the details about your lifestyle?

B: – What details are you looking for? Like work or…?

A: – Yes. It is mostly about work and the way you spend your free time.

B: – Ok. I am a student, I am doing a master degree now. At the moment I am working full time in the shop. In my free time when the weather is nice I go outside and I like to sit on the terrace and just have drinks outside. For example a cup of coffee somewhere. I like to hang out in the bar. And when it is cold outside I like to sit on my couch or meet up with friends or family and have coffee inside.

A: – And now we can move straight to the questions about the wedding celebrations. Can you please tell me how the perfect wedding should look like in your opinion?

B: – I will be happy if there are all members of my family and my partner’s family. If there is the good food. I do not want it to be too much or over the top. I would like to have tasteful food and tasteful decoration. I would like to be in the dress and my partner as well, but not the kind of dress when it is
too much. Like when you put two wedding cakes next to each other and let them get married. So I would like it to be elegant and tasteful. Is it enough or you want it to be …?

A: – This is just what came to your mind when you started to think about it. And now I will ask some questions about the wedding celebration and the wedding reception so you can think more specifically. Is it ok? Can you think about the best location of the wedding celebration?

B: – I would like it to be in old Amsterdam. Old Dutch building I think. Or in the garden of an Old Dutch building. Like one of these Amsterdam’s mansions or the ones you see on the channels. Something like that I guess or near the water, near the channel. Something nice like a terrace overlooking either the water or part of the city I guess.

A: – Did you ever consider a hotel as a location for you wedding?

B: – Yes, of course. Because it is convenient with your guests as well. Since my partner is half Turkish so all her family will have to fly in. We will need to put them somewhere to sleep. So the hotel will be convenient. But Amstel hotel is not the first hotel we had in mind because it is so extremely expensive, but it is very gorgeous and it has a very nice terrace and everything.

A: – And if you think about the atmosphere at your wedding, which atmosphere should it be?

B: – It should be cozy, elegant, peaceful. I do not know what kind of atmosphere I can pick up from?

A: – It is more about your feelings. Let’s talk about colours…

B: – I would like it to be just white colour and maybe one more other colour. Like white and maybe red or white and maybe … You know? Just white and one other color.

A: – And you also mentioned that you want a live music at your wedding.

B: – Oh yes. That would be nice. Like a small classical band with violin and other things I do not know.

A: – Is it going to be more classical music?

B: – No, not specifically. Yes maybe. Or jazz. I have not figured it out yet but I like this idea and I like live music.

A: – And which time of the day you want your wedding celebration to take place? Does it have to be in the morning or afternoon, or evening? How do you see the day of the wedding?

B: – A sunny day. I would not want to get married in the morning. I would like around four or five to start the whole ceremony and then dinner and after dinner a party or may be put the dinner and the party together. Something like that. So everyone can eat and dance. And before that I would like a ceremony for the specifically selected group of people. Before that I would like to spend the day like wake up not stressful. Not sleep till extremely late, but do not get up too early and then get ready, get dressed like hair and everything. To do make up and everything. So that you have the day to make everything gathered and fix everything before you have to get married, without having any time pressure. So that I have all day to get ready and I do not have to worry about that.

A: – When you described your perfect wedding you already mentioned that the food is important and that it has to be tasty. But how do you think the food should be served at your wedding?
B: – What do you mean by how it should be served like should it be dancers handing out food sticks or what are the possibilities?

A: – There are many possibilities. For example it can be served as a course dinner or a buffet or maybe you have some other ideas.

B: – I do not want to have a walking buffet. I want everyone to sit down and have a seat where I point them to sit and they will have to talk with the people I put next to them. They will have a nice course with a starter and one or two main dishes and a really nice desert with chocolate and during the meal people can also dance. My partner will really like that. And stand up and chat and walk around. Or otherwise after. But anyway they would sit down at the tables and they would have a menu that I picked up. It is a wedding. It is not like they go to the restaurant with their families or friends. So they are our guests and they are going to eat what we served. And I would probably have a vegetarian or halal selection for the people who wish something like that. I would upfront ask them, on the wedding invitations if they have a special menu requirement or if they would like to have a vegetarian meal. My partner is Turkish, so some of her family does not eat pork or a lot of my friends are vegetarian, so we would point it out if they want something like that.

A: – Should the beverage be served in the same way or somehow different, with the bar table?

B: – I would like there to be an open bar anyway like during the whole thing but while dinner I would… Well it depends, like if there is a party during, when people can stand up and they talk and they chat and they dance, it will be nice if they also can go to the bar and ask for the drinks. So the open bar should be open all the time, but I also want the selections of two or three wines that would fit to the dinner and which we selected specially for this day. These wines I want to be served. Am I making it difficult or not?

A: – No, it is ok. And will you have any requirements for the staff at the wedding? For the waiters for example?

B: – Like..?

A: – What do you expect from the staff?

B: – First of all I would like them to be respectful. We call it in the Netherland …. , somebody who refuses to serve gay people. I would not expect it to happen in the hotel where we would have a gay wedding. It will cross my mind and I would ask the place where we would have the wedding, if there is a guarantee that they can give. That there is no issue with the staff or whatever. I assume that in the Netherlands there will be no problems. So that is one on my main requirements. Besides (without from) that I would not… No as long as they are nice to the people, to the guests there are no other requirements.

A: – And what about event organization? Do you have some requirements for the staff who organize the wedding?

B: – Oh wait. I want to come back to the staff at the wedding. I want to know the way they will be dressed so I would know how they will fit the total picture. I would probably not change that, because there is a special uniform for the staff especially in the Amstel hotel, but I would like to know it upfront, so I know how the total picture will be. How does the end project will look like. Just in case
some hotels might dress up people in pink or in orange, maybe it will not match everything. And about the organizing staff I do not know. I would like it if they know a lot about organizing weddings because I do not know a lot about it. I know my own preferences and I know my partner's preferences, but I do not know how to put it all together. I would probably miss out a lot of details. I would like that people who organize it, you know...?

A: – So in other words you want them to be professionals. Am I right?

B: – Yes. I want them to be professionals and to think for me as well, to remember the things that I might forget. I would like them to be nice. Oh also... but that is what I expect from the venue, I would like there to be big bathrooms because if you are in the wedding dress and in our case there will be two wedding dresses, it is hard to use a small bathroom. So when I go to the wedding venue, the first thing I will check is the restrooms.

A: – And if we talk about the organization of your wedding celebration, do you want to take part in it?

B: – In the organization?

A: – Yes.

B: – Yes. I would not want to do all of it, but there are things that I want to happen on my wedding, and I will control that those things are actually happening. So I would like the other people to actually make it happen.

A: – So is it more like you want to control the event staff time to time?

B: – More like I would like to decide. I would like to talk to them about how is better to do certain things and what will be logical. I would like to hear their impute and I would like to hear what they have to say because they are more experienced than me, but I want to be the one who decides in the end. So I am going to be the person who says “Yes. It is going to be that color.” Or “Yes. It is going to be that flowers.”

A: – So in the ideal situation they just will offer you few options for you to choose from. Is that correct?

B: – Yes. Or we can discuss it and maybe I will add something else that I would like. Or if they know something better and then we discuss it and I choose and they will make it happen.

A: – Actually that was all my questions about the wedding celebrations. Are there some other aspects which came to your mind, but we did not discuss it during the conversation?

B: – I would like it also to be outside but since we are in the Netherlands and it can rain or the weather can be quite disappointing, I would like it to be an option to go inside. So that is something I would like and the bathrooms, but I already mentioned that. I think it is the most important and open-minded staff, gay-friendly staff, because I do not want to be judged on my wedding day.

A: – Now we can move to the topic of the informational sources. Can you please describe the way how you are going to search for the place of the wedding?

B: – Google, google, google and then I will visit the places I like the best with my partner or with friends. And I will compare the price and the wedding packages. I will take into consideration whether they serve food or not and things like that. I will start out by looking on the internet.
A: – Are there any internet websites which come to your mind when you think about searching for a place of a wedding?

B: – Yes, if you just google “original or beautiful weddings” in Dutch and then “Amsterdam” because I would like to get married in Amsterdam there are a couple sites that pop up.

A: – So will you start with the location?

B: – I would start with Amsterdam or maybe nearby Amsterdam, but my girlfriend would like to get married in the castle, probable it will not be Amsterdam. We still have some time to decide. It will be not only my decision, but I would like to start with looking around Amsterdam.

A: – Do you think asking friends is a reliable source of information in this case?

B: – Yes. I would ask them why they would have chosen for something and which things I should take into account while looking for a place.

A: – Do you know if there are any opinion leaders in the gay community of the Netherlands?

B: – No. It is difficult. There are not so many famous lesbians in Holland. So I would be inspired by any lesbian wedding with two beautiful girls or nice looking women. They do not have to be gorgeous. I would be inspired by any girls when they both wear a dress, when they have nice make-up and hairstyle. You know it is really hard to find something like that on the internet, especially in Dutch. In America it is starting to be popular, but still I have not found anything like that. So I would be inspired by anything. When I see a wedding organized in a nice way, maybe I would do it similar.

A: – Can you tell me about any newspapers or magazines which are popular among gay people?

B: – Ok. For women it is “Zijn and Zijn”. If they have something about weddings I would definitely buy it. If any Dutch magazine has a lesbian wedding column I would buy it. Specifically gay I would read “Zijn and Zijn”, I would check their official page on Facebook. Also I would check COC. This is the gay Facebook page for gay people. They post a lot of gay stuff and news and everything. So if they would post something about gay weddings it would pop up in the news on Facebook. I think many gay people will see it. I think that are the two main things I know. But I do not know magazines for men. I do not follow them. But you know the thing is that I would also follow if there would be a neutral–sexual focus magazine like “Elle”, “Vogue” or any wedding magazine and there will be a gay wedding theme or a column. I will also use these magazines for inspiration. So I would suggest not only promote through gay channels but through straight channels as well.

A: – So in your case it is not about the source of information, but about the information itself. Ok thank you very much. I think it is everything I wanted to ask. Now I would like to make a small summary of our conversation. As far as I understood, your wedding will take place in an Old Dutch building in Amsterdam. You will be happy if there are all members of your family and your partner’s family and you would like to have the tasteful food. The atmosphere should be cozy, elegant and peaceful. You want the staff to be hospital and of course gay–friendly. The organizer of the wedding should listen to you and discuss with you what you want and they have to remember everything that you can forget.
For the informational sources you will use google and also asking friends is a reliable source for you. Am I right?

B: – Yes and I would like to thank you because it would be great, if there is more information about gay weddings. I find it hard to find inspiration. It is so difficult to have two dresses next to each other without looking like a character from Disney movie. I would really like it if there is more inspiration for me or more people that know about what looks nice and what looks too much and things like that. That would be easier for me. So thank you very much for doing this.

A: – Oh yes, there is the last question I wanted to ask. Can you tell me what will be the approximate budget for your wedding?

B: – I would start with thirty thousand. That is my starting point. I would like to go above. That is the minimum.

A: – I want to thank you once again for taking time for the Skype session. The interview was very helpful for my research. The interview transcript will be sent to you as soon as possible. You can make some changes or add any information if you think it is necessary.

B: – That is great. Thank you.

A: – Good bye!
Interview G

A: – Hello, Billy! I want to thank you for taking the time to skype with me today. My name is Nelly Shemesh. As you already, know I am doing a research for Amstel InterContinental Hotel in Amsterdam. The hotel wants to focus on gay wedding celebrations. Today I would like to talk to you about wedding celebrations. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will not be shared with anybody. I ensure you that any information I include in the report does not identify you as a respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

B: – Hello, Nelly! Everything is ok! Let’s start.

A: – And the first question will be– how old are you?

B: – Twenty-four years old.

A: – Do you have a partner at the moment?

B: – Yes, I do.

A: – Are you planning to get married in the nearest future?

B: – Yes! But not in the nearest future. Nearest future for me is one or two years. We planned to get married in five years.

A: – In five years maximum?

B: – I think in five years minimum.

A: – Can you tell me the details about your lifestyle?

B: – I just finished university, I have a Bachelor degree. Right now I am working as a photographer. My free time I spend with my boyfriend. We go outside, we go out for dinner, we meet our friends, we make a barbeque with our friends, we have a lot of sport activities, such as, football with our friends, bowling, and pool. Also on weekends we visit my and his family. On summer holiday we like to travel, for example, we can go to any country with hot climate, to have a sunbath, to swim in the sea.

A: – Ok. Now we can move straight to the first topic, which will be the wedding celebrations. Can you tell me how the perfect wedding should look like in your opinion?

B: – Well. Such a difficult question, because I do not have a budget for the perfect wedding. I will try to describe a realistic wedding. It should start in the church, then it should be a dinner with my family and with my friends. And in the end it should be a party in any bar or club. If we have such a huge budget, we would prefer to celebrate our wedding in any romantic place, for example, Bali Island. As you understand it will cost a lot, because we have to pay for all of our friends and families. Before the
wedding we want to have separate parties. I want to organize my stag-party with my friends in Las-Vegas. And it also needs big budget.

A: – Ok. What is the best location for the wedding celebration?

B: – Well. I want to rent any villa next to the water, on the beach.

A: – Ok. Have you ever thought about getting married in a hotel?

B: – Yes. But I do not want to have a main part of the wedding there. We can organize the main part in any restaurant or club and after that we can have our first night in the hotel without guests.

A: – Can you describe which atmosphere should be at your wedding?

B: – It should be romantic, intimate. If we have a big budget, it can be rather glamorous with bright colours. If we go further and speak about timetable of the celebration, it should be in the evening, starting from the traditional part in the church and after that it should be a dinner and after that it should be an informal part with a buffet and a bar. So people can walk around, speak to each other, dance.

A: – Ok. If you think about the colour, which color comes to your mind?

B: – Traditional colours. White and other bright colours, such as, blue, pink and so on.

A: – Ok. Which entertainment do you want to have?

B: – After the main part we can go to the club, dance there and have drinks with our friends.

A: – Ok. As you already told you would like to have just a normal dinner. The main part should be in the evening and after that you prefer to have a buffet with a bar. Is that correct?

B: – Yes. Correct.

A: – And how long will be the course dinner?

B: – One and a half hour.

A: – And what will be after the course dinner?

B: – It would be informal part with the bar, singing, dancing.

A: – Would it be at the same place or will you move somewhere else?

B: – It depends on the budget. If the budget is rather big, we can rent a club–restaurant. On the first floor it would be the main part and then everybody move to the second floor where it will be a bar with music, and the buffet should be served there.

A: – Ok. Which requirements do you have for the staff?

B: – They have to be open–minded, they have to be friendly, they have to be gay–friendly, because I do not want to listen to their jokes that we are gays. They have to wear special uniform, it is easier for the guests to find out the waiters. Of cause they have to be polite to all the guests and to offer them beverages and food. They have to be professional, because I do not want to see dirty plates and dirty glasses.
A: – Which requirements do you have for the staff who will organize the wedding?

B: – Of course they have to be very creative, because it is really so difficult to organize non-traditional wedding and create something interesting. Firstly they have to discuss with us what we want and then act.

A: – Would you like to take part in the organization?

B: – Yes! But the main part will be in the hands of the planners and I will take part as an advisor. Every step of our wedding they have to discuss with us and then act.

A: – Ok. Do you have any special requirements for the wedding celebration in general?

B: – Maybe I can add some details about the organization. For example, I need a photographer, because I do not want to be busy with making pictures on my own wedding. Also we can rent a limo car or party bus where we can have drinks with our friends during traveling from the restaurant to the club. Also we have requirements concerning the place. It has to be gay-friendly. For example, if we have a big budget and we prefer to celebrate our wedding in another country, we can meet some problems such as law restrictions or any religious problems.

A: – Ok. Let’s move to the second topic. Can you describe the way how you are going to search for the place?

B: – Of course the main source is google. Also I will ask my friends who already got married for an advice and I will ask them to give me contacts of the organization companies they used.

A: – Ok. Can you tell me if there are any opinion leaders in the gay community of Netherlands whom you want to follow and organize the wedding like they did?

B: – What do you mean opinion leaders? For example, Sir Elton John?

A: – Yes! Any celebrities, singers, stars, bloggers. But people within the gay community of the Netherlands.

B: – No! Because if I follow some stars, I will not have a budget to organize the same wedding as they did. And I do not read any blogs.

A: – Can you name any magazines or newspapers which are popular in the Netherlands?

B: – Actually I do not read any gay magazines or newspapers. I use some gay communities on Facebook to search for places to go on the weekends with friends, but unfortunately I do not remember the names.

A: – Ok. Let’s summarize our discussion. You are going to marry within five years and your wedding will depend on the budget, but if we are speaking about the most realistic scenario, you want to rent a villa in any location next to the water: lake or sea. The atmosphere on your wedding should be romantic and intimate with bright colours. You also would like the traditional part to start in the church, then move towards the dinner which will last one and a half hour, then move on to the informal part and it should be in the club where you can drink. And also you can consider the hotel as a location for the wedding, but only for the first night. You would like the dinner to be served in two ways like a course dinner and a buffet. The staff at your wedding should be friendly and it is very important if they
would be gay-friendly as well because you do not want to hear any jokes about your preferences. You want your wedding organizers to be creative. You also want to check them and give them an advice if it is necessary. As a special requirement you want to have limo car or a party bus. As informational sources you will use the internet and ask your friends. Is everything correct?

B: – Yes, it is!

A: – Thank you so much that you skyped with me today. I will send you a transcript as soon as possible. You can make some adjustments if it is necessary.

B: – Thank you. I will wait for the transcript. Good bye!

A: – Have a nice day! Bye!
### Preferences towards wedding celebrations

<p>| Venue (location accommodation) | Gay-friendly location, natural scene, authentic location, city center, option to go outside, old Dutch style, water surrounding, comfortable for the preparation, flexible. |
| Hotel as a venue | Importance of the hotel, lack of the information, hosting foreign guest, convenient |
| <strong>Atmosphere</strong> | |
| <strong>1. Colors</strong> | Classical colors, traditional colors, decoration, self-appearance, dress. |
| <strong>2. Entertainment</strong> | “Dancing”, “having a party”, music issue. |
| <strong>3. Emotional background</strong> | Playful, personal touch, memorable, “celebration of love”, “intimate”, welcoming, “feel the atmosphere”, gay touch, not about ceremony, view on the meaning, relaxing, summer style, “peaceful atmosphere”, not tight schedule, no time pressure |
| <strong>Reception</strong> | “Dinner is more serious”, flexible program. |
| <strong>Guests</strong> | Family issue, presence of the family, everyone is involved, high degree of participation, celebration for the family, public acceptance, only close people, management behaviour, possibility to communicate, guests’ satisfaction, closed party, presence of the friends, wear, smart casual style, communicating, socializing, focus on the guests, family issue. |
| <strong>Food</strong> | National cuisine, importance of the food, food as a sign of |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Wedding celebrations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Staff</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beverage</strong></td>
<td>Amount of alcohol, accessibility of the drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. On the wedding</strong></td>
<td>Open-minded, gay-friendly, enjoying the time, “hospitable”, helpful, behave friendly, uniform, professional skill, mixed-gender staff, service for the elderly people, positive attitude, professionalism, self-experience, communication with the guests, willing to take part, fit to the wedding concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Wedding organizers</strong></td>
<td>“Creative”, understanding, trustful event planners, management behaviour, contact with the client, understand the wishes, communication with the client, cooperation with the client, act according to the plan, rely on the event organization, material for the party, well-structured organization, reliability issue, self-experience, new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in organization</strong></td>
<td>Making decisions in the beginning, take part in the organization, give the responsibility away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relation issue</strong></td>
<td>Reliable relations, long duration of the relation, making decisions together, discuss with a partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td>Money issue, share the budget, 20 000 euros, 25 000 euros, 5000 euros, willing to spend more for quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td>Photographer issue, car issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Informational sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal communicational channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Friends, neighbors, family</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Opinion leaders</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-personal communicational channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Newspapers</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online and electronic media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Web-sites</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Social media</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of the wedding location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gay-friendly, experience of a gay wedding, gay-friendly positioning, safety issue, gay-friendly infrastructure, gay marriage, traditional wedding, experience in the weddings organization, not a package wedding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searching in the internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not gay informational sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not only gay sources, straight focus sources, importance of the information, inspirational source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VIII Descriptive analysis

1. Preferences of gay people in the Netherlands towards wedding celebrations

1.1 Location

All the respondents find the location very important. Five interviewees out of seven mentioned the location while describing their perfect wedding celebration. The other two interviewees also talked about the location but only after the certain questions from the interviewer.

“I see my perfect wedding on the sunny beach. I mean the celebration will take place in the hotel, but the hotel should be located on the beach. Actually it is the most important for me” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

“It should not be too big. I would like to have small wedding with really loved ones and not all kind of people you do not know. So… intimate. And I want to get married in the sunny place, on the beach also, with the blue sea and the white sand.” (Respondent B, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

All the respondents mentioned that the location has to be gay-friendly. This is the main requirement for the location. This requirement is vital for the gay couples. The location has to provide a possibility to get married, which is a political issue in this case. Their safety and the safety of their guests is very important. All the respondents do not want to feel uncomfortable at the wedding and they do not want to be judged for their sexual orientation.

“Yes, of course. It is also about the safety of the people. You do not want to worry about anything during your wedding days. We will be very meticulous about the hotel, the location and the country our wedding will take place.” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

The other requirement for the location is flexibility. For those respondents who choose to celebrate the wedding in the Netherlands the possibility to celebrate both inside the building and outside the building is very important.

“I would like it also to be outside but since we are in the Netherlands and it can rain or the weather can be quite disappointing, I would like it to be an option to go inside. So that is something I would like and the bathrooms but I already mentioned that” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

“Well… I do not have a specific location in mind but the location should be… they should have an option to go outside. Maybe some grass or some water, or even a beach would be amazing. The outside part is very important for me. I do not want to spend the whole day inside, eating and parting inside. It would be great if they have an option to go outside and have some fun time there. Like with a pavilion or something, or tent.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

1.2 Hotel as the venue for the wedding celebration

Some of the respondents consider that a hotel is a convenient place for the wedding celebration, mainly because it can host the foreign guests who will come to the wedding.

“I would start with the hotel. To check out hotels and if they have locations for weddings, to be honest. Because it is quite handy if you have guests from outside. I have friends in Russia, in London, in
Germany, in the Netherlands. So if I would have a place with the hotel, this would be quite useful because they can just stay in the hotel.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

On the other hand not all the respondents thought about the hotel as a place for a wedding celebration. The main reason for that was the lack of information, which means that there is not enough advertising of the wedding parties in the hotels.

“No, it could be a good idea to celebrate wedding there (in the hotel). It has just never crossed my mind. But I think it does not cross the mind of many Dutch people to celebrate a wedding party in the hotel” (Respondent D, personal communication, May 16, 2014)

1.3 Atmosphere at the wedding

The category “Atmosphere at the wedding” was divided into three subcategories, which are “colours”, “entertainment”, and “emotional background”.

The research showed that all the respondents talked about their emotions and feelings while describing the atmosphere that should be at their wedding. It is important for the interviewees not to feel any pressure and have a relaxed atmosphere.

“Well, of course very welcoming. Everybody should feel at home in whatever location: in town consulate hall or the church or the party location afterwards.” (Respondent D, personal communication, May 16, 2014)

It is also very important that the atmosphere at the wedding expresses the background of the wedding couple. This means not only the aspects that express them as individuals, but also cultural aspects. The atmosphere at the wedding should reflect the cultural side of the country where they originally came from.

“You know, it will be very memorable and everyone will know whose wedding they came to and I will be like “my wedding”, and they will know I am so playful, because I am a playful person.” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

“That I mean about playfulness, so I have a lot of space to put in my imagination with her culture. You know? And the third day will be actually for getting married.” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

For the colours of the wedding none of the respondents aimed for the extravagant colours. Only traditional wedding colours were mentioned. All the respondents associate the perfect wedding with the combination of white and another bright colour. The colours are linked to the atmosphere of the wedding celebration. While talking about the colours, the decoration as well as the wedding dress were mentioned.

“Good question. Usually you have this white. So I really like light and bright colours and also green would be interesting. I have not really thought about it, but I think light green, white. This combination would be really nice. Summer style. That is actually summer atmosphere.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)
“I would like it to be just white colour and may be one more colour. Like white and may be red or white and maybe... you know just white and one other colour.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

1.4 Entertainment

For the entertainment live music and live band were chosen by the respondents.

“Oh yes. That would be nice. Like a small classical band with violin and other things.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

“So again live music would be great. If you have a live band and people can entertain your guests or the band that can entertain you guests, so people can dance, it would be amazing. Of course on the other hand you also need some space where people will just stand and calm down a bit and those sort of things.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

1.5 Guests

Another big category which was not mentioned in the operationalization process but was further added to the code tree is “Guests”. All the respondents who were interviewed during the research talked about the guests at the wedding in one way or another. The research showed that the presence of the family members is essential for the respondents. So the conclusion can be made that they need the support and the acceptance of their families during this step in their lives.

“I think it has to be quite traditional. For me it is very important that my family and the family of my girlfriend will present there.” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

“I will be happy if there are all members of my family and my partner’s family, if there is good food. I do not want it to be too much or over the top. I would like to have a tasteful food and tasteful decorations.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

The research showed that the respondents want to see close people at their wedding celebration. It is important for the respondents that guests will be satisfied by all the aspects of the wedding celebration. So there is a focus on the guests that can be seen from the fact that there was no straight question about the guests’ satisfaction but still this issue was mentioned by the respondents.

1.6 Food and beverage

The interviews showed that the food is one of the most important aspects at the wedding celebration. The food is seen by the respondents as a symbol of hospitality and one of the criteria that can influence guests’ satisfaction. Tasty food can satisfy the guests, which is important because of the guests’ focus of the wedding celebration.

“ And yes, the food is very important, because you are celebrating your love and you want other people to celebrate it with you and the least what you can do is to feed them” (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

Although the food is an important aspect of the wedding celebration, it does not have to take much time for serving it. Or at least it has to be a room for guests’ interaction and socialization during the dinner.
“Actually one and a half hour. I do not want to spend all evening sitting at the table and having the food. I choose to have two hours for having the food and then to start dancing and having party” (Respondent B, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

“I think it will start around three, so afternoon for the reception. And then guests will still have time to socialise a bit, to have fun, to talk to each other, and then start with a dinner. I think the dinner should not take longer than two hours and then really start the party in the evening” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

The selection of the food depends on the culture of the respondents. Three respondents have partners who are living in the Netherlands but were born in other countries, or have relatives in other counties. All these respondents expressed a wish to serve national food. Serving the food from their countries can mean that people want to express themselves at the wedding, please the guests from the country where they originally came from, and make the guests familiar with their cultural background.

“I am from Turkey. I am thinking about a Turkish wedding and how people celebrate it in my country. What we do is we have first course which is served on the table it is like cold things, salads and then after that we have like warm dishes. These are actually two courses that I like at the wedding.” (Respondent C, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

Cultural and religious issues have to be taken into consideration when it comes to the question of serving some kinds of meat.

“And I would probably have a vegetarian or halal selection for people who wish something like that. I would upfront ask them, on the wedding invitation for instance, if they have a special menu questions or if they would like to have a vegetarian meal. My partner is Turkish, so some of her family members does not eat pork or a lot of my friends are vegetarian, so we would point it out, if they want something like that.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

The main requirement for the beverage is accessibility. For all the respondents it is important that guests can get drinks all the time during the wedding celebration. The process of serving drinks has to be adapted to the part of wedding celebration and to the guests who are served.

“For the reception there should be waiters serving the drinks, but I think for the rest of the evening and especially for the dinner the guests need to be served. The main focus of the party is that the guests can just go to the bar and get the drinks themselves. And maybe for the older people there is some service available, if people are sitting down, but the main focus is really on people getting the drinks themselves at the bar.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

“I would like there to be an open bar anyway like during the whole thing but while dinner I would… well it depends… like if there is a party during, when people can stand up and they talk and they chat and they dance, it will be nice if they also can go to the bar and ask for drinks. So the open bar should be open all the time, but I also want a selection of two or three wines that would fit the dinner and which we selected specially for this dinner. These wines I want to be served. Am I making it difficult or not?” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

1.7 Staff
The “staff” category was divided within the operationalization process into two subcategories, which are "the staff at the wedding celebration" and "the staff who organize the wedding". Both of these categories were found very important by the respondents.

The main requirement for the staff is to be gay-friendly and open-minded. Although the respondents think that nowadays there will be no incidents when the staff shows intolerance towards people because of the sexual orientation, they would like to be sure that this issue will not occur.

"Not any particular requirements, but at least they should be LGBT friendly. But most of them in Amsterdam I guess they are." (Respondent D, personal communication, May 15, 2014)

"Yes, I guess. Of course we want for more open-minded hotel, of course we have to choose maybe somewhere in Europe. Spain or something like that. Where people are more open-minded and where we could marry. And for the staff around the wedding we want them to be open-minded and willing to participate as well. I mean if they are smiling, enjoying the time I would appreciate that. It is a celebration of love and I cannot have the staff members who are complaining about what sort of lifestyle these people have. I am sure that will not happen. Everyone is young these days in the hotels." (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

As for the event planners the most essential things are cooperation with the client and understanding the wishes of the client.

In the process of wedding organization the respondents would like to take the management position, which means that at the initial steps of the organizational process they would like to make some decisions and then just to control the working process of the event organizers. During the day of the wedding they would like to rely on the responsible person, because they would not have time to control or take part in the organizational process.

"More like I would like to decide. I would like to talk to them about how is better to do the certain things and what will be logical. I would like to hear their impute and I would like to hear what they have to say because they are more experienced than me, but I want to be the one who decides in the end. So I am going to be the person who says “Yes, it is going to be that colour” or ‘yes, it is going to be that flowers’. (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

1.8 Budget

As a wedding is expected to be once in a lifetime event, interviewees are ready to spend money on it. The answers within the interviews showed that the respondents understand that a wedding could cost a lot of money. On average, the respondents can afford to spend around 18,000 euros on a wedding celebration. In all cases the budget will be shared between the wedding couple. Two respondents out of seven mentioned that they could exceed the wedding budget, if there would be an offer of a good quality and with a competitive advantage.

“I think it would also depend on the concept. I mean if the hotel or event manager would amaze me with great ideas, very creative and I would love them, I would spend more money. It depends on the ideas. If I think that it is really catchy concept, I think I would spend more money” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)
“I would like to start with 30,000. That is my starting point. I would like to go above. That is the minimum.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

2. Informational sources that gay couples of the Netherlands use while searching for a place of a wedding celebration

For the informational sources, both gay-focused and non-gay focused informational sources were mentioned by the respondents. Four respondents out of seven would start the searching process from the information they would like to get, but not from the source where they can get the information. In this case the informational source does not necessarily be gay-focused.

2.1 Criteria for the wedding location

“Criteria for the wedding location” is the category that was added during the process of creating code trees within the axial coding. While describing the process of searching for a location of a wedding celebration six respondents out of seven started to talk about the criteria on which they would score the locations in order to find the best one. The respondents will start the searching process with searching for the location, which have to be gay-friendly, which means situated in the country where gay weddings are legalized by the government and where gay weddings are accepted by the culture. The hotel is expected to have experience of holding gay wedding celebrations.

“I would start on the internet. First of all it depends on the place, the city where I would marry, to be honest. I think I would first decide on the city and then I will go to the internet and check also locations. Coming back to the question with the hotels, I would start with the hotels. To check out hotels and if they have locations for wedding, to be honest” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

2.2 Personal communicational channels

All the respondents would use the experience of other wedding couples in order to select a place for a wedding. The answers of the respondents also showed that in their opinion asking friends is a reliable source of information in case of searching for a place of the wedding. In the opinion of the respondents this way of gathering the information is more reliable than searching for the information on the internet because only friends can provide them with the objective opinion.

“That is really a matter of hear or say. I already got some information from the friends, and the friends from the friends who organize party or me being there and thinking it is a nice location. I would not so much, only if it is was necessary, search in the internet and find flyers or informational books to get media information” (Respondent D, personal communication, May 15, 2014)

“Yes. Definitely if I had friends that were married and I was on their wedding and it was a very nice one, definitely I would talk to them how they arranged it and ask about their experience and the wedding companies and it is more reliable than to ask people that I do not know” (Respondent B, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

2.3 Non-personnel communication channels

The category “non-personnel communication channels” was divided within the operationalization process into two subcategories “magazines” and “newspapers”. None of these subcategories was mentioned by the respondents while describing the way of collecting information about the wedding
location. This can lead to the conclusion that these informational channels are not the first source of information in case of searching for a place of the wedding. For non-personal communication channels few magazines were named by the respondents. These magazines are “Zijn en zijn”, “Espresso” and “Squeeze”. The above mentioned magazines are gay-focused and in the respondents’ opinion they are popular among gay people in the Netherlands. Newspapers were not mentioned by the respondents.

2.4 On-line and electronic media

The answers of the respondents show that the internet is widely used for searching for a place of the wedding celebrations.

“I would start on the internet. First of all it depends on the place, the city where I would marry to be honest.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

“Well... I would look on Google. If I knew what the place to go in accordance of an experience of the other people, I would straight away look for this place and look for the hotels in this place, for wedding planning companies and see what is possible in this country.” (Respondent F, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

2.5 Websites

The respondents were asked to name gay-focused websites they know and use. While collecting the interviews it was found out that two respondents out of seven do not visit gay-focused websites on the daily basis. While searching for a place of the wedding celebration these respondents would not visit gay-focused websites.

“Actually I told, my life is quite boring so I barely visit gay websites. I guess, the same websites that straight people use, but we search extra to see if it is gay-friendly. So we will use “Tripadviser” or “Cheap Tickets” and “Expedia”, but we will go extra miles to see if the location is gay-friendly... “ (Respondent A, personal communication, May 13, 2014)

Two respondents mentioned dating websites such as “GayRomeo” and “Grinder” App. It was mentioned that these websites are popular among gay people.

“And there are some gay websites like gay.nl, gayromeo.nl which are the dating sites. “Gayromeo” is Amsterdam–based I believe. Quite a lot of gay people use this dating site.” (Respondent D, personal communication, 15 May, 2014)

“As I told, I am not really in this gay network. But I sometimes use an APP GRINDRER. Well, this is an app and it shows you who is around and who is gay. Sometimes you do not even recognize that someone is a gay. That is quite interesting. You can exchange ideas. It is like a chat. You even have it for straight people. It is just a gay equivalent for it.” (Respondent E, personal communication, May 18, 2014)

The rest of the respondents said that they used the internet and some websites as an informational tool, but they did not mention any particular websites.

2.6 Social Media

Facebook is a popular social media tool, because it provides gay people with the on-line platform where they can share the ideas and communicate with the people with the same interests. COC– the
biggest LGBT organization in the Netherlands – as well as a lot of other gay-friendly organizations, has its official page on Facebook.

“Some of them I use but the most important source of information for me is Facebook. I am in the few networks of people: the gay parade network in Amsterdam, the network of some political activities, gay networks in the Netherlands and Christian LGBT network in Europe. They provide me with all the information I need.” (Respondent D, personal communication, May 15, 2014)
### Appendix IX: Analysis of the competitors of Amstel Intercontinental hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okura</td>
<td>Large amount of meeting rooms (19)</td>
<td>New modern building with no history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Near Amsterdam RAI and Amsterdam “Zuid As”</td>
<td>The large amount of meeting rooms makes it not possible to have intimate meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nespresso machine’s in every room + meeting room</td>
<td>Small standard room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large amount of restaurant</td>
<td>Far from city center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biggest meeting rooms is 902m²</td>
<td>Support of GSO/GSA/Leading Hotels of the World is limited available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate entrance to the meetingrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean, tidy and hygienic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV included in meeting rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New product, still under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A large variety of suites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertainment system in all the rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own parking space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private boat(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A restaurant with two Michelin stars and one with one star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De l’Europe</td>
<td>Brand new product</td>
<td>No Michelin star restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate entrance to the meeting rooms</td>
<td>Support of GSO/GSA/Leading Hotels of the World is limited available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floor heating in the bathroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td>iPad in every room</td>
<td>No iPod/entertainer system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertainment system in all the rooms</td>
<td>Shower in bath tub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big variety of suites</td>
<td>Rooms are small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV included in meeting rooms</td>
<td>Outdated rooms + facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own parking space</td>
<td>No health center (swimming pool, sauna and steam bath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Located at the Amstel River</td>
<td>No standard entertainment system in the rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>permier packages with their logo on it which guests can take home</td>
<td>Small amount of suites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leder office boxes in meeting room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking lounge for special events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td>In the center of Amsterdam City located</td>
<td>In standard rooms are small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The garden is in the top 5 beautiful gardens (Misset Terras Top 100)</td>
<td>No Michelin star restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td>Separate entrance to the meeting room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coffee corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td>In the center of Amsterdam City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate entrance to the meeting rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big variety of suites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td>New product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private boat(s)</td>
<td>Small amount of meeting rooms (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unique wedding location</td>
<td>Small amount of rooms (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 minutes from the shopping area</td>
<td>Small hallway’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modern and authentic meeting rooms</td>
<td>No health center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large amount of meeting rooms (17)</td>
<td>No GSO/GSA/Leading Hotels of the World limited available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td>In the center of Amsterdam City located, near the “Negen Straatjes”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Michelin star restaurant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>Private boat(s)</td>
<td>Small amount of meeting rooms (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertainment system in all the rooms</td>
<td>It’s a starting business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unique wedding location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beautiful suites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>Located in the city’s major museums cluster (Museumplein)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Near by the Royal Concertgebouw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Air’ is a calming, peaceful space for Pilates, yoga and tai-chi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>New product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>parallel to the designer-fashion district of P.C. Hooftstraat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Treaths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Okura</strong></td>
<td>Okura</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese hotel, growing Asian market</td>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future business RAI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L'europe</strong></td>
<td>L'europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pulitzer</strong></td>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td>The growing demand for small boutique hotels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No large chain, no heavy SOP's</td>
<td>Financial crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suites are excellent for the entertainment industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are a new business in the existing market</td>
<td>They are a new business in the existing market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial crisis, opening during recession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Okura</strong></td>
<td>Jet lag program, which helps you gettin rid of your jetlag</td>
<td>Okura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Okura App, for tips about jetlags, taxi's, city guide, news, navigator, hotel services, *Okura's restaurants, Chefs's weblogs, Twitter, Facebook, reviews</td>
<td>No free wifi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have a Golden Green Key Certificate,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>De l'Europe</strong></td>
<td>Free wifi</td>
<td>De l'Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking lounge, offers variety of sigars, group bookings etc</td>
<td>Limited information on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusive wines by the glass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Butlerservice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have a Golden Green Key Certificate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wine workshop at winecellar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pulitzer</strong></td>
<td>They have a Golden Green Key Certificate.</td>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Grand</strong></td>
<td>They create a nice ambiance in the rooms by using candles, music and flavours</td>
<td>The Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free wifi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tours and workshops for guests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning: coffee and croissants corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening: champagne and canape’s corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upscale products in the health club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have a Golden Green Key Certificate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Dylan</strong></td>
<td>Because it’s a small hotel, the service is very personal and the atmosphere is intimate</td>
<td>The Dylan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free wifi</td>
<td>Small amount of information on their website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservatorium</strong></td>
<td>Personal host service</td>
<td>No outstanding service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No green key certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Treaths</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Okura</strong></td>
<td>they are focussed on working with the newest technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L'Europe</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pulitzer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Grand</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Dylan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservatorium</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okura</td>
<td>It’s own parking facilities. €4,00 per hour and hotel guests pay €35,00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€79,00 per day or €67,00 per day part banquet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 course menu vary from €65,00 to €50,00 per person incl. Drinks en room rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De l’Europe</td>
<td>Free wifi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€98,00 per day or €87,00 per day part banquet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td>Day part vary from €495,00 to €1250,00 and for day vary from €695,00 to €1575,00 free wifi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td>Valet service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td>The largest meeting room (104m2) is for a day €1200,00 and €850 per half day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunities**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Threats**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dylan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix X Current wedding package of Amstel Intercontinental hotel

Celebrate your wedding at the InterContinental Amstel Amsterdam

YOUR WEDDING DAY
* Welcome guests with coffee and tea
* Wedding ceremony in one of our romantic private rooms
* Reception where you can toast with a glass of champagne, enjoy classic wedding cake and an hour Dutch drinks selection
* Extensive three course menu including wine arrangement, composed by our Chef
* Wedding party with four hours of Dutch drinks assortment and an selection of bites

€ 255 per person

YOUR WEDDING WITH A ROYAL AFTERNOON TEA
* Welcome guests with coffee and tea
* Wedding ceremony in one of our romantic private rooms
* Toast with a glass of champagne
* Royal Afternoon Tea
* Classic wedding cake

€ 85 per person

YOUR WEDDING DINNER
* A festive welcome with glass of champagne
* Two canapés per person
* Dutch drinks selection for four hours
* A three course menu in a private room

Of course we can always add additional courses according to your wishes. Together with our Chef we can create your special wedding dinner.

€ 148 per person

CONTACT
For more information and reservations please contact our Wedding planner via +31 020 520 3195 or amstel.wedding@ihg.com.

www.amsterdam.intercontinental.com
### Appendix XI SWOT analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Location (city center, Amstel channel)</td>
<td>- Legalization of same-sex marriages in the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Availability of the banqueting rooms</td>
<td>- The incise of the national income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- High qualified team of the banqueting department</td>
<td>- Amsterdam Gay Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experience of organizing gay weddings</td>
<td>- Wide range of the communicational tools with the potential customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge of the standards of proving service</td>
<td>- No hotels with the gay-friendly position among the main competitors of Amstel InterContinental Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wide range of the wedding services</td>
<td>- No demand on two of the three wedding packages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personal approach of the wedding organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of rewarding system</td>
<td>- Extra expenses on new technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial resources on the implementation of the marketing plan are limited</td>
<td>- Main competitors have banqueting facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No demand on two of the three wedding packages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix XII Implementation plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action step (what will be done?)</th>
<th>Responsibilities (who will do it)</th>
<th>Time line (by when it will be done)</th>
<th>Needed resources</th>
<th>Potential barriers</th>
<th>Communication plan (who is involved)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Announcing about the new marketing strategy on the meeting of the management team</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>The 1st of July 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Management team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Announcing about the new marketing strategy within the Sales and Marketing department</td>
<td>Director of the Sales and Marketing department</td>
<td>The 1st of July 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Team of the Sales and Marketing department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Placing the advertising on the official Facebook page of Amstel InterContinental Hotel and the pages of gay communities</td>
<td>Sales and Marketing Manager</td>
<td>The 7th of July 2014</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sales and Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Creating brochures for the sales promotion package (the brushes will be given to the gay couples who are getting married in Amstel InterContinental Hotel)</td>
<td>Sales and marketing manager</td>
<td>The 14th of July 2014</td>
<td>Equipment for printing brochures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Team of the Sales and Marketing department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Inviting wedding specialist to the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair</td>
<td>PR manager</td>
<td>The 21st of July 2014</td>
<td>Informational courses</td>
<td>As the Gay-friendly wedding fair takes place in the high season for wedding celebration it may be hard to find wedding specialists who will be available at the date of the fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Controlling of the performance</td>
<td>Sales and Marketing director</td>
<td>The 30th of July</td>
<td>The consoling of the performance might show that the steps of the implementation plan are taken with the delays. Is this case it is recommended to postpone advertising od the Gay-friendly wedding fair</td>
<td>All the staff members who are involved in the implementation of the marketing strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Advertising of the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair on Facebook</td>
<td>Sales and marketing manager</td>
<td>The 1st of August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sales and Marketing manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Inviting journalists to the Wedding Fair</td>
<td>PR manager</td>
<td>The 1st of August 2014</td>
<td>Informational sources</td>
<td>PR manager, journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Organizing the Gay-friendly Wedding Fair</td>
<td>PR manager</td>
<td>The 25th of August</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>The amount of guests who visit the Gay-friendly wedding fair will be much more or much</td>
<td>PR manager, waiters, Chef, Wedding planner, external specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17. Updating the advertising on Facebook once in a month</strong></td>
<td>Sales and marketing manager</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18. Checking the results of the marketing activities</strong></td>
<td>General Manager, Sales and Marketing Director, Director of finance and Business support</td>
<td>1st of July 2015</td>
<td>All the staff members who are involved in the implementation of the marketing strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>