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# La co-cr ation d'une marque d'h tel de luxe en ligne : Le cas d'une marque d'h tel internationale

Alexis Chapman

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Thèse de doctorat

**La co-crédation d'une marque d'hôtel de luxe en ligne:  
Le cas d'une marque d'hôtel internationale**

***The co-creation of a luxury hotel brand online:  
The case of an international hotel brand***

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## Abbreviations

- (eWOM) Electronic Word of Mouth
- (FRHI) Fairmont Hotels & Resorts
- (FM) Fairmont Moments (website name from 2015 onwards)
- (EAO) Everyone's An Original (previous website name 2010-2015)
- (SM) Social Media
- (OSN) Online Social Networks
- (SD Logic) Service Dominant Logic
- (GD Logic) Goods Dominant Logic
- (DMO) Destination Marketing Organizations
- (R&D) Research & Development
- (CRM) Customer Resource Management
- (FP) Foundational Premises
- (VP) Value Propositions
- (OBC) Online Brand Communities
- (UGC) User Generated Content
- (RQ1) Research Question 1
- (RQ2) Research Question 2
- (CCT) Customer Culture Theory
- (RM) Relationship Marketing
- (IMP) Industrial Marketing and Purchasing
- (CV) Customer Value
- (4P's) Product, Price, Place, Promotion

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## Abstract

This thesis presents and analyses the findings that showcase value co-creation within an online community of a luxury hotel business. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts International (FRHI) is a Canadian based hotel group which manages over 74 hotel properties in 21 countries worldwide. FRHI has developed a branded website called **Fairmont Moments (FM)**, and the specific focus for this study is to investigate this successful online community and its relationship with the brand.

With the proliferation of social media platforms and consumers dedicating ever-increasing time to online activities this research area is becoming increasingly important to companies and their marketing executives (Wang et al. 2016). Previous studies relating to value co-creation in digital communities have for the most part focused on the consumer (Cova and Pace, 2006; Cova et al. 2011; Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2014). What makes this study unique is access to both the consumer and the brand (and its managers) and fills an important research gap in translating value co-creation theory into practice (Schultz et al., 2007).

The research adopts a holistic approach by using a qualitative multi-method case study, and reveals significant insights into the relationship between the brand community and the companies' digital strategy. The research design is made up of four stages. In stage one the focus is on evaluating and determining the marketing strategy and objectives of the company. In stage two, 15 interviews with managers and directors from the FRHI group gathers data relating to its digital marketing strategy focusing on value, innovation, resources, and service. The third stage presents the netnography analysis of 100 online postings and categorizes the online content into four value themes – social, hedonic, economic and altruistic. The fourth stage is based on 50 customer interviews with a cross section of Fairmont hotel guests in order to discover what the customer values (positive and negative) from their interaction with the FM brand website.

Two framework models were used to analyse and draw conclusions from the data: Service Dominant Logic (SD Logic) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2014) and Holbrook and Woodside's Value Topology (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). The theoretical findings from this thesis support using SD Logic, specifically foundation premises 6, 7 and 8, as a framework to aid in the company's value creation within online communities. Additionally, in applying the value topology of Holbrook & Woodside the research results reinforce the benefits of using an experiential approach to build a successful online brand community. Furthermore the results suggest the use of hedonic and social content within the online community of the luxury hotel group creates marketing value. Together these frameworks assist the company in designing and implementing a marketing strategy that builds an interactive online customer experience and ultimately delivers a stronger brand relationship.

Key Words: Value Co-creation, Service Dominant Logic (SD Logic), Online Value, Management Perspective, Experiential Value, Online Hotel Brand Community.

# Introduction

## **Introduction**

In recent years rapid advances in digital technology and the now ubiquitous nature of digital communications have invigorated the discussion on value co-creation between a brand and the customer (Gensler, et al. 2013), and in this ever changing landscape, companies are investing significant time and resources to measure and understand the online behaviour of their customer.

The focus of this paper is on how companies, in this case the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts (FRHI), are building meaningful relationships with their customers in this digital environment through the co-creation of online content.

Since 2010 the marketing department at FRHI has made a strategic commitment to developing their own community website, as well as making a concerted effort to grow their brand presence on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

One of the driving forces behind the Fairmont creating and managing their own co-creation consumer facing website, Fairmont Moments (FM), is that it allows them to communicate and interact directly with their customers, encouraging them to share their experiences online and to engage and contribute content to the branded site. Creating this two-way relationship, as well as gathering data from their customer, helps the Fairmont to optimise consumer interaction, and ultimately gain a much better or clearer understanding of their customers' behaviour. In the long term, if the brand creates a virtuous cycle with its customer they have a better chance of creating lifetime value.

With the growth in digital marketing over the past decade there has been a dramatic change in the way enterprise and industry communicates with their customers (Pew Research Center, 2017). The impact of social media and the exponential increase in networking online has resulted in deep digital consumer penetration with the number of worldwide Internet users expected to reach 2.95 billion by 2020 (Statista, 2017).

Given the increasing popularity of digital communication and the impact it is having on all businesses, this thesis addresses a void that exists in management led online consumer experience, through an examination of the Fairmont Hotel Group's digital marketing activity, where they focus on content co-creation.

While addressing the consumer led experience, previous work suggests co-creation as a solution to building an online relationship. Co-creation is a term that establishes the "intersection of the offerer, the customer,.. and other value-creation partners" (Lusch et al., 2007, p.11) and research on the topic of co-creation is rapidly expanding to develop conceptual and empirical knowledge (Gronroos, 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Yi and Gong, 2013).

The use of co-creation within this thesis is defined as the process where consumers and service providers co-create value jointly (Zwass, 2010). When this study refers to co-creation, inherently attached to the definition is the word "value" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Through valued relationships between the consumer and the brand (Hajli et al., 2015), the by-product or result maximises customer lifetime value (Payne & Frow, 2005).

Developing long-term relationships through the use of co-created content has been identified in previous studies as being more beneficial when the price point of the product or service provided by the company is higher than where the product or service is less expensive and transactional (Moore et al., 2015). In the case of a luxury brand like the FRHI which provides a premium service at a premium price point, the digital marketing strategy is geared towards building a long-term relationship with the customer.

Focusing on a global luxury brand such as the Fairmont gives this case study a unique perspective. Although the overall luxury marketplace is one of the worlds fastest growing business industries with luxury hospitality (9%) one of the fastest growing sectors (Bain & Co, 2014), luxury brands are notoriously difficult to access information and management knowledge from, due to company policy relating to client confidentiality of their clients as well as product intelligence secrecy.

Specifically within the high-end hotels luxury sector, there is uncertainty as to how to engage and connect with customers online (Chu, Kamal, & Kim, 2013). The challenge for marketing

departments and their managers is that digital communication has fundamentally changed consumer habits online (Gensler, Volckner, Liu-Thompkins & Weirtz, 2013) and engagement and interaction by consumers on the Internet has created a direct and valuable link to the brand experience (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). It is now essential for the brand to understand the online customer. Those customers who are posting on Facebook, contributing a review to Trip Advisors or a photo on Instagram have become an important part of the companies' marketing message.

Within the past few years online consumers have become more pro active and creative in the way they create and post content online. Academic work to date has focused primarily on brand communities and consuming tribes to describe online group consumption habits (Cova et al., 2011). Online active individuals who make-up larger groups on one specific destination are often referred to as online communities (Holbrook, 1994; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). This active consumer behaviour has helped to shed light on the co-creation process. However, much of this previous research has focused on the capability of consumers to provide ideas on new product or to offer usage suggestions. From a company standpoint, there is much more to understand in the co-creation online and value creation dimensions of individuals and their digital communities. Limited research has been conducted using case studies from a company marketing perspective.

Brands with large budgets and demanding consumer loyalty programs are often willing to apply the most up to date conceptual frameworks in order to enhance the consumer-brand bond or brand engagement to find a competitive advantage (Schultz et al., 2012). The challenge for managers is to apply these frameworks in an effective way, in practice where creation is more difficult (Schultz et al., 2007; Gambetti et al., 2015). By focusing on the management and the customer experience, the intention of this study is to fill a gap that exists in translating value creation theory into practice (Schultz et al., 2007).

This leads to our first research question: *How does a company's marketing influence the online co-creation of a hotel brand?*



Within this question we are addressing a qualitative approach in choosing “how” through a description research structure. This holistic multi-phase approach investigates the various aspects of how a company strategically communicates with its customers and how the customers react and respond. Studies relating to online brand communities have for the most part addressed a consumer perspective in the creation of value (Cova and Pace, 2006; Cova et al. 2011; Pongsakornrunsilp and Schroeder, 2011). Previous work has often relied on two main reasons to use consumers as research subjects. First, consumers have been more easily accessible than management. Second, brand decision makers and their executives are not as willing to share internal information about their companies (Gambetti et al., 2015).

However, in this study we have access to both the consumer and the key executives who are either directly involved in the overall marketing strategy and/or day to day running of their company’s brand managed community website. The customer in our study is described as any participating individual who posts photos content, whether that be videos or comments on the Fairmont Moments (FM) Fairmont Hotel brand community website.

With regard to vocabulary used in reference to the firm, company or the brand, these are used interchangeably in this study to refer to the Fairmont. The term brand is often used in marketing literature while company and firm vocabulary is often found in marketing strategy literature. This research spans both marketing and marketing strategy literature, therefore all vocabulary will be used and found in this work.

The researcher also has access to an abundance of online content produced by the brand and consumer. Sawhney et al. (2005) asserts that the ease as well as the frequency of communication between the consumers and the company have been increased by the use of digital communication platforms such as social media. Therefore technological advances, driven primarily by the Internet, have influenced the customers’ relation to the brand. Technology has changed the role of the consumer from unaware to informed, from passive to active, from isolated to connected (Inversini & Masiero, 2014). An example of company perspective research is shown in an Inversini & Masiero (2014) study where emerging technology in tourism is

addressed from the hoteliers' perspective. Their work discovered that these new active customers are those who have increased power through online communication.

These active users have led to an increased application of frameworks in value co-creation. Within the hotel industry, frameworks like Service Dominant Logic (SD Logic) have been used extensively in qualitative studies through the application of managerial interviews. In previous studies, SD Logic is a framework that has also been widely used to study the relationships and value between the customer and company. Since the 1980's relationship marketing and service marketing have challenged brand relationships by introducing a new framework of marketing. The traditional goods-dominant logic (GD Logic) has progressed from the exchange of tangible goods to the exchange of intangibles, such as skills, knowledge and processes. These developments look at branding and brands through the lens of co-creating experiences. Co-creation research within the SD Logic framework has been focused on customer relationships. Prahalad's (2004) co-creation brand research emphasizes the experience, while de Chernatony's (2006) contemporary experiential definition of a brand where the relationship-based view of the brand is seen from the perspective of on going customer experiences provides a perspective that is consistent with co-creation and SD Logic (Payne et al, 2009).

As marketing practices and the technology environment evolve so does the value co-creation literature through increased empirical work. Within the SD Logic framework, Grönroos and Ravald (2009; 2011) argue that the discussion on value co-creation requires further clarification and development, and that foundational premises FP6 (co-created) is too simplistic. They suggest that there is a distinct difference between resources and value. Lusch and Vargo (2006d) have also indicated that these foundational premises still require further elaboration and refinement.

With consumers actively participating online, changing their online brand experiences requires an updated theoretical framework to accurately take into account the co-creation value for the brand and consumer. As such, the theoretical framework of SD Logic provides us a framework that recognizes the role of customers as operant resources in service settings (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a) such as hospitality and tourism. The focus of this approach is on the use of actors as the operant resource. Operant resources are described by Vargo & Lusch (2004a), as the application of knowledge and skills, meaning "service," is the basis for all exchange. Thus, the fundamental goal

of this concept is, not of the values through experiences, but of the co-creation of services. It is noted that the basic premises of the SD Logic are accepted but the product co-creation is inherent; the services co-creation of the product facilitates the services that result in the company value.

Based on previous empirical work, hotel brands have applied SD Logic as a framework for analysis of managerial interviews (Petrick & Li, 2008; Shaw et al. 2011; Hayslip, Gallarza and Andreu, 2013). Hayslip, et al., (2013) used SD Logic foundational premises and analysed in-depth interviews of hotel directors to investigate SD Logic as a management strategy (Hayslip, Gallarza and Andreu, 2013). The study discusses SD Logic actors (customers & employees) as potential value drivers. The hotel industry studies are often focused on service and employee interaction between the company and customer (Van Raaij, 1986). The researcher agrees with this insight and argues that the consumers' community experiences create a positive marketing value for the company.

The SD Logic orientation proposes an ecosystems approach to the online service systems (Spohrer, Maglio, 2010; Vargo, Lusch, 2011) and provides greater understanding of value co-creation (Vargo, Akaka, 2012) as well as how it influences the actions and interactions of individual actors (Vargo, Lusch, 2011; Ostrom, 2010). The interaction of individual actors (customer and supplier) is the core of value creation (Vargo, Lusch, 2008; 2009) and of the service provision (Ostrom, 2010). The use of SD Logic for the purposes of marketing has been an extensively tested framework to explore value co-creation between the customer and the company (Arnould et al. 2006).

Within SD Logic there is some key vocabulary that refers to different resources and roles discussed when referring to the company or the customer. The term "operant resources" refers to knowledge or skills that are applied by either the company or consumer. Operant resources are referred to as goods or tangible items such as technology (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). "Actors" are also a resource used to discuss the employees or customers that are engaging together to create a service experience.

In the 2008 iteration of SD Logic, Vargo and Lusch extend the concept of value-in-use, and propose value-in-context to further address the online networks of value as captured in FP10 (Vargo and Lusch, 2008c). Value-in-context encompasses the idea that a customer's interpretation of an experience is attached to product/service bundles in relation to the context in which they are used (Vargo and Lusch, 2008d). Social media networks allow a company to connect with a large volume of customers or potential customers online. The significance in managing information technology is addressed by Vargo, Lusch, and Tanniru (2010, pp. 22 – 23) in referring to networks and ecosystems of service when looking at web and social media context. Value-in-context is an important dimension of SD Logic when discussing value co-creation because it frames service and the resources of an entire service ecosystem. It can be noted that Vargo and Lusch revised the GD logic-oriented concept of 'value-in-use' to a more SD Logic-friendly concept of 'value-in-context' (Vargo, 2009; Vargo et al., 2014) in reference to networks and service ecosystems online. If a brand shares a Facebook posting with its fans, and fans then "share" and "like" the posting, this can be viewed as a network of actors that are interacting and finding the online context valuable, as they are co-creating exchanges in the ecosystem of the Facebook platform (Belk, 2009).

Lusch and Vargo (2006d) have also indicated that the FP still requires further elaboration and refinement. Experience sharing as part of the online website integration can form part of this ongoing work. While it is agreed that service is the essence of value creation, there is a need to consider the applicability of SD Logic in an online customer experience focus. This has not been actively addressed or explored in the SD Logic literature to date. An example of experience sharing would be consumers sharing their photos on the FM website with other consumers in this online community.

This leads to the second question: *What are the value dimensions between the firm and consumers within the FM website?*

In order to investigate the second question, the researcher proposes the integration of another framework to enhance the experiential nature of online customer experience. The framework must provide a more expansive view of value to encompass the experimental online behaviour. It

was identified by Vargo and Lusch's (2006c) that the work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) and Holbrook (2006 a, b) demonstrates that characteristics of value can emerge through a variety of consumer experiences. Holbrook's (2006a, b) interactive experience offers a relativistic account of value, which corresponds to how value is understood in SD Logic. Holbrook suggests that value can be relative depending on the comparative, situational, or personal contexts in which consumers can assign value to goods or services. In a study by Pongsakornrungrunglip and Schroeder (2011), online football fan communities utilized both Holbrook and SD Logic perspectives to understand the online relationships within fan communities (Pongsakornrungrunglip and Schroeder, 2011).

The online consumer experience is an important element of value creation for companies trying to stay connected and build relationships with their customers. The literature on experience has found that some consume in order to satisfy their hedonistic desires (Belk, 1988); some to challenge their day-dreams (Firat et al., 1995); and others to join with their peers (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001) through communities (e.g. Punk, Biker, Surfer, Sport Fandom). These experiences are created by consumers and marketers and take place inside and outside of the service place, in a hotel in this case and their online FM community. This experiential view of value creation between the company and the customer is an area where little research has focused, and the gap exists to study the value creation (Merz et al, 2009; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). There has not been a great deal of research to date in order to understand co-creation of value through online communities from a company perspective (Hajli et al., 2015).

The Holbrook value topology was found to be a suitable framework, as it encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic value dimensions to accommodate the experiential online consumer (Holbrook, 2005). Within this case, consumer value is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct, made up of 4 dimensions: functional value, emotional value, social value and altruistic value. These 4 dimensions can co-occur for consumers, as an individual can experience multiple dimensions of value from the same consumption experience. Individuals seek satisfying experiences, which are derived through activities; experiential value is derived as a result. Experiential value is an important aspect of online marketing activities, as they may translate into a greater likelihood of continued Internet activities. These value dimensions have been conceptualized and tested in marketing practice but there are no empirical results discussing the

value dimensions in social network marketing. Holbrook's Value Topology was less profiled in previous hotel studies; however the opportunity to combine the two frameworks was taken up by this thesis.

Holbrook's Value Topology (2005) enhances the value dimensions of our use of SD Logic, and as Grönroos points out, there is a need to recognise customers as value creators in the value-creation process. In an earlier work, he argues that customers can be the "sole creator of value" (Grönroos, 2006, p. 324). That is, while firms can actively engage in customers' value creation processes and create value for customers, customers can also create value for themselves, by initiating the development of new resources (Grönroos, 2009). This view is further supported by Baron and Harris (2008), who outline that consumers can be resource integrators through consumption and co-consumption. The service-for-service relationship in SD Logic needs to further recognise consumers' active roles as initiators and mutual participants in the value creation process, a view shared by Grönroos (2006). From this viewpoint, FP 7 states: "actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p.24).

Other views on consumer value have been linked to literature where Hirschman & Holbrook (1982) and later Holbrook (1994) differentiate people based on their consumption motives. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) describe consumers as either problem solvers or seekers of fun and enjoyment and thus refer to utilitarian versus hedonistic consumption. The hedonic concept highlights the importance of having a fun or enjoyable experience in contrast to the achievement of a utilitarian goal. Holbrook (1994) further suggests that consumption experiences most likely involve more than one type of value simultaneously (Holbrook, 1994).

In previous work discussing consumer value online, Healy & McDonagh (2013) use Holbrook & Hirschman's (1982) work relating to online opportunities to collaboratively co-create with fans in experiences that reflect fan preferences (Healy & McDonagh, 2013). The experiential nature of the online communication suggests that hedonistic and social values are important to the enjoyment of online activities. The customer perspective, then, is different from the company's

perspective when assessing value co-creation online, and makes it clear that an alternative framework must be discussed when generating value co-creation.

Historically, company perspective research has utilized an economic approach (Payne & Holt, 2001), which investigated the consumption experience of the consumer, where the service exchange was considered to include pre and post consumption stages (Russell-Bennett, Previte & Zainuddin, 2009). In contrast, this study's utilization of an experiential approach identifies the value that exists in a current and dynamic website of a hotel company. Four dimensions of value have been identified and studied in the past social marketing research for use in experiential settings (Holbrook, 1994; 2008): hedonic, social, economic and altruistic value.

The integration of SD Logic and Holbrook's value topology have not been used within a case study to the researchers knowledge. The use of both strengthens the understanding of value and the relationships between the consumer and brand in this hotel case study setting. The value dimensions of Holbrook's Topology complements the SD Logic value framework, which lacks intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of experiential value.

The purpose of this research is to fill the gaps in research mentioned. First by investigating value co-creation from a company value perspective, the researcher seeks to fill the gap that exists (Cova and Pace, 2006; Cova et al. 2011; Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Pongsakornrunsilp and Schroeder, 2011). Second, the gap that exists within SD Logic around FP 6, 7 and 8 on value, this study makes a theoretical contribution to SD Logic and its use in an online environment (Vargo & Lusch, 2006). This is done using Holbrook's value topology and generating a greater understanding of the online experiential nature of users. Third this study contributes by applying theory to the practice within digital luxury marketing and a brand community website where little work has been done to date. This is partly due to limited access to management, customers and internal documentation.

This hotel brand attracts customers within the luxury realm because of its quality of product, its locations and its service. The primary target of this community website FM is those individuals sharing photos, videos and written content by logging onto the website or via Facebook connect,

Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. This brand community is mainly North American consumers as nearly half of FRHI hotels are in North America. Also only North American residents qualify for the online contests. This unique co-created website community was well established with consumers and content being in operation since 2010. For this study a luxury hotel brand was chosen due to the importance of a strong connection between the company and consumer for marketing purposes (Kapferer, 2012). To be designated as “luxury” in our Canadian hotel brand, a hotel must earn 4 or 5 stars on a 5 star rating scale, as determined by the Canadian ranking system (Canada Select, 2013). The Fairmont Hotels are ranked 5 star in this classification system. In order to effectively manage customer relationships especially within the luxury hospitality domain, businesses are challenged to play a more active role (Moore et al., 2015). Companies are increasingly focused on creating meaningful relationships with the customers online and as a result, organizations are investing in social media technologies with greater fortitude (Rodrigues, Ajjan and Peterson, 2016).

The research approach focuses on the online marketing department’s role and priorities for the hotel brand. This qualitative study primarily addresses value co-creation and the discussion around relationship marketing of the brand; the 4 phases involve strategy document analysis, management interviews, online content review and customer interviews. This approach was chosen as multiple interactions ensure coherence between the research object and the method of each phase. The 4 research phases were created to methodologically complement each other in order to study the phenomenon under investigation. Specifically the first two phases discuss the issues from the company’s perspective – marketing documents and management interviews. The third phase is from both a brand and customer perspective – online co-created content. This leads to the final phase - customer interviews. Thus each research phase was created to work independently while complementing each other in order to fully address the research questions.

Combining methodological approaches is not to validate the results gained but to add valuable knowledge and insight from the setting with the most suitable method at each phase of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This allows for the triangulation of research methods that is consistent when combining different approaches, techniques and strategies to ensure the most



insight can be gained in the interpretation of the results (Wray et al., 2007). The integration of the different qualitative methods in order to achieve exploration of different angles is a widely used research practice in social sciences (Moore, 1999; Wray et al., 2007).

An overview of the methodology can be divided into two phases. Within the first study, corporate strategy documents and press releases were analysed in order to understand the company's marketing objectives and goals. In the next phase, management interviews were conducted with 15 managers/directors in charge of the online marketing of the FM website. Following this, a netnography study of 100 online postings of comments was taken by both consumers and marketers of the brand to better understand the communication online. The netnography was part of Study 2, where the goal is to explore value dimensions in the online messages. The final phase was customer interviews, which contributes to both Study 1 & 2 to gain a deeper understanding of the customer's online behaviour, feelings towards the Fairmont and personal value of the brand online and offline.

Within Study 1, the interviewees were selected because of their expertise and work within the brand marketing of the website and hotel studied. The interviewee's specialist skills were considered and they were recognized within the Fairmont hotel to be the most competent individuals for the discussion on the FM website and marketing strategy (Kimes and Schruben, 2002).

Within Study 2, the netnography study involved selecting numerous participants who had posted at a specific date, time and place over several years on the FM website and then choosing 100 of these at random. From the 100 selected, 25 of their items were chosen at random to examine in more detail with the NVivo & Quirkos software.

In Study 1, second phase, the customer interviews, snowball sampling was used. Previous work has identified that snowball sampling can be effectively applied as a method to reach a target population and can be viewed as a response to overcoming the problems associated with sampling concealed populations. In addition, with the aim of this study to be explorative, qualitative and descriptive, then snowball sampling offered practical advantages (Hendricks,

Blanken and Adriaans, 1992). Most frequently it is used to conduct qualitative research, primarily through interviews; this study follows this research design.

The systematic approach used by the researcher to analyse the data was focused on first level and second level coding. The intent of the analysis was to examine the data-to-theory connections in the form of linkages among the quotes in the text. This first order coding in the data structure provided a way to focus on key emergent concepts or themes. Some examples of this include “sensegiving” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), or “identity ambiguity” (Corley & Gioia, 2004) where magnifying the data is used to find the most interesting and incisive parts to emphasis. By focusing on these emergent concepts, the researcher can produce new insight and further discussion (Gioia et al, 2013).

The selected methodology for this research is justified and beneficial as, first, interviewing allows for the acquisition of multiple perspectives on consumers’ travel experiences. King (1994) argues that interviews are, “ideally suited to examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored” (King, 1994, p. 33). An example was noted in this study’s brand website discussion of topics important to consumers and brands.

Second, King (1994) noted that interviewing as a research tool occurs in live social settings. In this study, a small sample of brand experts at the Fairmont were interviewed, as it was important to explore real life situations rather than conducting research in manufactured simulated settings. As an example, 15 experts in the field of marketing strategy for the brand being investigated were selected and interviewed. These individuals were not aware of SD Logic but were experts in their field of hotel brand marketing. Some individuals were experts in analytics, some in day-to-day operations of the brand website being studied, some in the overall brand strategy of the hotel group. The interviewees were more willing to share their experiences with the researcher because the interviewer had a plan and questions to lead the discussion; thus there was a conversation with purpose (Berg, 2004, p. 75).

Third, the number of interview candidates selected was small but possessed a high level of knowledge on the subject matter. These individuals within the Fairmont group had this level of expertise on the website being studied. The number of interviews was deemed appropriate because the purpose of this study was to gain a holistic and detailed account of opinions from the

brand standpoint of the value gained. Denscombe (1999) recommends interviewing individuals in situations where the researcher is seeking in-depth information gained from a small number of informants (p.111).

In the first phase of the case study the focus of the management interviews was strongly geared towards the guest experience and the interpretation of the technology involved. The digital platforms of engagement have become linked to the firm's offering (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). If the firm's offering is not in line with customer desires, the firm will have problems connecting with the consumer in the online environment.

The combined evidence generated from this multi-method research design reveals themes that are linked between the 4 phases divided within 2 studies. The discussion links to various themes found from the management interviews, which are summarized by the online experience being the top priority for management. Following this the netnography content links the value co-creation between the consumer and hotel with words like "memories", "experiences", and "beautiful views" that is linked to the brand goals in terms of exchange value. The exchange value is part of the link between customer's action of sharing on social networks. This value is characterized by benefits to both the brand through endorsed content, and the customers through expressing their feelings or thoughts and feeling recognized. From the customer interviews, the themes were linked to loyalty and trust value; these were the key points of value expressed about the Fairmont brand.

The next part of research into the Research Question 1 (RQ1) linked the management interviews to the value co-creation between the hotel and the customer and value attributes were found to offer value in context, and in proposed and reciprocal value. These three areas surrounded employee skills, knowledge and training associated with the actions and reactions to employee interaction with guests in hotel and online. Within the netnography study, the dominance of social and hedonic postings were linked to experience value. The customer interviews mentioned various points of value like recognition, deals, booking incentives, which contribute towards reciprocal value and exchange value as the customer is receiving some benefit to booking.

Experience value was also mentioned to connect to the in hotel or online experience with employee skill and online ease of booking.

When understanding Research Question 2 (RQ2) and the values associated, management interviews were linked towards proposed value and experience value as the conversation was centred on co-creation of consumer experience, sense of belonging with other like-minded guests, and valuable content and photos. When analysing the netnography content, enabling the consumers to connect with the online communities through experiences was determined an experience value as well as proposed value associated with the web content. The customer interview suggested that memories, connecting with like-minded others, purpose driven users, history, beautiful hotels, online posting of photos, viewing of recipes, online word of mouth were all comments the customers provided that showed examples of experience value, exchange value, value-in-content, proposed value and reciprocal value.

This study also has management recommendations providing practical contributions, which benefit the hospitality brands and social marketers. First, the research outlines the value that consumers bring to social network marketing by the firm when engaging consumers online. This knowledge is useful when planning social media campaigns and in understanding the expectation generated within online communities and brand value. Second, the research can be used as a diagnostic tool for brands looking to understand various factors in managing their online communities to maximise results and gain potential business. Third, the research provides insights into consumers satisfaction and repeat usage as well as insights into more effective organizational strategies around online communities and social marketing strategies.

The concepts in this paper support SD Logic and Holbrook's Topology working in combination as an integrated management solution within a company operated marketing website. Both frameworks have the potential to change the organization's overall management of the website. However factors that were observed in the case may depend on the marketing department's commitment to the overall integration and implementation of the theory. The adoption of a marketing strategy must take place at both corporate marketing and individual hotel level. This would include staff training, budgeting of resources, and a commitment to integrate the

marketing practices suggested in this study.

This casework demonstrates how Holbrook's customer value topology can be used to categorize online content in order to understand what the customer values online. As a result of the study, marketing departments now have a categorization system to help marketing employees identify value-creating posts. It is imperative for the employees to understand what type of content the customers are posting. The "sharing" and "liking" of posts is an important measure, which demonstrates what the customer values from the content. If the majority of customer shares or likes are only hedonic or social postings, then the marketing department will know the customer would prefer to see more of these postings.

In summary, this research seeks to understand how SD Logic can be used to benefit company collaborative interaction between consumer and brand actors. Collaboration and learning between the company and customer can become key strategies for knowledge building in a complex digital environment. The findings with relation to SD Logic support the notion that a firm's competitive advantage is dependent on continuously updating its technology competencies. The gaps in theory supported using SD Logic and Holbrook's value topology together, specifically where online environments evade SD Logic's ability to provide a framework for the experiential nature of online customer value. The use of both SD Logic and Holbrook's value topology provides greater understanding of value co-creation within an online environment. The complementary nature of Holbrook's topology provides a more tangible framework to reflect the experiential nature of the social and hedonic postings of the online consumer.

This thesis is comprised of 5 chapters. The introduction is followed by chapter one which presents a review of the literature providing current discussion on relationship marketing, luxury marketing, online communities, SD Logic, consumer value, the value exchange process, Holbrook's Value Topology, tourism value creation online as well as insight into hotel marketing and online communications.

Chapter 2 describes the methodological approach and explores the research questions through 4 phases of the research. This chapter discusses the research gaps in the literature and the methods of research needed to address the two research questions. This chapter justifies the use of a single

case study multi-method approach, utilizing qualitative research methods. The research procedures for the various materials of online content analysis of netnography, semi-structured interviews, and strategy document analysis are outlined and discussed in depth. The chapter concludes by exploring the benefits and ethical considerations for this research.

Chapter 3 contains the results of the research where the two research questions are analysed using the SD Logic framework and Holbrook's value topology. The individual semi-structured interviews and corporate strategy documents are explained from a SD Logic lens. This is followed by the contributions of a collective online community analysed in the context of Holbrook's value topology where 25 website postings are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 contains the discussion where key findings link the theory to the results. Support for the literature integration of SD Logic frameworks with Holbrook's consumer value topology are also detailed. Managerial suggestions and examples from our case are pointed out to showcase the real-world opportunities for hotel brands.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis and summarizes the theoretical link of the discussion. This chapter discusses the managerial implications and practical suggestions for managers in online marketing of hotels. Finally limitations and suggestions are made for research opportunities.

## 1. Literature Review

In this literature review, an examination of literature as well as gaps that exist in the current literature were found in the following areas: service-dominant logic, value creation, value co-creation, value exchange, co-creation of value dimensions, brand communities, luxury branding online, tourism co-creation of content online, and online social networks in hotels.

### 1.1 SD LOGIC THEORY & RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Marketing has evolved from roots in economics and other social sciences. Owing to a lack of interest among economists, marketing had an early bias toward distribution activities—as evident in the first marketing courses (these were at Michigan and Ohio University), which focused on effectively performing distributive tasks (Bartels, 1976)—and early marketing thinking centred on the efficiency of marketing channels (Cherrington, 1920; Shaw, 1912; Weld, 1916, 1917).

Two influences have had the most impact on the development of marketing: Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1904) and Newtonian mechanics (Vargo & Morgan, 2005). Both of these were influenced by the British Industrial Revolution and have been the basis for “economic science” since the nineteenth century (Vargo et al., 2006). Smith's concept of the division of labour (Smith, 1904) drew attention to the importance of “service” in economies, and today this importance is acknowledged in the field of marketing. Later marketing scholars who had backgrounds in institutional economic theory viewed the phenomenon of value determination as fundamentally linked to exchange and tangible goods (Alderson, 1954; Duddy & Revzan, 1947). Although the institutional marketing view was later modified by the organisational dynamics viewpoint and marketing thinking was influenced by other social sciences, exchange remained the central tenet of marketing (Alderson, 1965; Bagozzi, 1974, 1978, 1979; Kotler, 1972).

The demise of the distributive theory of marketing, which occurred after World War II, can be linked to a shift from focusing on distributive functions to other aspects of marketing. With the advent of market research, producers began to direct and control the distributors regarding such aspects as merchandising, sales promotion, and pricing. This was in an attempt to influence end

consumers, and to gain repeat purchases which resulted in brand loyalty gaining prominence in the marketing literature (Barton, 1946; Churchill, 1942; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Sheth, 1973; Womer, 1944). This led to the development of market segmentation and targeting as tools for marketing planning. Thus, the concept of marketing evolved and the consumer, rather than the distributor, became the focus of marketing attention (Kotler, 1972). In order to gain control over the channels of distribution, producers adopted and administered vertical marketing systems (McCammon, 1965). However, the orientation of marketing was still transactional, with its success measured in such transactional terms as sales volume and market share.

### **1.1.1 The 4 P's Model and the Evolution of Product Marketing**

In the 1950s, marketing embraced a functional school of thought, but in the 1960s, there was a shift to targeting and satisfying the desires of customers through the 4 P's framework (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). The 4 P's include product, price, place and promotion and this framework was used as a universal marketing tool by companies competing in the current marketplace because these 4 P's could be easily developed and modified. Marketing scholars and practitioners focused on generating a competitive advantage amongst the competition who were also applying the 4 P's model. The concepts of customer orientation, customer relationship management, supply chain management, and quality control was introduced and production, distribution, and exchange of tangible goods were seen as the answer to satisfying customer needs (Kotler, 2003).

The focus on the 4 P's model and the move to specific discussion on the quality of goods and production and distribution systems were very much from a manufacturer's perspective. Goods-dominant logic (GD Logic) uses the 4 P's framework to define and adopt marketing programs. Marketing departments tried to implement different techniques such as product differentiation, customer orientation, quality management, and relationship management, which tend to adopt a 4 P's universal framework. In the present framework, product, price, place, and promotion are the basis of marketing strategies (Day & Montgomery, 1999).

This goods-centric view of marketing focuses on operand resources as the primary point of competitive advantage for companies. The concept is resource driven, with resources viewed as finite and tangible. From this perspective, companies which possess greater resources have an



advantage over other companies which either do not have these resources or have fewer of them (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). The focus is on tangible products from the manufacturing process in order to maximise quality against production costs.

Discussion of value within the GD Logic framework views goods as the unit of exchange and “value” as embedded within the goods to create the value of the exchange. However, Gummerson (2004) believes that the reason that customers are the best judge of value is because they are the experts in terms of their needs.

In the goods-centered view of marketing, companies primarily focus on operand resources and produce products to distribute. The GD Logic paradigm of marketing was proposed as a new marketing discussion and ignited controversy among both academics and practitioners. Scholars responded to “Invited Commentaries on Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing” (Bolton, 2004).

With the GD Logic perspective, marketing focused on the process of delivering value to the customer (Kotler, 2003). This perspective is a myopic view of marketing as it has a narrow focus on what the customer needs and is dictated by the company. The perspective also shifts from the role of services to the centre of exchange (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a) and focuses on value in the transaction and tangible goods as the centre of exchange (Vargo & Morgan, 2005). The tangible good or product is also believed to produce greater customer value based on the lower cost of goods. Rather than determining what the customer wants, the company remains focused on keeping costs low through production and distribution costs.

The limitations of GD Logic can be seen in its process of delivering value to customers and the meaning of value in the exchange. With the GD Logic, marketing activities have been influenced by economic and marketing science’s focus on exchanging tangible goods, with value regarded as taking part in the transaction (Vargo & Morgan, 2005). The downside of GD Logic is a firm focus which loses sight of customer needs. Traditional marketing concepts like GD Logic do not offer the customer or the current online marketing environment enough flexibility. The concept of tangible goods has been clarified by scholars such as Gummerson (1995), who suggested that customers do not buy offerings or “service” and goods, but merely service provisions. This idea can be added to the discussion, so that service is not something that pertains to a good as such but

rather is something which can be added to goods to increase their value, such as the staff knowledge and skills which companies employ (Vargo & Morgan, 2005). Concepts such as operant and operand resources, will be described later in the review as well as customer value and exchange which all need further exploration.

Various specialities or paradigms have gained popularity and momentum over the years in marketing discussions. The disciplines of relationship network marketing and consumer culture theory (CCT) have proposed scholarly theory and management techniques in order to gain a competitive advantage. Scholars and practitioners have become aware of difficulties in trying to predict behaviours strictly based on customer demographic factors such as gender, social class, education, and income, which are typically used in GD Logic statistics. A new focus on the customer is necessary for marketing to evolve.

### **1.1.2 Relationship Marketing Background**

In the 1960's and 1970's, relationship marketing (RM) discussions and publications addressed the business-to-business context. Adler (1966) observed symbiotic relationships between firms which were not linked by the traditional marketer–intermediary relationships. Vardarajan and Rajarathnam (1986) later examined other manifestations of symbiotic relationships in marketing. Arndt (1979) provided a second impetus for turning to RM by noting the tendency of firms engaged in business-to-business marketing to develop long-lasting relationships with their key customers and suppliers rather than focusing on discrete exchanges. He termed this phenomenon “domesticated markets” and his works had an impact across two continents. In the United States, several scholars began examining long-term inter-organisational relationships in business-to-business markets, while in Europe, the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group emphasised business relationships and networks (Anderson, Håkansson, & Johanson, 1994; Jackson 1985).

Although Berry (1983) formally introduced the term “relationship marketing” in the literature, several related concepts were also being discussed before the RM terminology was coined. McGarry (1950, 1951, 1953, 1958) included six types of activities in his formal list of marketing functions: activities could have a contractual function, propaganda function, merchandising

function, physical distribution function, pricing function, or termination function. Of these, the contractual function, which falls within the main task of marketing, reflects McGarry's (1950) relational orientation and his emphasis on developing cooperation and mutual interdependency among marketing actors.

The Nordic School of service marketing, which was also relationship oriented since its inception in the 1970's (Grönroos & Gummesson, 1985), believed that for effective marketing and delivery of services, involvement of the entire organisation is needed in developing relationships with their customers (Grönroos, 1981). Except for its greater emphasis on achieving a marketing paradigm shift, the Nordic School approach is similar to RM ideas put forth by services marketing scholars in the United States (Berry 1983, 1995; Berry & Parsuraman, 1991) Scholars from the Nordic School have recently tried, to a certain degree, to integrate the network approach popular among Scandinavian and European schools with service relationship questions (Holmlund, 1996).

Over the last few decades, researchers have defined and viewed RM from different perspectives. Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined RM as "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing and maintaining successful relationships" (p. 22). Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett (1988) predicted that RM would revolutionise the concept, field, and practice of marketing. Within the marketing domain, use of RM has facilitated development of other theories and contributions. For example, social exchange and social network theory stem from RM contributions (Cook & Emerson, 1984; Scott, 1991). These theories, which have roots in social psychology and sociology, have contributed to the knowledge of marketing networks (Araujo & Easton, 1996). Grönroos (1999) stayed within the boundaries of the marketing field to generally define the act of marketing with an RM influence: "to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers ... at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met" (p. 138). Gummerson's (1995) work was significant because it pointed out that the marketing mix theory also contributed to RM development. Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne (1991) and Kotler (1992) explored RM theory outside the customer-supplier boundary, which expanded the framework and scope of the literature, leading to other theories.

The expansion and broader frameworks led to enhanced RM applications such as Kodish and Pettegrew's (2008) view that the RM process has restricted operational and practical applicability. Their work emphasises the impact and trustworthiness, which organizations should have in their long-term relationships with customers. Eiriz and Wilson (2006) also discussed practical aspects; marketers generally want guidance regarding their work and the process of marketing in the future (Eiriz & Wilson, 2006). Palmatier et al. (2006) suggested that RM is typically more effective when relationships are more critical to the consumers. They argued that a dialog and reciprocal discussion were needed, rather than companies simply pushing their product toward customers and that the relationships thus formed are crucial for the customer. This discussion around importance to the customer is more applicable in industries where service plays a crucial role for the product, for this is where relationships are invaluable.

The current move towards a relational approach to marketing can be viewed as a result of other factors, such as competitive advantages, technological processes, and a shift from mass to individual marketing (Kuster & Vila, 2006). The focus on relationship-oriented approaches has led to the abandonment of transaction-based approaches in the pursuit of customer retention (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Kodish & Pettegrew, 2008; Kuster & Vila, 2006). The relationship approach offers an important business strategy to service-based businesses, where an intangible element of connecting with the consumer on a personal level is vital, such as luxury hotels which offer premium goods and differentiate themselves with their service offerings.

### **1.1.3 RM Domain & Moving Online**

RM has the greatest potential when it delimits its domain to the firm–customer aspect of the relationship (Sheth, 1996). In order to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship with customers, a firm may have to collaborate with its suppliers, competitors, and internal divisions. The study of such relationships is a valid domain of RM as long as they are studied from the perspective of how they enhance or facilitate customer relationships. Other aspects of organisational relationships, such as supplier relationships, internal relationships, and lateral relationships, are directly addressed by such disciplines as purchasing and logistics management, human resources management, and strategic management (Sheth, 1996).

The present study is restricted to the area of RM which discusses customer relationships and how the firm adapts its marketing to the customer through collaborative marketing actions which are focused on serving customers' needs.

In recent years, several factors have contributed to the rapid development and evolution of marketing and online social networks. These include the growing connections in many industries due to the advent of sophisticated computer and Internet technologies and online platforms which allow producers to directly interact with end customers. Industries such as banks, hotels, airlines, insurance companies, computer program software businesses, and even consumables are being de-intermediated, which is rapidly changing the nature of marketing. Databases and direct marketing tools give producers the means to individualise their marketing efforts. As a result, producers do not need the functions which were formerly performed by middlepersons. Consumers are now willing to undertake some of the responsibilities of direct ordering and reviewing products online through their own initiative.

Kozinet (1999) advised marketers to differentiate interaction types within social networks. This would allow meeting consumers' diverse needs and providing them with opportunities through the 4 primary modes of interaction: informational, relational, recreational, and transformational. Choosing between these modes enables the marketer to establish which social platform has the greatest potential for a positive customer response (Kozinet, 1999). The use of online marketing and a focus on online brand strategy naturally leads to a discussion of interactive marketing. The term "interactive marketing" is often used interchangeably with "online marketing strategy".

Moving away from the traditional goods approach to product relationships, a progression can be noted based on the need to adapt to a more service-oriented approach to marketing. Frameworks and tools are needed to assist in understanding the human element involved in service interaction between the actors (consumers or fans).

Wang et al. (2010) believe that the ability to feel close to customers through information and a better understanding of their predicted behaviours is important, as social networks may be "the most effective way of RM, since it blurs the lines between customers, allies and partners" (p. 415). Developing a closer relationship with these customers and turning them into loyal ones are equally important aspects of marketing. Berry (1983) discussed and defined RM as "attracting,

maintaining, and—in multi-service organizations—enhancing customer relationships” (p. 25). Berry’s (1983) notion of RM resembles that of other scholars studying services marketing, such as Grönroos (1983), Levitt (1983), and Gummesson (1987). Although each of these authors refers to the value of interactions in marketing and their consequent impact on customer relationships, Grönroos (1983) and Gummesson (1987) take a broader perspective and advocate that customer relationships ought to be the focus and dominant paradigm for marketing. Grönroos (1983) notes: “Marketing is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises” (p. 138). This definition implies that customer relationships are the *raison d’être* for the firm and that marketing should be devoted to building and enhancing such relationships (Grönroos, 1990; Gummesson, 1987).

Once customers are attracted to a business and interested in its product or service, the firm’s ability to retain the customers’ business is important in terms of costs as well as the lifetime value of a brand. Kamdampully and Duddy (1999) suggested that it costs five times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing customer. It has been shown that following their initial attraction, loyal customers are less sensitive to price (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). The firm will have fewer associated costs through retaining a customer, with reduced marketing costs and an ability to increase prices, which is extremely important for management awareness in the case of luxury or premium products. Gilbert et al. (1999) also discussed management awareness of the lifetime value of a customer. It is therefore imperative for brands to make every effort to retain existing customers; the lifetime value, reduced price sensitivity, and reduced marketing cost all create a strong case for management to adopt a strategy of relationship-based marketing. It has been noted that the accessibility of customer information and statistics through complex customer relationship management (CRM) software creates an electronic intimacy for maintaining valuable relationships (Gilbert et al. 1999; Gummerson, 1994; Luck & Lancaster, 2003).

The ultimate goal of marketing is to build a bond of trust with the consumer. In Elliot and Yannopoulou’s (2007) study, findings show that when consumers are facing buying choices, familiarity and symbolic brands are a safe purchase for consumers. The role of brand marketing is to build confidence and trust between the brand and the consumer.

It should be added that the type of a product and its cost will also determine the marketing cost and effort which are needed to maintain a customer relationship. Products can be categorised as more “transactional” when the price point is low and the goods are frequently purchased. These goods may compete solely based on price or may also rely on a brand name to differentiate the product in the consumer’s mind. The distinction between goods and service was described in the framework of GD Logic. According to GD Logic, the primary purpose of communication between the customer and the firm is to successfully complete the transaction. This is why RM is a move closer to service-dominant SD Logic, although still retaining a GD Logic mindset. The firm is interested in capturing profit through an exchange of goods with the embedded operand resource, whereas customers’ intention is the fulfilment of their requirements (Benner, 2009). GD Logic and traditional marketing concepts are no longer adequate for the purposes of the current marketing environment—whether online or offline. A new paradigm which combines the best service or value to customers in the exchange is necessary.

#### **1.1.4 “Service” in the Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing**

Several marketing scholars have published work which branches out into a number of sub-disciplines, one of which is service marketing (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b). Shostack (1977) proposed a “break free” argument according to which the development of service marketing as a sub-discipline was “necessary if service marketing was to succeed” (p. 73). Vargo & Lusch (2004a), who agreed with this argument, therefore presented SD Logic as a model for taking up this discussion and showing an exchange of resources and value.

The concept of “service” could explain an environment of intangible goods, specialised skills and knowledge, and an exchange process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). This new dominant logic of marketing is a service-dominant paradigm. Service is exchanged for service, and what is important within this new paradigm is how a competitive advantage for companies is created. Unlike GD Logic, which competes based on low prices for the customer with a product which can easily be replicated by another firm with the same resources, SD Logic competes based on the use of employees’ knowledge and skills to interact and co-create benefits with the consumer (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). The firm manages the creation of value in GD Logic, while the customer is viewed as the co-creator in SD Logic. Vargo and Lusch also define service in such a

way that all companies are service businesses: SD Logic concerns a “singular service” which is a process of doing something for someone (Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a).

## 1.2 Service-Dominant Logic (SD Logic)

Although goods are not viewed as the end product in SD Logic, some studies have described goods as the “transmitters of operant resources” (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). Bronner and de Hoog (2010) define operant resources as resources, which are possessed by someone, such as knowledge, and are employed to act on operand resources. The primary unit for the exchange in SD Logic (for example, the knowledge needed for design feedback) is the operant resource.

In SD Logic, customers are used as operant resources to act on operand resources. Customers determine value as co-creators, and the value given to a service or product is dependent on the customer’s perception (Bronner & de Hoog, 2010). The relationship between the firm and the customer is thus based on their interactions with each other. The gathering of wealth through the exchange of specialised skills and knowledge is the main source of economic growth in SD Logic.

The marketing and selling of goods have caused a change where a focus is on the services offered. Vargo & Lusch (2008) argued that competitive advantages are no longer sustained by the business, and thus a business cannot succeed by focusing on the manufacture of a commoditised good along with their practice in marketing it. Today’s customers want to be heard, and their needs must be satisfied by offering services which respond to those needs rather than merely by observing markets.

GD and SD logic have led to a change, which has blurred the traditional differences between consumption and production. Jaworski and Kohli (1993) noted that the product is co-created and modified in the process of consumption, which is no longer a passive process but has become active instead. SD Logic is characterised as an outcome of evolution and has emerged as one of the currently dominant theories in this field. The company’s task should be to satisfy customer demands. SD Logic has changed marketers so that they are no longer product oriented, but rather customer oriented. Applying this example to marketing, Vargo and Lusch (2008) asserted that the SD view of marketing is service centred, and therefore driven by the market and customer centred.



Vargo and Lusch (2008, 2016) proposed SD Logic axioms and foundational premises, which have evolved over the years and provide key drivers of SD Logic’s customer-focused marketing. The latest update was in 2016, with the addition of Axiom 5 and FP 11 stating that value is co-created through actor-generated institutional arrangements. This new premise targets the use of networks and company online facilities, where the company is responsible for proposed online value creation between the company and customer. Table A provides an up to date version of the FP and Axioms involved in SD Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

**Table A: Axioms and Foundational Premises of SD Logic (taken from Vargo & Lusch, 2016)**

Axiom1	FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.
	FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.
	FP3	Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision.
	FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit.
	FP5	All economies are service economies.
Axiom2	FP6	Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary.
	FP7	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions.
	FP8	A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.
Axiom3	FP9	All social and economic actors are resource integrators.
Axiom4	FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.
Axiom5	FP11	Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements.

*(Source: Vargo and Lusch (2004), "Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing" Journal of Marketing 68(January), 1-17. Vargo and Lusch (2008), "Service-Dominant Logic: Continuing the Evolution" Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science 36(Spring), 1-10, Vargo and Lusch*

(2016), *"Institutions and axioms: an extension and update of service-dominant logic"* *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-19.)

The prerequisites of co-creation are customer-centricity and customer orientation. According to Payne et al. (2009), the company must keep the needs of its customers in mind in order to build the services which customers are deeply interested in consuming; the process is therefore called “co-creation”. SD Logic maintains that the customer’s value-creating processes should be understood by the company to begin the co-creation, and it shows how to increase value through the co-creation activities. Knowledge of the customer’s needs and behaviour is attained by the company in the process of co-creation; this is termed a “self-reinforcing process”. Information about customers’ needs is mainly gathered through the company’s interactions with the customers so that it can offer improvements and gather further, deeper knowledge of the customers’ needs.

### **1.2.1 Operand and Operant Resources**

There has been a shift in the view of a firm’s resources going from GD Logic to SD Logic, and the distinction between operand and operant resources is a very important point element of the latter. GD Logic arose in an era when operand resources were the source of a company’s competitive advantage, that is, the manufacturing facilities, and raw materials and tangible goods were the central denominator of exchange. The production and control of the operand resources and the conversion of these into the goods to be provided in the marketplace were the main source of economic growth. A sustainable competitive advantage could be achieved if a company possessed the right amount of the operand resources. The resources had to be rare, non-substitutable, and valuable in order to constitute a competitive advantage. The characteristics of most competitive resources vanish if all companies can have any of the operand resources at any given time. With the shift towards SD Logic, however, the competitive advantage stems from a new focus on “operant” resources, which include physical and mental skills such as knowledge.

Vargo and Lusch (2008) noted that operant resources provide a value proposition for the customer. A company’s operant resources come from the services which are the central source of value. These resources are the skills and knowledge which are used to act on the operand resources to produce the effect. Both inside and outside the traditional limits of the company, these resources

have increasingly blurred the distinction between consumption and production. Vargo and Lusch (2008) observed that consumers have shifted from being penetrated, promoted, segmented, and distributed to by the company and are now active participants in the creation of value for both the customer and the company. According to Prahalad and Krishnan (2008), for sustaining a competitive advantage it has become important to place increased emphasis on the employment of market intelligence and to provide suitable knowledge about a product to customers; it is no longer advantageous to simply provide companies with knowledge about the customers' behaviour (Prahalad and Krishnan, 2008). Therefore, in order to sustain a competitive advantage in the future, it is important to understand that customers can be used as operant resources; a closer relationship with customers can be maintained by a proper utilisation of consumers as operant resources in the co-creation of value.

Exploring the implications of competences and resources, Vargo and Lusch (2008) concluded that the customer who uses a company's services on the basis of co-creation promises plays a major role in value creation. The creation of value has moved out of the sphere of the company and is hence open for negotiation. Value propositions cannot be created without the customer; therefore, the sustainable competitive advantage for companies occurs when they constantly pursue customers as involved and co-creative value collaborators (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

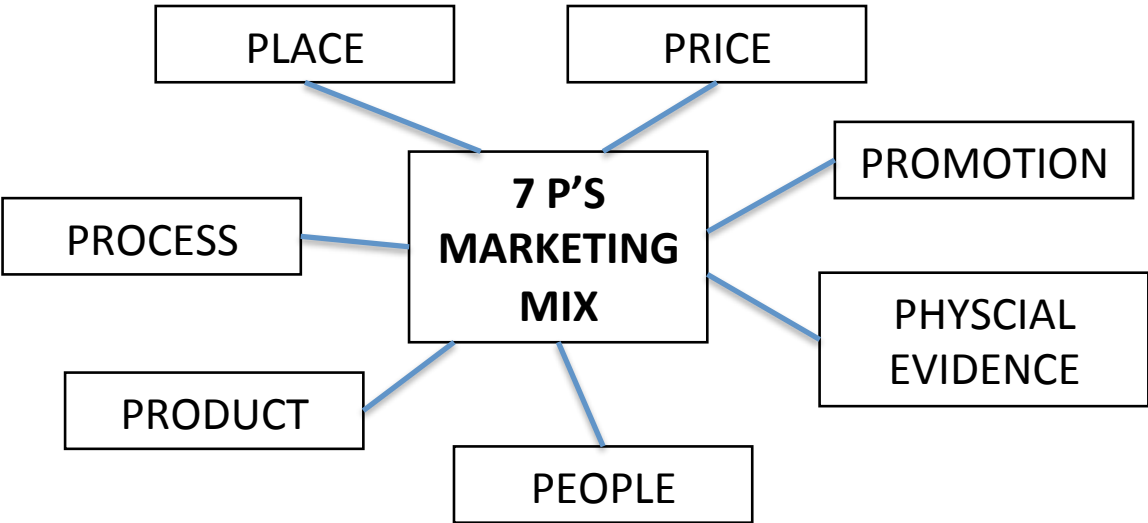
This review of Vargo and Lusch's (2008) SD Logic has focused on the marketing shift and sets the foundation for a discussion of co-creation. The review will further explore the conceptualisation of companies' co-creation with consumers because value is jointly experienced. Overall, three approaches are encompassed by such conceptualisations; these can be classified according to the experience of co-creation, innovative users (von Hippel, 2005), and the brands of co-creation (Payne et al., 2009). It is essential to present and study various approaches to co-creation as well as to study the potential of co-creation, all of which can have a sound influence on the relationship between the consumers and company.

### 1.2.2 GD Logic, SD Logic, and Luxury Goods

Each product category (e.g., budget, mass market, luxury products) and industry (e.g., airlines, hotels) have different characteristics, consumer demographics, and ways to market to potential customers. The different product categories are often defined and viewed through the 4 P's of Marketing. As an example, budget products will be priced lower than luxury products. The P's framework provides a practical way to discuss different product categories, and in this discussion, the P's have evolved from 4 P's to 7 P's in academic work on marketing. The P's embody a GD Logic view of marketing, but they are still useful regarding different ways to categorise the marketing of products and services.

Neil Borden introduced the term "marketing mix" in a speech at the American Marketing Association, and this was followed by Jerome McCarthy's (1964) definition of the term. The concept of the marketing mix was later expanded by service-focused academics Booms and Bitner (1981) (See Figure A: 7 P's of Service Marketing) through the addition of people, process, and physical evidence. This service approach added the characteristics of intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perish-ability to the mix, for discussion by academics and marketing practitioners.

Figure A: 7 P's of Service Marketing (Booms & Bitner, 1981)



The GD-focused P’s categorisation tools have been helpful to marketing practitioners for determining marketing budgets and resources. The overall goal in moving to a service focus is to highlight the customers’ needs and wants. This customer-centric approach has affinities to the GD subcategory of RM, which has been previously discussed; both focus on the importance of a customer-focused strategy.

Various product and service categories with a higher price point are known to focus on RM tactics; these products or services can be classified as “luxury” which has many definitions. This thesis discusses luxury in terms of a product and service provided by a hotel group, which differentiates itself as luxury through setting a higher price point and offering a higher quality of product and service. Restaurants can be used as an example to explain the distinction between marketing tactics used for luxury products or services and those used for budget products or services. McDonald’s restaurants might view their customers as transactional in that an order can be a one-time exchange in which the individual purchases a quick lunch during a one-hour lunch break. McDonald focuses on large images of the product near the cashier, giving the diner a menu to choose from. In contrast, a Michelin-starred restaurant may view its diners as longer-term clients with a potential for repeat service and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. When a client books at a luxury restaurant, an email address and contact details are requested. A personalised email is sent to the client to confirm the booking, reminders are sent before the meal, and a follow-up email is sent afterwards requesting feedback. When the customer arrives for the meal, the customer is presented with a menu, which offers a choice of daily seasonal selections, and if there are any allergies or dislikes, the chef will accommodate a personalised dish. These are very different approaches to marketing to the customer; Table B details the transactional versus RM approaches.

**Table B: Transactional Marketing vs. Relationship Marketing (Modified from Grönroos, 1991)**

<b>Transactional Marketing</b>		<b>Relationship Marketing</b>
One-off exchange	Focus	Ongoing Exchanges
Short-term Focus	Time Perspective	Long-term Focus

One-Way Communication from Management to customer	Customer Feedback	Ongoing Dialog
Mass Communication	Primary Communication	Personal Communication

The overall objective for each product or service category, from budget to luxury, is finding the right mix of marketing strategies to best serve the customer. The resources offered through RM and value co-creation for luxury goods comprise a marketing strategy which has been used in previous cases to attract and retain customers (Tynan et al, 2006). This interaction between the employees and the customer in value co-creation comprises a personalised brand relationship with the customer (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

### 1.2.3 Marketing of Luxury Brands

In much of the academic literature on luxury products and services, the concepts and discussion come from the fields of history (Berry, 1994), economics (Leivenstein, 1950; Veblen, 1899) and sociology (Bourdieu, 1984). There is a growing interest in luxury in the marketing literature, particularly regarding the increase in luxury goods sales worldwide. Luxury brands are important because the overall luxury market is substantial and growing, as market size exceeded €850 billion in 2014, driven primarily by luxury cars (10%) and luxury hospitality (9%) (Bain & Co, 2014). Topics within the marketing realm that have recently inspired academic research include the following: trading up for luxury goods (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003, 2007), democratisation of luxury (Twitchell, 2002), extending the market while retaining the luxury cachet (Dubois & Czellar, 2002; Giacalone, 2006; Nueno & Quelch, 1998; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003), marketing segmentation (Dubois et al., 2005), conspicuous consumption (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004; Truong et al., 2008), and online presence for luxury brand marketing (Dall’Olmo, Riley, & Lacroix, 2003; Kapferer, 1997, 2000). These marketing-related topics are all important for understanding customers and their motivations and values.

Marketing academics characterise luxury in a variety of ways. Dubois and Czellar (2002) take the view of “prestige,” stemming from self-indulgence, while Vickers and Renand (2003) consider luxury a symbol or social identity and Buchanan-Oliver (2008) take an integrative luxury

perspective. Understanding the nature of value for the customer requires an understanding of what a luxury brand is and what distinguishes a luxury brand. In this regard, Buchanan-Olivers (2008) proposes that three dimensions symbolise the identification of experiential luxury: functionalism, experientialism, and symbolic interactionism.

The emotional connection between the consumer and company is viewed as superior, with heightened levels of marketing connection with the consumer. This heightened level of connection with the customer is also referred to as an “experience” which can more easily be offered in an environment like a retail store or a hotel where the consumer is interacting with an employee and the product. This service experience is defined in SD Logic as the accumulation of employee, product, and customer interaction, a definition which describes “multiple points of interaction” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In this thesis an emotional connection experience is viewed as the key to a relationship with the hotel brand online. Further understanding and definition of luxury hotels and the SD Logic approach is explored in the following section.

#### **1.2.4 SD Logic & Defining Luxury Hotels**

The case study in this thesis uses the Canadian classification system for defining luxury hotels, as the headquarters of the hotel brand under study (the Fairmont) is located in Canada. The Canadian system is based on a 1–5 star rating which is administered by an industry-led, consumer-sensitive rating program developed for the purpose of providing the travelling public with a consistent national and often international standard of quality.

Worldwide, there is no standardised rating system. The 5-star system is mostly recognised in Canada and 15 European countries (which have a harmonised hotel-ranking system). In the United States, the American Automobile Association (AAA) is a well-established hotel ranking system. In the UK, ratings are run by tourist boards and the Automotive Association (AA), with 5-star hotels offering an undefined range of “extra” facilities as well as multilingual services.

Using the Canadian 5-star system as a basis for defining “luxury,” any 4 or 5-star hotel is defined as a luxury hotel. This qualifies the Fairmont brand’s properties as falling within the luxury classification. According to the Canadian rating system, a 4-star property “indicates exceptional quality in all areas of facilities and service, offering superior quality throughout the property,”

and a 5-star property is “luxurious at a world standard, offering outstanding facilities, guest service and amenities” (Canada Select, 2013).

When an individual books a room at a 4 or 5-star hotel, the brand name and knowledge and awareness of the brand may come into play. The brand studied in this thesis has a wide selection of both city and remote locations to fit the profiles of business and leisure travel. As the definition of luxury specifies a higher price as well as a higher level of product quality and service within the hotel, this connects to SD Logic as the experience expected by the customer is of a certain standard; the brand must endeavour to create a standard of guest experience through building a relationship with the customer. SD Logic explores the advantages of relationship building between the customer and company through skills and knowledge. Through the use of computer systems, employees are provided with knowledge and information so that they can predict the needs of a particular guest (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). An example could be where a guest is lactose intolerant, and soya milk is provided with breakfast. In addition the restaurant staff could suggest lunch or dinner recommendations that are lactose free in order to make the guest feel special and taken care of by staff. However the three areas within SD Logic value, premise 6 co-created value, premise 7 propositioned value and premise 8 unique value are areas that lack dimension and experiential elements needed for creating an unique experience.

### **1.2.5 Value Creation with Experiential Luxury Customers**

The value-creating interactions between the customer and the brand are an important area for brands to understand when creating marketing interactions and exchanges. In order to market successfully, an experiential luxury brand must communicate what the consumer will value. For marketers taking this experience-centric approach Tynanna & McKehnie (2009) have suggested that they are delivering a sensory, emotional, and social, relational value to the customer. This understanding that the customer must be involved in the process is essential for experiential luxury brands.

This thesis focuses on a luxury hotel, investigating the relationship that is formed between the brand and the customer. Payne et al. (2009) and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) have argued that the firm does not create and deliver value to the customer but rather interacts with the customer in a dialogue that embeds value in the process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).



In order to deliver a high-value experience to a customer, a brand must understand and communicate something which will be valued by the consumer. In order to understand what the customer will value, the brand must understand the customer. In the case of higher-end or high-net-worth clients, incorporating sources of value such as strong relationship between the brand (Fournier, 1998), the brand community (Cova & Cova, 2001; Kozinets, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2000; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009), and the service provider is essential (Grönroos, 2006). The cost and scarcity which are characteristic of luxury products are also relevant, as exclusivity and rarity can be determined by a price point where there are a limited number of rooms at a higher price which not all potential customers will be willing or able to pay. Luxury hotel brands are also often associated with a more personalised level of service on the part of the employees.

Experiential luxury products and services such as travel and tourism are more reliant on the customer experience. The experiential focus requires marketing to engage with the customer in different ways. Poulsson and Kale (2004) noted that the marketing experience should have a personal relevance to the customer, offer an element of surprise, engage with the customer, and engender learning. This requires the brand to involve the customer in an interactive process; this co-creative process between the customer and the brand surrounds the product and service experience. Therefore the experience and the value created are an embedded quality in the product or service.

## **1.3 CREATION OF VALUE**

### **1.3.1 Customer Value (CV) and Co-Creation of Value**

Holbrook (2006b) provides a definition of customer value, which addresses the important aspects of the consumption experience; objects and subjects interact in three ways - comparative, personal, and situational - in order to create value in a consumption experience. According to Holbrook (2006a, 2006b), the notion of "consumer value" construes value as something which consumers experience as they interact with objects. "Customer value serves as the foundation for all effective marketing activities...surprisingly the problem of defining what we mean by customer value or analysing its various types receives little attention" (Holbrook, 2006b, p.2).

Woodruff and Flit (2006) integrate Holbrook's notion of customer value with Richins's (1994a, 1994b) notion of value as symbolic meaning. With this integration, value can be seen as a

symbolic meaning of consumption that can be given to individual consumers or other consumers in a social network.

The majority of the existing research has focused on an individual level of consumption, with less research on how the value co-creation process exists at the group level of consumption or the influence of the exchange process in brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Muniz & Schau, 2005), consumer tribes (Cova & Cova, 2002), or subcultures of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Pongsakornrunsilp and Schroeder (2011) have shown that the consumer construct represents Liverpool FC fan groups and their football fandom through a hierarchy of groups titled "fansumers, compromisers, and hardcorers." Each group has its own definition of football fandom and different perspectives about the other groups of fans. Belk (1988, p. 152) stated: "We exist not only as individuals, but also as collectives."

Co-creation is the creation of value between customer and company in a cooperative context; it is defined by Zwass (2010) as "the contribution of consumers in the market place with the producer of the created value" (p.13). Zwass (2010) emphasised creativity which is shared by more than two people, and this has led to an increased awareness of value co-creation through online platforms within the tourism industry. The combined communication on various social network websites is aiding hotels in marketing their brand. Consumer sentiment and feedback are gathered through various websites such as Tripadvisor.com, booking.com, and the hotel's own brand content co-creation websites. Marketers show an increasing awareness of the value-creating potential which can be achieved through consumer contributions providing feedback, endorsements, and brand advocacy.

Vargo and Lusch (2008) explored the mutual and reciprocal advantages of relations between the customer and the company in terms of skills and knowledge, defining the co-creation of value as knowledge and skills that are applied in the goods branding and production. This was further supported by O'Hern and Rindfleisch (2010) who, when describing co-creation for new product development and innovation, stated that contributions are given by consumers as they can choose the elements of the product during the activity (O'Hern and Rindfleisch, 2010). Within marketing, the development of a product and co-creation are certainly interlinked. This has drawn criticism, as some reviews do not believe that co-creation is restricted to the activity of innovation and

improvement of a product or service. Rather, co-creation might be utilised at different levels in the company, such as in support of the development of new product, enhancing a current product, or, as suggested by O'Hern and Rindfleisch (2010), for feedback on the organisational processes. Thus, co-creation can exist in various forms and at different organisational levels.

The use of a service or the consumption of a product is sometimes described as a passive conceptualisation of Vargo and Lusch's (2008) concept of co-creation. However, Humphreys and Grayson (2008) argue that as consumers have co-created through the help of their consumption, this type of participation is not considered for a massive shift.

The traditional value chain is now regarded as fundamentally changed because the value is created for the company, more than buying and repurchasing of the product by the customer. Values cannot be precluded from being simultaneously co-created; therefore this discussion will continue to emphasise the active co-creation of the exchange values and online brand communities.

### **1.3.2 Value Creation and Brand Communities**

Consumers within a brand community have increasingly powerful roles in both creating opportunities and posing threats to companies (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006; Kozinets & Handleman, 2004; Wright et al., 2006). The value received in brand communities revolves around the benefit members receive from their social connections. Within online communities, for example, if a hotel brand has a problem like unclean rooms, such feedback is posted on TripAdvisor or other review websites, and the problem is then noticed by the hotel management. Hotel review websites, in particular, have well-established online feedback mechanisms among the consumers themselves, which has led management to keep a close eye on these communications.

The idea of "working consumers" captures the phenomenon of consumers creating value through their online actions while largely remaining unpaid (Cova & Dalli, 2009). The brand community has been likened to a tribal perspective, where consumers form a linked value in order to co-construct their resistance and consumption (Cova & Cova, 2002). The power of these collective groups is their ability to create value in multi-brand communities, which has been discussed by

Schau et al (2009) through a set of the values of 12 collective practices. Muniz and Schau (2005) have presented a story about the Apple Newton brand in which a once “abandoned” brand co-created new brand meaning and extended the brand’s life. This represented almost a faith or religiosity among loyal consumers.

Various studies of brand communities have focused on collective issues such as reciprocal problem solving (Mathwick et al., 2008; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). In addition gift giving has been found to be an important component in the co-creation of value, for example, in virtual communities and online gift economies (Belk, 2007). Napster music file sharing service is another example of goodwill in sharing files online (Giesler, 2006). These studies have found that customers may co-create value by themselves, but the relation between individual roles and the roles within a consumer community are less well understood.

### **1.3.3 Using Value Propositions for Marketing**

A value proposition can be created solely by the supplier, or the supplier can be assisted by consumers in co-creation or co-production of value (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In the case of the present research, the customer actively participates in the exchange process; customer participation is defined in terms of the degree of customer effort and involvement (Silpakit & Fisk, 1985). Distinguishing between value and value propositions, Pires et al. (2014) concluded that value propositions must be co-created and co-produced by the participation of both the customer and suppliers.

The co-creation of value can be investigated by discovering how consumers engage in the value creation process. This approach investigates customisation over standardisation as well as participation over consumption. From Vargo & Lusch’s (2004a) perspective, this process takes a manufacturers’ perspective in SD Logic, which is not as encompassing as the full value co-creation process.

In a competitive market the supplier, or a hotel brand in the case of this research, intends to create superior value by offering value propositions, which adds to the overall competitive advantage of the company (Porter, 1980). Some argue that the value proposition is grounded in a unique

capability or competence which is used as a resource to serve customers' needs and wants (Faty & Smithee, 1999). This focuses on the supplier to provide value propositions and market them to the consumer (Cova & Salle, 2008). This view is consistent with the supplier-initiated superior value proposition, where the customer is the one to perceive the value. That being said, consumers are still a resource for electing and participating in the value proposition, not as a requirement but through a choice made by the consumer. The rationale of customer participation as a choice facilitates understanding of why companies may customise their value offering in order to cultivate a relationship and involve the consumer in meeting a specific need (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 5).

#### **1.3.4 Co-creation of Experiences**

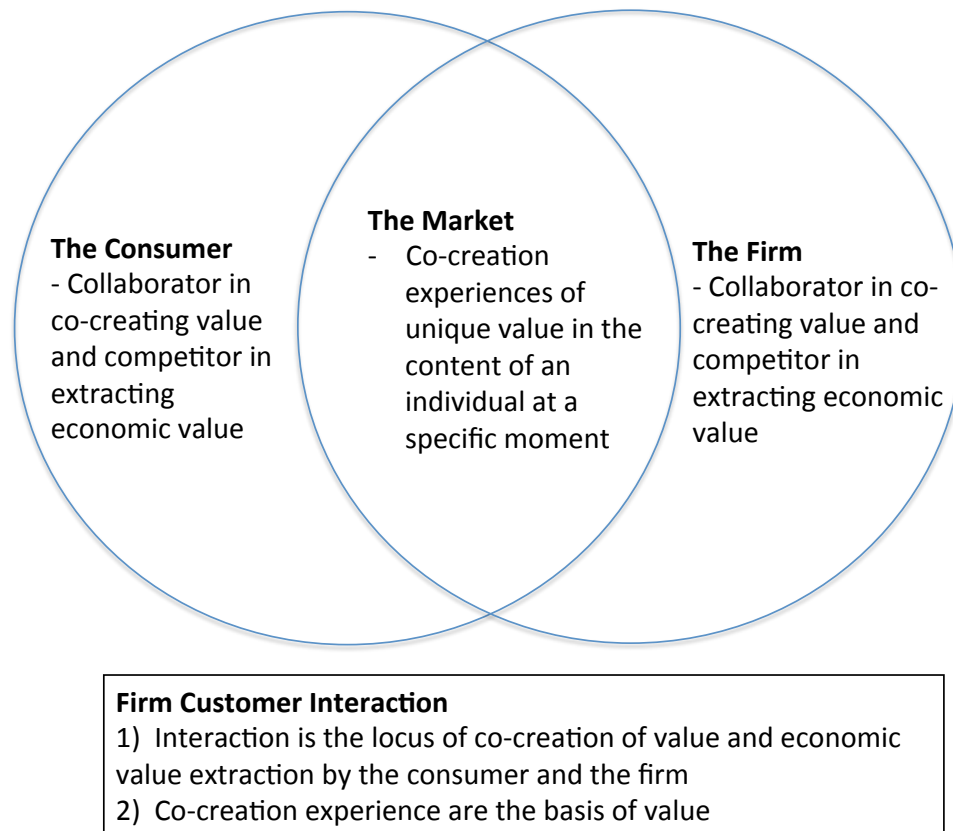
Vargo & Lusch (2004) suggested that co-creation is an unavoidable implication of the development of SD Logic, whereas Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) had considered co-creation as a strategy tool which organisations must employ to meet their challenges and which would ultimately change the demands of the market as well as the relationship between the consumer and company.

A conflict in this area occurs when organisations do not stage the experience of co-creation and thus do not create value interactions between consumers and companies (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Therefore, these organisations do not co-create to obtain a competitive advantage. Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) analysis took a more operational approach to conceptualizing co-creation, suggesting that companies must directly address the process of co-creation. However, they did not describe how companies would construct the process.

Hence, changes have occurred between the company and consumer; for instance, the emergence of technologies online has increased the power of consumers as they are being informed and are active and connected much more than previously. The challenge of dissatisfied consumers when there are conflicts creates a complexity which executives must solve. Hence organisations struggle to keep the consumers close and in communication. Banks and Humphrey's (2008) research suggests the experience of co-creation as a solution.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004b) framework (Figure B) establishes the crucial building block of dialog and interaction with consumers. Dialog is described in terms of deep involvement, interactivity, and a reciprocal propensity to perform. The dialogues of co-creation must feature both parties' interests, which requires a forum through which the dialogues can occur in order to ensure productive interaction with a set of committed rules. Moreover, in their reviews, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b) emphasised interaction as a prerequisite for the occurrence of co-creation. Vargo and Lusch's (2008) research revealed that in the GD Logic view of communications, the consumer is not specified as being at the end of value chains; that is, value is not created solely for the customer. From this view, communication is considered to be a monologue to the customer instead of an interactive dialogue (Ballatyne & Varey, 2006). In SD Logic, the creation of value has moved, with the necessary interaction being repeated at any time and any place in the system. Such interaction must originate through the consumer or the company and must consider the dialogue of both sides. Interaction between the consumer and company or among the community of consumers and companies is vital.

Figure B: Co-creation between Consumer and Firm (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b)



The use and application of conceptualisation theory may be viewed as the interaction among the consumers. According to Ballantyne and Varey (2006), dialogues in marketing require joint investigation; desires, problems, wants, and issues must come together to help make decisions. Finally Ballantyne and Varey's (2006) discussion supports the experience of co-creation through dialogical interaction as the typical form of communication in SD Logic, as it agrees with the co-creation of value's potential to maintain competitive advantages.

Features of the Internet have enabled organisations to interact with customers more frequently and intensely, with increased volumes of information (Sahwney et al., 2005). This enables consumers to contribute innovations given the interactive behaviour of companies; for example, feedback which consumers can provide through Facebook and Twitter feeds is instantaneous and instinctual. A more tangible and direct approach to co-creation emphasises customer

collaboration; according to Jang et al. (2008), this approach can also be called “user innovation”. This approach focuses on the utilisation of customers as an operant resource in designing and developing new products and services or enhancing and modifying the previous ones. Thus, the fundamental goal of this concept is not the creation of value through experiences, but of the co-creation of products. It has been noted that the basic premises of SD Logic are accepted but the product co-creation is inherent to SD Logic; the co-creation of the product facilitates the services which result in the real value. Pongsakornrungrungsilp and Schroeder (2011) have explained that in the case of developing an enhanced toothbrush, if consumers are required to take part in the process it will result in product co-creation and also simultaneously work positively in the service of healthy teeth.

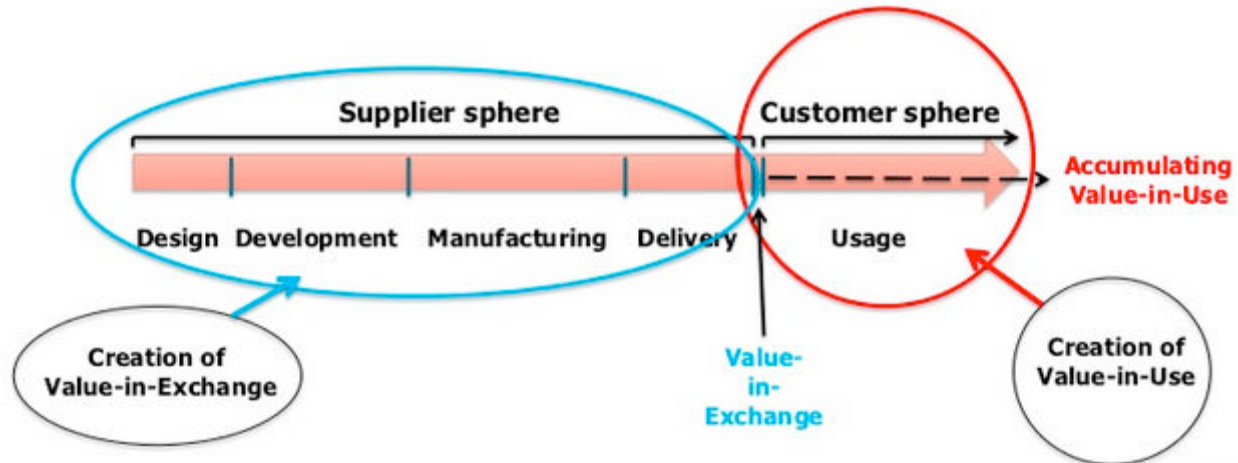
Consequently, the consumer is the operant resource and the new value creator. This is contrary to the argument that co-creation is the operant resource, primarily in the context of knowledge and skills, which uses the process of co-creation for increased extraction of values for the consumer as well as the organisation (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

Whether in the form of experience, value, or user innovation, co-creation is largely an open-ended process. The co-creation process strives to provide better service for the unique desires and preferences of customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b) and to develop strong relations to improve the brand value (Grönroos, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b; Vargo & Lusch, 2008; von Hippel, 2005).

Grönroos and Voima (2013) contribute to the debate about the influence of suppliers and perception of value. In their model, value creation has two spheres which overlap to show a shared area of participation (Figure C: Value Process, Grönroos, 2011). The first sphere is a single supplier and the second is the customer; these join in a shared space where there are overlapping interactions of co-producing and co-creating. The authors consider issues surrounding the dynamic, moving, and interacting participation factors of the two creators of value. A lack of control in these spheres has the potential to undermine the process of creating superior value and ultimately the suppliers’ success in the market.



Figure C: Value Process (Taken from Grönroos, 2011)



### 1.3.5 Active vs. Passive Co-creation

The value co-created by the consumer without the participation of the company is termed passive co-creation, while active co-creation involves the company consciously interacting with the customer beyond the transactional interactions in order to nurture the co-creation process. However, the lines between the two are somewhat ill defined. Vargo and Lusch (2008) theorised that the SD Logic framework suggests that the co-creator or the co-producer is always the creator of value and the element of exchange is the co-creation. However, the inherent element of consumption occurs in the co-creation when the product is consumed. The customer's manner of consumption can by itself determine the level and nature of the co-creation without the company taking any part in it. The value co-created by the consumer without the company is termed "passive co-creation" because the company has contributed no effort to the company-consumer interaction other than that needed for selling the product. This co-creation is a passive customer-facilitated process because the customers are co-creating the value, and the company must tap into the process. Therefore, Vargo & Lusch's (2008) co-creation is most relevantly applied to the consumption of services, not products. Thus, the interaction effectively takes place as their logic does not preclude such an interaction occurring. Whereas an impact on the company–customer relationship is not described beyond the purchase situation, co-creation is at some level inevitable

in SD Logic. The main objective of the co-creation approach is to create a close relationship between the company and the consumer (Lusch & Vargo, 2014).

According to Ballantyne and Varey (2006), the fundamental premise of marketing in SD Logic comes from the dialogical interaction, and companies can increase their brand value through engagement in the active co-creation processes. Active co-creation is the optimal goal of engagement between the customer and the brand.

In order to fully understand consumer that the company communicate and creates value, the value process models must be reviewed. Within this, both company/brand and consumer value perspectives will be explored further in the next sections.

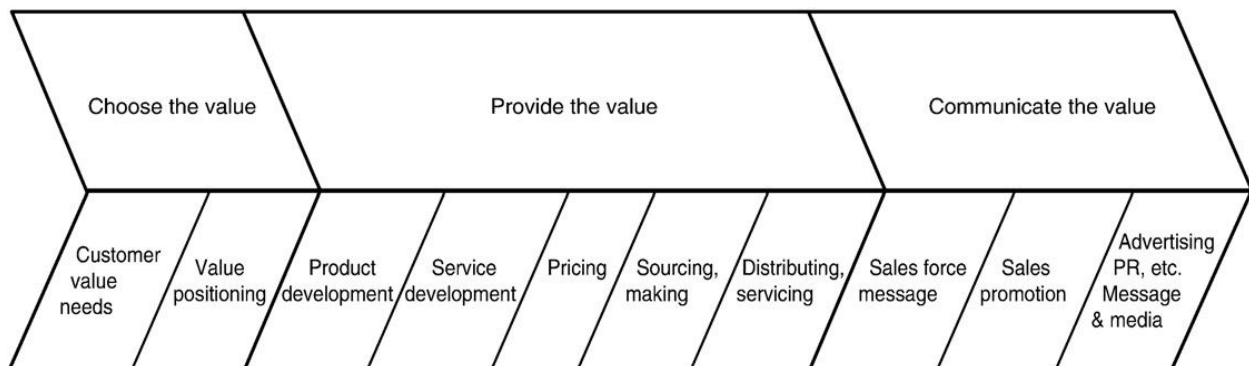
## 1.4 Evolution of Value Process Models

Value processes models have evolved from a company-centric position to that of a more collaborative nature. Previously through the company, the customer chooses and selects the offered product and services; there is no cooperation or collaboration between the consistent consumer and company. Through the one sided communication toward the customer, limited value creation has been recognised by company managers through the process. Payne et.al (2009) have examined this collaboration and found that the communication between the company and the purchaser is the focus of economic values extraction by the customer and the company. The customer might extract the value through this interchange of customer-to-customer dialogues and communications. It has been important in a company-centric position to determine if the company builds such experiences with customers as their primary company centric contributor; this eases the link between the customer in the company's offerings, thus recognizing the customer as a part of the process but not using the customer as a resource to provide value to the brand.

This supplier-crafted value perspective involved a marketing offer or promise initiated and communicated by one party to another, thought to be of value to a customer, with the intent that

it be accepted by the customer. One of the original process models for value in marketing was created by McKinsey and Co (1999) and modified by other academics to suit the value chain of the industry being discussed (Figure D: McKinsey & Co Value Process Model). In the model, the brand is the creator of the meaning and message in the delivery of value to the customer. Developments have created growth and change in this model from the original inception in order to catch up with the co-creation of value with the customer. McKinsey and Co.'s model is one that is very firm focused, thus more of a GD Logic process model.

**Figure D: McKinsey & Co. Value Process Model (taken from McKinsey 1999)**



In furthering examining the evolution of value creation, Potts et.al (2008) noted two methods for speculation in connection with value creation. The central role is played by the resource for both the logics, GD and SD; both act as framework to better understand the resources between the consumer and company. Relationship maintenance and relationship termination is discussed by Heide (1994) when he claims that the objective of relationship marketing is to establish, develop, and maintain successful relational exchanges.

The McKinsey and Co. (1999) process model is widely acknowledged in both academic literature and in practitioner marketing strategy. Often process models are used in qualitative based materials as opposed to quantitative data which often results in difficulty in translating strategy to real-work settings.

### 1.4.1 Process Model of Customer and Supplier Participation

A process view involving relationship marketing currently prevails in the literature and indicates that marketing practice and research needs to be directed to the different stages of the relationship marketing process. The process model is widely acknowledged in research literature on marketing strategy as a form of customer management. The impact from the previously discussed concept of consumer and supplier value dynamics are an important step in the value creation of Grönroos' (2008) model where the usage phase is fully controlled by the customer but allows for suppliers' possible facilitation of value in use (See Table C). This model identifies five moments of possible customer participation in an exchange.

**Table C: Grönroos' (2008) Model of Customer Participation in an Exchange**

1.	Prior to production phase – shown as A and corresponding to the idea generation (ideation) or product concept development point;
2.	During the production phase;
3.	Following the production phase and preceding the negotiation phase – shown as B;
4.	During the negotiation phase; and
5.	Following the negotiation phase and prior to the usage phase – shown as C.

This model indicates two moments when the supplier may participate in value-in-use, moment C, following the negotiation phase and during the usage phase that follows; this allows for the supplier to support customers' value-in-use activities.

The starting point occurs when the consumer participation is likely initiated before or after production of the product/service; as an example, off the shelf grocery products which are produced before being made available for sale. The supplier initiated the exchange process but may not intervene with negotiations. Movement of B is when customers' participation is likely to start as they identify products of consideration; variable C is where the transaction is made. With

this positive purchase decision, the negotiation phase might also include interaction regarding adjusting the value proposition on price, delivery, terms of payment, guarantees (Lurch & Vargo, 2006). This phase is also critical for service encounters where there is superior value-in-use for the customer. Moment C is where the consumer takes ownership of the product; this is an important part of the exchange. The usage phase is seen as a moment of truth where customers' expectations are confirmed or not. Supplier participation may be involved such as after sales service where this can be a differentiator. An example occurs when hotels offer a follow up email or survey where they ask post stay, for continued communication and feedback.

A two-way knowledge sharing approach is of benefit to the customers and suppliers during the service exchange process (Johnsen, 2012) although the variations in participation depend on the role of the initiator; for example, negative feedback is often a result of customer initiated post on a hotel review website within the hospitality industry.

Cova and Dallı (2009) have introduced a concept of identifying the co-creation process by asking three questions; first, who is responsible for value co-creation? Second, how is value created, communicated and transferred to the market? Third, what is the role of the community in the value co-creation process? Within this study, these questions are used to understand how the value co-creation process works. Although there is a basic understanding of the theoretical roles of co-creation of value through interaction, there is little knowledge of how it is done in practice. This case study will attempt to clarify and provide further understandings of this process.

SD Logic and the value co-creation process creates a variety of benefits for each participating party to interact using skills and knowledge in order to provide the best outcome. Much like SD Logic, Schroeder (2007) presents brand culture as a co-creation between companies and consumers. In 2004 Gummerson used an example of the relationship between a physician and his patient in order to explain value in the co-creation process. Each party has his or her own knowledge that needs to be communicated and considered in order to find a solution to the patient's problem. The doctor cannot cure the patient without the information about the symptoms and they both have something to gain by communicating with each other. Gummerson labels this a "win-win relationship" and views both parties as partners (p. 21) rather than only as physicians-

patients or, in this case, producer-consumers. This “win-win” is the ultimate goal for brand marketers.

### **1.4.2 Co-production and Customer Service Orientation**

Within service philosophies, co-production is often described as the consumer’s participation with the firm in at least one interactive decision-making process prior to the use of a good or service (Etgar, 2008; Gronroos, 2006). Within the service exchange, value co-creation is always present but co-production may not be dependent on the customer-firm interaction. Etgar states: “Co-production is an explicit result of decision making by consumers reflecting their own preferences” (p. 97). Within this study, co-creation is referred to as the interaction between the customer and the company and it does not always designate the co-production to section out the customer interaction. This thesis is often entering the discussion when the customer and company are already engaged in dialog.

In the customer centric perspective, the customers’ role is fully utilised with their involvement primarily during the process of creation of value for the company. The review by O’Hern & Rindfleisch (2010) defines the customer as the fundamental part of the system. A customer has the authority to be impacted in the value creation process in that system. Within this case the customer is involved in the creation of content on the website ranging from photos to videos and comments. The value created by this content adds credibility to the marketing communication for the company online.

Value co-creation is increasingly discussed in marketing literature and specifically with regard to value-in-use and the active roles of consumers. It is a collaborative process between the company and consumers where the consumers are playing a role of value co-creators (Vargo & Lusch, 2006). Equally consumers are knowledgeable of their power in this role of content co creation and the meaning of products and services they purchase. Within this value co-creation identity, the discussion may contain specific vocabulary associated with a certain group or products; however some of the terms that are commonly mentioned within the paradigm of SD Logic are co-production, consumer empowerment and consumer tribes.

### **1.4.3 Value Exchange in a Service Ecosystem**

Central to SD Logic and value creation is recognizing the knowledge and skills as primary resources for exchange (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). The emphasis on activities and processes is key in value co-creation. The creation of actors' competencies, other actors' knowledge and skills creates an environment where actors are engaging together through behaviours in an ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). This ecosystem is the environment within the hotel brand website investigated in this case study. This service ecosystem emerges as a "relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource integrating actors connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange" (Lusch & Vargo, 2014, p. 161). This service exchange is a mutual co-creation effort where actors are coming together in an environment where interaction on a micro level of value is embedded in a macro level (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Micro level can be described as individual personal levels of value that contributes simultaneously to a macro-level collection. Macro-level is described as collective, sub-section communities that contain many micro-level relationships. These interconnected ecosystems and subsystems form the ecosystem of value creation and exchange (Pires et al. 2013).

This SD Logic ecosystem of value exchange intertwines the competencies of actors with other actors' skills and knowledge providing a richer environment for community and member involvement. Both customer and employee actors benefit each another. The mutual benefit results in synchronization with the environment norms and expectations of the community. This ecosystem of value co-creation and exchange of value is the resulting environment between actors in this self-contained service ecosystem (Akaka, Vargo, & Schau, 2015).

It is important to study value as unique to this service ecosystem as value is identified by the customer actors for whom value emerges. This micro-macro value discussion is also important because it is the mechanism upon which the ordering of a service ecosystem can change or modify as the environment behaviour changes. As an example, individual consumers dictate the importance of themes within a community website. If consumers identify a desire to showcase photos of their adventure holiday, then the community discussion will adapt and an emergence of

this particular adventure holiday theme may occur from the social discussion. Over time, different patterns or relationships between themes may rise from a micro system of sharing. This results in a macro level of self-organization by the individuals within this service ecosystem in the network.

Modern communication tools within social media have emerged over the last decade where consumers and interest groups are able to gather and disseminate information amongst themselves. For example Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter have enabled customers to influence perceptions around companies. These feedback loops have contributed to more salient ecosystems where consumers are leading the discussions (Harrison, Newholm, & Shaw, 2005).

However it is important to recognize that each ecosystem is different and a brand created and managed website will have different self identified norms and expectations. Participation in the value exchange process within marketing literature has recognized different consumer environments and company participation levels.

There is a wide range and variety of ideas associated with value dimensions in the literature. Traditional approaches distinguish between the acquisition vs. transaction value difference (Monroe, 1979, 1990) and the hedonic vs. utilitarian value dichotomy (Holbrook and Corfman, 1985; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The hedonic versus utilitarian discussion has since been mainly accepted in the value literature and led to Dodds et al.'s (1991) work, which has since been widely used.

The hedonic versus utilitarian approach has led to SD Logic, which distinguished between value-in use and value-in-exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Within the tourism and hospitality settings, SD Logic has been used in much research concerning value (e.g. Babin and Kim, 2001; Ha and Jang, 2010; Park, 2004; Wu and Liang, 2009).

Customer value and the work from Hoyer et al. (2010), Payne et al. (2009), Kohler et.al (2011), Rheingold (2000), Nambisan and Baron (2009) and Holbrook (2006) are very different from the



customer value previously described within SD Logic. The main difference is the expanding context for experiential discussion within the customer value described. SD Logic does not delve into explicit detail, as there are other axioms and foundational premises to measure customer value. The online experience also provides a new level of transparency and openness to consumer comments and discussions that previous to the Internet use did not exist.

In each exchange process, companies and consumers have a conversation or dialogue in order to co-develop a solution. In Gummerson’s (2008) physician example a solution showed that communication was of benefit to both. Dialog plays an important role and the application of specialized skills and knowledge is the foundation of exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). The literature contains differing examples of customer value definitions as summarized in Table D.

**Table D: Frequently Cited Customer Value Definitions in the Literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Zeithaml (1988)	“Perceived value is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given.”
Sheth, Newman and Gross. (1991)	The five values influencing market choice behaviour are functional value, social value, emotional value, epistemic value and conditional value.
Woodruff (1997)	“Customer value is a customer's perceived preference for an evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations.”
Eggert & Ulaga (2002)	In the B2B-context, customer perceived value is conceptualized by cognitive construct, pre-/post-purchase perspective, strategic orientation, present and potential customers and suppliers' and competitors' offerings.

Woodall (2003)	“Value for the customer is any demand-side, personal perception of advantage arising out of a customer's association with an organization's offering, and can occur as reduction in sacrifice and benefit (determined and expressed either rationally or intuitively); or an aggregation, over time, of any of all of those.”
Holbrook (2005)	Customer value is 1) interactive; 2) relativistic: a) comparison of objects, b) differs between persons, c) situation dependent; 3) embodies preferences; 4) is attached not to the object itself but rather to the relevant consumption experience.
Pynnönen, Ritala & Hallikas (2011)	The systemic customer value reflects the value delivered to the customer, is dependent on more than one attribute, and possibly on more than one firm.

Dialogue is the first interaction among companies and consumers in the value co-creation process. These encounters require the sharing and balancing of ideas in order to find a solution. Jaworski and Kohli (1993) identified this process and the need for companies to gather data and knowledge about the consumers in order to benefit both.

Previously, Sheth et al. (1991) presented a theory of consumption value that encompassed functional, social, emotional, epistemic and conditional value. Similarly, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) proposed the “PERVAL” multiple item scale with 4 dimensions: emotional, social, quality/performance and price/value. Social value aligns with status and esteem, emotional value aligns with play and aesthetics, quality/performance aligns with excellence, and price/value aligns with efficiency.

Of importance to this research, Holbrook (1999) developed the dichotomy between hedonic and utilitarian values within the value typology. Holbrook’s work recognised three distinctions or dimensions that classified different types of value that can arise in the consumption experience: intrinsic vs. extrinsic, active vs. reactive, and self-oriented vs. other-oriented. The combination of the three distinctions in a 2×2×2 matrix gives rise to eight types of value: efficiency, excellence (quality), play, aesthetics, status, esteem, ethics, and spirituality (see Table E). Being mainly

considered a theoretical contribution, there is not yet a unique multidimensional scale of the eight-value types, although several authors have used Holbrook’s approach to assess value dimensionality, concentrating on some of the eight cells (e.g. Babin and Kim, 2001; Gallarza and Mathwick et al., 2001; Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2006; LeroiWerelds et al., 2014).

**Table E: Holbrook’s Value Dimensions (1994)**

		EXTRINSIC	INTRINSIC
SELF-ORIENTED	ACTIVE	Efficiency (Economic)	Play (Hedonic)
	REACTIVE	Excellence (Economic)	Aesthetics (Hedonic)
OTHER-ORIENTED	ACTIVE	Status (Social)	Ethics (Altruistic)
	REACTIVE	Esteem (Social)	Spirituality (Altruistic)

Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2006) reviewed different models of customer-perceived value. They observed that customer value may contain either positive or negative (valenced) values, personal, situational and context-dependent, exhibiting a dynamic nature. The overall theme was that customer value must have an on going assessment in order to accommodate an evolving consumer relationship.

After Sanchez-Fernandez and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007) studied various value models, they concluded that Holbrook and Woodside’s (2007) typology was the most comprehensive. Holbrook’s Value Dimensions, summarizes the customer value qualities as being extrinsic and intrinsic, of self and other-oriented who may be active or reactive. Holbrook and Woodside (2007) proposed the topology of value dimensions (hedonic, social, economic and altruistic) that are described in more detail in Table F in section 1.4.5.

The proposition that value is essentially experiential in nature is not new. Retailers have been aware that value is the result of several factors, both subjective and objective, that give the customer a complete shopping experience (Schechter 1984). When Holbrook (1994) stated, “value

is an interactive relativistic preference experience” (p. 27), he proposed a typology of consumer value with three dimensions: first, extrinsic/intrinsic to illustrate how the consumer perceives value in using or owning a product or service as a means to an end versus an end in itself; second,, self/other-oriented where consumers perceive value for the consumer’s own benefit versus for the benefit of others; and, third, active/reactive to describe the consumer perceives value through direct use of an object.

#### **1.4.4 Customer Experience and Service Experience Around Value**

In Pine & Gilmore’s (1999) book, “The Experience Economy,” they describe how businesses can develop experiences around products. The example of coffee is used where coffee shops can create a service offering of an experience around the drink. They have become a venue to meet a friend, hold an informal business meeting; the purchase price has risen as a result of the wider product offering of lattes and cappuccinos. This has turned the cheaply made two cents per cup into a booming industry where profits are soaring. Thus, Pine and Gilmore (1999) discuss the fourth form of product offering as an experience. In the updated version of “The Experience Economy” (Pine & Gilmore, 2011), they urge business leaders to engage in creating customer experience as an economic output.

Paying attention to this “experience around product,” currently, hotels and restaurants sell the coffee experience for two to even over ten dollars per cup, up to 50 times what a customer would pay for the wholesale coffee beans. The coffee experience now is comprised of comfortable seating areas to enjoy meeting with friends/colleagues combined with a heightened sense of smell from freshly brewed coffee, as well as visual displays of coffee-making by baristas, and other stimulating features, all creating extra value.

The complex Internet environment acts as a stage where individuals experience everything from the product, service, atmosphere, a sense of community, feelings of trust/distrust in the transaction, and after-sale support. Online there is also the sense of experience where customers

do not feel the pressure to purchase but gain information on product or services which is available 24 hours a day.

Playfulness has been studied in the context of technology/system use and e-commerce environment. Playfulness was found to positively influence the use of technology and intention. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) described the main reasons for spending time in many of our activities; he stated that “the experiences are rewarding in themselves and the activities provide a little world of their (our) own which are enjoyable” bringing the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p.145). Playfulness is a construct that has concentration, enjoyment, and curiosity as dimensions (Ahn et al., 2007). This can be linked to Holbrook and Woodside’s (2007) hedonic value dimension and the need for playful hedonic joy.

Keng and Ting’s work (2009) identified interpersonal interaction of customer experience values through a blog site. This interpersonal interaction of the blog shows whether it can provide frequent updates, diverse contents, and requested information. Customer experience has become a focus in managerial texts and has found a place on the academic agenda (Frow and Payne 2007; Patricio, Fisk, and Cunha 2008). Shaw and Ivens (2002) describe customer experience as “the next business tsunami... the next competitive battleground” (p. 1).

#### **1.4.5 Holbrook’s Experiential Value Dimensions and Hospitality and Tourism**

The researcher has chosen Holbrook’s (2008) typology of consumer value (see Table F) as the theoretical framework of this study, primarily because of his innovative paper from 2008. As this research topic involves the need for structure around customer online hotel community experience, which is rather unique, Holbrook’s typology provides the appropriate methodological structure for the experiential online content.

**Table F: Holbrook & Woodside’s 2007 - Topology of Value in the Consumption Experience (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007)**

<b>Typology of value in the consumption experience</b>	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-oriented	Economic value	Hedonic value
Other-oriented	Social value	Altruistic value

The topology of value used in the consumption experience has been explored extensively by Holbrook over 20 years (Holbrook, 1987, 1994, 1999, 2005, 2006a,b, 2007). In a streamlined form, the publication in 2007 reduces his previous categories from 8 to 4. He used this typology to specifically enrich our lives as consumers by contributing aspects to 4 forms of value dimensions. These dimensions are described as: economic value (as extrinsic means to self-oriented ends), hedonic value (as a self-oriented part of experiences appreciated intrinsically for their own sake), social value (as a facet of consumption used as an extrinsic means to influencing the responses of others), and altruistic value (as an ethical or spiritual component of other-oriented consumption viewed as an intrinsic end in itself).

This reduced typology of value in the consumption experience allows for simplification with special emphasis on how companion animals (in our case an Internet community) play important roles in fostering each type of consumer value. Using this connection, most contributors touch on multiple types of consumer value but direct their main attention or place special emphasis on one or another of the various types just described (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). These variations in emphasis serve as the basis for the organizations and in this marketing case. This topology was selected because it uses an experiential approach that is simplified and reduced in dimensions, making it easier for marketers to apply the customer value topology.

Holbrook (2006b) explains that customer value is an important aspect of the consumption experience and thus for understanding consumer behaviour: “Customer value serves as the foundation for all effective marketing activities..., surprisingly the problem of defining what we

mean by customer value or analysing its various types receives little attention” (p.2).

The motivations for engaging in co-creation activities for marketing have been demonstrated from a brand side; however consumer motivations may not be so obvious. From a consumer standpoint, extrinsic motivation refers to the actions of an activity that are carried out solely for enjoyment rather than for attaining the instruments’ value. The research by Noble et.al (2012) suggests the autonomy degree of extrinsic motivation. This degree is explained by using the example in the field of education. In extrinsic motivation, students select courses on the basis of their career, not on the basis of enjoyment of learning which means they are extrinsically motivated by evaluating income, salary and social status instead of interest and enjoyment. In the co-creation context, individuals could be extrinsically motivated through involving them in successful activities of co-creation which leads to provided financial rewards or free incentives but does not drive them by interest into the activity. Therefore in such situations a person is motivated to achieve an outstanding result as discussed in the definition by Payne et.al (2009). Rewards in extrinsic situations are an outcome from the external environment, an example is financial rewards are expected in extrinsic motivation.

The typology of value by Holbrook (2006a) can assist in providing a greater understanding of value with online content. However, this is arguable from different perspectives because value is dynamic and can be transmitted in different situations or contexts. Smith and Colgate (2007) have argued that one of Holbrook’s (2006a) types of value, namely “spirituality”, is a self-concept or rather is self-oriented (rather than other-oriented) in as far as consumers adapt the objects for themselves individually. But Holbrook (2006a) views spirituality from three dimensions: other-oriented, whereby consumers adapt objects for social collectiveness or for self-expressing; intrinsic whereby consumers adapt objects for their own sake; and reactive whereby objects provide spiritual value for consumers (Pongsakornrunsilp, Pusaksrikit, Schroeder, 2009).

This thesis argues that a typology of customer value as a framework to better understand customer experiential value online is required. The customers are the best judge of value and in order to better understand the content online, marketers must use an empirical framework to best gauge the content to determine the most prolific content contributors.

Economic value has been linked with individual's motives to become involved in co-creation. Such financial rewards might be direct or indirect. Hoyer et al. (2010) supported the description regarding the monetary factor by claiming that this element is related to the rewards that are financial in nature; i.e. they can be direct in terms of monetary prizes and profit sharing or indirect in the form of intellectual property. These rewards are given to those involved in the co-creation process and can be achieved only on involvement in specifically winning co-creation competitions. An example is suggested by Kohler et.al (2011) where an activity, such as blue jean design, is created on Facebook when customers are asked for their views on the personalisation of design. From many options, one design might be utilised for the purpose of commercialisation with the winning customer earning a financial reward. Another example is the website in study, where the motivation is a complementary night for two people to stay at a Fairmont hotel. The customer/potential customer wins by creating the most number of relevant submissions to the website. However, it is noted that some fans/consumers are not motivated by economic incentive but by other motivations such as social value and the perception of others.

The value of social integration has been explored by Nambisan and Baron (2009) who suggest that advantages are derived from the social ties developed through passage of time for participants in the environment of virtual customer. In the research by Rheingold (2000), social integrative is described with various advantages linked to the customer such as enhancement of a belonging sense or enhancing the social identity. In both definitions an advantage is linked to the customer for participation in social factors. An individual might respond in co-creation activity through participation in order to become a member of a certain community. Within this framework the organisation creates the relationship but in certain instances the framework could be created by the customer participation as well. These participants benefit from such relationships; for example, increased status in social aspects which might occur within their online community as customers are seen as prominent contributors and thus prominent members of this group. The idea that consumers or fans are motivated by social status is shown by the increasing number of followers on social media which seems to be a real motivation for today's online users.

Inner feelings and emotions of an individual have a relationship to behaviours and activities, which are a major aspect of intrinsic motivation. According to the research by Payne et.al (2009),



intrinsic motivation is the performance of an activity for the natural satisfaction, irrespective of the consequences. The person with intrinsic motivation develops forces to perform for challenge, involvement and even fun. Pressure, external prods or rewards are not factors. In the light of co-creation background, intrinsic motivation can be interrelated with tasks. People can be intrinsically motivated when they have keen interests in a certain task and it can be suggested that in certain situations, organisations are required to be adaptive in order to motivate intrinsically their customers and employees in every possible situation. The company must facilitate and enable the co-creator for intrinsically motivated individuals. On the hotel review websites many reviewers do so because of their desire to help fellow travellers with no expectation of a reward or recognition. This is a prevalent motivation within travel and tourism online. In some cases a reciprocal motivation is felt when the use of review sites are used in the travel planning phase, and once travellers return, they feel compelled to offer their own online feedback and recommendations from their own travel experience.

According to Nambisan and Baron (2009) the source of hedonic feelings is profoundly fascinating, and a rationally vitalising experience. Hedonic value sources are linked to the pleasure and enjoyment one can get from initiating and completing a positive action or responsibility. According to Holbrook (2006), the hedonic value arises from one's own place in consumption as in the enjoyment of fun received out of an experience. This could be in the form of a leisure activity like tennis or riding a bike. The hedonic value could also stem from the aesthetic enjoyment received when watching a sunset or viewing a scenic mountain vista. Within hospitality and tourism, hedonic factors, pleasurable activities, are vital as individuals are often using holiday time and spending money.

A study by Vukadin et al. (2016), found that by incorporating artistic elements into a retail store, marketers were able to innovative and differentiate their customers shopping experience. This retail strategy maximised hedonic gratification to store visitors, while adding symbolic value to the commercial offering. The study found that store traffic and sales are were stimulated and by incorporating artistic elements, is also a made a magic way to conceal the store's transactional purpose. This experiential strategy offered a hedonic element to improve the customer experience in store.

Hedonic consumption is to “designate those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products” (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p. 92). According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), consumers register multi-sensory stimuli of a product and those stimuli can evoke images. Some are historic recollections and some are fantasy images created by the mixture of individual experiences and new stimuli. Emotional arousal includes preferences and affects various emotions such as joy and jealousy. In the area of information systems and the Internet, attempts to include the hedonic benefits of using technology came later than utilitarian benefits (Shang et al., 2005). Constructs such as playfulness, flow and cognitive absorption were used to identify the pleasurable aspect of using technology. Playfulness is a construct that has concentration, enjoyment, and curiosity as dimensions (Ahn et al., 2007).

The research by Holbrook (2008) describes altruistic value as involving how one’s own consumption behaviour affects others. When an individual is engaging in something ethically desirable or sourced, this provides a feeling of self-justification. This particular value relates to a mental and social component where the feeling itself is a “virtue in its own right” (Holbrook, 2006, p.59). Rothchild (1999) argued that in marketing there is no such thing as altruism because everyone acts in their own self-interest.

The altruism value dimension is related to the individual’s inspiration and action that are ethically desirable in the form of not buying or consuming a product. As an example, certain tuna are not ethically fished and, certain restaurants and hotels declare they will not serve them. As well, a sense of spirituality or unity that can be achieved as a result of altruistic value is also described in Holbrook’s (2008) work. This could come in the support of a charity or cause close to an individual’s heart such as supporting a cancer charity because a parent suffered the illness. Within the website in this case, altruism value plays a role in customer website contributions.

These 4 dimensions (economic, social, hedonic, altruistic) are experiential and relational to the hotel website being studied because of their applicable nature and customer approach. The knowledge of how experiences engage emotions or how emotions work in channelling consumer

activities in particular directions remains limited (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The majority of recent research in tourism is based on the application of psychological scales developed to measure emotional responses; these are constrained in their ability to explain how tourist's consumption experiences lead to a particular emotional response.

## 1.5 Tourism Value Creation Online

Previous work has identified the importance of values around the tourism experience (e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993). These studies recognise that tourism is often an emotionally charged consumer episode (e.g. Pearce, 2009). As an example, within the discussion on tourism destinations, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) suggest that emotions have a significant role to play in influencing consumers' behavioural intentions. Their studies and others. have examined empirical work on value where either a firm/brand led or a consumer led perspective is taken.

The shifting approach towards value co-creation has been recognized within the tourism sector. In current research, the perspective of consumer driven investigations outnumber firm perspective which illustrates their importance. Table G summarizes studies within various tourism & hospitality areas that have been investigated.

**Table G: Analysis of Empirical Works on Value in Tourism**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Consumer</b>	<b>Firm</b>	<b>Services Investigated</b>
Lin, Z., Chen, Y., Filieri, R. 2017	X		Destination
Alazaizeh, M., Hallo, J., Backman, S., Norman, W., Voglel, M., 2016		X	Heritage Attractions
Zhu, W., Morosan, C., 2014.	X		Hotels
Rihova, I., Buhalis, D., Moital, M., Gouthro, M.B., 2014.	X		Tourism
Hayslip, Gallarza, Andreu, 2013.		X	Hotels
FitzPatrick, M., Davey, J., Muller,		X	Hotels

L., Davey, H., 2013.			
Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011.	X		Food Events attendees
Smith, Bailey & Williams, 2011.		X	Hotels
HO, Chung, Lin & Chuen, 2010.	X		Tourists express trains
Chen, Chang, Tseng, Huang and Lei, 2011.	X		Gaming sites
Williams & Soutar, 2009.	X		4-Wheel Drive Adventure Tours
Wu & Liang, 2009.	X		Hotel Restaurants
Hutchinson, Lai & Wang, 2009.	X		Golf Travellers
Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009.		X	Tourism Business Networks
Gallarza & Gil, 2008.	X		Destinations for students in packaged tours
Payne et al., 2009		X	Hotels
Trivedi, Morgan & Desai, 2008.		X	Hotels
Li & Petrick, 2008		X	Hotels
Petrick & Li 2008		X	Hotels
Lee, Petrick & Crompton, 2007.	X		Festivals
Lee, Yoon & Lee, 2007.	X		Destinations (Korea)
Moliner, et al., 2007.	X		Tourism Package/Travel Agency
Park, 2007.	X		Airlines
Feng & Morrison, 2007.	X		Travel Clubs
Gallarza & Gil, 2006.	X		Destinations
Um, Chon & Ro, 2006.	X		Destinations (Hong-Kong)
Sanchez et al. 2007.	X		Destinations (3 Spanish Cities)
Duman & Mattila, 2005.	X		Maritime Cruises
Oh & Jeong, 2004.	X		Website Experiment with Students
Petrick, 2004.	X		Maritime Cruises

### **1.5.1 Co-creation of Value within a Hospitality & Tourism Setting**

From the background of SD Logic, the research by Vargo & Lusch (2008) proposed that the co-creator of value has been the consumer. In this context, tourism and hospitality organisations require that the tourist be incorporated in the process of creating values. Another research project by Payne et al. (2009) suggested that strategically, integration has been required by the consumer at every step which has been essential for the betterment of services and product.

When companies learn from their consumers, the role played by consumers changes along with changes in their relationship with the organisation and eventually with the experience of service and product (Payne et al., 2009). Consequently, from the consumer integration dimension, the consumers' co-creation capacity has been measured along with the ability to determine creative consumers within the tourism and hospitality organisation and help them to become co-creators. The organisations have the capacity of co-creation in order to support their approachability of ideas from consumers and to transform idea skills into information. This has led to the development of new services and products as well as an improvement in the significance of the existing products and services through raising the efficiency and effectiveness to ultimately develop economic advantages (Volberda et.al, 2010).

Hotels can advertise items and administrators can give instant help, and/or make an online group of brand fans through all manifestations of social networking: person to person communication destinations, content groups, virtual planets, websites, micro blogging locales, Internet gaming locales, social bookmarking, news locales, discussions and then some (Noone et.al, 2011). These discussions give organisations an alternate savvy approach to build brand mindfulness and support and expand brand faithfulness (Morrison & O'Mahoney, 2003). Hence, it might be concluded that online networking assists firms in creating brand devotion through systems administration, discussion, and group building.

Von Hippel (2005) suggested that the critical goal in the process of innovation is to involve the customer and to satisfy both the firm and customer. User innovation raises the question regarding

the co-creation of products and why customers are concerned about participating. The answer lies in the customer's heterogeneity. Seldom do homogenous or heterogeneous groups within an organisation have similar requirements as consumers. To fulfil the requirements of different customers, the company needs to offer a variety of products and to offer effective market cost. To respond to this need, a user innovation tool kit, such as a software tool, enables the consumer to innovatively design a product that optimally fits the customer's requirements with pre-defined, yet quite broad limits. The result is that this customer contribution has directly targeted innovation of a product so that other customer groups with similar mind-sets and needs have the benefit of a superior product, which targets and increases their satisfaction.

### **1.5.2 Tourism and Social Media Co-Creation of Value**

In early 2000, the participative web was introduced and developed from the concept collectively known as Web 2.0. Hoyer et al. (2010) found that by searching and sharing opinions, information and experiences with others, social media has become a common resource for consumers. At present, the consumer plans a vacation tour with rich opinion resources such as the personal blogs and communities of virtual tourists. This information is combined with more knowledge given by several other tourism and hospitality providers or the destination-marketing organisation (DMOs).

The hotel industry has a significant influence on social networking according to frequent travellers who post reviews on the websites; these reviews are perceived to be more valid and useful than those given by the established rating organisations such as American Advertising Association and Forbes. This is supported by the Nielsen Company (2010) who found that social site users confidently used these website reviews making decisions about the services and products of the hotel industry. Thus, online reviews are a challenge for the service providers as they cannot always be positive.

This is supported in a report by the Hospitality Industry (2010) that concurs reviews can be unfavourable for the hotels and other leisure services providers. The importance of the reviews can

be analysed from The Nelson Company's (2009) research; 90% of the participants trust the recommendations posted by other users who they know personally, while 70% trust the recommendation of other users with whom they are not friends. This result shows that the consumer's role is crucial as it affects the purchasing decisions of others based on the content that is user generated.

It is noted from the review by Banks and Humphreys (2008) that the social media's participatory architecture permits tourists to post their knowledge, evaluations and experiences regarding particular destinations and brands. This tends to inspire others. Certainly several tourism and hospitality firms utilise social media platforms as the fragment of marketing strategy they possess though adopting the participation of consumers for promoting and distribution of product. For example, the industry may hire professional bloggers, may sponsor blog posts, or may promote discussion posting. In addition, the content generated by the consumer has potential to offer material to market research; whereas the tourism and hospitality organisations could abstract the consumer characteristics such as capability, judgment and emotions over destinations and products (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Therefore the participation and collaboration through the platforms of social media, allow the consumer to construct value for the tourism and hospitality organisations.

Thus, the consumer of social media has been empowered to access and participate during this process of developing the value, co-existing with the tourism and hospitality organisations (Hoyer et al., 2010). Eventually the consumer's interaction through social networking might progress into a process of innovative networking and social productions (Potts et al., 2008) through binding the opportunities with the benefits of social production. Conversely, tourism and hospitality require the destination and the provider to adjust to the co-existence of the consumer with social networks (Banks & Humphreys, 2008).

Banks and Humphreys (2008) found that such an evolving co-creator could not be directed in the same way as an employee; if the organization would magnify the control on the participant, there would be a risk of losing creativity. However tourism and hospitality organisations require the creation of new competencies in social media so that all employees are working together along

with consumers. Payne et al. (2009) proposed that the strategies of social media could be integrated into the process of new production development; this might elevate the ability of tourism and hospitality organisations to create value among the consumers.

Firms can be involved with their customers by interacting more frequently, by seeking opportunities to develop new technologies (such as the development of social media) and by utilising the content generated by the user. Piller et.al (2012) referred to the idea that improvements in effectiveness and efficiency can be led by social media; the cost of interaction with the participants can be lowered and their contribution and numbers can be significantly higher. In addition, the knowledge possessed by the individuals is increased with the heterogeneous nature of the groups, which, in innovation management, is viewed as an important factor of success. According to Kohler et.al (2011), much advancement has been made in recent times in 3 different fields: graphics, bandwidth volume and network connectivity. All these fields ensure the advent of virtual communities with more attraction to the users. The role of the customer has been altered by the advent of social media. The customers have also gained a massive amount of power resulting in more influence as the social media attracts the public due to its nature; there is more control by the users and lesser control by the firms. From the initial process of search until the final sales process, this influence can be exercised at different stages. As the consumer is connected to the web more frequently, five different powers have been identified: “a global view, experimentation, information access, activism and networking” (Kohler et al., 2011, p. 74). Potentially, more influence is exercised when the consumer is enabled by these powers in order to gain more information about a particular company, product or service, either internationally or locally where individuals form groups.

Piller et al. (2012) suggests that the relationship between the customer and the firm has impact on social media; however the above example shows that the primary relationship is among the customers themselves. The capability on a large scale to change the relationship between the market actors and the market structures is preserved by the social media and the real co-design processes. Piller et. al (2012) also reported that the tasks, such as distribution and marketing, are easily and more effectively used by the customers who utilise social media. The travel and leisure industry is often characterised by the need to communicate and market to high volumes of



potential customers. This can draw a natural fit to the use of the Internet and to social media along with the feasibility of social media as the suitable channel for communication (Deloitte, 2015). These online tools through social media platforms can be used with convenience, as a favourable and positive image of the organisation is presented to the consumer. This also has direct positive impact on the sales. Sites like Twitter and Facebook have also been used as a way to communicate feedback and complaints to the hotels. Thus the communication process initiated in this manner is two-way as it comes from consumers as well as management.

Thus social media serves as one of the most effective platforms of co-creating with the customer, as the levels of engagement and participation are higher. Online interpersonal influence is an important area to explore because consumer behaviour can exert pressure on this influence; the powerful effect of the two on each other, makes it important for marketers to manage the interpersonal influence. Also of importance is the spread of electronic technologies which is increasing and expanding the interaction that is a virtual reality among the consumers and social site users. Mowat (2010) proposed that the opportunities made possible by the adoption of social media should be used in the correct manner by the hotel management because social media tools have allowed guests to give their feedback about the services. The same is true for the case of value co-creation; hotels can utilise social networking for gathering valuable feedback and responses. This requires highly effective content strategy so that the data is used in the formulation, development, modification, improvement and expansion of the products and services.

### **1.5.3 The Organizations' Challenges with Value and Online Social Networks (OSN's)**

Tourism and hospitality organizations can obtain a great deal of content and value from co-creation; however, Potts et.al (2008) discussed the challenges that might be faced by the organisation. By integrating the co-creator with the internal team, executives might manage the organisation by means of new mechanisms that require controlling and monitoring for the development of efficiency and quality. The constant and frequent interaction tends to increase the

co-creation degree as such mechanisms of management are inclined to be frequent and intense (Payne et.al, 2009). In addition, the performance of the customer as the co-creator can stop abruptly with the reorganisation of the company, which negatively impacts the process of new product and services development.

Social networks have increasingly become significant to marketing departments as well as to consumers as other consumer recommendations are trusted more so than the conventional delivery of a marketing message by the brand (Jain, 2008; Zeng, 2014). A social network may be the “most effective way of RM, since it blurs the link between customers, allies and partners” (Wang et al., 2002, p. 415). In previous work, the social network is defined in other forms (virtual communities, virtual network, online communities); however for the purpose of this paper, the term social network is used. Kirby (2009), whose work is within a hotel’s network, suggests that entailing a two-way communication on the network should be active and not necessarily focused purely on the hotel itself, but on adjoining topics to provide customers with appropriate information which will result in gaining their business.

This is particularly significant within online tourism communities that have become the connection between individuals in virtual space; they provide user-generated recommendations from their experiences as well as from those of other members (Chung & Buhalis, 2008). The term “virtual community” or social networks has been a challenge over the years for marketing literature to define. Rheingold’s (1994) definition was, according to Wang et al (2002), the most frequently cited definition and still very relevant for this thesis:

The social aggregations of individuals that emerges online when enough people carry on these public discussions with sufficient human feelings, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. A virtual community is a group of people who may or may not meet one another face to face, and who exchange words and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards and networks. (p. 57-58)

Wang et al. (2002) also suggested that Online Social Networks (OSN’s) are the most cost-effective forms of information dissemination; however cost effectiveness is not the most important aspect for this research within luxury hospitality. Chung and Buhalis (2008) suggested that

information gathering and distribution are key benefits to OSN's. They argued that OSN's can be used extensively for market research, observing customer interaction and increasing customer knowledge. These are the important insights that OSN's can deliver to brands that use them within a marketing strategy. The valuable information online can be used by hotel marketers to enable customers to use and disseminate information online through these OSN's (Wang et al, 2002; Zeng, 2014). Connecting online with the customer is becoming as increasingly important as offline, also described as on location (within the hotel). As the connection to the customer within online communities or brand owned websites before or after a customer's trip, the need to understand why consumers are connecting with brands and what they value is increasingly more important. The functionality from a management perspective is that information needs to be available online within OSN's and the user can freely decide to use, share, and/or contribute to the information. This does relinquish control to the consumer; however this is an important element for brands to understand. The spread of opinion-based information for other consumers to read, use and potentially affect the company's image are all key elements for practitioners in the new online marketing domain. The company itself has no control within this word-of-mouth process which many consumers rely on heavily to reduce uncertainty and align expectations prior to making a purchasing decision (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Wood, 2009). From another point of view the OSN's provide existing customers the ability to be brand advocates by re-announcing marketing messages (Wood, 2009). This can be seen as a way loyal guests can become brand advocates by sharing content like photos, videos and messages on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The discussion of how brands can use OSN's to develop and deepen the relationships with its customers is the area of interest for this thesis. The ability of brands to use and manage the relationship building on OSN's applies to the fundamental use of these social networks. Through social networks that are designed to facilitate communication through a deeper sense of commitment enables consumers to "obtain information, maintain connections and deepen relationships" (Wang et al., 2002, p.408).

A wider individual network online overcomes any geographic boundary through these OSN's. Along with advances in information communication technologies, this has significantly changed the way consumer-firm relationships and interactions occur. The consumers can now engage

directly with suppliers which in turn cuts out the need for intermediaries and provides a transparency of rates for hotels and any third party website selling rooms (O'Connor & Murphy, 2004).

### 1.5.4 Integration of SD Logic Foundation Premises and Tourism

Previously discussed has been Li and Petrick's (2008) research where SD Logic is engaged in tourism literature and offers new ways of thinking. The SD Logic approach is related to tourism by evaluating conceptual development of how the nine FP's can be related to previous literature in tourism and applied to the tourism setting.

A brief explanation and evaluation of these principles are based on work from Li & Petrick (2008) (see Table H) where foundational premises provide a framework for discussion:

**Table H: Explanation and Evaluation of Foundational Premise from a Tourism Perspective**

<p>FP1: Service is the fundamental basis of exchange. In SD Logic, services are the exchange for service through the use of operant resources or one's knowledge and skill (Vargo &amp; Lusch, 2008). This idea of exchanging service through knowledge sharing and management has been discussed as influential and beneficial by tourism researchers (Li &amp; Petrick, 2008).</p>
<p>FP2: Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange. The fact that service is the fundamental basis of exchange is not always clear because there is a complexity around service. This comes from a combination of goods, money and various institutions (Vargo &amp; Lusch 2008). Within the tourism process, there are different companies (transport, accommodation, restaurants, entertainment) which work with different prices and goods and the fundamental exchange of service in tourism is not always obvious.</p>
<p>FP3: Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provisions. SD Logic states that goods generate value through the services they provide (Vargo &amp; Lusch, 2008). Even though tourism is serviced based (value is derived from physical products like hotel rooms and rental cars), services such as shelter and transportation are used and hence the idea of value-in-use is a perspective applicable to tourism.</p>
<p>FP4: Operant resources are a fundamental source of competitive advantage. This is an intangible resource that includes knowledge, skills, know how where there is a direct relationship. Li and Petrick (2008) found that, "It has been recognized that knowledge is the source of competitive</p>

advantage in the tourism industry” (p.6).

FP5: All economies are service economies. Vargo and Lusch (2004) support this statement by suggesting that the characterization of economies by “the expansion and refinement of some particular type of competence (operant resource) could be exchanged” (p.10). Today these service providers are not differentiated by what they offer because the offerings are similar. They are instead differentiated by supporting service along with personalized service.

FP6: The customer is a co-creator of value. This refers to the fact that the creation of value is interactional and a joint effort (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Considering all the different series in tourism, almost all are interactional. This could be generalized by implying that service in general implies interaction. However in tourism, it is believed that the engagement between provider and customer is more than interactional due to the importance of relationship and nature of proximity and contact in the tourism service.

FP7: The enterprise cannot deliver value but only offer value propositions. If value is always co-created jointly by the service provider and customer, then the provider cannot create value independently but only offer propositions. Once the brand and customer can work together to co-create value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), they can only create value with participation. This is consistent with all service industries, so therefore in tourism as well.

FP8: A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational. SD Logic suggests that since the value of a service is determined by the customer and created jointly, the service centered view must be customer orientated and relational (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This view has been utilized in many research studies within tourism brand of marketing in the past several years.

FP9: All social and economic actors are resource integrators. All members of organizations within a network can benefit and create more effectively through collaboration and being a resource integrator (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This idea of working in collaboration and in joint effort within the tourism network has been considered by many to be beneficial (Zhang, Song & Huang, 2009; Yilmaz & Bititchi, 2006). This collaboration between providers within destination is an ideal one but is considerably complicated to accomplish.

FP10: Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary. Vargo and Lusch (2008) describe value as “an ideology, experience, contextual and meaning laden approach”(p.7). They state that value is experientially determined by the beneficiary and is experiential in a “Phenomenological sense” (p. 7). When tourists experience value, value-in-use, they are beneficiaries and the ones who determine the extent of value that their experience provided.

FP11: Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements. These actors are employees in the company and company initiated network platforms where the company can invite customers through value propositions to engage in co-creation of value.

The above principals of value drivers are the foundations of SD Logic. If these premises are to be combined with a managerial application, it is possible to generate a competitive advantage.

## **1.6 LINK BETWEEN LUXURY & SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **1.6.1 Online Community: Company/Consumer-initiated, Luxury Hospitality and Social**

#### **Network Platforms**

The rising popularity of online brand based communities has led the global companies and consumers, particularly in the hospitality sector, to develop these communities for promotion of brand initiatives. Marketers and companies might utilise such communities as tools for building the brand and to customise, create and execute message advertisements for their products. In the same manner consumers might build the successful online brand communities through which they could engage other members voluntarily in different activities of community.

Company initiated communities like the one studied in this thesis are created by Fairmont Moments with the intention of furthering the brand message making it consistent with the overall brand message. Consumer initiated brand communities could be linked to product or brand fans.

Several researchers have discussed the community of “hosting” as a significant feature of online brand communities classification as it replicates the various operating mechanisms. Indeed, as indicated by the investigation of Lee et al. (2007) market effort could be simply associated with the consumer for building and managing the online brand communities. Hence company employees are less likely to engage in the activities of the online brand communities. Various studies have suggested that there is a casual association among the community forms, social analysis motivation and intentions of the online brand engagement communities. In view of these discoveries, Lee et al. (2007) recommended that managers should not impose their ideas on consumers but should encourage the consumer to participate voluntarily to exchange and share their ideas as sales coupons which is a form of economic motivation.

Moreover the communities of company-initiated brands have the benefit of receiving more precise product information. Simultaneously the communities might lack skill in working with the negative opinions with the branded products (Jang et al., 2008). Therefore both the companies and consumers together could build the communities, although Noble et. al (2012) noted that it is difficult for the companies to control consistently the brand messages.

### **1.6.2 Online Community and the Luxury Hospitality Networks**

Social networks are an excellent resource for sharing the information as evident from the size and volume of users and of content online. Schmallegger & Carson (2008) explain that the social network can be utilised for information sharing that leads to consumers learning about products and services. This also enables the direct feedback of consumers, which is available to the organisation. However, it is not enough to respond to feedback; it must be used proactively so that the social network can be incorporated in shaping the business strategies. These strategies not only expand the customer base but also cause repeat purchases of products and services.

In describing the consumption habits of the luxury consumer, we are identifying those that are willing to pay a higher price for the experience. As discussed earlier, the designation of 4 and 5 star hotel ratings is the level of hotel classification designated by the Fairmont brand. There is no previous research on an online luxury brand community that the researcher could identify. Within this case, the hotel is identified as a premium product where the consumer is a “mass affluent” or a “higher net worth individual.”

The number of affluent North Americans using social media is increasing, according to a survey conducted by Spectrem Group (Sass et al., 2013). Statistics from American users are illustrated because the website in this study, Fairmont Moments, is populated predominantly by North American users. The proportion of “mass affluent” Americans, defined as individuals with a net worth between \$100,000 and \$1 million that use Facebook has increased steadily from 29% in

2010 to 61% in 2012. The next category of “millionaires” the proportion of net worth individuals who earn between \$1 million to \$5 million has increased from 26% to 55%. Similarly, the proportion of “ultra high net-worth” individuals, \$5 million to \$25 million who use Facebook jumped from 27% from 52% over the same period (Sass et al., 2013).

The proportion of mass affluents using LinkedIn has increased from 10% in 2010 to 31% this 2012, while the proportion of ultra high net worth individuals jumped from 18% to 40% over the same period. However in the same study, Twitter was further behind, with just 7% of ultra high net worth individuals saying that they use the microblogging site, along with 9% of millionaires and 11% of mass affluents (Sass et al., 2013).

The mass affluents, millionaires and ultra high net worth individuals are online and using social media with numbers continuing to increase year over year. Another fact that is applicable to the luxury online community is consumption and experiences are associated with emotion (Chaudhuri, 2002). The marketing and advertising of luxury retail stores and hotels is an emotional experience with marketers attempting to steer consumers towards multi-sensitive and multi-sensory, intense and unforgettable experiences (Anido Freire, 2010b). However there are few studies on the luxury online distribution channels (Sanguanpiyan and Jasper, 2010).

The hedonic aspect of consumption encourages and enables the purchaser to have fun (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Babin et al., 1994) and is applicable to the luxury community. The consumer is in search of authenticity (Cova and Cova, 2002b), and new sensations and experiences (Boutaud 2007; Ladwein, 2002). This is where luxury hotel experiences where customers are always looking for the next new experience, provide a challenge for marketers.

### **1.6.3 Social Networking Platforms and Communities**

Noone, Mcguire, & Rohlfs (2011) suggest that there are many social networking platforms that facilitate the process of interaction and make the content available by continuous exchange, modification and generation. This is supported by Elefant (2011) who stated that social



networking enables the collaboration as well as the control of content because the user creates as well as controls the content. The popularity of social networking has increased the range of websites that have been developed to serve the purpose of socialising services. These include Facebook, YouTube, TripAdvisor, Instagram, Twitter and many others. Kasavana reported participation through social platforms is increasing as half of the adult population is reported to have activities online and are networking; today these numbers are estimated to continue to grow (Kasavana, 2008). This suggests the importance of these social networking channels for collecting useful and rich data and improving business opportunities and information gathering. These websites also illustrate that different techniques can be applied in order to retrieve information. An example of this is the usage of customised data scraping software that helps the organisations in understanding the behaviour of the consumers as the software can track the spending patterns based on the evaluation by the users according to satisfaction gained from the services or products. Financial and non-financial performance indicators can also be based on these patterns that lead to an interest from the business standpoint.

Marketing activities have been revolutionised by the social media with promotions from different aspects, advertisements and incredible popularity (Hanna et.al, 2011) along with the Internet utilisation patterns and the consumers' activities impact as noted by Ross et.al (2009).

As the social media plays a crucial role in the communities of brand, it is imperative that brands understand the communities online. Communities online have been studied by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), where the social media is the combination of application based on the Internet which permits the exchange and creation of content on Web 2.0. However social media is considered to be the combination of practices and technologies that permit individuals to share their opinions and knowledge. Thus the community and social media should be conceptualised together (Laroche et. al., 2012).

Branded communities based on the social media are the channels of community to build on the social media platform. There are key dissimilarities between platforms of the social media based brand communities and online brand communities. The well established branded communities of the Four Seasons, The Ritz Hotel, or the automobile brand Jeep emphasis the connectivity with the

customers using the networking sites like Twitter and Facebook that allow the information to flow freely (Laroche et al., 2012). The content is created with the cooperation of community members for the brand-based communities in social media through videos, arguments, pictures, and games (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

Virtual communities that are related to travel enable the tourist to exchange the experiences and opinions about the places they have been to and thus a common interest is shared among the users. This has been practised since the 1990's when many online communities came into existence. This resulted in reduction in the risks carried by the tourist from the unfamiliar and unchecked products (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Tourists are able to explore and seek for the required information and images in this first step of a decision making process for vacation. A study carried out by Ross et.al (2009) concluded that the surveys that were collected from college students on the use of social networking sites showed that information seeking is considered as the primary need by these users. Thus, the role of Web 2.0 is significant because individuals are able to develop relationships even when residing at different destinations. With the popularity of smart phones and improved technology, multiple social networking tools have been developed that support the usage of online social platforms. On these platforms, people can share photos, video, reviews and experiences at the hotels destinations and provide a great deal of conversation with other travellers as well as companies involved (airlines, hotels).

#### **1.6.4 Social Media Users Demographics & Link to Higher Incomes and Online Spending**

It has been found in previous work that middle-aged consumers with high levels of education are more likely to make online reservations (Hernández, Jiménez, & Martín, 2011). Previous studies have also found that compared to offline travellers, online browsers or purchasers have higher incomes, higher-status occupations, and more experience using the Internet (Weber & Roehl, 1999).

Consumers with higher education tend to spend more money and time online (Card, Chen, & Cole, 2003). Furthermore, Lieber and Syverson (2011) show that education is a predictive factor for Internet use, with advanced educational levels being associated with higher probabilities of going online. In terms of education, researchers have demonstrated a positive link between education and Internet shopping (Vrechopoulos, Siomkos, & Doukidis, 2001). Akhter (2012) argues that education makes it easier for people to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the Internet, thereby positively influencing online spending.

In previous work, income is also a significant variable in online spending (Lohse, Bellman, & Johnson, 2000) with higher income being associated with more online purchasing (Akhter, 2012). In addition, those people with high incomes perceive less risk in the adoption of new information technologies (Lu, Yu, Liu, & Yao, 2003).

Ladhari & Michaud (2015) conducted a study involving the trust issue of a hotel's website. Comments written by Facebook friends were seen to influence the user who had the intentions of booking a hotel. The study looked at the moderator role of Internet users' trust in those comments on these relations and found that amongst 800 university students, the influence of comments generated on Facebook highly impacted the users' decision-making process (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). This suggests that the trust in the brand is an important factor with hotel booking intentions and is in line with what our interview discussions divulged. The importance of trust and online spending is something we will be looking at in the discussion as we know the income and education of the users is above average for a sample.

The Pew Research Group (2017) conducted a national survey of 1,520 adults in North America between March 7-April 4, 2016, and found that Facebook continues to be the most popular social networking platform by a substantial margin (Pew Research Group, 2016). Nearly 8 in 10 *online* Americans (79%) now use Facebook, more than double the share that uses Twitter (24%), Pinterest (31%), Instagram (32%) or LinkedIn (29%). Also in this study a profile on age demographic shows that as discussed in our study, the more active users are in a younger age demographic. In the same study by Pew Research Group, it was reported that young adults continue to report using Facebook at high rates, but older adults are joining in increasing numbers. Some 62% of online adults ages 65 and older now use Facebook. In addition, women

continue to use Facebook at somewhat higher rates than men: 83% of female Internet users and 75% of male Internet users are Facebook adopters (Pew Research Group, 2016). In order to connect with audiences of all ages the hotel brand must find the best strategy to connect with the user online. The statistics provided for North America were used from Pew Research Group as the users contributing to FM are predominantly in North America; contests are popular and to take part, one must be a resident of the USA or Canada.

## 1.7 Web Technology & Outcomes for Hotel Co-creation Strategies

Organizations' interest in the engagement of consumers is increasing with recent technological developments. In this regard, Berthon et. al (2012) explored the role of networking web in the empowerment and creativity of consumers. Web 2.0 is the driving force behind these new opportunities of development and engagement. This concept has also evolved the use of web from traditional to a more innovative and involved manner. This is possible by changing the static content into one that is continuously updated by the groups and communities of users. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) also related the Web 2.0 development with the ability of users to create the user generated content that forms a collaborative and participative environment.

### 1.7.1 Web 2.0 and Social Media

Web 2.0 is defined by O'Reilly (2007) as the platform that acts as the network in spanning all connected devices so that the connected users have advantages from Web 2.0 applications. Users also provide their own data that is remixed by others using services which in turn creates the network effect through the participation architecture. This architecture goes beyond the Web 1.0 metaphor by delivering the rich user experiences (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Thus, the more users consume and own the network, the more value social network delivers to its users. Therefore, the user-generated content is critical for Web 2.0 as it allows the user more engagement and participation.

Berthon et. al (2012) suggest that with the evolution of Web 2.0 development, social media strengthens itself on the underlying technical foundations and principles of serving as the platform that allows the creation and sharing of user generated content. The most commonly used platforms in this regard are Facebook and Twitter as these have significant numbers of users registered and using the services at the same time. Besides involving a large consumer base, social media allows cost effective engagement for the customers, much more efficient and effective when compared to the traditional strategies in terms of customer base and cost savings. Zwass (2010) found that consumers remained engaged using these web services and this results in producing creativity as the customers are utilised by empowering them through co-creation. When such customer voice is used actively by the organisation, then it also enables the processes of product development that can be incorporated effectively. Thus, the co-creation through social media is seen as the essential resource external to the business for developing new products. This is also supported by von Hippel (2005) who noted that such processes increase the overall performance of an organisation as the demand for investment is less for innovation projects.

In Yannopoulou et al.'s (2013) study on user-generated brands and social media with AirBnb, the results detail the collapse of private spheres and authenticity, that were key elements associated with online brands and social media. These two factors of access, where individuals are opening their private homes to lodgers, and authenticity as a visual expression of 'talking' online, were shown to be important for the online user brand experience (Yannopoulou et al., 2013). Brands need to change their social media strategy in order to effectively communicate with users online. The changes needed in order to talk to the users create advantages for the brands, specifically hotel brands online.

### **1.7.2 Advantages for Hotels of Social Networking**

The advantages, particularly for the hospitality industry, of assessing effects of social networking are numerous as online networking is the most effortless and open source of data collection and generation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It is additionally engaging the members, which make it

successful in expanding engagement in unique ways. The information created from these sites can be used for observing and assessing the current situation, reputation and picture of the business. Social media and the social networks formed online are significant because they have changed the way brands communicate with consumers and consumers communicate with brands; thus it has created conversations that are contradictory to the traditional media in which content is delivered but without any participation of the users and consumers. According to von Hippel (2005), the information on social media applications are user generated content (UGC) and this content covers a wide range of media from blogging, social media, social networking, review sites, forums, to digital video and podcasting sites.

The resulting developments and outcomes for brands such as hotels have been related to gathering more information about the consumer (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), valuable creative content from consumers (Zwass, 2010), increased innovation (von Hippel, 2005), less sensitivity to price (Berthon et. al 2012), and improved competitive advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). For the purposes of this thesis, competitive advantage and innovation mainly as achievable outcomes for hotel brands will be examined. Therefore it is crucial to investigate the factors influencing social media success in order to understand how this affects the online brand strategies.

### **1.7.3 Models of Tourism Co-creation Marketing**

Although the co-creation of a brand has been recognised within GD Logics, Boyle (2007) discriminates between the consumer and company; this is incompatible with the SD Logics. Additionally Boyle argues that the development of new product is only a company driven process which brings forth questions with regard to the use of consumers as the operant resource. Boyle also emphasised that the organisation could not impact the formed groups in the consumption and purchase of product; however co-creation enables the organisation to inspire, and to create knowledge (Sawney et al. 2005) as well as for the consumer to form associations with the brand. He concluded that the product created by the organisation is not interlinked in companies as the

organisation must permit the consumer to participate in the process of creation that in turn, allows the organisation to increase the impact back to consumers.

Much of the research discussed in this thesis is related to the co-creation of the brand and the relationship experience introduced by Payne et al (2009). Payne's model places emphasis on the main processes which are related to the value of co-creation with the brand. These factors interplay within the model and can be identified as 1) customer, 1) supplier processes and 3) encounters. Every process performs an essential role in the creation of value and so the brand formation with the company and customer role has an equal importance. As discussed the form of interaction in the process of co-creation of the model of Payne et. al (2009) has suggested that the designing of co-creation experiences is far more applicable and tangible in the approach regarding the branding of co-creation (Payne et al., 2009). The model for co-creating the brand relationship experience was introduced by Payne et al. (2009) and for this thesis, Payne's model is closely followed as the process and flow offered by his dimensions are between the consumer and the company studied.

#### **1.7.4 On-line Tourism & Hospitality Brand Communities**

The web-based solution has grown rapidly as noted by advancements in previous academic work and consumers' practices. The web knowledge and the informational flow have merged into the creation of new types of social forums such as online communities and more precisely, the online brand communities (OBC) (Jang et al., 2008). Such new social forums have improved the group knowledge and thinking which has raised the value chain along with the internal processes of a firm's value foundations (Pongsakornrungrungsilp & Schroeder, 2011).

The concept of consumer consumption has led to the emergence of co-creation where consumers participate among different communities. Traditionally individuals meet face to face where they are required to participate in meetings in physical cities/locations. However, in the online world, people form relationships and virtually analyse each other based on experiences and emotions and

choose the people to meet physically by face (Rheingold, 2000; Pongsakornrunsilp & Schroeder, 2011).

Jang et al. (2008) described the online community as the group of engaged individuals who are predominantly interacting among each other in virtual space and so are creating content. Online brand communities resemble the general online community; the difference is that these brand communities build their brand around what is shared by the members. The online brand community channels typically are official web pages of companies and other blogs and social networking platforms like Twitter. The online brand communities have been classified into several forms by numerous researchers. These classifications could be grouped into two types as suggested by Jang et al. (2008), first on the basis of community “host” as the consumer initiated community, and, second, “other” as company initiated community.

From the process models reviewed and discussed, a process model was created from the website in study where the integration of company value propositions, and customer value dimensions were used to populate the social network of FM. In this model, discussion resulting in reciprocity and competitive advantage is achieved as a result of the company initiated intentions from the social networking website members. These end results are the requested dimensions from the website where further analysis of a case study dimension is needed to understand the relationship between the intended use of the website and resulting outcomes.

Accessibility is the major advantage of Web 2.0 and social networking in recent times has shown that information is readily available. This according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) is the major factor that can influence the brand awareness among potential customers. The direct communication facilitation allows the customers to provide direct feedback to the service providers. Thus, the hotel industry should focus on its social network strength and by doing so, the online market place becomes competition oriented and the industry grows as a whole.

Brand awareness in the hotel industry is critical as the content from both users and business owners plays an important role online (Hoyer et.al 2010). When hotel management incorporates co-creation in the content strategy, it becomes valuable and relevant by communicating a positive



sentiment. Thus, trust is developed and revenues are increased. Relevance of content strategy with co-creation is important as it promotes the vision of the organisation in terms of the view for its customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Thus, the managing of messages, feedback and data generation is part of co-creation. This includes multiple sources and platforms such as images, texts, guest blogs, social media posts and videos. Hanna et.al (2011) used content analysis to identify common causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among reviews on tripadvisor.com and discovered that few hotels are actively managing their reputation on the site. This called into question how seriously hotels are managing their brands online. Major barriers to Web 2.0 adoption seem to be related to internal resource constraints, organisational culture and mind-set, lack of a clear social media vision and strategy, and concerns about loss of control and potential negative brand impact of user generated content (Hamill et al. 2009).

Brand awareness from social networking is also higher as the reach and influence of social networking circle becomes wider (Starkov & Mechoso, 2008). This has increased the reliability of data obtained from consumer sources. Of importance, online platforms of social media are cost effective as well as a more engaged resource. Also, no additional hardware or software is required for the increase in interaction level increase. Thus, service providers in the hotel industry are entering the domain of social networking with an expected faster pace. According to Kasavana, Nusair, & Teodosic (2010), maximum customisation is possible through the platform and the interaction with customers is proactive. Thus, hotel management is able to provide responsive customer services.

### **1.7.5 Hotel Networking and Connecting with the Consumer Online**

The effect of online networking is noteworthy as the decisions that clients make in selecting the hotels and travel services rely on the online networks and websites that the purchaser sees. It is observed that online networking has turned into a key resource for visitors as 83% use online sources (Wilker, 2007). From these, 77% said that they decided the travel destination and hotel to stay on the basis of reviews of other travellers. Social networking has developed as an important and effective instrument in addition to correspondence and electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

(Wilker, 2007). Online networking additionally varies from platform to platform as hotels continue to update and stay on top of consumer trends. Consequently hotels are augmenting the utilisation of creative social networking stages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+) other than conventional advertising channels as indicated by Lanz, Fischhof, & Lee (2010).

Key findings in previous studies have linked online reviews with having a significant influence on the sales of consumer branded products (Jang et. al, 2008). This is a key point as communication online increases and customers and users are increasingly posting information. An insight from previous studies also shows that the influence of user reviews is particularly significant for experience goods such as travel as their quality is unknown before consumption. However there are a limited number of significant business case studies that focus on successful cases of online social media campaigns and how this influences the hotel's online presence.

According to Jang et.al (2008), the hotel industry is responsible for providing a much personalised experience to its guests and this makes the industry highly customer centric. Thus, by incorporating the tools of social networking in this industry, a quicker response to the users and a higher level of customer engagement can be achieved, as well as lower costs for marketing. The online communication medium is extremely useful in comparison to the traditional media in which communication is very slow and of one-direction business to consumer flow. The impact of social network on every industry is significant but the major one is seen in the hospitality sector, as services are experiential and intangible. This demonstrates that it is fundamental for the hotel business to use social networking to connect with its clients. The effect of the online networking stages (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+, and so on) needs to be evaluated by utilising social networking instruments so that hotel and resort organisations can react rapidly to developing client needs. The travel and leisure industry is often characterised by the need to communicate and market to high volumes of potential customers. This can draw a natural fit to the use of the Internet and social media as a suitable communication channel (Deloitte, 2015).

These online tools through social media platforms are a convenient way for customers to acquire a favourable image of a company's products, which in return may increase sales. Sites like Twitter and Facebook have also been used as a way to communicate feedback and complaints to the hotels, to facilitate a two-way communication between the customer and company. Analysing the effect of social networking on the hospitality industry is also useful as the customer base of this industry, as well as a large part of the workforce, use this platform for communication with each other and with the management of service providers. According to Deloitte & Touche (2015), maximum business can be derived for the hotels from the use of social networking as it results in value addition. The concept of social networking can be understood as the most effective way for communicating so that the communication emerges as the mode that enables the long-term relationship of business with the guests. Thus, it is said that the latest trends of social networking are beneficial for hotels as these tools have the highest significance. However, Walsh (2010) points out that managers face the challenge of not only keeping the customers engaged on these social networking sites but also successfully measuring the actual impact these networking efforts make on the organisational outcomes. This impacts on the role of senior managers who must measure the outcomes from social networking effectively as they are responsible for developing the interactive strategies focused on brand loyalty of existing customers as well as acquiring new customers.

Social networking keeps the users stimulated and involved which gives it an edge over traditional media. It is also the interactive nature of social networking that allows co-creation as the level of customer support increases. However, in cases of ineffective hotel services, the negative feedback can be promoted which can be a disaster for the brand.

The issue of credibility of social media content has been challenged over the years (Kaplan, 2012). However the common discussion around sites that generate user content is the compromise to be made on false and bogus reviews and these reviews should not completely influence the decision. Influence is commonly accepted as the effect that user generated content has on the traveller.

There has been a movement in general, where people's trust has shifted from news establishments to social networking. These are labelled, "loops of trust" where "associations" of visitors are like

speaking with family and friends online – social networking channels are changing the way people work together and are always modifying how businesses draw in and hold an unwavering base.

The techniques of modern branding where a commercial message is often now rejected by the consumer occurs because the consumer believes that a marketing message can be forced and untruthful. This is why co-creation and the studies within a marketing capacity are significant. This cultural engineering drives the identity system of the dominant branding paradigm, which has lost the ability to create the expected responses of the customers. Often this results in the lesser impact of traditional branding methods. As an example, mass email communication is often not effective as consumers are inundated with spam email; only relevant interesting content that is tailored or personalization to the individual's interests is effective.

The consumers are now active co-creators of the brands rather than being the passive recipients of the branded communication. Through the interactions of the brands, the consumers are capable of defining their own identities. In the creation of the brands or co-creation by the consumer, the company and the consumer both are the active participants and provide content online. The consumer needs are more satisfied and their expectations fulfilled both hedonistic and utilitarian as a result of the co-creation of the brands. The brands are not controlled exclusively by the company; therefore the co-creation can be regarded as a break from the dominant logic of branding. The impact of how the consumers are related to the brands has been increased by the emergence of the new technologies. The product and company information can be tapped by the help of the computer and Internet access holder. The advantages of giving information to the consumers are gone. Companies traditionally controlled their brands from inside alone; however now consumers are at the heart of the communication and content online.

Travellers are less and less likely to utilize traditional travel agents in booking as the industry numbers show a steady decline (Deloitte 2015) and instead, travellers utilize the increasing number of online booking aggregators. As an example booking.com, expedia.com are two of the biggest websites for online booking. With these sites comes reviews and utilization of tripadvisor.com's data feed of popular hotels and resorts as part of the booking process of flights, hotels, and rental cars. Deloitte reported on Travel Consumers 2015 that 59% of holidaymakers

compare prices online and 42% of consumers share holiday experiences on social platforms and review websites (Deloitte 2015).

Consumers access to information online through reviews and booking aggregators easy to use websites have increased consumer control over holiday bookings. The importance of online interfaces and use of website booking engines is an important part of any hospitality and tourism business.

Social media networks offer much more to the brand than being an inexpensive marketing tool; they also connect with consumers online where travellers are spending more and more time before, during and after a holiday. This two-way communication tool allows access to the consumer and yet offers the independence of reacting to service, products and experiences in a real-time setting. The hotel brands have the advantage of using social media as they can address the problems indicated by the consumers. This channel is an opportunity for businesses to build their brands in an effective manner (Carragher, Buchanan, & Puia, 2010). The importance of social media is only growing as society continues to connect through their mobile devices, ipads, and even iwatches. Thus, social media is an effective tool for communication and engaging with customers or potential customers online and needs to be investigated from a case study perspective in order to fully understand the consumer and brand interaction online.

Social media provides a new way for companies to communicate and build the relationship with customers (Nambisan & Baron, 2009) and jointly co-create value. Previous research of online communities demonstrated that the engagement of these communities produces a great deal of value for the brands (Schau, Muniz & Arnould, 2009). Thus companies are increasingly using social media as a marketing tool in order to foster and develop customer relationships. By exploring the effectiveness of the co-creation from a firm perspective (Christian, Mainelli & Pay, 2014), the social interaction provides an online experience for the customer along with an online marketing tool for the firm (Hajli et al., 2015). However there has not been a great deal of research to date in order to understand co-creation of value through online communities from a company perspective (Hajli et al., 2015).

Ladhari & Michaud (2015) conducted a study involving the trust issue of a hotel's website. Comments written by Facebook friends was seen to influence the user who had the intentions of booking a hotel. The study looked at the moderator role of Internet users' trust in those comments on these relations. The study found that amongst 800 university students, the influence of comments generated on Facebook highly impacted the users' decision-making process (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed and critically evaluated previously published material from a historical and current view as it related to research of value creation, exchange, and co-creation with a customer focus, driven by company initiated value propositions. The concept of experiential value and the luxury consumer was defined and explained, as the consumer involvement will affect the outcome of value co-creation. Brand communities and the power of online consumer groups, particularly within the tourism and hotel sector were showcased as a great deal of online content, sharing and feedback is populated due to the experiential nature of travel. SD Logic was debated as a framework for discussion within the hotel landscape; past examples and wide use within a hospitality setting provide a precedent. The addition of Holbrook and Woodside's value topology (2007) provided a consumer value perspective with a greater experiential compass to explore value within the hospitality setting online. The integration of Holbrook's topology into SD Logic 's limited experiential customer profile provides a more substantial framework for discussion within the value co-creation in the luxury hospitality setting.

The marketing literature demonstrates that resource integration is a fundamental process for co-creation, which takes place under certain conditions and goes beyond involvement and participation (Grönroos, 2008). Within the marketing co-creation literature, there is little empirical evidence that discusses participation by both the customer and the company. The research has built on the marketing literature that explored the gaps within SD Logic 's value axiom, and the unique needs of a brand managed, customer contributed, value co-creation

website ecosystems; Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) topology was explored to fill gaps and address online experiential customer values.

This results in the synchronisation of SD Logic and Holbrook's Value Topology to address 2 research questions that involve 3 separate sets of analysis in this single case study. The following section of methodology will address the research design and will further explore the research requirements.

## 2. Methodology

In the previous chapter the theoretical foundations were established for this research including the academic frameworks, justification for research and gaps in the literature. The current chapter on methodology seeks to fill the research gaps and answer the primary question RQ1: How does a company's marketing influence the online co-creation of a hotel brand? In addressing the primary question a second research question was developed in order to understand the relationship dimensions and the sources of value between the customers and the company. RQ2: What are the value dimensions between the firm and consumers within the FM website?

Through utilizing a single case study method with multiple methods, the primary purpose of this inquiry is to provide insight and gain a deeper understanding of the relationships involved in this hotel brand website. The researcher recognizes that a collection of several case studies would delve into a particular phenomenon, but for the purpose of this research a multiple case study is not used because no other hotel had a similar brand managed website.

The initial pre-research information gathered from experts in the field of hotel management helped shape the research topics and questions that were significant within the hospitality management field. The researcher sought to align a topic that would provide further analysis and fill gaps in the existing academic literature.

The aim of this research is to use a case study method to further understand the "how" and "why" questions that are posed in this study. Yin (1994) states that, in order to interpret the findings, a case study design must have five components: the research question(s), its propositions, its unit(s) of analysis, the determination of how the data is linked to the propositions, and to the criteria, in order to interpret the findings.



## 2.1 Philosophical Perspectives

Within case studies there are predominantly two approaches that come to the forefront of case research. The two researchers, Stake (1995) & Yin (2003), both use a constructivist approach which is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Searle, 1995). This perspective “recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but does not reject outright some notion of objectivity” (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 10). The approach allows for the researcher and participant to interact and enables participants to share their story – this is one of the advantages of a case study.

The social reality that is used in this case is a real-life example in a marketing study on a hotel brand. An existing framework is used to test theoretical explanations provided within the lens of SD Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2014, 2008, 2004) and value dimensions (Holbrook, 2007). There is neither a positive nor negative value for the hotel from this research. The theories and propositions utilized to test the data will be independent and intended to further understandings for the marketing academic literature. The three phases of qualitative studies will use triangulation to compare and better understand the relationship between the results. Within this case study the triangulation will be used to ensure the data is comprehensive and developed in terms of understanding the methods and consistencies.

In marketing, positivism is the dominant paradigm (Marsden & Littler, 1996). There are limitations of the positivist approach; historically it does not utilize the necessary methods to holistically understand the experience and to understand phenomenon (Karami, Rowley & Analoui, 2006).

In order to overcome the narrow approach in the positivist paradigm, a post-positivist paradigm that accepts that reality is imperfectly captured and understood, will be utilized (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A holistic approach explicitly integrates the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods creating the research nexus in order to create a system for the qualitative approach used in this study. This post-positive paradigm relies on mixed methods as a way of capturing as much reality as possible and verifying the theory used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). For this reason,

several forms of data collection exist, from in-depth interviews, press releases, corporate strategy documents, and website data.

## 2.2 Research Context: Hotel Brand Website

The website FM was initiated in 2015 when the hotel was attempting to grow and shape its social networking with its own online community platform. In 2010 the website was named Everyone's an Original (EAO) but changed names in 2015 to FM to stay connected in name to the brand as it is a brand initiated website. The website is a mix of customer-generated media and non-traditional Fairmont content that serves as a virtual gathering place for Fairmont guests, colleagues, and acts as an interactive environment where fans of the brand can post comments, photos and/or video from a memorable trip. The brand created the website to generate excitement by providing access to exclusive hotel and destination content. The website is a place to engage in dialog with site users about their Fairmont travel experiences to better understand the guests, and to deepen the understanding of what they wanted in a hotel brand.

As well as being a platform for brand and hotel storytelling, the FM site is set up to serve as a timely and comprehensive resource for travellers seeking information about the hotel and destination visuals. The website is designed to support rich media content including YouTube and high quality digital video, and vignettes from Fairmont hotels, ranging from tours of suites made famous by visiting VIP's to tips on how to fully explore the local area. Ensuring a sense of authenticity was also important to the brand; fans were encouraged to post their own short vignettes from their travels.

The highly competitive nature of hotels to gain customers' loyalty and share of stay has caused them, in particular, to stay abreast of the latest technological innovations and trends in order to effectively market to potential guests. Innovative in-room technologies such as iPads to control lighting and temperature, and twitter to communicate with guests for dinner reservations have shown hotels that the use and adaptation of technology is important.

The use of social network marketing allows the brand to connect with a wide audience and increase the marketing reach. There is no expectation that the viewer of social media content is a current customer; however, in order to contribute content the user must sign up for the

President's Club loyalty program, or sign in through Google +, Facebook or YouTube connect. The requirement to have a profile is to connect ownership and ensure comments and contributions can be traced to an owner, thus avoiding anonymous posts. Individuals have a greater obligation to contribute meaningful content rather than spamming or posting irrelevant content. (See Appendix 7.1.1: EveryonesAnOriginal.com - A virtual Gathering Place for Guests of the Luxury Hotel Brand)

The stories highlighted through FM are linked to the Fairmont brand, and in particular, story telling through online platforms where the hotel can benefit from the rich history of the brand and can engage customers online. This user-generated content provides a more in-depth story telling hub for the brand as platforms such as Twitter and Facebook do not provide enough space for the brand or guests to tell their stories.

Because of the hotel brand's extensive history, story telling is an important aspect of the photo and written content online. Many of the Fairmont's 61 hotels around the world are deemed historical icons; the hotel utilizes their unique stories in order to market and exhibit strength in the brand. Sample stories that are shared on the site consist of tales of Tony Bennett first singing, "I Left my Heart in San Francisco" in 1962 at the flagship Fairmont San Francisco or Marilyn Monroe's infamous midriff baring appearance at London's The Savoy in 1956.

FM is not a hotel review site, but a customer service and marketing tool where 99% of the posted content from members is positive. The categories of content on the website for the video and photos are grouped into Guest Stories, Destinations, Food & Drink, Spa & Wellness, Weddings, Arts & Culture, Fairmont Magazine and Fairmont Cocktails. To increase guest/fan content the hotel often announces photo contests which accumulate hundreds of entries submitted by contestants hoping to win a night's stay or weekend away at a Fairmont Hotel.

The Recipe Finder search category where users can type in the name of a recipe or keyword is popular, allowing nearly 200 Fairmont recipes complete with photos to be utilized in guests' homes. It is also beneficial for the hotel brand to showcase employee talents with guests or fans and give an outlet for employees to express themselves in their jobs.

The website contains hundreds of stories with a mix of guest and management users, all searchable by category, keyword, media type, property origin, and all allowing users to find content easily and quickly. The conversation aesthetics of the website were updated in 2013 providing a ‘Pinterest’ style of design that freshens up the appearance of the website. The back-end posting experience is simple for guests to navigate, with minimal levels of computer literacy required. This also allows the community to attract a demographic and audience that may not be present on other social networks. In keeping with the ease factor, users are not required to login in order to view content; they only need to create, provide or sign in through Facebook in order to post materials. To encourage more sharing and engagement across other social networks, every post on FM is equipped with Facebook Like and Google + buttons as well as Email, Rate and Comment capabilities.

From a marketing and service standpoint, the hotel can connect on a more personal level, giving fans and followers an opportunity to speak to the brand. They might share their interests and passions, inviting other followers to appreciate and engage. The hotel then maintains on-property relationships with guests long after they check out.

The website could be viewed as an alternative to a hotel blog which is generally only one-sided. This co-creation site utilizes a branded online community and allows fans and guests to interact with like-minded individuals with similar interests such as travel, luxury and story telling. This form of content co-creation site is unique online. In turn, the hotel benefits from a venue where unique user generated content (UGC) is generated, and can connect with brand advocates and build credible content that can be used in further marketing campaigns. All content requires the content creator to agree to terms and conditions so that the hotel can use the post or content in a marketing campaign. This was the source of a marketing campaign where the brand pulled content created from FM’s website and used it in print, online and billboard displays.

FM has served as a platform for brand story telling that shares history and knowledge about each property; when customers respond by sharing their memorable experiences, a powerful marketing tool results. (See Appendix 7.1.3: Overview of Fairmont’s Original Take on Social Media Sharing)

Special moments translated into a photo and post on FM by a parent are a marketer's dream. For example, the parent of a special needs child told the tale of an upgraded room and birthday cookies (Appendix 7.6.2: A Five Year Old Boy's Wish). The Fairmont has created a powerful tool in this website by harnessing postings that provide credibility showcasing positive stories to share with fans or potential guests. Motivations for the user to post may be contest prizes, free hotel nights, or wonderful experiences. Regardless of the motivation, individuals seem to post and continue to share experiences on FM.

The content of FM is frequently updated resulting in the daily growth of the UGC database. This is not a promotional site that offers insider deals or incentives other than bi-yearly contests. The site was originally launched in 2010 and to gain assistance in generating awareness, a contest was created called "Original Memories Photo Contest" (Appendix 7.1.1: Everyonesanoriginal.com) where entries in the thousands helped generate content to the site. In February 2014, a photo contest in partnership with Paramount Pictures was titled "Our Greatest Love Story Photo Contest" (Appendix 7.1.4: A Century's Worth of Love) to encourage fans to post romantic photos for the chance to win various Fairmont prize packs.

Within hotel marketing, a great deal of influence can rest on a yearly calendar of events and holidays: summer vacations, winter holidays, school breaks and Valentines are some examples of events that are marketed. FM is no exception, with a photo contest called "Greatest Love Story Photo Contest", the link being Fairmont hotels around the world where movie stars and celebrities have checked in over the years for romantic rendezvous. Charlie Chaplin's romantic interlude with Paulette Goddard took them to the Shanghai and Fairmont Peace Hotel while Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks "held hands everywhere they went" according to a letter home from one of the summer staff at The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. Elizabeth Taylor spent part of her first honeymoon at The Savoy with Nicky Hilton, while Liz and Richard Burton chose Boston's The Fairmont Copley Plaza for a second honeymoon. The recognizable names and locations of Fairmont are a deep part of the history with which guests can identify and the brand can utilize as a marketing tool. This is seen in corporate documents such as a press release promoting the FM photo contest entitled "Romance through the Ages – Fairmont launches Greatest Love Story Photo Contest" to win a "Trip to the London Movie Premiere of Titanic in 3D". (See Appendix 7.1.4)

There is a great deal of customer and brand interaction on the FM website and from a management perspective, advancements need to continue to reach the customer in meaningful ways. From an academic perspective, research on the relationships between the customer and brand from a marketing perspective is needed to advance frameworks and theory. This study focused on a company perspective and is examining the interaction and co-creation of value between the customer and the company. The understanding of value co-creation between the consumer and brand has been a research priority over the last number of years (Oyner, O. and Korelina A., 2016).

### **2.2.1 Pre-testing Tourism Management Study**

In 2010, the researcher conducted a pre-testing study in order to discover areas of concern and importance to hotel practitioners for further academic study. Research began by interviewing managers of luxury hotel brand hotels in Monaco and the UK to determine important issues and considerations in order to focus research in the luxury hotel sector. Through conversations and preliminary data gathering, it was determined that social networking was an area of importance for the strategy of the brands; however there was much confusion and concern as to how to manage the communication online. Areas of concern and need for further research were expressed in the areas of brand reputation online, negative word-of-mouth online, and brand strategy online. Of particular interest was a website that one of the brands had developed in 2009 called Fairmont Moments. This website was initially created for the sole purpose of telling the brand's story online and creating a communication tool where fans could contribute their own stories. These discussions provided the background and basis for this study and has proven, for the researcher, to be a beneficial connector and builder of relationships with the management of the selected case hotels.

### **2.2.2 Selection and Characteristics of Pre-study Interviewees**

The pre-testing study was conducted during the December, 2011 to January, 2012 period with six individuals who were employed by three hotels in Monaco. Monte-Carlo was selected as the

researcher was based there and had access to contacts who were suitable and willing to assist with the research. The respondents were required to have experience and deemed to be experts in the area of hotel management because they held titles with hotel organizations and had 5+ years within hotel work. Purposeful sampling was conducted in order to obtain a sample of information rich respondents to interview.

The six individuals interviewed in the pre-test group were all managers or directors of hotels in Monte-Carlo (Table I: Pre-test Sample Characteristics of Six Interviewees from Three Hotels). The hotels were of different sizes, one being an international luxury hotel brand that managed over 60 hotels worldwide, the second was a medium sized luxury boutique hotel and the third, a large luxury hotel. The six managers consisted of two from the international luxury hotel brand: a marketing manager and the general director of the hotel; another two from a large luxury hotel: a marketing manager and general manager; and two from the luxury boutique: the marketing manager and the general manager.

**Table I: Pre-Test Sample Characteristics of Six Interviewees from Three Hotels**

Name	Title	Years in Industry	Sex
Interview 1	General Manager, FRHI	20+	M
Interview 2	Marketing Director, FRHI	15+	M
Interview 3	Marketing Manager, SBM Group	15+	M
Interview 4	General Manager, SBM	20+ years	M
Interview 5	General Manager, Metropole Hotel	20+ years	M
Interview 6	Director of Marketing, Metropole Hotel	(2003-2015) 12 years	F

All individuals were experienced within the hospitality industry, which was determined from their years working in the industry (average number of years was more than 15). Five out of six participants were males within the age range of 40-50. The sample was not intended to be gender biased; however this was the nature of the snowball sampling and the result of individuals

employed within the hospitality industry in Monaco. The individuals were of French, Dutch and English backgrounds.

### **2.2.3 Pre-test Methodology for Interviews**

The participants were recruited through personal networks and using a snowball sampling technique where the interviewees were asked to suggest other potential interview candidates. An email was sent to the personal network of the potential interviewee, describing the study and asking for 30-45 minutes of the individual's time for an interview.

The small number of participants interviewed was deemed sufficient as a wealth of detailed data can be derived from a small number of individuals through the use of qualitative methods (Patton, 1991). From the interviews, there were little differences in the responses based on the fulfilment of the selection criteria and questions drafted. This allowed the researcher to determine the ability of interviewees to sufficiently discuss the phenomenon being investigated and to provide enough information that was required from the pre-test.

The individual in-depth interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. All participants were provided with an information sheet and all interviews were auto-recorded and transcribed. All respondents were offered the option of receiving a copy of the transcription for verification. Incentives were not provided to the participants in order to avoid bias. A thank you and promise of future communication on the progress of the study was offered.

### **2.2.4 Pre-test Themes from Managers Interviewed**

Throughout this pre-test, common themes were exhibited that were centred on future trends, staying up-to-date with technology, revenue allocation, customer relationships and the unknown social media future. This unknown future was an expected finding particularly with the age group sampled in the pre-test. The conversations were centered on what social media platforms would gain popularity amongst travellers and what platforms should be invested in with firm time and resources. There was also some hesitation on how the online and social media elements will be used in the future and how invested their own clients would be. One individual did not think social media was important for his own firm's clients because he did not see them booking



on a tablet or mobile or using Twitter. A theme echoed throughout was that the human touch provided by a phone call or face-to-face meetings within hospitality would always be of paramount importance.

The individuals expressed concern over resources, both financial and skills, being available to create best in class websites and a social media presence. Some of the concern was that the individuals' superiors or management teams did not believe in social media investing. This would affect their role as they were not in charge of budgets or spends on resources to handle the expanding roles. It was also discovered that some individuals were interested in learning, growing and changing with trends in social media while others were resistant and negative on social media. This dichotomy of opposite opinions could be representative of the demographic characteristics of these individuals. Some of the younger interviewees could personally be early adopters, using social media regularly on a personal or business level.

It was noted that one of the brands is heavily investing resources in a stand-alone social media platform. The brand and the 2 individuals interviewed were excited about the platform but were aware that it is risky to invest heavily with only one platform. The unknown future uptake of consumers is the risk as it is not known if the volume of customers will take to the website and find it worthy of the fans' or customers' time and energy. It was also noted that this brand heavily researches and makes efforts to stay ahead of the curve in online trends as well as investing in time and resources for employees. This website is an interesting area of study for the researcher; discussions ensued and the decision was made to focus specifically on this website for this study.

The themes and discussions regarding customer relationships assisted the researcher in noting a sense of value and service gained from online communication. It was noted that continued research in the direction of social media communication through an online platform would be of value to the studied brand.

### 2.3 Research Program Overview

With the pre-test study completed and analysed, the primary research began in 2015. In order to identify the dimensions of value co-creation and the relationships involved, multiple sources of

data were used. The questions were selected to frame the research in order to further understand the benefits from a company perspective. Another perspective which was suggested but not pursued, was that of a consumer perspective, where often researchers examine consumers' behaviors and choices in an artificial lab environment. The interest in this study was in real life situations and to further the progress of the company marketing framework and discussion concerning consumer experience online. The researcher has an interest and background in marketing and communication and thus sees a gap and need from both a practical and academic perspective to further this research.

The research methodology for the management interviews followed a semi-structured interview method in order to discuss questions and allow the interviewee to elaborate on their own thoughts (Yin, 1994). Table J summarizes the questions, gaps addressed, research methods and objectives of the research in discussing RQ1 & RQ2.

**Table J: Research Questions, Gaps, Studies, and Objectives**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Gaps Addressed</b>	<b>Research Method &amp; Analysis</b>	<b>Objectives of Research</b>
RQ1: How does a companies marketing influence the online co-creation of a hotel brand?	GAP 1: Limited empirical evidence from a hotel brand perspective of online marketing strategy for co-creation online.	Study 1: Qualitative (Nvivo & Quirkos Software)  1. Use of interviews semi-structured (n=15) to identify research themes.  2. Company internal documents: strategy documents, presentations from yearly marketing meetings, press releases.  3. Customer Interviews (n=50) identified through	To explore the marketing influence of the brand through the online strategy and co-creation of content online.

		snowball sampling. Researcher asked questions on online search behaviour, brand preference and web community use.	
RQ2: What are the value dimensions between the company and consumer on the FM website?	GAP 2: Lack of value dimension in SD Logic value foundational premises (FP 6,7,8).	Study 2: Qualitative (Nvivo & Netnography)  1. Analysis of website content of both consumer and brand postings (n=100)  2. Identify 25 postings for further analysis of content	To better understand the relationship between the brand and consumers/fans online on a website for co-creation.

### 2.3.1 Research Methodology for the Qualitative Research

The selected methodology for this research was a qualitative technique. Qualitative research methods are often used to build exploratory theory and when the focus of the research is on meanings and attitudes (Veal, 2006). Interviews were conducted with managers and directors who hold the expertise of the firm’s knowledge of marketing strategy of the co-creation website utilized for this study. The in-depth interviews were completed between 20-50 minutes; questions were asked that were developed around the axioms of SD Logic that are being explored in this study. The interviewees were asked various demographic questions that pertained to their expertise in their roles in the firm and their expertise of the firm level strategy. The rationale was that the longer a person is in the role or within the marketing department of a firm, the more expertise the individual possesses on the firm’s strategy.

### **2.3.2 Case Study Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to investigate, from a firm's perspective, the online creation and management through co-created website content that is managed by the brand. Marketing has changed significantly over the past ten years with the advent of online website technology, moving the brand into an area where online management communication and feedback loops need to be understood and addressed; otherwise the brand risks damage to the image and reputation. Further research is needed from an academic standpoint and requested from management practitioners of the brands, particularly in the area of marketing of tourism brands. Marketers are most often the individuals managing the brands online and controlling the communication with the outside sources. The management of websites as communication vehicles for the brand, enables businesses to make, check and keep up associations with the purchaser in a more advantageous, easy to understand way.

Some individuals are utilizing the online space to scrutinize organization's items and administrations, particularly on the off chance that they are connected with travel encounters. Thus the web has intensified the velocity and the geographic appropriation of any sort of data. Using social networking, individuals can influence a company's business with incorrect information and other fabricated news; however it can additionally turn into an organization's best accomplice as organizations can utilize social networking to screen and control unfriendly data appearing in those online discussions. Careful observation is a necessary procedure in order to avert negative crusades and audits. Organizations can likewise exploit these devices by being eagerly included in online discussions with the purpose of enhancing the impression of the business, as it permits the business to react straightforwardly to faultfinders, to repudiate data or to open a fair remark around a negative circumstance. By talking reality in an open media, the company can confide in an individuals' comments and reassure them that they are genuinely listening.

However in the setting of the website studied in this research, the consumer contributed data is mostly positive. The users are choosing to contribute content based on their positive experiences and memories.

### **2.3.3 Research Questions & Objectives**

In discussing and addressing the overall research questions, two objectives were examined. The main objective (RQ1) was to understand the online marketing of a hotel brand's own website and its relationship with customers. A second research question (RQ2) was created to better understand value from a consumer experience perspective. The objective in the second question was to identify the value experience dimensions in the co-creation process between the consumer/fan and the brand.

This dissertation seeks to extend Vargo & Lusch's (2004a) consumer value discussion by demonstrating that the experiential process among consumers online are important in the SD Logic discussion of value. The conceptual discussion began by demonstrating how and why SD Logic is an emerging dominant logic of marketing. The FP's were outlined as the main concept of SD Logic. As a requirement in this research, "service" was at the centre of the exchange process, which shifts the focus of marketing from the collection of productive resources to that of skill and knowledge. Previous marketing research and practices have focused mainly on the value in transaction (economic value); this shift is to value-in-use or service (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a) and the value co-creation process. However with new roles that companies are assuming in communication online with customers, value co-creation is demonstrated as a process showing how firms can help consumers fill personal goals through value propositions. Consumers are the best judge of what is of value and therefore firms can only provide to them value propositions. If firms are successful, the consumer will engage in the value co-creation process. This is the feedback loop used by the firm in order to evaluate marketing performance.

Two approaches can be taken to view value: either economic or experiential. Traditionally an economic approach is utilized extensively in marketing literature; however for this thesis an

experiential approach was undertaken. The experiential approach has gained significant attention and progressed marketing theories over the last decade of research. This approach defines value as an “interactive relativistic preference experience” (Holbrook, 2006 p. 212). It considers customer value as personal and comparative based on a consumption experience. This approach acknowledges that value can come from different individuals who use the same product or service, and accepts that the consumer is involved in the creation and determination of value found through the consumption experience.

Therefore, brand communities are among the consumer operant resources of SD Logic that companies need to understand in greater depth due to the power they hold. Online communities are a resource for information, socialization, and celebratory consumption context. Arnould et al (2006) explains that such groups and networks of relationships with others include “traditional demographic groupings (family, ethnic groups, social class) and emergent groupings (brand communities, consumer tribes and subcultures, friendship groups)” (Arnould et al, 2006 p. 93).

Previous consumer research on social connections or co-consuming groups seen from the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) demonstrates how and why groups are formed and also reveals the re-emergence of communities (Cova and Cova, 2002; Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). These brand communities are searching for social connections that have disappeared in modern societies. This term is called the “loss of community” (Muniz and O’Guin, 2001, p. 413). The Internet heavy modern world has created an isolation of individuals from traditional communities (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). This change has created the formation of these online communities; however the same need exists for social relationships.

#### **2.3.4 Justification for Individual In-depth Interviews**

For RQ1, individual interviews were used to collect data which allowed respondents’ perceptions, meaning, definitions of situations and constructs of reality (Punch, 2005). These in-depth interviews allowed for a qualitative method to gather experiences and subjective views of the marketing value surrounding the 4 pillars of SD Logic.

According to Yin (1994), theoretical sampling of single cases is straightforward, is usually revelatory, extremely exemplar, and gives an opportunity for unusual research access. A case study approach, using in-depth interviews, was selected as it satisfies all conditions. The collection of data was done on Skype as face-to-face interviews with participants at their respective locations in Toronto and Switzerland were not practical.

### **2.3.5 Sample and Units of Analysis and Characteristics of Interviewees**

Purposeful sampling was used in this research involving the selection of information-rich individuals to interview (Coyle, 1997). This allowed for a sample of rich data with meaningful contributions towards the research question (Mason, 2005). The use of the purposeful sample is common in marketing research (Chiu, Hsieh & Li, 2005) and a great deal of the sampling is purposeful and defined in accordance to the data collection (Coyle, 1997). In this case, 9 individuals who were experts in their firms' brand marketing of the co-creation website were interviewed. In addition, the online co-creation site had consumers and fans who were using the website to showcase their points of view.

In order to analyse the research questions, the unit of analysis is defined within this case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context.” The case is, “in effect, ...the unit of analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The analysis units are the hotel's marketing managers and the customers in the online community. The “how” and “why” aspects to these research questions are to focus and limit the analysis to a narrow scope which will determine what the research will and will not cover (Creswell, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the boundaries of time and place are restricted to 2013 to 2016 with a hotel brand's online community and hotel companies' fans who share photos and stories on a member protected log-on. In order for the researcher to build the case, the participants need to decide what motivates them to contribute content and the researcher must find a tool for explaining this phenomenon. For this we have established that Holbrook's (2008) value dimensions provide a framework

appropriate for online travel consumption through economic, hedonic, social and altruistic dimensions of value.

Also within this case, the researcher is restricting the understanding of the managements' roles, objectives and goals. The SD Logic framework is selected in order to explore and understand the scope, boundaries of value, innovation, service and resources. In addition, this framework has been used extensively in case studies within the hotel marketing setting.

In order to select suitable interviewees, initial identification focused on 4 criteria. First, the employee's company had to utilize a co-creation website that was brand managed and owned. Second, the ownership of the company had to be an international brand with inputs and co-creation from both brand and fan. Third, the company needed to be open and provide all information the researcher required. Fourth, the interviewees were required to be experts in their field; this was measured by years of work at the company and by their relationship to the website being studied. Fifth, interviewees were required to be from different levels (cross sections) in their field within the company. Half of the employees' roles were focused on the FM website, and the other half held greater responsibilities within the FRHI (Fairmont Raffles Hotels International).

## 2.4 Data Collection for RQ1 & RQ2: 4 Phases

In the pre-test study, the researcher gained an understanding of important issues for managers within the luxury hotel industry. Following this pre-test work, the data collection for the main study addressing RQ1 & RQ2 was focused in three primary areas. The first being interviews of nine managers either involved in various levels of the website FM or involved from a brand strategy level with the hotel group. These interviews utilized slightly different questions based on the individual's role. The second area involved review and analysis of corporate and strategy documents. The third area involved content online where 100 postings were collected from the FM website.

In order to gather background on the individuals' roles within the organization, the amount of time they have worked in their roles, and their age group and gender were collected from each interview (McGuire, 2001).



### **2.4.1 Case Study Research Design**

Qualitative exploration is the technique selected as this study focus is on further understanding the consumer experiences and brand communications. Kimes and Schruben (2002) concurs that in such a study, qualitative exploration would be an ideal tool. The information was gathered between June 5- September 25, 2015.

In order to conduct a multi method case study, it is important to implement a research approach based on multiple sources. This study was carried out between September 2014 and October 2016 and consisted of three data collection procedures. A qualitative study approach was chosen to ensure a more holistic method in order to investigate the phenomenon. These multiple interactions and complexity of various sources ensure the best coherence between the research object and the method of each phase.

The benefit of qualitative research is that it involves creating flexibility for the researcher to capture nuances to explain the phenomenon. In using this constructivist approach, the researcher can focus solely on the role of cultural, contextual, and psychosocial determinants of the idea and research in a social construction (Denzin and Lincon, 2012).

Figure E: Proposed Phases of Research – Internal and External Perspectives, diagrams the 4 phases of the research. The first phase was based on corporate document analysis. This is followed by in-depth semi structured interviews (Mariampolsky, 2001) conducted with management. The interviews lasted about 30-45 minutes and were conducted on Skype as the interviewees were in Toronto and Geneva. The interview guide was semi-structured and reoriented on the basis of new insights that emerged out of the conversations.

The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. A comparative analysis process was used to identify themes and patterns in the interviews. The interviews were coded into first and second order codes following the Gioia Methodology of qualitative interview coding (Gioia, Corley, Hamilton, 2013).

The third phase of the research involved an online netnography study of the brand community content. Netnography adapts the traditional in person participant observation technique so that the researcher can study the interaction and experiences through digital communication (Kozinets, 1999). This stage of analysis highlights the linguistic characteristics of the message, title, photos and interpretation by the process of meaning making used by consumers who are taking part in posting within this community. Previously, more traditional models were studied and the analysis was carried out according to both digital media semiotics analysis (Jenkins, 2008). The semiotic analysis of the digital media model allows for organization of the online community in terms of images, symbols, and conversational exchange in order to understand the rhetoric of online postings.

However for this study, netnography is used and is currently recognized by marketers with increased importance because of increased use of the Internet and because consumers often partake in discussions whose goals include attempts to inform and influence fellow consumers about products and brands (Kozinets 1999, Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The online communities also open up new opportunities for market-oriented consumer interaction and opportunities for marketing researchers to study the tastes, desires and other needs of consumers interacting in online communities. Almquist and Roberts (2000, p. 18) found that the major factor influencing positive brand equity for one brand over another is consumer advocacy.

Focus groups are often used for marketing research methods; however compared to focus groups and personal interviews, netnography is far less obtrusive and is conducted using observations of consumers. Netnography also can provide information in a manner that is less costly and more timely than focus groups and personal interviews and provide a window into naturally occurring behaviours, such as a communal word-of-mouth discussion.

The final phase consists of consumer storytelling based on 50 customer narrative interviews (Pace, 2008). These interviews are based on customers that have used the Fairmont Hotel more than once and are aware of the Fairmont Moments website either to post or to view content. These customers are deemed low to moderate users and are moderate to highly aware of the brand. Online community participation was low overall for this group as community participation is often aimed at contests as motivating factors for participation. This study focuses

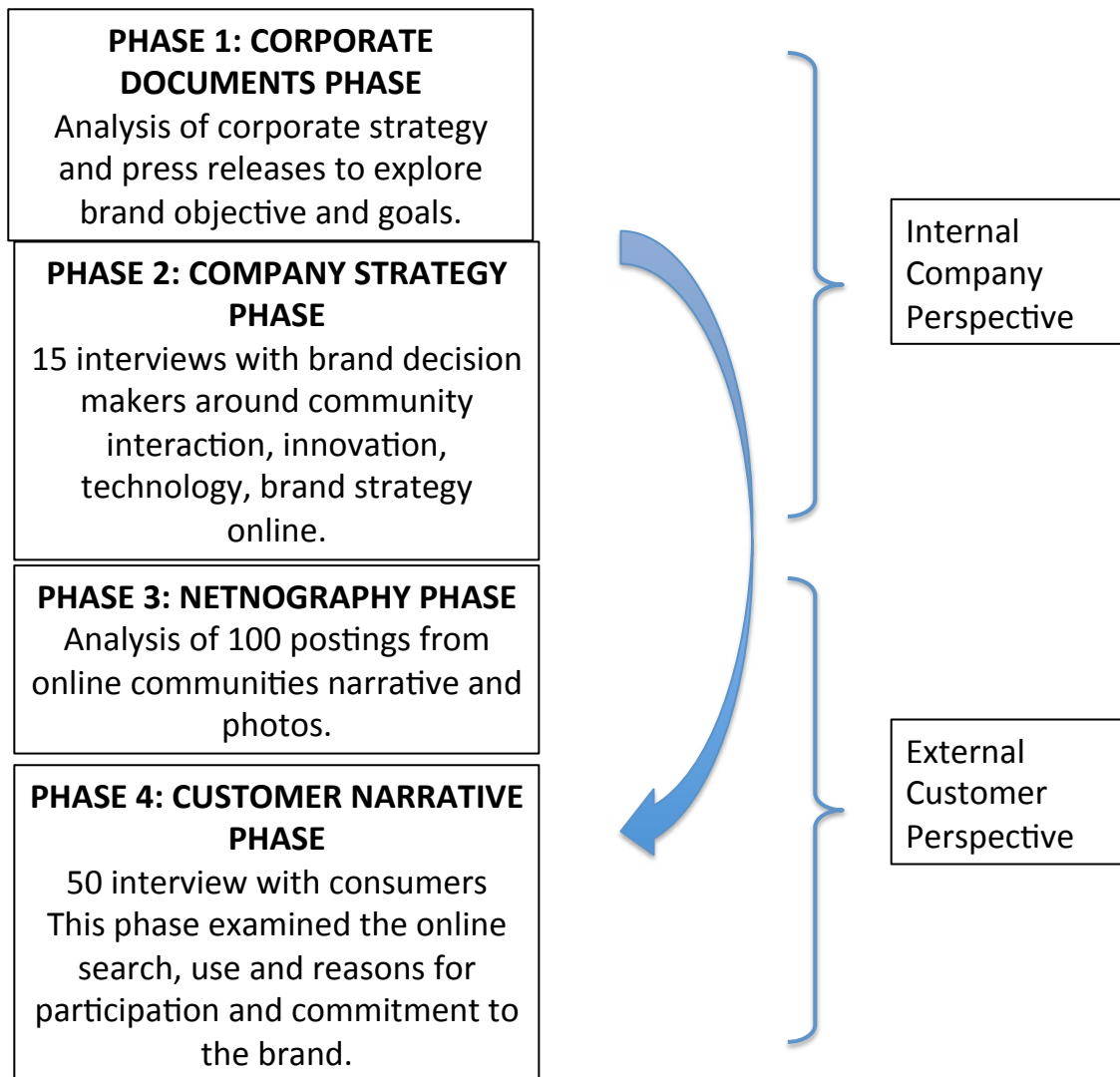
on the external value co-creation perspective and is aligned with the target audience for the brand. Age demographics are between 26 and 75 with a focus on the 35-55 age range. Educational levels are high and income is in the medium to high range with the majority falling in \$75,000 CAD+ level. Further information on demographics is provided in Table Q: Customer Sample Interviews. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, analysed and subjected to an interpreted content analysis (Smith, 2000), by identification of themes and emergent ideas. The analysis is searching specifically for overlying commonalities and results are representative in the customer narrative.

In summary, as diagrammed in Figure E, the research is divided into two phases: internal (company) and external (customer) – using 4 independent phases which provide both internal and external perspectives using customer and company resources. The 4 phases, referred to as either an internal company perspective or an external company perspective, illustrate a balanced approach with two phases on each side. These 4 phases are individual studies that could be used on their own or can be used in this grouping in order to show a holistic representation of internal workings of the Fairmont's marketing as well as customers' online and offline opinions. A very similar structure of phases was used in Graffigna and Gambetti's 2015 study into a failed online brand community (Graffigna and Gambetti, 2015). Their study investigated value co-creation between the "inside" and the "outside" of a company and its brand community. The study followed a qualitative multi-method design based on three phases of research that align with management motivations and strategy, semiotic website analysis and narrative customer research phases. The results reveal how some key misalignments are rooted in the processes among brand decision-makers and how they resonate and communicate the community identity. The results reflect a missed opportunity with the consumer experience of the community, to the detriment of its value co-creation potential.

This thesis utilizes a similar framework to that of Graffigna and Gambetti's (2015) but adds on a corporate document analysis phase and gathers more management interviews with 15 interviews rather than Gambetti and Graffigna's 3 management interviews. As well, in this work the research conducts 50 customer interviews, an increase over the 15 customer interviews in Gambetti and Graffigna's study. The increased number of interviews and data gathered is done

in order to strengthen the validity of the qualitative research (See figure E: Proposed Phases of Research: Internal and External Perspectives).

**Figure E: Proposed Phases of Research – Internal & External Perspectives**



## 2.4.2 Qualitative Approach for this Case Study

The qualitative methodology for this examination is phenomenological, which might be characterized as a route “to recognize phenomena through how they are seen by the performing

artists in a circumstance” (Kimes and Schruben, 2002, p, 142). Phenomenology is concerned with the investigation of experience from the point of view of the individual, and is situated in a standard of individual learning and subjectivity; it accentuates the significance of individual viewpoints and understanding. Phenomenology is important for the comprehension of subjective experience; this is demonstrated by picking up bits of knowledge into individuals' inspirations and activities. In this study it is used in order to get to know inside and outside of the online brand and consumer interactions.

McGuire (2001) believes that in qualitative research, there is much more noteworthy enthusiasm toward the interviewee's perspective as it gives knowledge into what the meeting sees as pertinent and critical. There is attention on more noteworthy all-inclusive statements in the plan of beginning exploration thoughts and on the interviewees' own viewpoints. This study utilizes a phenomenological qualitative methodology.

### **2.4.3 Case Study Methodology**

Qualitative case study methodology allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations through various phenomenon (Yin, 2003). There are two key approaches that guide case study methodology, the first from Robert Stake (1995) and the second from Robert Yin (2003).

Generalisations from cases are not statistical; they are analytical and based on reasoning. As a result it is possible to more exactly define the domain within which the theory is valid. The testing of the theory is comprised of the emulation of experimental method in a naturalistic setting. From theory and the facts of a case, generalisations are drawn concerning the domain of the theory. Yin (2003) developed this model in which generalisations are drawn from a case; his model is ideally suited to this study.

This thesis reviews a specifically selected hotel in an attempt to study a real-life example. Case studies are often used to investigate and answer specific research questions for either individuals, groups or classes and they seek a range of different levels of evidence (Gillham, 2000). The

decision to use the case study research method is a strategic decision that complements the size and scope of the research and provides numerous advantages.

First, it allows for several methods to be used depending on the circumstances and the special requirements of different situations (Descombe, 2000). Case studies are generally strong precisely where statistical methods are weak. Case studies explore and examine casual mechanisms in individual cases. Additionally, they allow the researcher to examine several variables, which may provide entirely different results compared to earlier studies. Another strength is the ability to accommodate complex casual relations and paths. They provide generalizations that are narrower but more confining (Bennett, 2004). Case studies can be chosen due to their ability to provide more in-depth information. The aim of this study is to suggest useful strategies when managing strategy marketing, focusing especially on online guest reviews. It shows paths and provides a contingent generalization.

A comparative study would help to generalize and draw more concrete conclusions; however, because of the originality in volume of postings, variety in content (photos, videos) there was a lack of comparative websites. This is why only a single case study was used. In order to find rich data within the case, online sources through the FM website with company and consumer content, interviews as well as analysis of corporate documents and press releases were used.

When a deviant case leads to the specification of a new theory, the researcher may be able to generalize how the newly identified mechanism may play out in different contexts (Bennett 2005). To be able to generalize the result of a case study, it is important to consider if it is representative and if the results are unique (Descombe, 2000).

Triangulation of data provides an important way of accounting for robust and comprehensive data rather than verification or validation. In this research, the data collection methods and the data sources were triangulated along with theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Stake (1995) believe that if the findings are generalised, it is done by purposefully selecting those which are information-rich, critical, revelatory, unique, or extreme. If a case is purposefully selected, then there is an interest in generalising the findings.

A limitation of case studies is that the research focuses on certain specific aspects. The

requirement for structure and focus applies equally to individual cases since they may later be joined by additional ones (George & Bennett, 2005). Another limitation is that case studies create propensity on the researcher to devote less attention to specific contexts and instead focus more on how cases can be set against each other (Bryman, 2008). The researcher was aware of these limitations and made every effort to mitigate these issues.

#### **2.4.4 Semi-Structured Management Interviews**

Interviews can provide in depth and detailed information while the researcher provides valuable insights and can maintain an element of flexibility (Descombe, 2000). A common qualitative approach to collecting data is unstructured interviews where the researcher controls as little as possible, which provides opportunities for individuals to formulate their responses and comments (Bryman, 1997). For this study, where in depth information is required as well as receiving access to various perspectives of the respondents, the qualitative method is ideal as it provides this type of information and also allows the respondents to be flexible and decide what is important for them to emphasize.

In this research, semi-structured interviews allow the respondents to add their own perceptions. As a starting point, semi-structured questions were asked as it can be difficult to use open questions when the researcher is not able to interact and follow up with immediate questions. Thereafter unstructured questions were used when issues arose during the interviews.

Skype interviews were selected primarily based on the cost; face-to-face interviews involving flights to Canada and Switzerland were not feasible because of expense and time. Schedules of the Toronto executives were analysed to ascertain if a one-week trip would suffice to conduct the interviews; however it was not possible to arrange all interviewees in one location within a week. Furthermore, the researcher could interview several respondents, record the interviews and take notes during the Skype interviews. Ryan (2004) has supported this type of interview as the researcher has time to reflect on the answers and keep continuous contact when questions arise. Skype interviews and the ease of phone and video technology offers the ability of creating trust and rapport similar to conducting a face-to-face.

In the second phase of Study 1, semi-structured customer interviews were also employed via phone conversations which were used to connect with customers in North America and Europe. This arrangement accommodated the busy schedules of customers in order to connect with them in their place of convenience.

### **2.4.5 Netnography: The Content Analysis of Online Data – Third Phase of Study**

Netnography is defined as the study of communication patterns and content between social groups on the Internet. These social groups are often referred to as “virtual communities” (Rheingold 1993) and have become more predominant. As Kozinets (1999) pointed out, “These social groups have a ‘real’ existence for their participants, and thus have consequential effects on many aspects of behaviour, including consumer behaviour” (p. 366) (See also Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001).

Netnography has two aspects of analysis. First, analysis can be computational and computer assisted. Digital netnography uses all manner of computerised elements to mine, extract, pre-code, classify and visualize data in the quest for culturally flavoured informed big data insights. Second, the interpretation can be personal, introspective and focused on subjective positions. As an example, in 2012 a doctoral thesis explored the social dimensions of Second Life where a new social dimension was recognized in this virtual world that replicates social beings in more traditional venues (Krotoski, 2009).

Netnography data collection was used in RQ2 for the online analysis of content from a social position on FM. This method of data collection has been used in similar studies where online content is collected to study fans’ and individuals’ comments online. An example of such is when Liverpool FC collected content from its football fans (Pongsakornrunsilp and Schroeder, 2011).

This study has collected textual data, which sheds light on the nature of the value creation



process. These texts provide understanding of the cultural meanings of social interactions through a hermeneutical framework (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995). However, this form of data demands interpretative skills from researchers (Kozinets, 2010b) who cannot extend their understanding beyond these texts as research context or problems may be complex and difficult to understand. Researchers cannot access additional data from informants; they must only report on data provided by the interview method (Askegaard, Gertsen and Langer, 2002).

While it is inherently an open-ended form of inquiry, ethnographers choose from related field procedures and often confront similar methodological issues. Common ethnographic procedures that help shape researchers' participant observation include: making cultural entree, gathering and analyzing data, ensuring trustworthy interpretation, conducting ethical research, and providing opportunities for culture member feedback. Thorough accounts of these procedures exist for ethnographies conducted in face-to-face situations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, networked computing is predominantly used for social exchange between consumers that changes the particulars of each of these research procedures; whereas netnography provides a window into the conversation of consumers.

There are 2 initial steps for conducting a netnography, first, the researcher must have specific marketing research questions and then identify particular appropriate online forums. Second, the researcher must learn as much as possible about the forums, the groups, and the individuals in order to understand this community.

Distinct from traditional ethnographies, netnography can identify relevant communities online search engines then can provide invaluable sources of information. Structurally, there are at least 5 different types of online communities, which can be distinguished by the conduct market-oriented netnography (see Kozinets 1999 for more detail). This case is looking to those who are organized around particular products, services or lifestyles, as each of these communities may have important uses and implications for marketing researchers interested in particular consumer topics (Sony Playstation, beer, travel to Europe, skiing, hotel brand).

The data collection from online communities suggest at least 2 important elements. First, the data that the researcher directly copies from the computer-mediated communications of online

community members, and second, the data that the researcher inscribes regarding his/her observations of the community, its members, interactions and meanings.

Netnography has an advantage over traditional ethnographers in that it can automatically transcribe the text or material for data collection. With the addition of lower search costs than face-to-face ethnography (particularly in purely observational forms of netnography), data is often plentiful and easy to obtain.

For tracking the marketing related behaviours of online communities, netnography is and can be used as a stand-alone method (Kozinets, 1999). It is a way in which to understand the discourse and interactions of people engaging in computer-mediated communication about market-oriented topics. During the course of netnographic data collection and analysis, the market researcher must follow conventional procedures so that the research is reasonable or trustworthy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Netnography is based on the observation of textual discourse which is very different from the balancing of discourse and observed behavior that occurs during in-person ethnography (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994) as these online informants or content creators may be presumed to be presenting a more carefully cultivated and controlled self-image.

## 2.5 Selections of Participants in the Study 1 & 2: 4 Phases

Within Study 1, the interviewees were selected based on their specialist employment skills and were recognized within the Fairmont hotel to be the most competent individuals for the discussion on the FM website and marketing strategy. These managers were selected by the hotel brand's marketing director who advised on the best candidates to be interviewed based on their role and expertise of the FM community website. Table K details the interviewees from FRHI selected and provides information on position, number of years in the role and the number of years with the brand.

Within Study 2, the netnography phase involved selecting 100 participants at random on the website. From the 100 selected, 25 were chosen to be examined in more detail with the NVivo

software. The selection was chosen at random on the FM website. The researcher was conscious to randomly choose participants who had posted at different time periods over several years on the FM website.

**Table K: Interviewee Fairmont (FRHI) Candidates Selected**

Interview Number	Sex	Age	Position	Number of Years Position Held	Number of Years with the Brand
Interview 1	F	30-40	Director of Social Media & Community, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	4	6
Interview 2	F	20-30	Manager of Brand Marketing, FRHI Hotels and Resorts	3.7	7
Interview 3	F	20-30	Manager of Social Media & Communication, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1.5	1.5
Interview 4	M	20-30	Manager of Electronic Customer Relationships Management, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	3	6
Interview 5	M	30-40	Director of Digital Marketing for Europe, Russia & Turkey, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	6	6
Interview 6	M	20-30	Manager Digital Marketing, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1	6
Interview 7	F	30-40	Executive Director of Analytics Marketing and Consumer Insights, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1	3.5
Interview 8	M	30-40	Director of Public Relations, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	3	15
Interview 9	M	40-50	Senior Vice President of Marketing, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1	13

Interview 10	F	30-40	Director, Brand Experience, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	3	21
Interview 11	F	50-60	Director of Partners Marketing, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	10	10
Interview 12	M	30-40	Director of Integrative Marketing, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1	8
Interview 13	F	30-40	Manager, PR & Partnerships, Marketing & Sales, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	1.5	1.5
Interview 14	M	30-40	Director of Product Innovation, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	2	2
Interview 15	F	40-50	Director of Loyalty of Marketing, FRHI Hotels & Resorts	2.5	2.5

In Study 1, the third phase which involved customer interviews, snowball sampling was used. Previous work has identified that snowball sampling can be effectively applied as a method to reach a target population and can be viewed as a response to overcoming the problems associated with sampling concealed populations. In addition, if the aim of a study is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive, then snowball sampling offers practical advantages (Hendricks, Blanken and Adriaans, 1992). Most frequently it is used to conduct qualitative research, primarily through interviews; this study follows this research design.

The interviewees are asked to begin with information concerning their age range, gender, and educational level. This information is recorded and used later in the discussion of demographics (See table L).

**Table L: Customer Interviews – Education, Gender and Age**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
1	Masters	F	20-30
2	University	M	40-50
3	High School	F	20-30
4	Masters	F	30-40
5	University	M	30-40
6	Professional	F	30-40
7	University	M	50+
8	University	F	50+
9	University	F	30-40
10	University	F	50+
11	Masters	M	50+
12	High School	F	50+
13	High School	M	50+
14	University	M	30-40
15	University	F	40-50
16	University	F	30-40
17	Masters	F	40-50
18	High School	M	40-50
19	University	F	50+
20	University	F	40-50
21	Masters	M	50+
22	Masters	F	30-40
23	Professional	M	40-50
24	Professional	F	30-40
25	Professional	M	30-40
26	Masters	M	40-50
27	University	F	20-30
28	University	F	30-40
29	University	F	40-50
30	High School	F	50+
31	University	M	50+
32	Professional	F	20-30
33	University	F	20-30
34	Masters	F	50+
35	High School	M	50+
36	University	F	20-30
37	High School	F	20-30
38	University	F	20-30
39	Masters	F	20-30
40	University	F	20-30
41	Masters	F	20-30
42	Masters	F	20-30
43	University	M	20-30
44	Masters	M	30-40
45	University	M	30-40
46	University	M	30-40
47	University	M	40-50
48	University	M	40-50
49	University	F	40-50
50	University	F	40-50

Snowball sampling seeks to take advantage of the social networks of identified respondents to provide a researcher with an ever-expanding set of potential contacts. This sampling technique

can also be used to examine changes over time as well as produce in-debt results relatively quickly.

This “link” that exists between the initial sample and others in the same target population, allows a series of referrals to be made within a circle of acquaintances (Berg, 1988). The Fairmont brand was open to providing a small sample of users; however the need for 50 guests for interviews required the researcher to expand the search and ask those interviewed for recommendations of other guests they may know. Typically this method of sampling asks one subject to give the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on (Vogt, 1999).

Methodologies such as snowball techniques can be used to work upwards and locate those on the ground who are needed to fill in the gaps in our knowledge on a variety of social contexts. For this reason snowball sampling can be considered as an alternative or as a complementary strategy for attaining more comprehensive data on a particular research question. While many have considered snowball strategies primarily as an aid to accessing an off-beat population, some studies have used them to engage with the “hard to reach” among urban elites. Saunders’ (2007) study of urban politics is an example where a “reputational” method was used. Respondents were asked to recommend those who held power in the local arena. This led to a series of contacts and the establishment of a subjective indication of the relative local power bases. This suggests that snowball sampling has a wider applicability in sociological research than has previously been realised.

### **2.5.1 Netnography Community Selection: Fairmont Online**

#### **Community – “Fairmont Moments”**

The FM community began as a space where guests could post photos of Fairmont “moments” through photo contests after a stay at the hotel. Consumers also used the opportunity to thank hotel staff by name or department post-stay. Over the years the look and functionality of these posts has evolved with the technology and current Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Google + connect feeds making posting easy and quick on multiple platforms. Postings are 99% positive as

the individuals engaging are often showcasing a moment at a Fairmont property, proud to post hastags and tags of friends in photos or videos. The brand community is mainly short-term consumer participation where individuals are entering photo contents on the community; however the brand must continue to update the technology and the website “look” to stay relevant, interesting and easy for consumer use. It is important for the brand to engage with consumers online in a less corporate web atmosphere and offer an online “experience” especially as a younger consumer is spending more and more time online (Heine & Berghaus, 2014). This online community has been in operation since 2010 and in 2016 changed the website name from “Everyone’s An Original” to “Fairmont Moments”.

## **2.5.2 Interviewing Procedure for Management Interviews**

The respondents were experts at the FRHI group and selected because of their expertise, past and present, with the website in study. In order to gain a holistic and detailed understanding for this study, it was important that all of the candidates had direct experience with the FM website. All participants had responsibilities in tactical or strategy level marketing in their current role or in previous roles.

The interviews were conducted with an interview question guide based on the role held within FRHI. There were two employee designations in our study. The first group of 7 individuals interviewed held positions that involved closely managing the day-to-day operations of the FM website. The second group of 8 individuals were involved in the FM website and the overall marketing strategy at the Fairmont. Both groups have direct involvement in the FM website being studied but the second group also had greater insight into the development of strategy and understanding of company messaging.

The interviews commenced with limited talk to ease into the discussion and create a feeling of open communication. Questions such as, “How are you today” and “What is the weather like in Toronto?” were used to establish rapport. An opening question was used to set the premise and establish rapport with the respondent (Fotana & Frey, 2009). A typical question to open with

was: “Shall I start and give you some background to this study?” This was followed by throwaway questions used to collect information about demographic age and gender. Direct age questions were not used; interviewees were asked to select an age bracket. An example of another throwaway questions was: “How long have you worked at the Fairmont?” This was used to establish the experience level, followed by a probing question such as “And how many years have you been working in your current role of \_\_\_\_?”, to help draw a more complete story (Berg, 2004). These questions helped the interviewer place the interviewee as the expert in his/her area of work within the organization. Further questions were followed involving the various areas of SD Logic to structure a series of probing questions that were essential in gathering and requesting more information from the individuals (Berg, 2004).

Two interview guides are detailed in Appendices A.10 & A.11. Table M discusses the questions with the FP’s to guide the creation of the question development. The FP’s which guide the SD Logic framework are further detailed with words associated and axioms based, digging into the roots of SD Logic foundations.

**Table M: Interview Guide using SD Logic Perspective (hospitality) in the creation of Interview Questions (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Petrick & Li, 2008)**

Introduction by the interviewer and explanation about the study. Pleasantries and demographic questions are asked regarding employee title, length of time at company, in position, age bracket.
FP1: Service is the fundamental basis of exchange. In SD Logic, service is the exchange through use of operant resources or the employee’s knowledge and skill.
<i>Interview Question (1) Please explain how the employee’s knowledge and expertise are incorporated at Fairmont/ FRHI?</i>
FP2: Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange. Service is the fundamental basis of exchange between employee and guest. Within the tourism process there are a number of



different institutions such as accommodation, restaurants, entertainment, activities, which can mask the fundamental exchange of service in tourism.

***Interview Question (2) Does Fairmont/ FRHI work in collaboration internally to harness best practices among its staff? Please give examples.***

FP3: Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provisions. SD Logic states that goods generate value through the service they provide (value-in-use).

***Interview Question (3) Are IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy? Please give examples***

FP4: Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage. Operant resources are the intangible resources that include knowledge, skills, know-how, experiences. A direct relationship in the research from Li & Petrick (2008) found that, “It has been recognized that knowledge is a source of competitive advantage in the tourism industry” (p. 6).

***Interview Question (4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners such as Reebok and BMW Bikes offer a competitive advantage?***

FP5: All economies are service economies. The product and service are inseparable in hotels.

***Interview Question (5) How does Fairmont/FRHI gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?***

FP6: The customer is always the co-creator of value

***Interview Question: (6) How does FRHI enhance the customer experience?***

FP7: The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions. (The value proposition increases competitive advantage specially when considering that value is determined by the beneficiary within a context (value-in-context)).
<b><i>Interview Question: (7) Why is engaging with customers and fans online an important marketing tool for FRHI? Please can you give me some examples?</i></b>
FP8: A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational. SD Logic says that the value of a service is determined by customers and created jointly with them. This service-centered view must be customer oriented and relational (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Within tourism, a service marketing approach is growing in importance along with having a customer focus strategy.
<b><i>Interview Question: (8) How does FRHI / Fairmont provide value to the customer?</i></b>
FP9: Expertise, control, physical capital, risk taking, psychic benefits, and economic benefits influence customers' motivation, desire and amount of participation (FP6, FP9)
<b><i>Interview Question: (9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?</i></b>

The interviews focused on the 4 areas of SD Logic and the value that these areas provide to the company. The principal question was followed by complementary questions and if needed, a clarification question. The complementary questions were grouped by the value proposition they represented. As an example, the value propositions 7 and 9 were grouped together because both focus on co-creation and engagement. This resulted in the question, “How does Fairmont Moments help the Fairmont engage and provide value to the consumer/fan?” followed by, “Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?”

### **2.5.3 SD Logic Value Propositions to Interview Questions**

In current SD Logic studies, empirical research methods focus on Vargo and Lusch's (2008) 9 FP's. The form of data generated in previous research is qualitative which provides a resource and sets precedence for this study. However within the study of value in tourism using SD Logic, there were only a few studies found in which qualitative research data was gathered (Li & Petrick, 2008; Hayslip et al., 2013). Over half of the literature reviewed for the data gathering section of this thesis used past examples of research on either destinations or hotels. This study used the FP's to create research questions that followed the areas of innovation, value co-creation and engagement, competitive advantage and knowledge sharing and employee knowledge and skill. However, many of the previous studies used the FP's as statements where interviewees are asked to react to and comment on the statements. Hayslip et al (2013) used the FP's to generate research questions and that study's example is followed extensively by this thesis. Table N: FP's 6, 7, 8 Interpretation (Vargo &Lusch, 2008), outlines the FP's which are the value driving propositions.

**Table N: Foundational Premise of Value (FP 6, 7 & 8) Interpretation (Vargo & Lusch, 2008)**

FP6	The customer is always a co-creator of value.	Implies value creation is interactional.
FP7	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions.	Enterprises can offer their applied resources for value creation and collaboratively (interactively) create value following acceptance of value propositions, but can not create and/or deliver value independently.
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational	Because service is defined in terms of customer-determined benefit and co-created it is inherently customer oriented and relational.

The SD Logic approach can be applied to tourism by evaluating, through conceptual development, how the 9 FP's can be related to previous literature and applied to the tourism setting in a qualitative approach. It is important that SD Logic is correctly applied as an objective in this thesis is to further test and develop new theory. This rationale is the research aim of this study and provides the basis for the empirical section. In the literature review, SD Logic was explored extensively so the information in Table N is an extension of the value propositions connecting and creating an interview question. Hayslip et al. (2013) utilized research questions as statements, and the interviewee was asked to produce points of discussion. This is one approach; however for this research, direct questions were developed that were related directly to the brand and the website FM. Table M explains the value proposition from SD Logic and creates questions for the interviewees. Within the context of the interview, if the interviewee gave a short answer, the researcher asked for an example and an expansion on their thoughts. This was successful with all of the interviewees in generating more data and information for the areas in question. The method of creating management questions from FP statements was used in Petrick & Li's 2008 study; this study closely follows their interview guidance. Table H contains the "axiom themes" and the "premise" as a theme in developing the research questions. The FP's

within SD Logic are categorized into sources of linked resources around service, value, resources and actors (See table O).

**Table O: Lexicon of SD Logic and Linked Sources**

<b>AXIOM LEXICON</b>	<b>PREMISE</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
AXIOM 1: FP 1 TO 5	SERVICE	GOODS: direct or indirect CURRENCY: economic or social
AXIOM 2: FP 6 to 8	VALUE	UNIQUE COCREATED PROPOSITION
AXIOM 3: FP 9	RESOURCE	OPERAND (physical good) OPERANT (Intangible/skill)
AXIOM 4: FP10	ACTORS	TIME BOUND RELATIONALLY BOUND RESOURCE INTEGRATING

Once each of the 4 sections were discussed in accordance to the grouping of questions by themes, the interviewees were given the opportunity to provide any final comments or further thoughts on the topics. After the discussion concluded, the interviewer would express gratitude for the interviewees’ time and thoughts on the subject by making a statement: “Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day. I really appreciate it; your answers were very helpful.” The researcher also wanted to make sure that the interviewees would allow the researcher to contact them again if there were any further questions by asking: “May I contact you if I have any follow up questions?” For all interviewees the answer was yes.

#### **2.5.4 Interviewing Procedure for Customer Interviews**

The customers were initially connected through a conversation the researcher had with a customer who contributes content to the FM website and was interested in being interviewed.

This interviewee began the snowballing effect by suggesting other FM contributors. The interviewees were qualified as acceptable as they were recommended through this chain. All interviewees were required to have stayed at a Fairmont hotel at least once so that they would be familiar with the brand.

The primary concerns of recent snowball sampling research are quality of the data and, in particular, a selection bias which limits the validity of the sample. First, because elements are not randomly drawn, but are dependent on the subjective choices of the respondents first accessed, most snowball samples are biased and do not therefore allow researchers to make claims to generality from a particular sample (Griffiths et al, 1993). Second, snowball samples may be biased towards the inclusion of individuals with interrelationships, and therefore will over-emphasise cohesiveness in social networks (Griffiths et al, 1993).

The challenge of selection bias may be partially addressed through generating a sample large enough. In this case 50 interviewees were chosen to strengthen any generalisations. Currently there is no statistical formalisation of snowball sample biases (Griffiths et al, 1993). With this, the larger sample sizes may reduce bias. In addition to selection bias, there is also the issue of “gatekeeper bias” as suggested by Groger, Mayberry and Straker (1999). In their work they identified a difficulty when using nursing home staff as “go-betweens” in obtaining the informed consent of caregivers. These gatekeepers were sometimes protective toward those they cared for and sometimes hindered access for the researchers. For this study the gatekeeper situation does not apply as the interviewees were primarily positive and were willing to suggest others. However, if we were going through the Fairmont for the sample, the company executive would be the gatekeeper of the customer contacts; this did not occur in this study.

The interviews followed a guide based on questions of online search behaviours and preferences, value in a company’s website, reasons for returning to the hotel and online community awareness and use. These questions are based on the SD Logic discussion axioms where the areas of value, service, resources and co-creation focus evolve into a broader area of customer value, where the researcher is trying to understand what is important to the customer in online research of hotel information.

As with the management interviews, these customer interviews were initiated with limited talk to ease into the discussion and create a feeling of open communication. Questions such as, “How are you today” and “What is the weather like in ...?” were used to establish rapport. As suggested by Fotana & Frey (2008), an opening question is used to set the premise and establish rapport with the respondent (Fotana & Frey, 2008). From the initial questions the interviewer explained the procedure and groups of questions that will be discussed.

The interviews started with demographic questions around age, gender and education level to better understand the individual. These were followed by the interview question around online search, value and preferences, and on returning to the Fairmont. These questions followed the further investigation on SD Logic and the importance of value co-creation from a customer perspective. In these questions the emphasis on choice and returning to a brand was mentioned in order to better understand the customers driving value needs. Table P details the interview questions asked in the customer interviews.

**Table P: Interview Questions & Demographic Characteristics Questions**

Characteristics of the respondents:
1. Please state your age: (20-30/30-40/40-50/50-60/60+)
2. Gender M/F
3. What level of education have you completed: High school/University /Masters/Professional designation.
Interview Questions
4. Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?
5. What do you value in a company’s website or online blogging website?
6. What makes you choose one hotel brand over another?
7. What makes you return to the Fairmont?
8. Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

The interviews were conducted on Skype and each interview was recorded and transcribed. The interviewer first described the reason for the interview and thanked the interviewee in advance

for their time. The initial demographic questions were asked followed by the interview questions. If the interviewee provided a single word answer or the interviewer thought further detail was needed, a second complementary question followed. An example would be if the interviewee replied, “Yes I do search online for travel ideas”. The interviewer would ask for an example of a website’s name or type of information inquired about so that the question was more completely answered.

### **2.5.5 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

The analysis of the qualitative data in this study of management and customer interviews commenced with manual transcriptions of the audio recordings of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and each transcript was assigned with a number to de-identify the transcripts but insuring that each transcript was attached to the correct respondent. Transcripts were first read through and then themes were established. A thematic analysis was conducted on the data that included identifying themes and reporting patterns of these responses. This technique was suitable for the study as the purpose was to explore and describe the phenomenon (Ryan & Bernard, 1998).

The qualitative data was examined from a theoretical framework and included thematic analysis to deduct emerging themes rather than predefined categories (Ezzy, 2002). This was also suitable for the study given the sources of value and dimensions being investigated in this hotel brand.

For the management interviews, the researcher selected an equal number of males and females as it was essential to avoid bias or misrepresentation in the hiring practices of the Fairmont which is an equal rights employer. All selected were in the 25 to 50 age demographic and had no previous knowledge of SD Logic or the reasoning for the research other than information gathering on the website.

For all interviews, the analysis and coding was conducted to inform the themes and analysis of data. Further to this step, the analyses of web connect of fans was conducted as well as analysis of strategy documents of the firm.



The systematic approach used by the researcher to analyse the data was focused on first level and second level coding. The intent of the analysis was to examine the data-to-theory connections in the form of linkages among the quotes in the text. This first order coding in the data structure provided a way to focus on key emergent concepts or themes. Some examples of this include “sensegiving” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), or “identity ambiguity” (Corley & Gioia, 2004) where magnifying the data is used to find the most interesting and incisive parts to emphasis. By focusing on these emergent concepts, the researcher can produce new insight and further discussion (Gioia et al, 2013).

If data did not fit within the conceptualization of the data discussed, within first and second coded rubric, the researcher was allowed the flexibility in applying different approaches to fit the phenomenological needs. The second coding and third level analysis was used to triangulate the data and further aggregate relevant data of interest for this study. Triangulation of data is often used in a case study as a way to validate the results.

NVivo 9 & Quirkos software were used to analyse the codes and themes for the interviews, web content, and strategy documents. The use of NVivo software for the analysis of qualitative data was necessary given the multiple phases of this case study and the analysis and coding that was conducted. Because the software assists the researcher in organizing multiple sources of data and in delineating attributes through multiple sources and series of data, this software provided a much higher level of detail and analysis than manual analysis. Quirkos software was used for the 50 customer interviews because it offered better visual descriptions for the 50 customer interviews. This software, or similar software, is typically used for qualitative research studies.

As mentioned previously, the qualitative data was analysed using two phases of coding. The first phase was open coding which is a system of unrestricted coding of data where concepts and categories are determined by the data. This system allowed for a close examination of data assisting the researcher to determine concepts and categories that fit the material. Open coding is recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as the researcher’s first step.

The second phase consists of axial coding where coding frames were used to assist in the organization of the data and to identify the findings more clearly (David & Sutton, 2004). This phase was conducted using a deductive process, which is typically a theory-testing process where

an established theory of generalization seeks to determine if the theory applies to a specific instance (David & Sutton, 2004).

Axial coding was undertaken to further investigate the value dimensions of SD Logic and the 4 themes within the SD Logic propositions. The analysis was conducted with in-case and cross-case analysis and utilized theoretical categories during the coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In order to analyse each interviewee a 3 step coding system was utilized. First, the coders (the person who conducted the interview and advisor) coded each sentence that was considered a viable unit of text. Codes such as “synergy” and “strategic fit” were used to characterize units of text. When a new code was created, the researchers documented its meanings and parameters in a list of codes. The code structure was interactively refined throughout the coding process. The next step was to prepare the cases in order to identify common differences which would lead to the development of the emerging constructs and theoretical logic. The list of codes evolved (new codes were added and some codes were changed) throughout the data analysis process that was based on comparison of newly analysed transcripts and previously coded data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Once the interviews were coded, the need for additional interviews concluded as no new codes were added, indicating that the researchers had achieved theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These categories were then organized into categories on a diagram where similar categories were consolidated. This structure consisted of 3 major constructs and numerous significant sub dimensions that further described each construct.

The final stage of this coding and analysis utilized a process of pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). At this point there was a need for large amounts of data to be summarized in the previous phases of coding into a smaller number of constructs that had been identified as relevant in order to extend the current theories.

The selected methodology for this research is justified and beneficial as, first, interviewing allows for the acquisition of multiple perspectives on consumers’ travel experiences through use of 4 sources of data: marketing document analysis, management interviews, netnography and customer interviews. King (1994) argues that interviews are, “ideally suited to examining topics

in which different levels of meaning need to be explored” (p. 33). An example was noted in this study’s brand website discussion of topics important to consumers and brands.

Second, King (1994) noted that interviewing as a research tool occurs in live social settings. In this study, a small sample of brand experts at the Fairmont were interviewed, as it was important to explore real life situations rather than conducting research in manufactured simulated settings. As an example, 15 experts in the field of marketing strategy for the brand being investigated were selected and interviewed. These individuals were not aware of SD Logic but were experts in their field of hotel brand marketing. Some individuals were experts in analytics, some in day-to-day operations of the brand website being studied, some in the overall brand strategy of the hotel group. The interviewees were more willing to share their experiences with the researcher because the interviewer had a plan and questions to lead the discussion; thus there was a conversation with purpose (Berg, 2004, p. 75).

Third, the number of management interview candidates selected was small to medium but possessed a high level of knowledge on the subject matter. These individuals within the Fairmont group had this high level of expertise on the website being studied. The number of interviews was deemed appropriate because the purpose of this study was to gain a holistic viewpoint through multiple sources and detailed account of opinions from the brand standpoint. Denscombe (1999) recommends “interviewing individuals in situations where the researcher is seeking in-depth information gained from a small number of informants” (p. 111).

### 3. Results

This chapter will present the relationship and themes found surrounding co-creation and sources of value in managing company marketing. The 4 phases of the research are discussed progressively starting with the corporate marketing documents, then the management interviews, netnography and customer interviews.

The research for this paper uses multiple sources in a single case study to investigate the value co-creation between company and consumer in an online environment. A case study was selected as the qualitative data is used to study “one or more selected social phenomena and to understand or explain the phenomena by placing them in their wider context” (Kitay and Callus, 1998, p. 103). A single case study can be justified when access to similar data is not available or critical to testing of theory (Yin, 2003). The researcher could find no other comparable co-creation website where there was engagement between the company and consumer.

#### 3.1 RQ 1: Co-Creation of an Online Website

*How does a company's marketing influence the online co-creation of a hotel brand?*

To answer this research question, document analysis of strategy materials and presentations, as well as interviews of both managers and customers were used. Both management and customers' views were significant in this framework in order to provide a holistic measure of the marketing of the company. SD Logic was chosen as the framework to assist in question development for the management interviews around the areas of value, service, resources and innovation. The customer interviews employed further questions around brand meaning, loyalty, awareness and online search preferences. Management and customer interview questions were based on the company's marketing strategy in the framework of SD Logic that has been extensively used when trying to understand co-creation in marketing of hotels. Additional questions to explore the

marketing influence were used to explore the customer mind-set and value understanding around the website and brand.

The value propositions that are discussed in Chapter 3, Methodology, outline the propositions of value that are offered from the firm to the customer. The value propositions offered through the interview questions were created with the intention of obtaining a more complete understanding of the firm's purpose and reasons for creating the FM website. In analysing the answers, a framework was used to better understand the sectioning of questions and groupings together with themes.

### **3.1.1 Phase 1: Fairmont (FRHI) Corporate Documents**

For the analysis of RQ1, the following items were used: strategy documents collected mainly from a presentation at the 2014 FRHI General Managers Conference and press releases and other brand documents retrieved from the manager of the website.

The brand's marketing conference presentations were geared to brand marketing managers from different parts of the world across the three brands. FRHI management discussed various strategies related to each brand separately; however clear consistency with a luxury management strategy was noted in attracting and retaining a luxury customer with identifiable demographics.

Appendices 7.5.1 (Objectives: Integrated Loyalty Program Design Highlights) discussed and identified the investments of brand resources. The economic and actor resources are focused on technology which comes through in the form of mobile apps and staying abreast with online technologies like loyalty engines and automated platforms. Another area of focus is employee (actor) training programs to enable cross-selling opportunities. Loyalty and continued brand ambassador support by brand fans were identified as an important area of focus for the brand.

Following this the Sale & Marketing 2014 Conference Agenda, identifies Part 1 and Part 2 of the training discussion. Within Part 1: Brand Equity, Segmentation and Luxury Trends, training and information sharing of brand focused material was presented and relevant guest experiences are

discussed. Part 2: Sales & Marketing Initiatives focused on the sales and marketing training around social media, global luxury sales and integrated loyalty programs. Investment in staff training was seen as an important area of focus for the brand (7.5.2: Agenda).

7.5.3: Travel Discretionary Spending, showed that travel is the number one discretionary spending with “Vacations” coming in at close to \$8,699 as an average amount of household spending in the USA (as determined by the Fairmont Brand). Other notable spending categories were “Resorts and Fine Hotels” at \$4,105 and “Weekend Getaways” at \$2,423. This provides support for future financial planning in order to attract current and new clients for the FRHI brand.

Guest profiles were discussed within demographics for the FRHI brands showing the difference between the brands within customer profiles. When focusing on the Fairmont, the average age is 47 and this customer has a traditional expectation of luxury. Of all guests, 47% feel successful, 81% are very concerned about the economy and 89% usually know what they want and are will to pay (for luxuries) (7.5.4: Customer Demographics).

The slide entitled “Consumer Trust in User Generated Content & Reviews” was also discussed as a part of the presentation where the statistics of media trustworthiness is a mix of user generated content (59%) and advertising (39%). The importance of this slide is the acknowledgment of consumer trust in opinions, which are not necessarily true facts, but are circles of trust provided by the websites or review sites that users are referencing before booking a trip. Websites like FM are included in this statistic, where users are sharing, consuming and trusting the media (7.5.6: Consumer Trust in User Generated Content). The key focus of Fairmont is engagement and connection with the customer online.

Digital Marketing is also discussed (7.5.7: Digital Marketing) in the form of important areas of investment and focus for the brand within technology strategy, distribution strategy, data & insight, service strategy, and brand-to-brand strategy. Other smaller areas of focus are on content, search engine optimization, campaigns, partnerships, mobile and UGC through blogs, and social platforms. Again, technology resources and service delivery is a focus in digital marketing.

The evolution of branding is also discussed where the origins, background and movement through from post World War one, two and the current post-great recession helps marketers understand the roots and contextual reasoning of what consumers value and why they connect with brands (7.5.8: Evolution of Branding).

The slide, “Fairmont Values” (7.5.9: Fairmont Values) states: “Investing in Insight To Turn Ideas Into Action. Using Global Platforms To Enhance The Guest Experience And Drive Customer Engagement.” This slide gives an insight into the values of the brand which are about action and connection with customers. This ultimately is the key within hospitality - to create an experience and connection with the guest. The value states very clearly the intention and purpose of the brand in a simple direct way.

Ultimately the guest experience is about creating a satisfied guest where the cause and effect are providing the results during the pre, during and post stay of the guest. The Guest Experience slide (7.5.10: Guest Experience), the first phase of “Reservation Process & Pricing” moves into the second phase of “Employee Satisfaction” where importance is placed on the employee as an actor in the process. This is extremely important in the wellbeing of a brand ambassador who must be satisfied in order to connect and to demonstrate a positive brand experience with the consumer. The third phase is the “Stay Experience” with the guest in mind. The fourth phase, “Effect,” the social sentiment, is where the guest is online, leading to the final phase of “Brand Loyalty” post stay – will they return or stay connected online. This slide provides 5 distinct phases across three timelines of pre (at the cause), during (the stay experience), and the post or (effect) of the overall guest experience. The details of this slide allow insight in to how the brand measures the experience in more direct terms and connections to the customer. The calculation of these distinct phases shows the service connection points with the customer on and off line as well as the actors who may connect at different points.

Consumption trends in the luxury market are also discussed in different areas such as “Borderless Luxury, Global Asset Boom, Personal Information Economy, Search for Safety and Security, Segmentation of “Me”, and Enlightenment Self Interest”. Within these identified trends, the FRHI team is identifying the various sources of possible income and ways to target these consumers in a marketing context (7.5.11: Key Luxe Trends).

The final slide being discussed for the 2014 Marketing Conference is the Social Media Strategy Key Focus (7.5.12: Social Media Strategy Key Focus). In this slide the focus is around a series of key areas followed by tactics of their implementation. Areas of focus include: Content Marketing & Distribution, Community & Audience Management, Online Reputation & Customer Services, Social Media & Advertising, & Special Campaigns, Regional/Property Strategy & Guidance. The tactics include: increasing volume of reviews to address quality ranking factors (80% of FRHI reviews are positive), encouraging general managers to address key findings from online reviews to improve quality of future reviews, and increasing response rate to reviews in order to improve customer perceptions. These areas provide a solid understanding of strategy focus for the brand in the coming year as well as ways to achieve the strategy being discussed at the conference.

### **3.1.2 Phase 1: Fairmont (FRHI) Press Releases**

The brand has a number of press releases that help focus the marketing strategy addressing various programs from environment, to social wellness and partnerships. In 2010 the Fairmont launched the FM website with a release describing the platform as a new “online community platform”. The mix of consumer generated media and non-traditional Fairmont content would act as a virtual gathering place for the Fairmont guests, colleagues and others in an interactive environment where fans of the brand can post photos or video from a memorable trip, participate in exclusive contests and access exclusive hotel content and engage in dialogue about their Fairmont travel experiences (7.1.1: Everyonesanoriginal.com).

Contests such as “Romance Through the Ages” press release is used as a tactic for the brand to generate a buzz and collect photo content for the website. Prize incentives such as a trip to a London movie premier of Titanic in 3D, and a stay at the London’s Savoy were used to motivate submissions (7.1.2: Romance Through the Ages).

Another way to generate “buzz” is the article in a hospitality trade magazine, Hotel Executive, written by the FM community manager which was used to share information about the website with industry executives (7.1.3: Overview: Fairmont’s Original Take on Social Media Sharing)



Screen shots and a connection to the history of the brand is discussed in stories like Tony Bennett first singing “I Left my Heart in San Francisco” at the flagship Fairmont San Francisco in 1962. The discussion in this article is about consumer engagement, at a higher level, offering reasons for the creation of this platform as a new form of engaging blog, where interaction can occur between branded online content. The article discusses the connection with guests on a personal level marketing the chance for the brand and consumer/fan to connect on another level online. The brand strategy discusses two-way conversations as oppose to the one-sided hotel blog format of traditional online communication. The gathering of like-minded travel, luxury and story-telling content of fans and consumers is highlighted where FM provides an outlet for these brand advocates to build a unique collection of UCG.

The Fairmont Company Facts provides information about the brand’s strategy of using the Presidents Club (loyalty program), Sustainability practices, Willow Stream Spas, Fairmont Gold (special floor with additional services and products), and Residential Offerings. Through these offerings we can see the attention to product and service detail and the essence of the brand positioning as a luxury conscious, service conscious as well as its position in product leadership (7.1.5: Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Company Facts).

The parent company, FRHI group, is a leading luxury hotel management company whose property count is 110 hotels and developments in more than 40 countries. The global head count of employees is 47,650, and the Americas contain the largest number of hotels at 46 properties, Europe has 23 hotels, Asia Pacific contains 23 hotels and MEA at 18 hotels (7.1.6: FRHI Hotels & Resorts By the Numbers).

Within the Fairmont hotels, the Fairmont Fit program provides members of the loyalty programs with new fitness gear, running shoes and sports apparel from Reebok. This allows the Fairmont to communicate with members and showcase exclusive partnerships. The benefit of Fairmont Fit is there is no need to pack gym clothing and running shoes on business or leisure trips with the idea behind it being to provide value and recognize loyal customers with rewards (7.1.7: Stay and Stay Fit).

Another program that the Fairmont is involved in is the “Canine Ambassador” programme where travellers missing their own furry friends can find a companion and take a dog for a walk. The

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind is a non-profit organization that trains many dogs that do not necessarily become guide dogs; Fairmont takes some of these dogs as official members of the hotel’s Guest Services Team. Currently around 10 hotels operate a Canine Ambassador program for guests to enjoy (7.1.8: Fairmont Goes to the Dogs).

Another area of importance to the Fairmont is environment and sustainability issues. Fairmont honeybees program is one where hives are placed on some hotels’ rooftop gardens to help local environments and provide chefs with an onsite product. Currently around 22 locations worldwide maintain a hive for hotel use (7.1.9: Fairmont Roofs Abuzz with Honeybees).

Themes within the documents of the corporate marketing and press releases are identified around both goods and currency of service. When referring to the product (or hotel) and the social currency (service), a dynamic is created around the service of the hotel. Technology and improvements online through continued innovation and resource integration is noted, where the online experience (social currency) and the hotel brick and mortar products are continually being innovated and improved upon (See Table Q: Summary of Corporate Documents and Press Releases).

**Table Q: Summary of Corporate Documents and Press Releases**

Summary of Corporate Documents	Summary of Press Release
- Brand Investment & resources, staff investment and training, social media training.	- Online community platform, memorable trip experience, participation in contests
- Technology focus, mobile apps, consumer generated content, digital marketing, content focus, partnerships, mobile, UGC blogs, social platforms	- Dialog and sharing of Fairmont travel experience, guest experience
- Measure guest experience, consumption trends, consumer trust, sharing, consuming trusting	- Storytelling, two-way conversation
- Cross-selling opportunities, luxury sales and loyalty	- User generated content
- Guest experience, loyalty, brand ambassadors, fans, guest experience, guest demographics	- Sustainability practices, Willow Stream Spa, Fairmont Gold, Fairmont Fit, Canine Ambassador Program

Themes around resources like employee skills and knowledge (operant) are discussed and it is recognized that employees are expected to “think on their feet” as part of employment at FRHI. Satisfied and happy employees are also seen as an imperative in order for them to do their job well. It is also important for the employees to be happy and satisfied in their jobs.

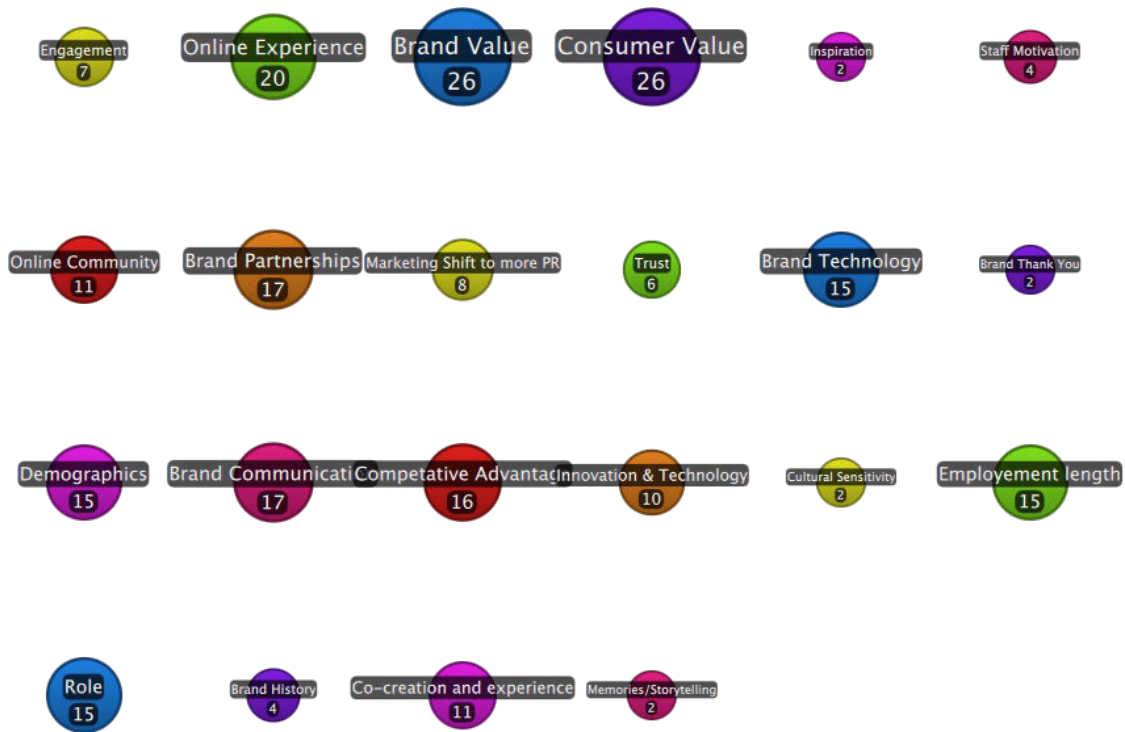
Another theme around value is recognized where value-in-use of products and services are key for a brand to create memories with the customer. Through a rich brand history and propositioned value by the brand, consumers are requested to engage in dialog online or offline with the hotel to create their own unique memories. Photo contests like “Romance Through the Ages” requests guest memories to be contributed to the FM website, building content for the website and motivated for the consumer with a chance to win a trip to London with Savoy Hotel accommodation. A “win-win” approach is used, or a reciprocal advantage by both the brand and the customer to co-create experiential content. The actors in discussion are both the brand (actors), and the customer/fan (actors), within the SD Logic framework where both are distinguished as actors in the SD Logic framework.

### **3.1.3 Phase 2: Qualitative Interviews of 15 Mangers using NVivo & Quirkos Software**

The content was also analysed by both Nvivo and Quirkos software to provide further information. Quirkos is a qualitative content analysis software that provides better visual diagrams when analysing content than Nvivo. The Quirkos Canvas tool (Figure F) provides a summary of the highlighted themes in a tree view; the size of the circle is relative to the number of quotes received. This means the bigger the circle the more quotes were on the subject or theme. Colours were used to decipher and alert the researcher to different themes and these colours were chosen as a way to differentiate between the various words and phrases and form them into groups from both the manager and the customer interviews. There is no other purpose to the colours than to segment the themes visually.

Figure F: Quirkos Themes in Customer Interviews

## Quirks Canvas - Primary



The Interview Coding concepts were analysed in Nvivo into first order, second order and aggregate dimensions and are illustrated in a document. Table R: SD Logic Themes and Interview Discussion, provides a summary of SD Logic axioms and the themes mentioned in the interviews by management. Table R also illustrates the coding for each interview through Nvivo.

**Table R: Interview Coding, 1<sup>st</sup> Order, 2<sup>nd</sup> Order and Aggregate Dimensions**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Order Concepts</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Order Concepts</b>	<b>Aggregate Dimensions</b>	
<b>Interview 1</b>			
“We’ve noticed a real storytelling trend”	Consumer Culture, storytelling trend	Customer Culture – Storytelling	CC
“The entire goal is an easy place to share memories”	Share memories	Sharing memories	CC
“Tell the story of each unique property”	Consumer Experience, story telling	Consumer Culture	CC
“At FM we have the ability to go deeper and explore more” (as opposed to other social media platforms)	Social Media, Conversation depth, online brand exploration	Social media Conversation	BE
- “We provide value because we give them (customers) an outlet” - “Building a database of real images” - “Real users experience rather than telling you that it’s a great place to stay”	Customer Value, real images, “real-life value”	“Real-life” Value	MV
“It’s a ton of value to us – it’s trust.”	Trust-Value	“Trust-Value”	MV
“People are driven to action when there is a real reason...when there is an extremely great experience or extremely poor experience”	Customer motivation for SM use, extremes	Social Media Conversation – extremes	
“It’s a thank you to us...the outcome is building a huge data base of content”	Reciprocation, huge data base	Reciprocation – thank you	MV
We would rather have amazing stories rather than 10,000 medial ones...it’s about the quality of content”	Brand Value, content quality	Brand Value – content quality	MV
“We can learn about what’s important to the guests”	Operant, intangible	Employee	OP ER

	employee skill	Knowledge	AN T
“We’re always looking at different technologies to make things easier”	Accessibility, ease of technology	Technology Ease	DI
“Fairmont fits in, the brand its self lends to experience and marries – because we are a historic brand people have experiences they don’t forget. Hence Everyone’s’ an Original name. It means each property is a unique place...as an overall marketing campaign this is essentially a celebration of this.”	Memories, brand experience, history, unique place, marketing memories and experience	Brand Experience	BE
“Improves our search result online”	Marketing value, online marketing	Digital Importance	DI
<b>Interview 2:</b>			
“I think giving people a sense of empowerment, inviting people to share experiences and post pictures – it gives people a safe space.”	Brand relationship, share, experience	Consumer Empowerment	CC
“..And brings some real life to a campaign.”	Marketing value	Real-life Marketing Value	MV
“I think it’s routed in the notion of wanting to be heard. I don’t want to say bragging but by posting on other social media channels,..i think it’s ultimately selfish at the end of the day, there is something in it for them, ..provides motivation and interest.”	Consumer culture, motivation, selfishness	Selfish Motivations	CC
“Digital marketing is at the helm of everything we do and every customer touch point today...it ties in to the distribution strategy, technology, data and insight, b to b, service strategy – everything”	Marketing strategy, digital importance, resources and technology	Digital Importance	DI
“Social is big. All properties have social – dedicated twitter feeds; we want to make sure the loop is closed and keeping business in our own channels. Guests and potential guests close rather than going to a third party platform for booking. I think it’s a part of the entire brand strategy.”	Digital importance, digital marketing, customer online strategy, guests close.	Digital Importance – Social is big	DI

“Another advantage for the community member online is they get early access to offers – main advantage to get heads in beds...and if they continue to talk positively about us it is all worth it.”	Social marketing, marketing value	Marketing Value	MV
<b>Interview 3:</b>			
“its another platform to share trip photos and vacation memories with other fans who will appreciate these photos because they are also fans.”	Social currency, connection with like minded, fans	Like minded fans (Brand Fans)	BF
“We’re in the best position because it’s our brand to showcase”	Operant resource (skills and know how), brand showcasing	Brand Skill	O
“Great connections with the brand, it shows we enjoy their Fairmont moments. I think it drives that connection.”	Brand proposition, co-created, Fairmont moments	Brand Value	MV
“We definitely try to stay on top of digital marketing and everything that is evolving in technology”	Technology, digital importance	Digital Importance	DI
“People seem to like this hub to share their lives....and it gives you a better perspective and understanding of what impacts them. Hey, this is what we love or this is the highlight for us”	Social currency, personal highlights	Brand Fans	BF
“It’s a unique platform and very interaction. It’s a place where they can share memories and know they fit into.”	Co-creation, unique, brand propositions, fit-in, shared values	Unique Value	MV
“I think it offers a wider perspective. It shows we are connected with like-minded brands. The same values that our customers would be interested in. The Fairmont fit program allows you to have athletic wear to be waiting in your room when you arrive. It makes life easier.”	Brand value to customer, make life easier (customer satisfaction), consumer value, value of brand to consumer, makes life easier	Empowered Fans	BF
<b>Interview 4:</b>			

<p>“Social media gives an opportunity for guests to read and get inspiration on our properties. It’s very engaging. It’s underutilised to drive traffic...Just as the traveller wants to go to one of the prosperities – user content of our guests is far more appealing for potential guests to read than pre fabricated marketing stuff the brand creates.”</p>	<p>Unique, proposition, real-life marketing</p>	<p>Real-life marketing</p>	<p>MV</p>
<p>“I think part of FM fills a void that Trip Advisor doesn’t. FM is very different because it’s more storytelling – like a customer review. That extra voice you need. You’ll use TripAdvisor to check the rating but use FM to shape your trip and what you do.”</p>	<p>Customer value, consumer use fills void, FM storytelling, FM to shape trip</p>	<p>Like-minded Fans</p>	<p>BF</p>
<p>“I think it’s part of human nature to want to one-up another. I think people are interested in trying to impress and it’s natural for humans to want to show off. I think that what drives it (FM). The advantage for the brand is free advertisement. It’s like having 10’s of thousand of stories where people are writing endorsements for your company.”</p>	<p>Unique, co-created, propositions, customer motivation, human nature, “one-up another”, free advertisement, endorsement</p>	<p>Real-Life Marketing</p>	<p>MV</p>
<p>“I think FM is underutilised because I haven’t heard of anyone using the site to generate ideas where more funding should be spent.”</p>	<p>Negative on brand – could be more use from a marketing/revenue generating perspective, marketing dollar idea generation</p>	<p>Underutilized Opportunity</p>	<p>O</p>
<p>“I’m part of the digital marketing team. Between loyalty teams is a lot of knowledge sharing – so yea, I think we do this quite well. Meetings we share best practices, conferences, emails, and online systems we use.”</p>	<p>Operant – sharing of knowledge. Brand culture, internal communication</p>	<p>Internal Sharing Communication</p>	<p>O</p>
<p>“I definitely think it is a competitive advantage we just need to get more content up there and drive traffic.”</p>	<p>Competitive advantage, drive traffic</p>	<p>Competitive Advantage</p>	<p>CA</p>
<p>“I think there is an opportunity to leverage these partnerships more fully on FM...Reebok could offer</p>	<p>Social value, partnerships,</p>	<p>Underutilized Opportunity –</p>	<p>O</p>



running routes around the hotels, provide routines of how to exercise when they travel,. Underutilized once again”	underutilized opportunity, leverage partnerships	leverage partnerships	
<b>Interview 5</b>			
“its about communication of value each customer is looking for. Others just want to communicate when they arrive at the hotel or pick up the phone to make a restaurant reservation before they arrive. More and more are communicating online through social media platforms.”	Value is unique, co-created with staff and guests	Co-created Value	MV
“We need to utilize our best marketing efforts to capture and enhance the conversation online...we are in the best position to provide the platform and can be involved in the communication, not necessarily controlling but involved and helping to shape it.”	Brand value with communication, enhance the conversation online	Marketing Value	MV
“We gather a lot of different data in our loyalty program. As an example, if a member orders a dish or a drink – through all the hotels and all the different brands this is available so we can see what they like. A way we try and share information and please the guest. Data and information is key for us to feel close to the customer.”	Value to customer, information and data is key to feel close to customer, info sharing is power to please guests	Data Led Communication / Big Data	DI
“Biggest challenge is finding resources and invest in capital to find money in the budget.”	Corporate Resources, technology	Marketing Resources	O
“Big data to leverage services and local product knowledge.”	Employee resources and knowledge, big data, leverage service	Big data – employee resources	DI
“Our clientele are willing to have companies like Reebok as a partner – not to try and sell something but to provide value and benefit like shoes or clothing in the room.”	Partnership providing value, not selling, benefit to the customer,	Partnership Synergies	PS

	customer benefits		
<b>Interview 6:</b>			
“Yes co-collaboration,.., customers are no longer passive, they are active market participants and their loyalty to brands is being considerably challenged and their insight is imperative with respect to the decision we need to make from a travel business point of view.”	Collaboration with customers, customers are an active market participant	Co-collaboration	MV
“Another area of co-collaboration is social media channel where our properties are involved in discussing feedback and service issues – we have a strong service culture, service issues are taken very seriously.”	Service culture, online feedback for service issues taken seriously	Service culture	O
“Big data shows what the customers likes and wants through past decisions. Through our loyalty program our role is to know what they will want before they ask...to give them exceptional experiences.”	Brand propositions, service role, exceptional experiences, big data, loyalty programs, anticipate customer needs	Big Data – Digital importance, anticipate needs	DI
“We own the direction of the message. As a brand we need to position and move the message into a beneficial direction. It’s a marketing tool for us.”	Marketing tool, direct the message, position brand	Marketing Value	MV
“The consumer and guest are online and more and more search and bookings comes from mobile and tablets, we need to stay abreast.”	Online, technology, bookings, mobile and tablet	Digital Importance	DI
“I think it’s about being able to listen and understand what the customer wants.”	Listen to what the customer wants	Co-collaboration communication	MV
“Either before the guest steps on the property, during the stay or after the stay, guest are logging on and sharing their experiences and learning from staff. Staff knowledge and the ability to touch guests in a memorable way is the key to great guest experiences.”	Guest experience, touching guests in memorable ways, staff knowledge, sharing experience	Staff Experts – experience	O
“We have an internal Internet that we use for internal communication and communication on email is an important daily activity amongst department and	Internal Internet, important daily	Internal Sharing communication	O

colleagues that are in different cities.”	sharing		
“They (customers) are looking for the experiences and service they have come to expect. And our partnership with Reebok is a great case in point to create a positive experience through the positive shared values.”	Experiences the customer have come to expect (from Fairmont), positive experiences with partners (Reebok), positive shared values	Partnership Synergies	DS
“We’re not going to get into the business of making shoes but by creating synergies. BMW we use the bikes with extensive properties.”	Partnership benefits, creating synergies, focus on what the brand does well	Partnership Synergies	PS
<b>Interview 7:</b>			
“Marketing has shifted. Marketing and PR have blended and that is what social media is. People don’t want to be broadcasted to, they want to converse...People are jaded. People are looking for their peers – word of mouth on steroids (Social media)”	Consumer culture, converse, word of mouth on steroids	Consumer Culture – Online Word-of-Mouth	PS
“Brand engagement, we have much more control of the experience,.. a much more authentic experience, with touch, feel, sensing the brand experience and getting to know the positioning.. Another thing we are finding with guests is a strong connection to the company, and find others with a shared interest.”	Engagement with brand, authentic experience, shared interest, consumer brand authenticity	Digital Importance – Brand Engagement	CC
“(the customer experience online) comes down to a product differentiation. I think having extensive guest loyalty programs to reward and recognition is certainly about recognizing loyalty and trying to make our guests stay with us meaningful, personalization rather than rewarding with points to stay with us.”	Personalization for guests, loyalty program, customer experience online	Customization	DI
“Innovation is something we look to with innovating guest programming that sets out brands and hotels	Competitive advantage	Brand Experience - recognition	BV/ CC

apart.”			
“Technology is so integrated into every functional area, everything a colleague does in a day to the guest, you see checking in on ipads. If you don’t have a good technology system to extract and leverage data then it’s pointless.”	Technology, guest experience, instant communication, integration of online & offline	Competitive Advantage - Innovation	CA
“Knowledge sharing, social relevance – twitter flash sales going back a few years, 3-4 years ago they weren’t doing this. It’s finding key leanings what worked, what didn’t and continue to build on it.”	Social media experience, knowledge sharing, positive guest feedback,	Guest Experience – SM Communication	PD
Our Canine ambassador program. Guest feedback was so positive that other hotels view it as a way to differentiate from other hotels and a way to drive up guest satisfaction results. Now there are 15-20 hotels.	dog differential (satisfaction differential – competitive advantage), guest satisfaction	Guest Experience – Canine Program	CC
“Guest benefits are research driven. ..Fitness and health and wellness are key and critical to our guests and Reebok fitness offers guests something important and valuable because they have told us this. We have been able to provide unique experiences, special offers or pre launch product trials to make them feel special.”	Social currency, research driven, unique experiences, wellbeing trend	Guest Experience – Well-being trend	CC
<b>Interview 8:</b>			
“FM is a company strategy and is important and will continue to grow – engaging guests in the story and marketing.”	Engage guests, storytelling as a strategy	Consumer Culture – Storytelling	MV
“Fairmont has FM because of it’s history – Banff Springs, Lake Louise – our hotels are a must see for people and the continent is a repository for stories and history of the various properties.”	History driven	Brand Value – storytelling	BV
“When I speak to vendors they say we are ahead of the curve (technology).”	Technologically Advanced curve (competitive	Digital Importance – Competitive	CA / I

	advantage)	Advantage	
“Engaging with customers is the only way you can stay innovative and connect to stay top of mind with the customer.”	Innovative, engaging with customer, stay top of mind	Customer Engagement – Innovation	I
“We operate in a world of conversation online; people contributing are speaking to others and the brand. People can trust a story or a review. You can’t make this stuff up. It’s much more powerful.”	Online word of mouth, trust, powerful	Trust-Value	BV
“We are now with a regional model. Swisshotel was in Zurich, Raffels in Singapore, Fairmont in Canada, which seems to be working better. Allowing us to separate duties and responsibilities based on geography, time line, language and it’s the way it was when we combined brands and it’s returned that way because it seems to be the best approach.”	Regional model of staffing, segmenting of employee work, working well	Internal Communication	O
“Fairmont – moments and memories, Raffles – more street luxury, Swisshotel – green eco-friendly business traveller. FM fits into memories and moments reflection of the brand and allows us to showcase this.”	Brand stands for: moments and memories, brand reflection, FM fits into memories and moments	Brand Value – Memories	MV
<b>Interview 9</b>			
“Co-creation around content is critically important. Both by the nature of our brand and because we have a very experiential product. Consumers are willing to share their experiences, their photos and video about experiences and memories ..which ultimately drives more engagement and usage of our website. “	Co-created content, hotel experience, memories drive engagement, experiential industry	Digital Importance – Customer Experience	DI
“I think we enhance the customer experience through well-run and managed platforms and content that users want to see.”	Customer experience, enhance through online strategy	Digital Value – Innovation	DI

<p>“We are always learning from our guests and gaining insights. Innovation and continual adoption of technologies is imperative especially in our line of business – hotels, we are an information rich business and need to stay on top of what the information means to continual innovation.”</p>	<p>Innovation, technology adoption, continual innovation, insight, information rich, continual innovation, always learning</p>	<p>Marketing Value – Customer Experience</p>	<p>MV</p>
<p>“So far we are pleased with our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and FM but we can’t sit on our past proficiencies, we need to always be looking forward to new ways to engage and better ways to enhance the experience.”</p>	<p>New ways to engage, better ways to enhance the experience</p>	<p>Marketing Value – Experience</p>	<p>MV</p>
<p>“At the moment (we are) looking for new technologies and innovations to improve the experience is part of the process and our role with the brand.”</p>	<p>new technologies, innovations to improve experience</p>	<p>Digital Importance – Innovation</p>	<p>DI</p>
<p>“Yea 100%, so much of marketing is relying on technology and products. CRM, data mining, analytics, marketing automation, sms, email marketing, payments – everything we do has technology behind it.”</p>	<p>Marketing is technology and product, everything we do has technology behind it</p>	<p>Digital Importance – Marketing Value</p>	<p>DI</p>
<p>We also have an internal Internet site where we have the ability to educate and provide ideas (to employees)...we have quarterly awards...it works quite well (employee motivation).</p>	<p>Employee development and resources, educate, motivate</p>	<p>Employee Development</p>	<p>O</p>
<p>Creating value has to be about both the product and the service. For Fairmont, differentiation is really about the fact that each of our properties are unique and no two are the same or alike. No cookie cutter experience. This makes it even more unique bringing flavor into the hotel.</p>	<p>Creating value is both product and service, differentiation is uniqueness, hotel experience provides uniqueness</p>	<p>Differentiation – Uniqueness Value</p>	<p>PD</p>
<p>“The main rationale behind brand partnerships is a real opportunity to prospect. From our perspective its being</p>	<p>Brand partnerships is an opportunity to</p>	<p>Partnership Synergies – Joint</p>	<p>PS</p>

able to reach new consumers who may not know about the Fairmont. ...”	prospect, brand awareness, joint marketing, exposing the consumer to the brand	Marketing	
“We do a lot of joint marketing to drive consumers to the brand. From a consumer perspective, it’s exposing the consumer to the brand and hopefully we are in the consideration.”	Joint marketing, customer perspective – it’s exposing to the brand	Partnership Synergies – Marketing exposure	PS

Nine interviews were selected to showcase the variety of answers and themes – the full 15 interviews are located within the appendices. With the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level codes from the interviews, the researcher distils the information into themes from the management interviews and provides deeper analysis and links to the theory in the discussion chapter.

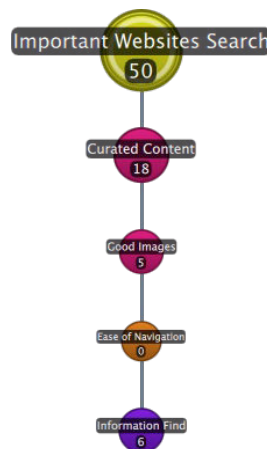
### 3.1.4 Phase 3: Customer Interviews using Quirkos Software

After completing the management interviews, the researcher found consistencies existed in the customer interviews in areas of online experience, search, value, loyalty and brand meaning.

Within these interviews, various website names were given that are supported and used by the

Figure G: Quirkos Hierarchy of Important Website Search

### Quirk Hierarchy: Important Websites Search

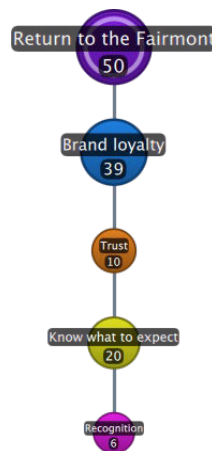


interviewees for website searches. Curated content was a theme where websites are choosing the content and sifting through the best websites available for users – handpicking based on defined search criteria. Figure G describes the important factors for the customers by theme.

Throughout the discussion, other themes emerged within the topic of returning to the Fairmont (See Figure H). Phrases like “trust” and “know what to expect” provided some ideas around

**Figure I: Quirkos Hierarchy: Return to the Fairmont themes**

### Quirk Hierarchy: Return to the Fairmont

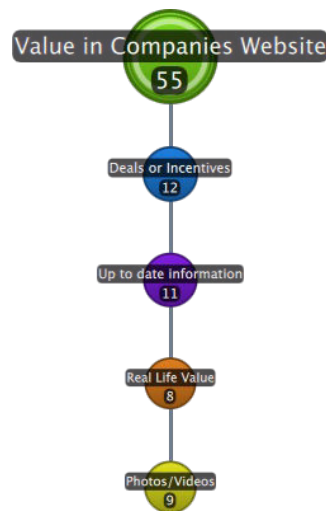


why customers want to return. This also prompted ideas around brand and customer loyalty. Another key theme concerned online engagement; discussions revolved around content items that are appealing and interesting to users. Figure H provides phrases or words used to describe why the customers would return to the Fairmont.



Figure K: Value in a Companies Website

## Quirk Hierarchy: Value in Companies Website



The discussion of value within a company's website provided the chance for the interviewees to share what they found valuable and important within the websites. The feedback was grouped into the 4 most popular topics the interviews provided which were deals or incentives, up to date information, real life value and photos or videos. These were the top areas that were valued on a brand's website by those interviewed. Figure I provides the details of themes associated with

Figure M: Quirkos Hierarchy: Fairmont Online Engagement Themes

## Quirk Hierarchy: Fairmont Online Engagement



why customers engage online with the Fairmont.

Table S provides a summary of words and phrases that were associated with each of the questions and mentions the topics with a short description. It also details the number of codes and quirk themes collected in the sample. For example the online engagement theme was associated with the planning phase of a trip and why a customer might go online and look at the FM website.

Table S: Quirkos Table of Themes Summary

# Quirks Summary

Quirk Title	Parent	Grandparent	Description	Author	Date	Total Codes
Important Websites Search			The most important websites mentioned by the interviewees	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 9:42:57 AM	50
Curated Content	Important Websites Search		Websites or bloggers providing a selection of information online.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:21:52 PM	18
Good Images	Important Websites Search		Pleasing Photos	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 11:56:46 AM	5
Ease of Navigation	Important Websites Search		Simple website easy to manuver.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:22:19 PM	0
Information Find	Important Websites Search		Important information price, availablilty, amenitites, etc.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:22:30 PM	6
Value in Companies Website			What does the customer value in a companies website?	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:22:40 PM	55
Deals or Incentives	Value in Companies Website		Price reductions, special promotions or any incentivised reason to book.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:23:41 PM	12
Up to date information	Value in Companies Website		Website information is accurate.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:21:35 PM	11

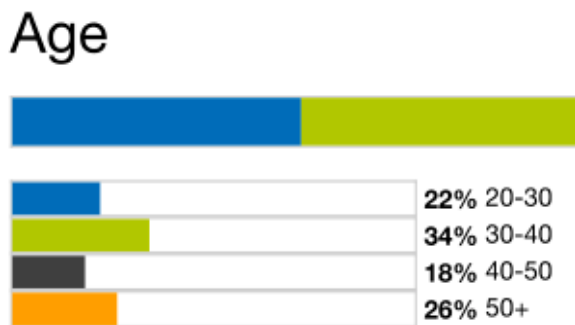
Real Life Value	Value in Companies Website		Real people providing endorsements rather than marketing jargon.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:24:20 PM	8
Photos/Videos	Value in Companies Website		Providing important information in the visual aid.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:25:08 PM	9
Return to the Fairmont			What makes an interviewee return to the Fairmont	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 9:44:17 AM	50
Brand loyalty	Return to the Fairmont		What makes a user choose one hotel brand over another	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 9:44:11 AM	39
Trust	Return to the Fairmont		Believing and placing faith in the brand.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:28:12 PM	10
Know what to expect	Return to the Fairmont		Having an understanding and awareness of the brand and their standard.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:28:47 PM	20
Recognition	Return to the Fairmont		Being recognized at the Fairmont hotels.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:32:44 PM	6
Fairmont Online Engagement			The Fairmont's user of online and social connection with the customer	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:29:04 PM	46
Social Media Habits	Fairmont Online Engagement		An individuals use of online social networks.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:32:31 PM	23
Not Connecting Online	Fairmont Online Engagement		Guest not communicating with the Fairmont online.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:29:34 PM	6

Online Realness	Fairmont Online Engagement		User generating content holds greater validity than information from the companies marketing material.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:30:30 PM	4
Speed & Essentials	Fairmont Online Engagement		User only looking for essential booking information - price and availability.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:31:34 PM	3
Planning Phase of Trip	Fairmont Online Engagement		Time when checking out Fairmont Moments - trip planning, pre booking.	Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 12:30:55 PM	5
				Customer Interviews 1	Feb 7, 2017 11:56:27 AM	0
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CODES</b>						<b>386</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF QUIRKS</b>						<b>22</b>

Following this, the age range of each individual interviewed was recorded. This sample provided statistics that detail: 22% interviewed were between the ages of 20-30 years, 34% between 30-40 years, 18% between 40-50 and 26% were 50+. The researcher attempted to have an even mix between all age ranges. (See Figure K: Quirkos Customer Ages.)

Next the interview asked for education levels of the interviewees (See Figure K).

**Figure N: Quirkos Customer Ages**

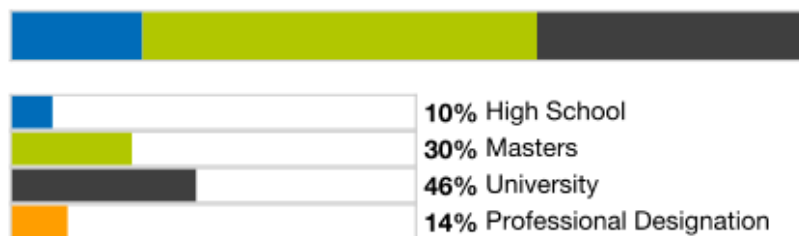


The education level reached by each interviewee was recorded as a way to understand the sample in more detail. Previous studies have positively linked education and Internet shopping where the premise was a certain level of skill and knowledge was required to navigate the Internet (Akhter 2012).

In this study the breakdown of education is 10% have completed high school education, while 46% have completed an undergraduate university program. A further 30% have completed a masters designation, and 14% of the sample have gone on to do a professional designation, e.g. lawyer, doctor. Overall, in this study, the level of education is quite high for a population sample (See figure L).

**Figure O: Quirkos Customer Education of Interview Sample**

## Education



Obtaining information like age and education gives an understanding of the audience. The link between education and income is explored as there has been previous work that details the link between education levels and higher income; this is also linked to online purchases (Akhter, 2012). From these discussions, the key areas of trust, social media habits, curated content, deals or incentives, and expectations, provide insight into the significant areas surrounding value of the brand.

### **Online Web Search**

The interviews provided insight into the type of information that the traveller is searching for online. Following the management interviews, the customer interviews provided insight into the

areas of online technology and into the importance for the hotel to stay current with the latest ways to connect with the customer online. From the customer discussion, various areas were revealed for online search and information gathering; some interviewees were interested in specific aggregator websites like Trivago, Booking.com or hotels.com. These customers were loyal to these websites as a go-to when searching, either first, and then checking out the corporate website; or only using the aggregators to search for information, such as examples from Sources 7, 1 and 6.

” I often refer to customer reviews or websites for information first like lescape. I love good photos, a must on any website.

Source: *Source 7*

” I use hotels.com to do most of my bookings. I use it because it keeps all my bookings organized in one place and I get points/free nights based on my bookings. Really it just keeps me organized and I know where to find my reservations

Source: *Source 1*

” I would identify the website on their corporate website. I also go to TripAdvisor to check on what other people are saying. I'm more interested in the corporate website, less on bloggers

Source: *Source 6*

Others are more interested in the company website as they are looking for specific information such as price, dates, availability; less important to them is other information like bloggers opinions or recipes. These individuals also cited that their time is limited and they require specific information to help them book.

While others interviewed were interested in recommendations from friends in providing information of interest based on their shared standards. From the recommendations they would go online and check out the photos and other booking details. (See Sources 12, 28, 30)

**”** I also go on recommendations, and from the recommendation I'll go on the website to get more information. Both friends and family recommendations, that you put more weight on certain people's recommendations based on knowing their preferences.

Source: *Source 12*

**”** Not at the beginning. I mostly take a recommendation from a friend then from there I would go online.

Source: *Source 28*

**”** Yes it is. Yeah I book most of my travel through booking.com. Why because in the beginning I found there was a lot of chose and in the beginning as a member I can rank and rate the hotels. I look for 8/10 rating in my search and then from there I look at photos. I find from the first few photos you can tell a lot and go from there.

Source: *Source 30*

Overall it was evident that most of the interviewees used online as an important research tool even if it was just to look up the phone number in order to call the hotel to book. One of the



interviewees did say his wife does all the bookings and he doesn't go online but recognizes that if he was doing the booking he would be forced to become more proficient in web searches. Many of those interviewed mentioned using a variety of devices from smart phones, to ipads, and computers. (See Sources 15, 26.)

” For both business and leisure online information is always the first point of contact. I travel a lot for work internationally and although I have to go with the company brands for travel within the Starwood network, its important for me to find out local information online about the hotel restaurants, gym, local area etc.

Source: *Source 15*

” Yes I use my computer and smart phone to look up and research trips. I always refer to the online searching and corporate websites when booking. I really like the Four Seasons and my dad loved staying in nice hotels so that was fantastic when we were travelling to Cape Town or Switzerland.

Source: *Source 26*

The variety of information sources range from Facebook feeds for users to see where their friends were staying to blogs like iTrip and iEscapes. Good photos were stated as a key resource to gain a better understanding of the hotel; videos were preferred by some. Those that were not keen on the videos said it was a time constraint; they didn't want to have to watch an entire video and often were using smart phones where the sound was annoying. (See Sources 41, 24)

” Yes I definitely search online. I go to review websites, company websites, some blogs like iTrip I like for the good photos. I also scroll my Facebook feeds or see the sorts of people that check in to various hotels on Facebook to get a better feel for the sort of customer that they attract.

Source: *Source 24*

” Yes definitely, I book most everything online. Rarely call. Most information is online and frankly it's easier and quicker to book things online. I always check out review websites or recommendations by others. You get a feel by reading peoples other choices or reviews and know if they are just annoying complainers or if they seem like reasonable, similar to me vibe.

Source: *Source 41*

### **Value in a Company's Website**

The interviewees were asked to share what they valued in a company's website. Users were mainly providing information about the visual elements associated with the websites. Many users shared that, on a company's website, clear, beautiful photos and pictures of the hotel, its amenities and surroundings were significant; less well liked were website videos. While others detailed how they wanted a very simple, clear easy-to-use website that wasn't cluttered; It was important to many users that price, availability, location and amenities were easily found. (See Sources 36, 1)

” I definitely like a lot of pictures, so I can see what might stand out about that hotel.

Source: *Source 36*

” I like good photos, also use the videos sometimes. Sometimes I use reviews to confirm a booking choice

Source: *Source 1*

Some interviewees mentioned that social media was important for the company. Companies must use these platforms such as Instagram and Facebook and hashtags along with guests. One interviewee mentioned that customers would only hashtag themselves when they like the brand and therefore are endorsing or using a word of mouth on social.

Other interviewees suggested that incentives or deals were valued on a company's website. Customers mentioned packages and contests as valuable and that Fairmont did offer a variety of interesting ones. Details such as room sizing were noted especially when family travel necessitated larger rooms and child friendly amenities. (See Sources 4, 11)

” Incentives and deals are also interesting sometimes.

Source: *Source 4*

” Photos, amenities, like a pool. We have three kids and it becomes all about what they want. I use corporate websites but often find an app I use hotels.com to be quite simple, they rank the hotels and have reviews also, so find that quite easy to book

Source: *Source 11*

"Everything needs to be easy" is a phrase that was mentioned in reference to the company's website where the layout and visual appeal needs to be simple. Limited time was also mentioned as a factor that encouraged speed in navigating with easy to find information. (See Source 12)

” Everything needs to be easy, I want to see a contact phone number, I don't want to have to dig for it. Photos, lots of beautiful photos help. Videos, not don't do. I don't mind, I just usually find I'm doing it on the go so I can't really watch or listen to it. I'm using my phone and my ipad. Limited text , marketing bla is annoying. Lots of very visual, easy to navigate, mobile friendly. Booking I normally 50/50 call or book online. Fairmont as an example I don't find it that easy to book online. I call to book with them. Normally stay at the Banff Fairmont, that is where we had our wedding. I find it easy to call them there. In between ? layers, with boutique hotels it's usually easier online.

Source: *Source 12*

Loyalty programs and points were mentioned in both a positive and negative light. Some interviewed mentioned they follow points programs and it dictates where they will stay, especially through work travel. Others ignored these programs and mentioned using loyalty points when booking on an aggregator like booking.com and also for airline travel. (See Source 23)

”

No deals incentives or contest. Privacy, private butler service, if there is a floor that offers additional food or wine then that is important. Good restaurants.

Source: *Source 23*

Contests were also mentioned as an incentive and valuable to the user but were likely to be more popular with the younger age demographic of 20-30. Those in the 40-50 and 50+ did not mention contests as valuable.

Packages were suggested as a way to obtain more value for the money. The phrase of “feel like I’m getting a deal” was used. Fairmont does tend to offer packages for weekend stays where an extra night is included as well as ski and special event packages.

### **Brand Meaning & Loyalty**

The meaning of a brand provides a tool for the customer to determine the hotel clientele as well as the level of service, price and style. This was the understanding of many of the interviewees who all explained it in different ways. One guest described a brand as a reference point of what they can expect. (See Source 1.)

” am loyal to the hotels.com as I mentioned. Other brands give me an understanding of what to expect in terms of quality and price. For example: St Regis collection is the higher end price point for Starwood. I'd stay at the W hotels in New York mainly, price point and location suits, Le Meridian in Europe maybe and Westin sometimes when I need to find something cheaper. Overall the branding for me offers a reference point of what I can expect. I'm not that loyal because I like to try new places and only stay in hotels for personal trips, not business.

Source: *Source 1*

Preferences for certain social or aesthetic programs or practices were mentioned in other interviews as a way to differentiate the Fairmont. Interviewees discussed how the Fairmont focuses on various issues such as the environment through different awareness and practices in hotels. Bees on the roof, herb gardens, BMW electric cars are a few of the programs at the Fairmont that the guests mention (in the netnography phase). The Fairmont is also known for their historic hotels in North America; the rich history and stories associated with the buildings and their architecture are valuable to guests (See Sources 5).

” Um there are two things. I like older hotels, I like the heritage, the old photos, I'm a bit of a history buff. Im also conscious of the environment. I like the fact when they have, you put your towels on the rack and you have the same linen for a few nights. I also like when they have herbs on the roof and I think I saw something about a bee program on the roofs as well at some Fairmonts. All the environmental points are important to me. Oh also the social part, where some of the staff does something nice for special needs children or a family or someone in need.

Source: *Source 5*

The value a brand provides to the customer is unique and described by some interviewed as providing assurance when they are travelling to a less developed or unknown country. Interviewee 11 describes how, when he was living in Asia, the brand provided a level of comfort when his family was staying in an unfamiliar city. (See Source 11)

Others interviewees discuss how recognition is important and valuable. The Fairmont uses a recognition program and strives to remember guests' names as well as keeping a detailed log of all their food and drink items through the stay. Staff will make an effort to anticipate customers' needs based on their consumption patterns.

” Brand gives a re-assurance and that's nice when you're travelling to a country you don't know well. We lived in Asia for a while and had a lot of hit or miss hotels and found to book a brand we knew provided a lot of reassurance.

Source: *Source 11*

” Probably familiarity. I like the Fairmont brand. I also take into account recommendations from friends that are similar to myself in style. Often choosing locations that are appealing close to opera or the symphony.

Source: *Source 34*

Familiarity with a brand is another point of value where the interviewee feels comfortable, “like home”, and provides a level of reassurance to book. The level of brand knowledge and awareness is high when customers are familiar with the brand and have a strong idea of what they can expect from a brand in terms of look, feel and staff service. (See Source 34.)

## Return to Fairmont

There were several reasons listed as to why customers want to return but the main focus was found in the service area particularly to the Gold Floor (which is an offering at select hotels). This floor is known to have a lounge area where guests can have their breakfast, access complementary books, magazines and videos, use an office area, and have a check in/out desk on the floor. This floor provides a secure, relaxing area for guests to feel more exclusive and valued. (See Source 1.)

**”** I love the level of service and the gold floor option. When I'm in Banff I always try and book on the gold floor because it's a real treat.

Source: *Source 1*

Location of the hotels was also another reason for some of those interviewed to return. Location in large cities and in remote parks and private resorts was a top reason for a return. Consistency in service was also mentioned. (See Sources 34,11,3.)

**”** I like the Fairmont in Asia, very luxurious, a high level of service standard, and always beautiful hotels and pools at that.

Source: *Source 11*

**”** Location would be a key factor and consistency in the level of service and knowing they (the brand) wants to maintain a level of customer satisfaction.

Source: *Source 3*



As the Fairmont is a Canadian brand, some interviewees mentioned their allegiance to Canada as a reason to support this brand; this shows a strong awareness that has grown into a familiarity with the brand and the history associated with it. Example hotels include the Banff Springs, the Jasper Park Lodge and the Victoria Empress all showing the deep history and link with Canadian culture. (See Source 7.)

”

Fairmont is a hotel I know well through growing up with the brand in Vancouver/Victoria. I like the familiarity and knowing what I can expect. I also like the use of the gold floor at certain hotels, as I mentioned with a family it all makes a difference.

Source: *Source 7*

## Online Engagement

The interviewees were asked about their experiences online with Fairmont. Some had knowledge of the EAO or FM website and had checked out such items as photos, videos and/or contests and had posted their own personal content; others, a minority, were not aware of the website.

Those that had read postings such as articles or recipes found them primarily useful. One person enjoyed reading the Fairmont magazine found in the hotels and was pleased to find the articles of the magazine online. Many of those interviewed enjoyed reading the recipes of food or drink that they enjoyed in the Fairmont restaurants.

The idea that the website should be linked to Facebook feeds or be involved in Instagram postings was mentioned by one interviewee. The idea that if friends have the Fairmont posting on their social feed, they would be more likely to view the Fairmont post. The post would carry higher importance if it was seen on friends' social feed first – as a recommendation; the idea is that word-of-mouth is still a very important part of any business's marketing and sales strategy. The connection from guests and brand online comes from various social sites and the interaction makes it engaging. This is where the FM social managers on property must push out and connect

with guests to post on Facebook or Instagram as these social connections are vital for the success of the Fairmont online marketing strategy. (See Sources 6, 4, 26.)

” I think I would be more likely to view the photos if it was on Instagram or facebook. If I had to go to a separate website, I probably wouldn't but if it's on the social sites I'm on. If I want to read up or write a review I may go to Facebook. If I want to see photos then Instagram.

Source: *Source 6*

” Yes I have been on Fairmont moments and have found it interesting and useful to pull up recipes of meals I have had in some of the restaurants.

Source: *Source 4*

” I have used the website to check out my favourite drink cocktail before but haven't written and posts. I use social but so far I haven't posted to this website.

Source: *Source 26*

Several of those interviewed mentioned that although they would not post on the website, the younger generations would. The phrase “my children would post” was used in a few instances. (See Source 37.)

” I can understand a younger generation engaging more through social media but it's not my thing. My daughter may like to post photos and share some of the gorgeous pool scenes. When we were in Monaco the pool roof is just incredible so I can see why people post it's just not something I would do but the Fairmont needs to find ways to connecting to new and next generation customers and I think they're doing the right thing by starting early, staying abreast with the technologies and really committing to the customers online.

Source: *Source 37*

## Curated Content

When selecting hotels or brands, customers mentioned that an important resource was the reviews by bloggers, TripAdvisor or other curated content businesses like Conde Naste or Mr. & Mrs. Smith. Bloggers have created a career for themselves as “taste-makers” by picking and choosing products or services that they like and sharing them on a blog website. Brands in different industries have been using bloggers as an important marketing resource and in the hotel industry, the marketing manger will reach out to influential bloggers inviting them for preview days or special exclusive events; the expectation is that the blogger will post a favourable response. It is a softer way for brands to market as it appears the blogger is not paid to write the blog but enticed with some incentive (like free products or event invitations). Other resources like Conde Naste provide a recognizable travel brand and within their online editions or print magazine, provide recommendations for chosen hotels or restaurants. Mr & Mrs Smith is a company that chooses hotels to be a part of their group and offers incentives to stay like a bottle or wine or upgrade in room. Their business works on a membership basis where consumers are paying an annual fee to be a part and the hotels are also required to meet certain standards to be affiliated. These websites are important to those interviewed because these sources reduce the user's search time. Users know that the blogger or brand will select a certain style or level of

”

There is too much information online, I like a curated edited version rather than being inundated by information.

Source: *Source 2*

accommodation; users trust their recommendation. The user can then investigate the choices rather than start from the beginning. Thus, search time and trusted recommendations are the reason many interviewees choose these curated content resources (See Source 2).

## Trust

The word "trust" was used when interviewees were describing what was important in their web search of content; the trust of brand or product was a key element for the user to then book with the hotel. When the interviewees were asked about trust and information online, they mentioned

being influenced by negative information. If there was a negative review, especially when the overall set of reviews was negative, then this heavily influenced their decision. However, when positive information was presented, especially with numerical rating details, booking intentions and consumer trust was increased. This is in line with other research, which suggests that consumers tend to rely on easy-to-process information when evaluating a hotel based upon reviews. The higher levels of trust are also associated with positively framed set of reviews focused on interpersonal service (Spark & Browning, 2011).

### **Know What to Expect**

The phrase of "knowing what to expect" was mentioned in interviews and was an important factor linked to the brand. This is where customers shared that they found it comforting to know

”

It is a brand that I trust. I have stayed with them in countries all over the world and would choose to stay at them because I know how I will be treated and know what to expect.

Source: *Source 4*

the type of hotel aesthetic, the expectation of a certain service level and certain programs (e.g., environmental programs, bikes at certain hotels, canine walking). The brand awareness of customers is very high when they are aware of the hotel and programs and know what to expect when returning. There must also be a high level of expected service for the hotel to stand out which is a highlight voiced in several of the interviews. Specifically the Gold Floor was mentioned as offering a high level of service. (See Sources 16, 4, 7)

”

I love brands that I know. I will chose a trip based on the hotels I know, it gives me a reassurance and trust to book. Mandarin Oriental is a favourite or Raffles if I can, but these are for my Asia trips often. North America - Four Seasons, Hyatt, Fairmont. Europe, often Starwood is quite good.

Source: *Source 16*

” It is a brand that I trust. I have stayed with them in countries all over the world and would choose to stay at them because I know how I will be treated and know what to expect.

Source: *Source 4*

### **Social Media Habits**

Also mentioned in the interviews were the social media habits of users and their children. The question of using or referring to FM website prompted those interviewed to mention they do or do not post on social media feeds. This provided some insight into the users appetite for generating and/or reading content online. Those that were online and using web searches were aware of FM website and have used it at some point either pre or post trip. Those interviewed range in age and this correlated to the writing of posts on FM. Many in the age range of 40-50 and 50+ mentioned that their children would post content onto social feeds; however they would not. While those in the 20-30 age range mentioned that, yes they do post onto FM and other social feeds like Instagram and Facebook. Other studies have shown a similar breakdown in age categorization and use of social media such as the Pew Research Group that is further explored in the discussion. (See source 10.)

” Our kids would post and engage with social media. For myself I'm more conservative with what I do online in posting location, more private. Age and people that advertise what they do, can be both. We are the non-advertising kind of people.

Source: *Source 10*

” I would go on the website, my kids would probably post or hashtag us in but I would have a look at the recipes and articles.

Source: *Source 11*

The themes from the management and customer interviews carry similar threads of knowledge and awareness surrounding the brand and valued online resource (See Table T). The management interviews highlight the important marketing areas and brand message that is being communicated to the guest. The results from the customer interviews suggest that the guest is mirroring similar topics and themes that the brand is trying to communicate. As an example, the Fairmont uses a recognition system where it is important for hotel staff to remember the guest's name and preferences to anticipate future service.

**Table T: Themes from Customer Interviews**

<b>Important Website Search</b>	<b>Return to the Fairmont</b>	<b>Value in a Company's Website</b>	<b>Fairmont Online Engagement</b>
Curated Content	Brand Loyalty	Deals of Incentives	Social Media Habits
Good Images	Trust	Up to date Information	Not connecting online
Ease of Navigation	Know what to expect	Real-life Value	Online Realness

Those interviewed mention that they are aware of the recognition system the Fairmont uses and return because of the superior service. The overall goal of management is to communicate valuable brand information to the user. The customer reinforces that both corporate website and FM website are useful. However it was found, based on age demographic, that corporate website use was higher as a first reference point amongst 30-40 as well as 50+; whereas FM was of primary importance for the 20-30 age demographic who wanted to view what friends were posting through Facebook and Instagram social feeds. Both management and customer can capitalize on the preferences of these age demographics.

When analysing the corporate documents, management interviews and customer interviews in order to answer RQ1, we can distil common themes among the three sections and link the consistency in the message from the marketing department through to the strategy documents

and then flowing through to the consumer. This gives the researcher an understanding that the brand is communicating brand messages in an effective and positive manner resulting in satisfied guests.

### 3.2 RQ 2: Customer Online Value Dimensions

*What are the value dimensions between the firm and customers within the FM Website?*

The results from the research show how resources can be used to understand the consumer roles in collective groups, social structures and different levels of consumer involvement in the brand community enable the researcher to view the value co-creation process.

#### **3.2.1 Phase 4: Netnography Of Online Content – Holbrook and Woodside’s 2007 Value Topology**

The framework used to analyse the data was Holbrook’s (2008) Value Topology as there was a lack of complexity found in the SD Logic framework around value. Holbrook’s framework provides greater depth that reflected the customer driven self-oriented and other-oriented viewpoints.

Netnographic data is pulled from the online website EAO in order to understand the collection of the online fandom and the value created in the virtual community (See Table U). This question discusses the value dimensions from Holbrook’s Value Topology (2008) as synthesized with SD Logic value axiom (FP 6, 7 & 8) in order to understand the value co-creation process. This section focuses on how participants in the value co-creation process bring their set of personal projects or service provisions process to create value on this website. This focus is on the phenomenon of value dimension creation rather than how consumers individually orient value into their life projects.

In the sample in Table U of FM content postings, product information (of the data, author, title of posting sources, actor and social media used) is all provided in the excel spread sheet. Following this, value attributed (being economic, social, hedonic or altruistic) is provided, the exchange being restricted or complex depending if the message was shared online in social media platforms. Finally the coding words associated and the message posted is provided.

**Table U: Netnography NVivo Data from the FM Website**

Date	Author	Title	Source	Actor	Social Media	Value	Exchange	Coding Words associated	Key Phrases
10/1/2012	Muchmu Ch	Good morning Lake Louise!	Photo and comments	Guest Story	3 FB shares / 1 Pin	Social	complex	Thank you, amazing view, memorable, moment	The next morning when we saw out from the window, we were blown out by the amazing view of Lake Louise! It was the best hotel view in the world. Period. Can't say anything more! Thank you Fairmont for providing another memorable moment to me and my girlfriend, and she's now my fiancée.
3/26/2015	Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali	Kawung Pattern	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	restricted	connect, past and present	Ceiling reliefs that connect Bali's past and present. The motif was originally worn only by the Sultan in Java and his family and was one of the forbidden batik motifs for the general population. In this context the Kawung was linked with power, wisdom and justice and was thought to imbue these qualities to the wearer



3/24/2015	Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali	Joglo	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	restricted	tradition, social status,	Joglo is a traditional vernacular house of Javanese people.... Joglo also reflect Javanese social status; this type of building is only reserved for palace (keraton), official residence, government estate, .. A pair of these joglos are located at our Lobby Lounge.
3/31/2016	Rachitk2312	1st Year Marriage anniversary celebration	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	loved, staff, thank you, remarkable (memorable)	"Loved the stay. Had gone to UAE for my 1st marriage anniversary, the hotel staff was so courteous that Santosh at the front desk upgraded me to a bigger room when he got to know that. A cake was sent to my room wishing me anniversary. ...Thanks guys for making this time a remarkable one."
3/17/2015	Maurice Shriqui	Une histoire de famille	Comment	Guest	None	Altruistic	restricted	packages, staff contact, relationships	" We participated in the Christmas packages, New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween and even now the incident on Christmas Eve, and the engagement of my son...Our children were eager to find some staff and we always kept my contact with life at the Chateau Montebello Céline Longue"
3/26/2015	Farrell Monaco	A Fairmont courtship calls for a Fairmont wedding.		Guest	None	Social	restricted	memories, Fairmont properties	"When Sam met Farrell, an Italian-American courted a British-Canadian in the most memorable of ways. From lunches, shopping and post-hockey game drinks at the Hotel Vancouver to weekend getaways at The Empress; the Monaco's shared their fondest memories of early courtship at Fairmont properties. "
16-Aug-14	The Fairmont Copley Plaza	Alexandra & Jared's Wedding at The Fairmont Copley Plaza	Photo and comments	Fairmont	One recommendation	Social	complex	wedding, history, grandeur	"Married in a location that epitomized the history and grandeur of Boston..."Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont?

3/17/2015	Tlmitch	Easter Weekend at the Empress	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	memories, beauty, celebrate	I visited this beautiful hotel when I was a kid and had wonderful memories. I was excited to return and make more memories with my own kids. We spent a beautiful spring weekend at the Empress enjoying the pool, walking the beautiful grounds full of blooming tulips, and celebrating with a wonderful Easter brunch at the hotel.
3/8/2015	Dr David Cawood	A Golden night at the airport in Vancouver...	Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	Gold room, details, staff	"Everything about the stay in a Gold room was perfect thank you. I can't think of any detail that was not attended to! My wife also was especially pleased. I was particularly impressed with the standard of evening snacks and then what is really a full breakfast"
2/11/2015	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	It's Heavy, Man!	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Social	restricted	staff (by name)	"The tour, which starts at the Fairmont, includes local parks, some of Chicago's world-famous architecture and, of course, heated jackets...Recently our Sales Team journeyed out with Margaret and took advantage of everything Chicago has to offer in the winter!"
1/24/2015	Heather Mccoll	Wonderful Memories	Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	thank you, impeccable service, multiple hotels mentioned	"I always stay will stay at the Royal York while I visited Toronto. I have also stayed at Tbe Fairmount Empress in Victoria, Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.. All wonderful. I hope to stay at the Fairmont in New York City during March Break with my so..Thank you so much for al the years of impeccable service Royal York and Fairmont!"
1/18/2015	Gabrielle Vézina	Frederick & Gabrielle 23-08-2014, salle de bal du Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	true fairy tale, marriage, memorable day, dream location	"We had a beautiful testimonial from several people that we like very much, it was very moving. .... It was a memorable day in a dream location. A true fairy counted !!!! (Fairmont not mentioned)"

1/30/2015	HailToTheGael	A Calgary Christmas	Video and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	staff, culture, the best time	"My sister and I were fortunate enough to stay at the Fairmont Palliser during the holiday season. Calgary is a beautiful city with so much culture. The hotel employees are wonderful! They made sure we had the best time during our stay, and we did!"
7/15/2014	Chet313	Bermuda Adventure	Photo and comments	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	beautiful, thank you, warm hospitality	"A beautiful getaway to the island of Bermuda! Thank you for the warm sunshine and hospitality!"
7/12/2014	Ct	Super Excited at the Fairmont Beijing	Comments	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	exceptional experience, staff	"Just had an exceptional experience at the Fairmont, Beijing... Cannot recommend enjoying this experience yourself enough if you are in Beijing. A restaurant and staff that Fairmont can be very proud. "
10/26/2014	Jeffrey	Early Autumn at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Hedonic	restricted	Fairmont	"I decided on a driving visit from Calgary to Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.... In the Grand Lodge, the best views are in the Emerald Lounge and in the Cavell Dining Room"
10/3/2014	Fairmont Royal York	"Fluffy Bear"	Photo and Comment	Fairmont	None	Hedonic	restricted	housekeeping team, client's child	A young guest lost his stuffed animal buddy named, "Fluffy Bear" and our Housekeeping team was called to assist. After finding the bear, we called the young guest's parents to advise them that fluffy bear was found, but would like to wash him if possible. We gave the bear a "bath" and returned him to the guest. Accompanying Fluffy Bear was a stuffed lion and a note that read, "I am sorry I was not with you last night. I went on an adventure with my new friend, Roy. I hope we can make him part of our family? Your friend, Fluffy bear.
6/25/2014	joypecknold.	Wombs for the Grownups	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Spa	"Wombs for grownups."

6/25/2014	islandfeversisters.	In Honor of National Flip Flop Day	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex		"In honor of National Flip Flop Day, the only pair of @ipanemausa that came with us on our trip last weekend. #ipanemausa #ipanemabossa "
6/26/2014	Ji	Fairmont Queen Elizabeth	Photo and Comment	Guest	7 FB, 1 Tweet	Hedonic	complex	view, Gold Lounge	"View from Fairmont Gold Club Lounge"
6/25/2014	willowstreamspa.	Ladies Lunch and Spa Day	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	celebrate, Willow Stream Spa	"Good times are even better when they're shared. This spring, celebrate with your friends and loved ones in a Fairmont suite, then relax and #findyourenergy in our luxurious #spa. Get Social @willowstreamspa - Tag your #spaselfie #spasocial #spaday' "
6/25/2014	willowstreamspa	Wellness Wednesday	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Willow Stream Spa, unique	"WellnessWednesday Tip: Feel like you're floating on water with the "wave table" at our Willow Stream Spa. This unique treatment table moves with the soft, rhythmic motions of the therapist, creating a deeply relaxing escape"
6/25/2014	Fairmont kealani	Pick your favourite Colour	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Maui Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Willow Stream Spa	"Pick your favorite color! We now have several different colors of travel size OPI polish to play with! #WillowStreamSpa #WillowStreamMaui #NailPolish #Travelsize' "
6/25/2014	Fairmont kealani	Fathers Day Offer	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Maui Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Father day, promotion,	"Father's Day is right around the corner! Why not treat dad to a day at the spa? The Willow Stream Spa is now offering \$25 off any regular priced spa experiences through Wednesday, June 18, just for dads! He'll be happy you did! Call 808.875.2229 for details and reservations. #Maui #willowstreamspa #FathersDay"

6/25/2014	dosaismy life	Beautiful Food	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Beautiful food	"Beautiful food. #cakes #pastries #afternoontea #thesavoy #posh #family #qualitea #orientalbeauty #matcha"
6/25/2014	azerbaycanch1v1nstagram	Foto @aircooled1302	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Fire of Baku	"Foto: @aircooled1302 Andrea Casati #FlameTowers Dear friends! We announced the #project "#Fire of #Baku" To participate in the project: add under the photo made by you 1) #azerbaycanch1v1nstagram and 2)@azerbaycanch1v1nstagram #FireofBaku The project also involve photos of our active followers, attracted attention and other random pages"
6/25/2014	fairmont copley/	Carly Copley Canine	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Copley	From Instagram	Social	complex	Dog Program	"Carly Copley learning some new tricks! "
12/20/2014	Jeffrey	Teddy Bear Suite at The Fairmont Olympic Hotel Seattle	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic/ Altruistic	restricted	Time-out break, Charity	I have taken a "time-out". "benefit for Seattle Children's Hospital."
12/12/2014	Travelfiend	A tale of Exceptional Service	Photo and Comment	Guest	Dialog in comments Fairmont Mayakoba & Guest	Hedonic	complex	Service (staff by name), staff training	"As part of our reservation we were assigned Ricardo Bahena as our butler....Thank you Ricardo and kudos to the Fairmont for hiring and training staff that truly puts the needs of the guest first."
10/2/2014	Tinu Mathur	Beautiful Sunset SoCal style	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Thank you, love Fairmont	"September evening view from my balcony. Thank you to the wonderful staff especially Jackie Kearns for her hospitality. Love this property!"
6/25/2014	fairmont beijing.	Imagine a day spent floating on Houhai Lake...	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Beijing	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	relaxing, Willow Stream Spa	"Imagine a day spent floating on Houhai Lake. Then, after a day of restaurants, bars, and lounging on the water come back to Fairmont abridging and treat yourself to a famous Relaxation massage at our Willow Stream Spa"

6/25/2014	elliegraceashton	Welcome to my day! #willowstream #gym #relaxation	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Willow Stream Spa	"Welcome to my day! #willowstream #gym #relaxation"
6/25/2014	Fairmont southampton	We are obsessed with our new @joyastudio hand & body cream	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Southhampton	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Willow Stream Spa service	"hand & body cream in our signature lemongrass & guava scent at our @willowstreamspa"
6/25/2014	fairmont kealani.	Yesterday at the employee appreciation lunch...	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Kealani	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	cuisine, Amal (restaurant)	"at the employee appreciation luncheon, all of the staff had the opportunity to taste the cuisine from our new poolside restaurant, Ama! A favourite was the Grilled Fish Taco with Spicy Mango Salsa! "
6/25/2014	point4dave.	#RoomView #BanffSprings Hotel	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	View	#RoomView #BanffSpringsHotel
6/25/2014	fairmont whistler.	Flash back Friday #fbf	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Whistler	From Instagram	Hedonic/ Altruistic	complex	Catering quality of décor	"We had snowflake ice sculptures as centre pieces on all 30 tables during a recent gala from late March"
6/17/2014	Ester	Unforgettable experience at the Fairmont	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic	restricted	Unforgettable experience, gorgeous sea view, delicious, thank you	"Unforgettable experience at Fairmont...gorgeous sea view from our Deluxe, stunning sunrises on the high terrace overlooking Montecarlo and the sea while having the delicious breakfast at l'Horizon.....everything you could wish for a perfect (even though short) vacation. Thank you to all of U!"
5/30/2014	Bybruce Russell	Tiffani & Ari - The Savoy	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic	restricted	Wedding	The Savoy wedding
20-Apr-13	fairmont copley	A Fairmont Wedding at The Fairmont Copley Plaza	24 Photos and comments	Fairmont Copley	Google plus share	Social	complex	beauty, grandeur,	"The beauty and grandeur of The Fairmont Copley Plaza's Grand Ballroom" Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont?.."

5/15/2014	Martine Kelly	Happy	Photo and Comment	Guest	FB share	Hedonic	complex	Happy, excitement (photo jumping for joy)	"Writing how I feel in the sand staying at Fairmont the palm Dubai and jumping for joy ..HAPPY :-)"
3/7/2014	fairmont copley	You never know who might check you in...'	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Copley	From Instagram	Social	complex	Dog Program	'You never know who might check you in...' by Instagram user fairmontcopley.
3/7/2014	suzanne wenz	I never get tired of walking down Peacock Alley. #fairmonthotels #historicboston #boston #igersboston #copleyplaza	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Fairmont design	I never get tired of walking down Peacock Alley.
3/7/2014	airmontnanjing.	Food tastings are most definitely not the hardest part of the job	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Nanjing	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Employee benefits, positive	"Food tastings are most definitely not the hardest part of the job"
3/18/2014	Fatpandavan	'Sushi at a spa. Only in Vancouver'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Food Restaurant (Vancouver)	Sushi at a spa. Only in Vancouver' by Instagram user fatpandavan.
3/18/2014	fairmontnanjing	58 RMB all you can drink for ladies at Music@61 at The Fairmont Nanjing.	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Nanjing	From Instagram	Economic /Social Value	complex	Fairmont Offer	"58 RMB all you can drink for ladies at Music@61 at The Fairmont Nanjing. Starts tomorrow and lasts until March 15th!"

3/7/2014	lady_light	The vows! #ckandray #fairmontmayakoba #mayakoba #wedding #playaweddings #playadelcarmen	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Wedding	"The vows! #ckandray #fairmontmayakoba #mayakoba #wedding #playaweddings #playadelcarmen"
3/7/2014	jinlovestoat.	Happy Birthday	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Thank you, beauty	"Thank you, Chef Miko, for creating this beauty!"
2/24/2014	Jrioux	Weekend getaway Feb 21	Photo and Comment	Guest	6 FB shares	Hedonic	complex	Pamper, Welcoming, pamper,	"On this weekend I was making it a point to pamper my sweetie with a stay at Montebello and a stay at Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. "
3/7/2014	Rohitinspace	Beautiful Evening At #FairmontJaipur. #AravaliHills #Rajasthan.	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Beautiful evening	Beautiful Evening At #FairmontJaipur. #AravaliHills #Rajasthan.
3/7/2014	Fairmont 1234	Ghirardelli chocolate shop is ready for the holidays! #sfre #fairmontghirardelli	Photo and Comment	Fairmont	From Instagram	Social	complex	Local purveyor	Ghirardelli chocolate shop is ready for the holidays! #sfre #fairmontghirardelli
2/17/2014	Monica	Staff Meeting at the Fairmont	Photo and Comment	Guest Story	No	Hedonic	restricted	Staff trip, fabulous location	"Our Dental Office enjoyed a week at the Fairmont in Wailea , Maui. Fabulous location, we enjoyed the villa, the beach and all that this beautiful location had to offer"



2/18/2014	Fairmont Heliopolis	FAIRMONT HELIOPOLIS & TOWERS HOSTS ERICSSON TOP EXECUTIVES MEETING	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Heliopolis	1 Pin	Social	complex	Management meeting Fairmont selected	"Fairmont Heliopolis & Towers has been selected to host a half day meeting of senior delegation of top management from Sweden and key players in the telecom industry in Egypt and the North African region"
2/4/2014	Fairmont Pacific	"Like" if this is what you had in mind for Cocktail Hour.'	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Pacific	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	SM sharing, Bar	"Like" if this is what you had in mind for Cocktail Hour.' by Instagram user fairmontpacific.
2/4/2014	fuad788	#baku #flametowers #azerbaijan #home'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Fairmont design	#baku #flametowers #azerbaijan #home' by Instagram user fuad788.
1/31/2014	Mkbeautylife	I've just had one of the best weekends of my life! My mom, sister and I went to the #banffsprings hotel this year instead of giving one another gifts	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Best weekends, view, Willow Stream Spa, Lounge,	"I've just had one of the best weekends of my life... The bottom picture was our #view from the #spa #lounge where we sipped on citrus water and cucumber mint water, and snacked on in house made granola bars and a bento box which came with sushi, edaname, seared steak, and quinoa. Everything about this place promotes #natural #healing for both the #bodyandsoul"
1/30/2014	rors1981.	Dubai then and now...amazing !'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Location	Dubai then and now...amazing!' by Instagram user rors1981. (Photo of dubai in 1995 and 2012)
2/4/2014	kingsinlove	Upgrades & Ice Wine	Comment	Guest	No	Social	restricted	Cherished memories, staff	"We had booked the honeymoon suite, but when we arrived the previous occupants had decided to stay an additional night so the hotel upgraded us to an amazing suite just down the steps from the concierge...One evening we were sitting in the wine bar and we were introduced to Vin de Glace, or Ice Wine. We are celebrating our 16th

									anniversary this May and are still drinking Ice Wine. Those are some of our most cherished memories.
1/30/2014	Fairmont Pacific	Toasted to perfection.'	Photo and comments	Fairmont Pacific	Instagram	Social	complex	Food	(photo of lemon merange cakes)
1/29/2014	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	Chicago Concierge Day!	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	None	Altruistic	restricted	Concierge, in honour	"This day is dedicated to all concierge—from residential and corporate to hotel and other types—as a way to formally pay tribute for all they do to make Chicago the world class destination it is...They surely deserve it: Each year, the Chicago Concierge Community makes almost five millions referrals with more than 1.3 million dining recommendations,..."
1/30/2014	vancouverexoticluxury	Matte pink Lamborghini Aventador parked at Fairmont Pacific Rim, spotted the other night.	Photo and Comment	Guest	Instagram	Social	complex	Luxury Cars	Matte pink Lamborghini Aventador parked at Fairmont Pacific Rim, spotted the other night. Follow us and use our hashtag #vancouverEL... @mmdesign_car_wrap' by Instagram user vancouverexoticluxury.
1/30/2014	instamelsa.	Dog sledding in Montebello	Photo and Comment	Guest	Instagram	Social	complex	dog sledding	Dog sledding in Montebello #fairmont #montebello #winter #dogsled #chateaumontebello' by Instagram user instamelsa.
6/26/2013	Willow Stream Spa	Fit Bliss: 8 ways to stay in shape on the road	Photo and Comment	Guest	2 Tweets	Social	complex	Fairmont Fit, Reebok, MP3	" If you're a member of Fairmont President's Club, check out Fairmont Fit (a service that is free for premier and platinum members) It provides Reebok workout apparel and shoes delivered to your room, along with an MP3 player loaded with music, a yoga mat and stretch bands."

4/17/2012	Lshearer	Luxury Vancouver Hotel - Fairmont Pacific Rim	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	incredible experience, BMW Bikes, location, modern design, room features,	The Fairmont Pacific Rim, the newest property, offers guests an incredible experience from check-in to check-out. The modern design and room features are top notch, and the location puts you near all the action. One thing that you must do is use the in-house BMW bikes to ride from the hotel doorsteps around Stanley Park
9/14/2011	Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth	A Day in the Life of a BMW bike at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montréal	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Montreal	None	Social	restricted	BMW bike,	At Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, fashionable & complementary BMW bicycles are at guests' disposal, so hop on and take a day to explore La Belle Ville in style
7/30/2013	efoss3	Perfect stay at the Plaza NYC	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	Happy, extraordinary service, concierge, BMW bikes, welcoming, service	We were so happy with the way we were treated during our stay. All departments gave us service that was extraordinary. The concierge attendants arranged for our use of the BMW bikes and even adjusted the seats for us. A welcoming letter was sent to us ahead of our stay and I mentioned that the stay was a belated birthday for my daughter and a cake was delivered to our room.
4/27/2010	Fairmont Vancouver Airport	Earth Day with Fairmont Vancouver Airport	Comment	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	restricted	Earth day, Charity, community	"On Earth Day colleagues from The Fairmont Vancouver Airport trekked out to McDonald Park for their quarterly clean-up party"
8/25/2013	Lagiosv	Icon of Quebec City	Photo and Comment	Guest	74 FB shares, 1 google, 14 website comments	Social	complex	fairy tale, feel like royalty	(Contest Winner) "Arriving at the Chateau Frontenac is like walking into a fairy tail.....I was made to feel like royalty throughout the visit. Magical."

9/9/2013	cavefish	Henry's First Birthday	Photo and Comment	Guest	536FB shares, 5 google, 31 tweets, 7 pins, 11 website comments	Social	complex	pampered, relaxing, robe	(First Prize) We all really enjoyed being pampered at the Fairmont Pacific Rim in Vancouver. Nothing beats relaxing in a fluffy Fairmont robe on your birthday!
9/7/2013	Tejas Mehta	Best Road Trip Ever!	Photo and Comment	Guest	73FB, 4 google, 16 tweets, 2 pins, 17 website comments	Social	complex	experience, spectacular, actives, property, beauty, wildlife, thank you, memories	(second prize) "The experience was nothing short of spectacular - from the activities at the property to all the surrounding beauty of the park, including our luck in spotting all kinds of wildlife. ... This photo was taken after the sun had set on a gorgeous day and the clouds offered a nice backdrop to the place we called "home" for a week! Thanks for the memories!"
10/10/2013	osweiler family	An Epic Family Celebration at the Fairmont Kea Lani	Photo and Comment	Guest	40 FB, 2 tweets, 2pins	Social	complex	celebrate, property's beach, thank you, memories, staff, property	(contest) I'm the most fortunate man in the world to have gotten to celebrate both 20 years with my wife Kathy and the 4-year birthday of our cherished daughter Elke last month with a few glorious days at the Fairmont Kea Lani on Maui. Here are my gals taking part in our nightly sunset ritual of running around, swimming, laughing, and playing on the property's Polo Beach. Thank you for the stunning memories Fairmont staff and property!
10/8/2013	mellegre sley	A Trip Out West	Photo and Comment	Guest	3 FB likes, 4pins	Social	complex	Lake Louise	We stopped by Lake Louise, walked around the lake, I even tried to go for a swim, but man was it ever cold :P Then we stopped in Banff and took breath taking pictures of both locations.(No Fairmont Connection)

10/8/2013	Gloria	A Fantabulous Home Away From Home!	Photo and Comment	Guest	11FB, 3 webcomments	Social	complex	clean, attentive staff, greeted, staff (name), smile	I can honestly say that we have never stayed in a cleaner or more attentive hotel. On arrival we were greeted by Justin (doorman) who has the biggest smile.
10/6/2013	birthday gal	Picture Perfect Lac Beauvert	Photo and Comment	Guest	2 FB shares	Social	complex	beautiful, Canadian Rockies	It was early morning and the sun was just hitting the boat dock area. The still water produced amazing reflections. It was the perfect scene. In all my travels, I have yet to find a place as beautiful as the Canadian Rockies.
9/29/2013	tpmehta	Cannot beat the Fairmont Banff Springs Experience!	Photo and Comment	Guest	6 FB shares	Social	complex	everything about the stay, views, activities, food, staff, thank you	"Everything about the stay - the activities, the views, the food, and obviously the surrounding attractions made this trip one of the best we've ever been on....What a great vacation! Thanks Fairmont!"
9/23/2013	Michel Loiselle	Fairmont Fireworks!	Photo and Comment	Guest	9FB, 1 tweet, 1 pin	Social	complex	Fairmont Fireworks	This year, I wanted to get a new perspective on this amazing event, so I positioned myself in line with the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa. As you can see, Fairmont Fireworks does not disappoint.
9/18/2013	Sillydebate	The Little Man	Photo and Comment	Guest	13 FB shares	Social	complex	experience, warm greeting, staff (name), bathrobe for child, thrilled	"Our family made a visit to the Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel in Vancouver this June for a long weekend away and it was quite an experience for our toddler son. Each day he was graced with warm greetings from the staff, especially Patrick the concierge who added a greeting for our infant son and a fist bump from time to time as well...One surprise for us was to find a bathrobe that was just our son's size and we still aren't sure who was more thrilled to have it. "

9/22/2013	DT	The amazing beautiful Fairmont Empress in Victoria, BC	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	immaculate, amazing grounds	"I had the opportunity to take my wife for a one night stay at this beautiful hotel before a business trip to Vancouver... The grounds and the hotel were immaculate. Look forward to taking my children to see this amazing hotel in the future."
9/14/2013	Kerry Simpson	Retirement in Paradise.	Photo and Comment	Guest	1FB share	Social	complex	amazing, paradise	After many decades of work with occasional breaks at The Orchid, my wife and I were finally both retired. We found ourselves in a lucky time when real estate was just right to let us sell our home and invest in two smaller homes for our retirement years. We found one place at Oakmont near Santa Rosa CA...and hoped to find a place near our favorite Orchid. We came to Hawaii for three weeks and at the last moment found a condo at The Fairways just minutes from the Orchid! We are now set for an amazing retirement in Paradise!!
9/17/2013	SonaliJaya	Bermuda Dreaming	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 Pin	Social	complex	guest experience, friendly staff	During the past 2 years, I've visited Bermuda twice, staying at the Fairmont both times. Both Fairmont's on the island are so distinct, one from the other, that guests really experience two hotels - the resort-like Southampton and the business-friendly Hamilton Princess.
9/13/2013	Gloria	Fairmont Makati + Boracay = The Perfect Weekend Getaway!	Photo and Comment	Guest	5 FB shares, 1 tweet, 2 web comments	Social	complex		"Staying at Fairmont Makati in the metro gives us the ease of mind of having a feeling of home away from home... On our third day of staycation, we asked the concierge what famous place in the Philippines they would recommend and they gladly told us Boracay is the perfect place!"

9/8/2013	muskwa	Engaged	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	memory, engagement, Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, lifetime	A memory of a life time captured on camera haha.. Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise
9/6/2013	Melissa Mix Hart	Hiking Amongst Ancient Cedars as Chateau Whistler	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share, 2Googleplus, 1 tweet, 2 pins	Social	complex	celebrate, birthday, weekend, activities, dream escape	On the August long weekend, my birthday, my family escaped to Whistler, BC for an exhilarating break of hiking, hiking, hiking in the coastal mountains and then swimming, swimming, swimming and relaxing at the Chateau Whistler Fairmont Hotel. It was a dream escape, we played hard!
9/6/2013	Melissa Mix Hart	Summer Long Weekend at Chateau Whistler	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share, 2 Google, 1 tweet, 3 pins	Social	complex	great service, love	The Chateau Whistler is a Fairmont hotel and I love Fairmonts. I can always count on them to give us great service

### 3.2.2 Summary of Discussion around Netnography Content

The netnographic postings are organized into date of the posting, with further information on the author (name) and the title of the post. Following this the source is recorded being a comment and/or photo with information on the actor – Fairmont or Guest Story. Also recorded is the social media that has been used if any. An example is some postings have a Facebook shares, a Pin (from Pinterest), and some posts are fed into the FM website from Instagram so this is recorded as well. The value dimension is then recorded from Holbrook’s (2008) value topology – economic, social, hedonic and altruistic. The exchange from the SD Logic framework is also recorded involving the complex (more than one share on social media) or restricted (no shares). The exchange provides the researcher with the information of sharing content and therefore content communication and online engagement. The stories that are shared are the ones that are

accomplishing what the marketing department would like. Sharing of content in a natural form by the consumer is the goal for the brand. This promotes the “realness” mentioned in the previous management and consumer interviews.

The contents from the comments are then recorded in coding words associated and key phrases. This information is used in NVivo to group content and find themes amongst the postings. Table R: Netnography NVivo Data from the FM Website contains the information sample of netnographic posts providing an example of some of the findings in order to answer this research question. The researcher analysed 100 customer and firm posts on FM (Table R: Netnographic Content from FM Website). From these 100, 25 were randomly chosen as examples to showcase the analysis within the study. The information gathered from the website provided a rich detail of content to further investigate the themes and topics discussed on the co-creation website. Various themes were found and coding words were established around the content. The data was coded and analysed to determine the dimensions of value that exists in the hotel website. Overall it was determined that customers’ perceived value in their use of hotel information was subjective and this varied among individuals. First, evidence was found of economic, social, hedonic and altruistic dimensions of value. Second, both active and reactive value was found, which represents the activity aspects of experiential value and exchange value.



## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 SD Logic Developments and Use Within Marketing Management

Through this dissertation, it has been argued that the demands of the consumer create complexity for marketing executives. Companies can struggle to keep the consumer interacting with the company through dialog that is valuable to both the customer and the company. Banks & Humphrey's (2008) research suggests co-creation experiences as a solution. The interaction involved with the online brand initiated experience has identified ways to create value within the FM website.

In this case the FM website proposes an online service system (Spohrer, Maglio, 2010; Vargo, Lusch, 2011). The recent discussion within SD Logic to recognize the online ecosystem is mainly due to company led requirements to better understand value co-creation and how it influences the actions and interactions of individual actors (Vargo, Lusch, 2011; Ostrom, 2010).

SD Logic theory discusses actors providing reciprocal services and integrating co-creation experiences with a company service ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). FP 11, states: "Value co-creation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements". Given this, the role of institutions, or the hotel brand in this case, is coordinating value with co-creation. Areas of co-creation within the service ecosystems of social media provides opportunities to better understand the relationship between customer and company.

The creation of value is dependent on the social context of the interconnected relationship described by Edvardsson et al. (2011) as the "social context implies norms and values that exert a profound influence on both the service exchange and the value co-creation process" (p. 239). The focus of this approach is on the utilisation of actors as the operant resource. Operant resources are described by Vargo & Lusch (2008) as the application of knowledge and skills, meaning service is the basis for all value exchange. Thus, the fundamental goal of this concept is not of the value through experience, but of the co-creation of services. Operant resources were

found in employees' knowledge and skills as well as shared experience in customers' online postings.

In 2008 SD Logic extended the concept of value-in-use, and proposed value-in-context to further address the experiential nature of value as captured in FP 10 (Vargo and Lusch, 2008c). Value-in-context encompasses the idea that a customer's interpretation of an experience is attached to the product/service bundles relative to the context in which they are used (Vargo and Lusch, 2008d).

Terms and words used in SD Logic discussions are often different than words associated with business and marketing jargon. Table V describes some of the SD Logic terminology and the matching description within the Fairmont case study.

**Table V: SD Logic Vocabulary & Fairmont Brand Vocabulary to Match**

<b>SD Logic Vocabulary</b>	<b>Fairmont Brand</b>
Co-production	Customer contributed FM content
Co-creation	Customer & Brand interacting together on FM – photos or comments and content sharing
Actors	Employee & Customers
Operand Resources	Technology (hardware), Hotel (building)
Operant Resources	Skills & knowledge of employees
Value-in-Context	Comments and photos in the FM Website
Proposed Value	The company offering (brand partnerships like BMW bikes, Reebok runners with Fairmont Fit)

## 4.2 Value Co-Creation in SD Logic with the Fairmont and the Luxury Customer

Value co-creation is continuing to evolve within the SD Logic debate as suggested by Grönroos and Ravald (2011) who argue that value co-creation requires further clarification and development, and that FP 6 and FP 9 are too simplistic. They suggest that there is a distinct difference between resources and value. Lusch and Vargo (2006d) have also indicated that these FP's still require further elaboration and refinement. Experience sharing on the FM website can form part of this ongoing value discussion.

Over the past decade, rapid advances in both technology and the online digital environment has invigorated the discussion of value co-creation (Gensler, Volckner, Liu-Thompkins & Weirtz, 2013). In this digital world companies are more frequently investing resources to understand the consumers' online behaviour in order to engage with them and provide improved customer service.

### **Phase 1 – Analysis of Corporate Documents**

Within RQ1, the analysis of corporate documents and press releases reveals the focus of the marketing strategy at the Fairmont. The corporate documents discuss the importance of technology and the growing market for mobile apps, digital marketing, and user generated consumer content online. The digital trend and its importance is not surprising as the hospitality industry continues to recognize customer connect through mobile, tablet and online platforms (Deloitte, 2015). The technology focus is also important in SD Logic theory as the addition of FP 11 recognizes a systematic approach within online networks.

The focus of the corporate documents is strongly geared toward the guest experience and the interpretation of the technology involved. The digital platforms of engagement have become linked to the firms' offering (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). If the firm's offering isn't in line

with the customer desires, the firm will have problems connecting with the consumer in the online environment.

The corporate documents also reveal that measurement of consumer experiences, consumer trust and sharing is important to the brand. The brand's employee resources and investment in online platforms and technology forms a large part of company budgets. Technology development must be supported by management through training and marketing in order to make customers aware of the online brand presence.

#### **4.2.1 RQ1: Management Perspective - Digital Currency of the FM**

##### **Website**

In the second part of Phase1, the management interviews, technology and innovations, employee skills, training and development, customer experience, and brand initiatives are all important and recognized in the discussions. The consistency in the message is a positive element for the company, showing that management led discussions are being reinforced.

The semi-structured interviews of 15 FRHI employees support the themes identified in the corporate document and press releases, which highlight the importance of technology, storytelling, and customer experience. The interviews also shed light on new themes such as employee training, internal communication and competitive advantage. Questions were developed with the SD Logic axioms in mind, linking the FP's to the overall theme in order to examine marketing practices within the FM website and the overall marketing strategy at the Fairmont.

The questions were developed with the 4 focused areas (or axioms) of the SD Framework in mind. The focus on value, service, innovation and resource areas allows for the researcher to frame questions in line with other tourism and hospitality studies that place emphasis on these areas as key strengths of co-creation between brand and consumer. The use of SD Logic has been well documented within tourism and travel research; past cases have relied on the axioms to

guide qualitative interviews, while quantitative studies have created more directed questions out of the FP's (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008).

A focus on value co-creation between the customer and the brand is a source of connection; it forms a two-way online dialog and highlights content of interest. This results in value-in-context for the customer, which is one of the main reasons the customer, for example, reads articles or searches for recipes. Value in context can be identified within FP 8, proposed online content, where the brand tries to engage the customer in online dialog the form of a photo or text on a social networking website.

Another identified value premise is reciprocity where providing something generates the reciprocal desire to return the favour. Reciprocity of customers saying “thank you” to employees will be discussed in more detail through FM examples.

The use of online technology and design is of prime importance for a hotel, in order to leverage both online and offline user experience. The redesign of the FM website in 2013 to focus on a Pinterest look continued to keep the site relevant and fresh for the consumer. The social feeds are an evolution of the technology; programs like Facebook Connect allow for easy integration of feeds into co-creation websites like FM. The technology experience also maintains an all important company presence online that translates into the integration of the hotel online and offline experiences.

Microblogging on Twitter serves as an example where 140 characters can be typed, providing a popular way for consumers to communicate thoughts and offer feedback to companies. According to Universal McCann (2014), microblogging is described as using less than 140 characters to share thoughts; it is the fastest social media form today (Universal McCann, 2014). Table W details some of the quotes that highlight the themes of digital currency from the management interviews.

**Table W: Quotes from Management Interviews: Digital Currency**

<i>“Marketing has shifted. Marketing and PR have blended and that is what social media is. People don't want to be broadcasted to, they want to converse...People are jaded. People are looking</i>
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<i>for their peers – word of mouth on steroids (Social media).” (Interview 7)</i>
<i>“Yea 100%, so much of marketing is relying on technology and products. CRM, data mining, analytics, marketing automation, sms, email marketing, payments – everything we do has technology behind it.” (Interview 9)</i>
<i>“Digital marketing is at the helm of everything we do and every customer touch point today...it ties in to the distribution strategy, technology, data and insight, b to b, service strategy – everything.” (Interview 2)</i>
<i>“When I speak to vendors they say we are ahead of the curve (technology).” (Interview 8)</i>
<i>“Social is big. All properties have social – dedicated twitter feeds; we want to make sure the loop is closed and keeping business in our own channels. Guests and potential guests stay close rather than going to a third party.”(Interview 6)</i>

**Connect to Customer Through Online Data**

Smart phones, ipads and various android smart phones have all made it easy for consumers to quickly click on an email link reminding them to submit a review of a hotel they have just left. The consumer ease created through technology has allowed consumers to quickly and easily contribute content on websites like FM. The technological environment has allowed for the exponential increase, by consumers and company alike, of co-creation content. The content allows the brand to feel close to the customer and know what the customer thinks and wants (See Table X).

**Table X: Quotes from Management Interviews: Connect to Customer through Data**

<i>“We gather a lot of different data in our loyalty program. As an example, if a member orders a dish or a drink – through all the hotels and all the different companies this is available so we can see what they like. A way we try and share information and please the guest. Data and information is key for us to feel close to the customer.” (Interview 5)</i>
<i>“Big data shows what the customer likes and wants through past decisions. Through our loyalty</i>

*program our role is to know what they will want before they ask...to give them exceptional experiences.” (Interview 6)*

## **4.2.2 Online Experience of Value by Customer and Company**

The main reason for the development of FM in 2009/10 was to create a destination where consumers and company could connect and share experiences online. As well as being a brand managed website, the FM site was also set up to serve as a timely and comprehensive resource for travellers seeking specific information about the hotel. The website was designed to support rich media content and high quality digital video from the Fairmont, ranging from tours of hotel suites made famous by visiting VIP’s to tips on how to fully explore the local area and how to maximize one’s stay. As well, interaction via the plethora of social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Facebook) allows for a single post to connect onto to FM. Ensuring a sense of authenticity was also important to the company, which included the encouragement of fans to post their own short video vignettes from their travels.

### ***Rich History of Company***

As well as high profile guests, the hotel group has a rich heritage based on historical events that have actually taken place within the hotels, such as the drafting and signing of the United Nations Charter at San Francisco’s Fairmont in 1945. Incidentally, the hotel is one of two buildings to survive the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. With the history of the Fairmont hotels, a natural fit offline has created momentum online when consumers are interested in sharing stories. An important goal of the hotel’s website FM was to provide an easy place for consumers and the company to share memories (See Table Y).

### **Table Y: Quotes from Management Interviews: Showcasing the Stories**

*“Fairmont has FM because of its history – Banff Springs, Lake Louise – our hotels are a must see for people and the continent (Just wondering if ‘continent’ is the right word. Makes*

*absolutely no sense to me!) is a repository for stories and history of the various properties.”*  
*(Interview 8)*

*Fairmont – moments and memories, Raffles – more street luxury, Swisshotel – green eco-friendly business traveller. FM fits into memories and moments reflection of the company and allows us to showcase this. (Interview 8)*

*“It’s about communication of value each customer is looking for. Others just want to communicate when they arrive at the hotel or pick up the phone to make a restaurant reservation before they arrive. More and more are communicating online through social media platforms.”*  
*(Interview 5)*

**Real life value** is discussed showing the “realness” of the communication of consumers. Real live value was also a theme mentioned in the customer interviews and online documents indicating that this is an important area for marketing and consumer value. The idea of trust surrounded the area of other people’s comments being authentic rather than marketing jargon. This form of marketing is seen by marketers to often be more powerful than anything a marketing department could create. The power of online word of mouth is something still very relevant and essential in the hotel online marketing area (See Table Z).

**Table Z: Quotes from Management Interviews: Real Life Value**

*“We provide value because we give them (customers) an outlet....Building a database of real images....Real users experiences rather than telling you that it’s a great place to stay”*  
*(Interview 1)*

*“Social media gives an opportunity for guests to read and get inspiration on our properties. It’s very engaging. It’s underutilised to drive traffic....Just as the traveller wants to go to one of the properties – user content of our guests is far more appealing for potential guests to read than pre-fabricated marketing stuff the company creates.” (Interview 4)*

*“It’s a thank you to us...the outcome is building a huge data base of content.” (Interview 1)*



Value-in-context encompasses the idea that a customer's interpretation of an experience is attached to product/service bundles in relation to the context in which they are used (Vargo and Lusch, 2008d). Social media networks allow a company to connect with a large volume of customers or potential customers online. The significance in managing information technology is addressed by Vargo, Lusch, and Tanniru (2010, pp. 22–23) in referring to networks and ecosystems of service when looking at web and social media context. Value-in-context is an important dimension of SD Logic when discussing value co-creation because it frames service and the resources of an entire service ecosystem. It can be noted that Vargo and Lusch revised the GD logic-oriented concept of “value-in-use” to a more SD logic-friendly concept of “value-in-context” (Vargo, 2009; Vargo et al., 2014) in reference to networks and service ecosystems online. If a brand shares a Facebook posting with its fans, and fans then “share” and “like” the posting, this can be viewed as a network of actors that are interacting and finding the online context valuable, as they are co-creating exchanges in the ecosystem of the Facebook platform (Belk, 2009).

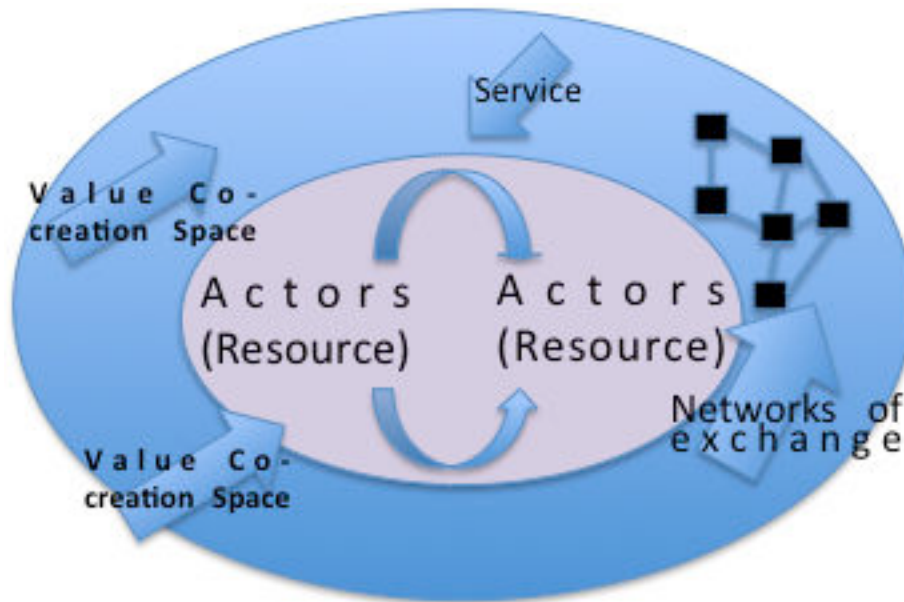
### **4.2.3 Knowledge Sharing Culture within the FM Website**

Resource integrators are SD Logic actors, in our case both customers and employee are the actors that are providing the resource. For the purposes of this study, the resources are both physical (operand) in the form of the hotel and the online platform FM as well as skills/intangible (operant) in the form of employee knowledge. The interaction of resources are key in the hospitality setting due to the need for both to exist because a service is being offered along with the product, both happening simultaneously and in an inseparable form.

Figure M: Exchange through Resource Integration and Value Co-Creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2014), demonstrates the interaction and exchange in the hospitality industry that can occur through resource integration and value co-creation. This diagram shows the combination of

employee and customer interaction in a network of interactions which are combined within a value generating co-creating space. Through the interactions and sources, together the interaction is value co-creating for both actors.

**Figure P: Exchange through Resource Integration (modified from Vargo & Lusch, 2014)**



Operand resources are defined as the physical products associated with a brand. In this case, operand resources refer to the hotel product, employee manpower and the FM platform. Key topics are discussed concerning the integration of these operand resources in terms of innovation and technology.

Resource integration can also describe the process of innovation. Three steps are associated with innovation: first, innovation is the building block where all social and economic actors are resource integrators; second, resource integration results in resource creation; and third, new resources are created and integrated with other resources.

Employees discuss innovation and technology development as they realize that they are integral to the hospitality industry. Of prime importance is a strong focus for digital development coming from management. This is evident from selected quotes in the management interviews (See Table AA).

**Table AA: Quotes from Management Interviews: Digital Focus**

<p><i>“Distribution marketing is the foundation of everything we do and that ties into the distribution strategy, technology, data and insight, business to business, service strategy – everything from user generated content, mobile strategies, blogs, online, partnerships, multilingual – it all revolves around digital.” (Interview 2)</i></p>
<p><i>“Given our active community it helps build the case and we need to continue to invest in these platforms. It’s a very dynamic world, a very reactionary world and if anything comes across as negative it needs to be dealt with right away.” (Interview 2)</i></p>
<p><i>“I think FM fills a void that TripAdvisor (TA) doesn’t. FM is very different because it is more storytelling – like a customer review. That extra voice you need. You’ll use TA to check the ratings but use FM to shape your trip and what you will do.” (Interview 4)</i></p>
<p><i>“We are heading in a more digital focus.” (Interview 4)</i></p>
<p><i>“We see new channels like Instagram is becoming more important than others...In terms of engagement we are trying to find out the influencer. We see a lot of traditional Facebook, Twitter and now Instagram. Important part about co-creation is that it provides a bit more information and makes it real by giving examples and real situations; we know content is key.” (Interview 5)</i></p>

As opposed to operand resources, operant resources, the intangible skill or “know how” of employees is crucial to maintaining and growing an advantage over the competition. The human actor resource involving recruitment and retention of exceptional employees is key to a successful organization. Thus an important aspect of the FRHI management strategy is the implementation of training programs designed to develop and educate employees.

Because business enterprises face the constant need to stay relevant and increase revenues, growing and developing employees is central to any hospitality company’s strategy. The end

result is crucial, and that is why exceptional employees are so valued - those who think and solve problems on their feet. This is illustrated in the selected comments from management interviews (See Table BB).

The evolving of technology and continual investment in it is important so that resources are made available in the operant area in order that the brand can stay competitive in the industry. Vargo & Lusch (2004) suggest that this is particularly noted within hospitality due to the information intensive industry that it is.

Knowledge sharing technology systems and software are also key in the management of data and customer resources. FRHI maintains leading products when it comes to employee technologies in order to use the data on a knowledge sharing bases. Key quotes are detailed in Table BB.

**Table BB: Quotes from Management Interviews: Knowledge Sharing Culture**

<p><i>“We do at corporate office (share employee knowledge) because most of our teams have multiple disciplines within them. Again I am part of the digital marketing team and between the loyalty team, we do a lot of knowledge sharing – so yes I think we do this quite well. In meetings we share best practices, conferences, emails and online systems we use.” (Interview 4)</i></p>
<p><i>We have an internal Internet that we use for internal communication and communication on email. It’s an important daily activity among departments and colleagues that are in different cities.” (Interview 6)</i></p>
<p><i>“Either before the guest steps on the property, during the stay or after the stay, guests are logging on and sharing their experiences and learning from staff. Staff Knowledge and the ability to touch guests in a memorable way is the key to great guest experiences. (Interview 6)</i></p>

Employees interviewed demonstrated a sense of concern for providing the best possible guest experience to customers. Continuous learning is expressed as an important element of the company culture. It was noted that in some interviews managers expressed a need for self-

analysis in order to continually improve; as well they suggested, in a negative vein, that the company could be doing more to attract customers and to be more efficient. This could be viewed from the positive perspective that sees that the company is working towards improvement in their internal development. One interviewee expressed that FM was underutilized and that the website could be better used to drive traffic and generate more content. (Interview 4, FP8). Key quotes are detailed in Table CC.

**Table CC: Quotes from Management Interviews: Learn from Guests**

<i>“We can learn about what’s important to the guests.” (Interview 1)</i>
<i>“Another area of co-collaboration is a social media channel where our properties are involved in discussing feedback and service issues – we have a strong service culture, service issues are taken very seriously.” (Interview 6)</i>
<i>“We have an internal Internet that we use for internal communication, and communication on email is an important daily activity amongst department and colleagues that are in different cities.” (Interview 6)</i>
<i>“We are always learning from our guests and gaining insights. Innovation and continual adoption of technologies is imperative especially in our line of business – hotels. We are an information rich business and need to stay on top of what the information means to continual innovation.” (Interview 9)</i>

***Under Utilized Opportunity***

Management also expressed the under used application of the website where there were greater opportunities that were not being addressed by the brand. This can also be taken as underutilized operand functions where the lines of communication and openness of the brand are not encouraging staff to speak up or for management to listen more closely to them. This could be an area noted for improvement for the Fairmont (See Table DD).

Within SD Logic, continual learning for both management and employees through operand and operant resources are important elements to co-creation. In order to stay ahead of the competition, companies will have to address deficiencies in under utilizing resources.

**Table DD: Quotes from Management Interviews: Underutilized**

*“I think FM is under utilised because I haven’t heard of anyone using the site to generate ideas where more funding should be spent.” (Interview 2)*

*“I think there is an opportunity to leverage these partnerships more fully on FM...Reebok could offer running routes around the hotels, provide routines of how to exercise when they travel. Under utilized once again.” (Interview 4)*

**4.2.4 RQ1: The Customer Perspective – Discussion from the Customer Interviews**

The varieties of customer experiences have a similar thread of brand identity around creating memories, appreciating the historical sense of Canadian long-standing hotels and realizing the deep sense of importance around events that have taken place in these hotels over the years. A lighter sense of experiences is created through a stay at the hotels or the photos online showcasing the aesthetic beauty and luxury of the hotel and services.

The consumer interviews contain questions to determine key factors in consumer use of online co-creation websites, brand loyalty and preference, and online search. Branded and non-branded hotels tend to provide guidance for consumers on what to expect with such items as amenities and staff helpfulness. Key points are the importance of historic hotels and of the beautiful architecture, for which the Fairmont is recognized. A notable difference is when the consumers are very well versed and comfortable in online search, booking, use of mobile, tablet and computer use. The demographic age bracket of 20-40 is most comfortable online and prefer to book online as opposed to phoning the hotel. Mid 40’s to 75 age range is more likely to call to

book the room and some guests are even adverse to online content submissions. As a whole, most guests are very aware of the Fairmont hotels and the online FM to view, for example recipes to recreate dishes and cocktails and to view other peoples' photos as well as post their own from Instagram and Facebook.

The hotel encourages customers to communicate through the “experience” and “memories” headings showing the hotel’s value of the online experience. Tying in a website community directly with the linking of memories and using photos and videos to capture the memories is a marketing strategy the brand has consistently been communicating to the customer. An example is a quote from a customer interview mentioning the memory creation linked to the hotel. (See Table EE.)

#### **Table EE: Quotes Customer Interviews: Memory Creation**

*“I recognize the heritage, a CP rail hotel, locations as a result of this the buildings are normally centrally located in cities that is perfect. As a result of a historical sense, the results carry my allegiance to Fairmont Internationally. For me Fairmont is comfortable, heritage, feels like home and I know what to expect.” (Interview 1)*

#### ***Recognition – offline and online***

Another theme that emerges with the consumers, particularly those highly aware of the brand and even some who are moderately aware, is the recognition element of the hotel staff that call customers by name. One customer even makes contact directly with the service director on the Gold Floor to make a hotel booking rather than through online or phone sources. This customer describes the communication and contact with the director as “feels much easier, he knows which room we want and has our favourite wines on stock when we arrive – so much easier than an anonymous email confirmation and we probably stay more regularly at the Banff Springs because he makes the experience simple and straightforward. It works for us.”

Another interviewer states the importance of recognition and the lack of need for a points based loyalty system. Currently the Fairmont’s loyalty system is called Presidents Club where recognition is the main driver. Many of the customers interviewed were aware of the program and appreciate being remembered by staff and called by name. The positive service experience the customer has in hotel with employees is remembered and mentioned in the interview. This indicates that the program is being communicated and experienced effectively as a marketing message. When a customer is posting a photo or message on the FM website and saying thank you for a wonderful stay with great staff, this is an example of service experience taken offline to online. The sharing of experience in a positive co-creative way through photos and messages is a valuable tool for the Fairmont.

The role of customers as operant resources in the hotel service settings (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) describes the interaction between the hotel staff and customer – the customer must engage and co-create the experience. Thus, the fundamental goal of this concept is, not of the values through experiences, but of the co-creation of services. It is noted that the basic premises of the SD Logic are accepted but the product co-creation is inherent; the services co-creation of the product facilitates the services that result in the company co-creation of value.

***Purpose Driven Online Community***

Another similarity among the interviews is the “usefulness” of the community. Those that have used the website do so for example, by entering contests, finding a recipe or becoming aware of various properties. The information was sought out with a reason for searching online. The basis of “online community” often has more association with “fun, like-minded, belonging” sense within the group; the community that exists on the Fairmont website is less repetitive and more purpose driven for a tangible reason or task (See table FF).

**Table FF: Quotes Customer Interviews, Ages 40-50, 50+: Recognition Online and Offline**

<i>“I’m not interested in recipes or looking at personal photos.”(Interview 2)</i>
<i>“I haven’t spent much time on it but in theory it sounds great, but at the same time I stay at the Fairmont semi-regularly and haven’t spent much time on this website. The concept of great</i>



*images, recipes and teasers sounds like a good idea but maybe because I know the hotel well enough I don't need to look at a website like that for marketing reasons.”(Interview 3)*

*“Ya ya, I've visited Fairmont Moments before and I've contributed. It's a nice touch, it's not hardcore marketing. It's real and staff are responding to any communication. When I have time waiting for a flight, I often go on those sorts of websites.”(Interview 4)*

Age demographic seems to be the most telling of those who are interested in spending time on the website. The age group of 20-30's seem to be the most prolific users doing online booking searching for information and are interested in watching videos, viewing customer photos, and entering contests. Those who are 40-50 and 50+ are the least likely to spend time on a website with this content. They use the website to find a phone number in order to speak to someone at the hotel or only to research amenities, services or available dates. These key information points are not available on FM and thus not interesting for that age demographic. The idea of spending time seemed to be viewed as a luxury and the point of online information was more of a “fact finding” purpose rather than an “experience”. (See Table FF: Quotes from Customer Interviews from the age demographic of 40–50 and 50+.)

The value found in the content is personal to each customer. These online individuals make-up online groups often referred to as online communities (Holbrook, 1994; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Within the past few years online consumers have become more active and creative in the way they create and post content online. In order to describe group consumption behaviours online, academic work has focused primarily on consumers' consumption habits such as consumer empowerment, brand communities and consuming tribes (Cova et al., 2011). These active online consumer movements have helped to shed light on the co-creation process.

Customer-perceived value encompasses outcomes, which reflect the nature of the end-state, or what the consumer ultimately wants i.e. the benefits received. Grönroos (2011) believes that value for the customer is created during the consumption experience from direct interaction with the company. Given this, value can be created or destroyed within the value creation process. Value is not determined at the end of the process but during the interaction between the customer

and the firm (Grönroos, 2011). The brand must post or propose value in the content and the customer must find it useful; otherwise the customer will not be interested and it will not be of value.

Social media networks allow a company to connect online with a large volume of customers or potential customers. The significance in managing information technology is addressed by Vargo, Lusch, and Tanniru (2010, pp. 22 – 23) in referring to networks and ecosystems of service when looking at web and social media context. Value-in-context is an important dimension of SD Logic when discussing value co-creation because it frames service and the resources of an entire service ecosystem or “value-in-context” (Vargo, 2009; Vargo et al., 2014) in reference to networks and service ecosystems online. If a brand shares a Facebook posting with its fans, and fans then “share” and “like” the posting, this can be viewed as a network of actors who are interacting and finding the online context valuable, as they are co-creating exchanges in the ecosystem of the Facebook platform (Belk, 2009).

### ***Everything needs to be Easy***

The interviewees reiterated that “everything needs to be easy” when using any online branded source of information. The purpose of the online search or facts will dictate the sources of information. The website where booking, availability, price, amenities will continue to be the corporate website and often in the age 40+ guests, this is the only source of brand information they need. However to offer a greater brand experience online, Fairmont Moments taps into the younger demographic need of consumer generated content that is more believable. The consumers do not want pre-fabricate corporate marketing jargon; they want other travellers experiences in photos, videos or Tweets. The believability of content seems to be of paramount importance for the 20-40 age range.

The importance of younger generations (20-40) with a greater concern for brand responsibility has come through with some interviews. There is a need for corporations to provide societal return in the form of social programs such as a sponsoring a young chef through a San Pellegrino Competition or supporting various causes like multiple sclerosis fund raising; each hotel and brands have their own causes to support. Environment is also an important area in the hotel industry with most hotel chains having adopted some form of green initiative.

According to the research by Payne et.al (2009), intrinsic motivation is the performance of an activity for the natural satisfaction. The person with intrinsic motivation develops forces to perform for challenge, involvement and even fun. Pressure, external prods or rewards are not factors so the company must facilitate and enable the co-creator for intrinsically motivated individuals and it must be easy. Ease of use is an important factor when dealing with online search and consumer's social media habits.

#### **4.2.5 Customer Age and Education Demographics and Online**

##### **Behaviour**

Demographic factors, such as age, gender, and also Internet experience, has been shown to affect Internet users' privacy concerns (Cho et al., 2009). Within the context of tourism, the middle-aged consumers with high levels of education are more likely to make online reservations (Hernández, Jiménez, & Martín, 2011). In this study we are not linking the website use to online reservations; however it is linking high levels of education to online use. This study found the customer interviews reflected that the online web use (in the form of social media habits) was influenced by age and education. The younger demographic were more likely to search online and the higher educated were also likely to search online for travel information.

Previous studies have found that compared to offline travellers, online browsers or purchasers have higher incomes, higher-status occupations, and more experience using the Internet (Weber & Roehl, 1999). This study can also suggest that higher incomes reflected a higher use of online information search in our sample. Taking advantage of these demographic factors to attract customers' attention and encourage them to make online purchases will be a key to the future of the hospitality and tourism industries. Although prior studies demonstrated the significance of demographic factors in the online business market, they mainly focused on investigating the characteristics of online purchasers. Kamarulzama's (2007) study indicates that consumers increasingly gather information online, but purchase offline. Within this study we did not gather information on where the purchasing took place but can confirm that consumers were likely to gather information online and factors such as age played a part as to where they would purchase – either online or offline.

There are few studies that simultaneously investigate online travel browsers' demographic characteristics and their preferred online channels. Beldona et al. (2011) emphasized gender as a significant differentiator between channels in terms of travel purchasing. Compared to males, female Internet users trust the online environment less, are more concerned about privacy, tend to rely more upon word-of-mouth information, and are less likely to purchase online (Cho & Jialin, 2008). In this study the researcher did not find a strong correlation of Internet search and difference between male and female differentiator. We did find with some of the male 50+ interviewed there was a role differentiator between who would do the travel bookings and in three examples the wife was the one who searched online and made the booking arrangements. Eastman and Iyer (2004) also cite age as an important factor in explaining consumers' attitudes toward Internet use; therefore from this research, it can be concluded that age, and income affect Internet use.

Moreover, Zhang and Mao (2011) claims that, for online shopping behaviour, age is an important determinant. However, McCloskey (2006) suggests that although age influences initial decisions in online purchasing, it is irrelevant to behaviours. Despite the fact that younger people are more likely to use the Internet to search for information, middle-aged consumers are more likely to make purchases online (McCloskey, 2006). Within this study the breakdown in age categories showed a mix of 22% for age 20-30, 34% of age 30-40, 18% age 40-50 and 26% age 50+.

### 4.3 RQ2: Netnography Findings & Website Analysis

The netnography phase engaged the researcher in analysis of the online dialog of both the consumer and brand postings in terms of structure (texts and graphics like photos), content (language) and relational-dialog (interaction with brand and social sharing elements) within the FM community (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Holbrook, 2007).

The content analysis of the 100 web postings was studied under the framework of Holbrook's (2008) self-orientated (extrinsic or intrinsic), and others-oriented (extrinsic and intrinsic) value framework. This framework investigates dimensions that were categorized into areas of economic, social, hedonic and altruistic value. The majority of online content falls into social

and hedonic value dimensions; whereby photos, video and comments are focused on play, aesthetics, status and esteem. These dimensions are used to better understand the value derived from the content online. From a consumer perspective, it appears that the consumers are brand loyalists: those individuals who are dedicated to the brand and sharing brand values of the Fairmont. These consumers are proud to share content from their experiences as hotel guests with their friends on social media and the FM website.

The netnography web content analysis provides insight into how both the brand and consumer provided most postings for social and hedonic values. Both self-oriented and others-oriented qualities could be found within a single post; thus, the decision was made to describe the postings by combining social and hedonic. This is not surprising because travel is self-fulfilling, esteem evoking, social and hedonistic in nature. A summary of the consumer versus brand breakdown in posts was 33 to be from the Fairmont brand and 67 to be from consumers out of 100 posts analysed. The value exploration with Holbrook's (2008) value dimensions was used as they closely express online information key attributes. The connection in this case is explored with consumers ranging in age from early 20's to mid 70's.

The structural features of the community have changed over the years. For this study, the FM 2016 was examined; features such as site layout where the "look" is mirrored in a blog style Pinterest aesthetics which is used in order to stay relevant to the customer taste. In the top right is a "log-in" or "join" for the website to post material. Share features allow for quick upload of content from YouTube, Facebook, or from a PC. Another tab for "contests" is featured in the upper right corner where any open contest is easy to find. The "about tab" provides information about the FM community and what can and should be shared. Values are stated as: "Experience, Share, Repeat – if anything truly defines Fairmont Hotel and Resorts it is the value we attach to lasting memories."

Moving into the top middle of the page and the content featured down the page into a blog style top/down layout is content headings: "Guest Stories / Destinations / Food & Drink / Spa & Wellness / Weddings / Arts & Culture / Fairmont Magazine / Fairmont Cocktails". This layout across the middle top of page is then followed by content from all mentioned within the middle down the page. The style is clean and modern with the colours of grey and white on the borders

with bright images of content throughout the photos down the page. Thus on the website the use of colour, which is secondary to the images, implies the strong intention to connect with users through the photos. The company uses less contrasting colours to focus the user on photos (Graffigna and Gambetti, 2015).

Another component of the semiotic analysis is the content feature of the online community interface. Within the community, on the posting page, the content is kept to the language of the community in short text comments and photos. There are rules posted in the contents entry area that state photos must not exceed 5mb in size, caption must include the Fairmont property name and where the photo was taken, all entries must be in English and no previously submitted photos allowed. Rules provide the community with parameters for the contests and conditions for the communal value co-creation. There is little “free spirit” philosophy noted; the space seems curated and populated to allow for the community to easily submit photos within a restricted framework.

The final area of relationship-dialog concerns the opportunities for the community users to interact and share content. The community’s reference (eg the symbolic, photos, language and vocabulary) is more traditional where there is a stiff rather than a free spirit feel. This can be felt as the postings must fit a standard from size of photo to length of text and value-based on the parameters of the contest the company sets.

The stiff versus flexible are semantic opposites which encompass the contents that are visually presented by the company on this brand community website (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). The existence of stiff, company led initiatives gives a feeling of formality and presents the luxury brand values of beautiful images and a clean well organized website. The brand has a significant role in the user access/submissions and also a small narrative role in providing staff content and images from various hotels.

#### **4.3.1 Holbrook and Woodside’s (2007) Value Topology on the FM Website**

Many of the actor postings were found to have both social and hedonic values. Both self-oriented and others-oriented qualities could be found within a single post; thus, the decision was made to describe the postings by combining social and hedonic. This is not surprising because travel is self-fulfilling, esteem evoking, social and hedonistic in nature.

FM has been set up as a marketing tool to facilitate online content creation between the brand and consumers, and does not allow hotel bookings to be made; yet it is still possible to present economic propositions on the website. Examples include: the company reminds customers that Fathers Day is coming up (see Appendix: 7.6.5) and weekend promotions are offered where the user can book two nights and receive another night free.

In another example, titled *WellnessWednesday* (see Appendix 7.6.7) a new product is promoted featuring a unique spa experience called a “wave table” to offer even deeper relaxation followed by the hashtag #Willowstreamspa. Hashtags are used in the posts to categorize the content online in the hope that users will share them amongst their peer group and beyond.

In another spa message, this one through Instagram, it provides similar economic incentive, showcasing a new smaller sized travel nail polish by OPI, a company the Willow Stream Spa carries (see Appendix: 7.6.3). The promotion of products can be viewed as an economic incentive to book a manicure or pedicure.

Proposing value in the form of economic offerings like packages or specials in the spas, restaurants or hotels, is a good use of the online communication through Twitter & Facebook, via the FM website. These posts are being shared and liked by those participating online. The use of hashtags to categorize the content is an important tool for brand and consumer in order to increase shares and links within social media – to be able to find the posts. As online use of social media and other online websites increase, so will the uptake on online offers and deals by the users (Cho & Jialin, 2009).

Appendix 7.6.5: *"Father's Day is right around the corner! Why not treat dad to a day at the spa? The Willow Stream Spa is now offering \$25 off any regular priced spa experience through Wednesday, June 18, just for dads! He'll be happy you did! Call 808.875.2229 for details and*

*reservations. #Maui #willowstreamspa #FatherSDay" (Fairmont Maui Spa)*

*Appendix 7.6.7: "WellnessWedneSDay Tip: Feel like you're floating on water with the "wave table" at our Willow Stream Spa. This unique treatment table moves with the soft, rhythmic motions of the therapist, creating a deeply relaxing escape." (#Willowstreamspa)*

*Appendix 7.6.3: "Pick your favorite color! We now have several different colors of travel size OPI polish to play with! #WillowStreamSpa #WillowStreamMaui #NailPolish #Travelsize" (Fairmont Maui Spa)*

### **4.3.2 Customer Experiential Value Surrounding Social & Hedonic Value Dimensions**

Social & hedonic value characteristics were found to be main value sources in postings by both the employees and customers. In fact, the posts contain values of both that intertwine and complement one another.

The difference between social value and hedonic value is the focus on intrinsic versus extrinsic value sources. Words to describe hedonic value surround self-fulfilling experience - fun, freedom, fantasy and admiration of something beautiful. Within social value, the description is focused on one's own consumption behaviour that then serves to shape the responses of others. An example could be taking a selfie of yourself in a Ferrari parked in front of a Fairmont hotel, and posting it on the FM website. Travel and tourism are both hedonistic and social in nature; because users on vacation are typically relaxed and are spending money to enjoy themselves, it is expected that most postings are hedonic and social. Holbrook and Woodside (2007) suggests that often value topologies are not mutually exclusive, meaning multiple value topologies can represent a single source. In this case, both social and hedonic value characteristics were shared within the same postings.



An example containing values of both is entitled “In Honor of National Flip Flop Day” where a guest is posting an image of herself holding flip flops at a Fairmont resort. This does not appear to be much more than a status-enhancing, location updating, beautiful Fairmont resort post through her Instagram account (Appendix 7.6.8: “National Flip Flop Day”).

The Fairmont marketing department also posts to make guests aware of different programs. The BMW bike program at certain hotels such as the Fairmont Pacific Rim invites guests to check out rather than rent bikes so they can ride around the local Stanley Park (see Appendix: 7.6.11).

A negative posting was found on the website which, according to one of the interviewees who manages online content, is 99% positive. In this posting a guest alerts other guests to his unpleasant experience with Fairmont staff (Appendix 7.6.12: Negative Staff Feedback). Such postings are rare but Monty01 provided information about being disappointed in staff attitudes and behaviour, as well as commenting on the value of the rooms. By offering no response to the online comment, it appears that the online content manager was negligent which makes this a 99% negative. Generally on other review sites, or on Facebook and Twitter, a timely response by management is expected.

Postings by Fairmont employees can be both positive and educational. For example, a staff member is recognized and commended for his work. (Appendix 7.6.13: Staff Recognition, Fairmont Mayakoba). In the posting, the Fairmont announces that the Young Chef 2015 winner of the S. Pelegrino Global Talent Search is their Chef Diego Stefan who works at their Puerto Restaurant. In the post, the competition is described in more detail and in this way, the hotel can promote their talent and their restaurant.

Other guests are using this website to thank the hotel. Postings like “Thanking Staff” (Appendix 7.6.14) showcase the exemplary service offering by specific staff.

The next example post won “An Original Summer Photo Contest” that had 536 Facebook shares, 5 Google+, 16 tweets, 7 Pinterest pins, and 11 website comments. (Appendix: 7.6.17: Henry’s First Birthday). This is the ultimate goal of FM, to create sharing of posts to ensure the message becomes viral, expanding the online audience.

Another contest entry was posted by the Banff Springs but is from a guest who dined at one of its restaurants and caught a reflection of flowers in her sunglasses. A thank you to staff was shared along with an explanation of a relaxed stay with the hotel. This post was shared on Facebook. (See Appendix 7.6.18).

Weddings and engagements are frequently discussed on the website. These events often are associated with high costs, so it reflects favourably on the hotel when consumers are very pleased with the results. Given these events are highly emotional, they are perfect for postings on a social media platform. An example where an outside individual was using the Fairmont to advertise his business on line is detailed in Appendix 7.6.20, Wedding Wow. A wedding photographer is using other social media posts to generate interest in his work thus improving search ratings on Google. He is using the website to promote his business through a post where the couple is mentioned as well as the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. A credit to the photographer with his website is included. Although the photographer is promoting his own work and website, his reference to the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac works to the hotel's advantage as well.

Appendix 7.6.9: *"Beautiful food. #cakes #pastries #afternoontea #thesavoy #posh #family #qualitea #orientalbeauty #matcha"* (dosaismylife).

Appendix 7.6.11: *"The Fairmont Pacific Rim, the newest property, offers guests an incredible experience from check-in to check-out. The modern design and room features are top notch, and the location puts you near all the action. One thing that you must do is use the in-house BMW bikes to ride from the hotel doorsteps around Stanley Park"* (Ishearer)

Appendix 7.6.12: *"... I think that the staff are some of the most unpleasant, arrogant individuals you are ever likely to meet. The staff looked for any excuse to avoid doing their job. When you consider you are paying a premium and Fairmont sells the whole experience, I would suggest you save your money, it's not worth it..."* (Monty01)

Appendix 7.6.13: *"S.Pellegrino launched a global talent search to find the best new Young Chef for 2015. With great pleasure we share with you that Chef Diego Stefan, restaurant chef of el Puerto Restaurant (AAA 4 Diamond Award), will be representing Fairmont Mayakoba in the*

*LATAM - Caribe semifinal in Brazil in March, where he will go through 20 different challenges in front of the local juries.” (Fairmont Mayakoba)*

*Appendix 7.6.14: Thanking Staff: “Perfect stay at the Plaza NYC: We were so happy with the way we were treated during our stay. All departments gave us service that was extraordinary. The concierge attendants arranged for our use of the BMW bikes and even adjusted the seats for us. A welcoming letter was sent to us ahead of our stay and I mentioned that the stay was a belated birthday for my daughter and a cake was delivered to our room.” (efoss3)*

*Appendix 7.6.18: Banff Springs Sunglass Reflection: “Visited the Fairmont Banff Springs in Banff this summer and went to the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course. The views are amazing!!! ...Such an incredible experience!!” (Rose)*

*Appendix 7.6.20: Wedding Wow: “Beautiful wedding ;- ) Nicole & Leonardo at Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. Photos by Michel Roy [www.digitaldirect.ca](http://www.digitaldirect.ca)” (Wedding Wow)*

Couples who submit wedding testimonial postings on FM serve as “trusted advisors” to others who are seeking a venue for their own nuptials. Positive posts are highly valuable to the Fairmont. (Appendix 7.6.21: Our Wedding). Other wedding postings by the Fairmont act as a clear form of marketing material. In one post, 22 photos are provided, with additional links of information in the comments. In an example from the Fairmont Copley in Boston. (Figure 7.6.22), the question and answer style creates an interview format in this long post where users can gain a great deal of information and visuals from a single posting.

### **4.3.3 Customer Behaviour and Altruistic Value Dimensions**

The value dimensions around altruistic values are focused on how one’s behaviour affects others. There is a need to self-justify through ethically desirable causes and/or charities with another way being through spiritual means, or the feeling of oneness that some find through yoga or spa sanctuaries. Within this study, both Fairmont originated and guest created content in this area was identified.

An example is of a charity supported by the Fairmont that pledged funds of \$10,000 USD (Appendix 7.6.23: Charity Challenge Fairmont San Jose). In the posting a photograph is used to show the event followed by a caption.

Another example where a cause is the focus of a posting is the Fairmont's Honey Bee Program that is part of their Ecology and Sustainability Program (Appendix 7.6.24: BeeButler). In this posting the Fairmont provides a link with further information on the Fairmont Initiative.

*Appendix 7.6.23: "The Fairmont San Jose hosted our inaugural San Jose Craft Cocktail Challenge benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Million Dollar Mission this past Friday, March 13... The Fairmont San Jose has pledged to raise \$10,000 toward the mission." (Fairmont San Jose).*

*Appendix 7.6.24: "Help us welcome the humble and underrated Mason bee, nature's early season pollinator and the insect most likely to help fruit trees like apple, cherry, pear and plum develop their fruit later in the season and a sure sign to all of us that spring in this part of the world at least, is on the way!"*

*Learn more about our bees and #BeeButler at: <http://bit.ly/greenhotelinitiatives>"*

A program that falls under the value, altruistic, is the Green Initiatives. In Appendix 7.6.25: Thinking Green post, the Fairmont announced two electric vehicle-charging stations for guests to use at the Fairmont Waterfront. Within this posting a photo is followed by information on the green initiatives at various Fairmont hotels with partner companies like BMW. Engaging with value partners (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) is an important aspect of proposing value that is supported by SD Logic and the value premises.

#### **4.3.4 Summary of the Phases and How They Connect To The Research Questions**

Within this thesis two primary questions were proposed in order to investigate the relationship between the consumer and company in a digital co-creation environment within the FM website. The researcher structured this work into two studies to effectively address the questions, which involved 4 phases in total.

The initial phase involved document analysis of marketing strategy and press releases. This phase was pertinent for an understanding of the company's goals, objectives and messages being communicated to consumers and formed the foundation of RQ1 in order to understand the marketing department and ways the brand was communicating online. The findings showed the brand was very much working towards online connections with customers through technology, employee engagement, and linking memories and experiences in hotel to online through incentives. Overall the online experience for the guest was the goal for the brand – creating a “memorable experience” in hotel to post on the FM website. The objective online was to encourage the guest to visit the FM community website and post content (photos, text). This was linked to online experience where exchange value was generated through the brands proposed value in the form of contests.

In the second phase, management interviews were conducted, strongly geared towards the guest experience and the interpretation of the technology and innovation involved within Fairmont. As the digital platforms of engagement have become linked to the firm's offering and if they are not in line with customer desires, the firm will have problems connecting with the consumer in the online environment (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). The combined evidence generated from this multi-method research design reveals objectives, guests and company community roles are in line with one another. The themes from each of these studies in phases are linked to the brand goals and objectives that are detailed in the strategy documents for RQ1. The discussion links to various themes found from the management interviews, which are summarized by the online experience being the top priority for management. Following this the netnography content links the value co-creation between the consumer and hotel with words like “memories”, “experiences”, and “beautiful views” – these are linked to the brand goals in terms of exchange value. The exchange value is linked to customers' actions of sharing on social networks. This value is beneficial to both the brand through endorsed content, and the customer through

expressing their feelings or thoughts and feeling recognized. From the customer interviews, the themes are linked to loyalty and trust value; these were the key points of value expressed about the Fairmont brand.

The second part of research into the RQ1 links the management interviews to the value co-created between the hotel and the customer where the associated value attributes were found to be unique, proposed and were able to co-created value. These three areas encompassed employee skills, knowledge and training associated with the actions and reactions to staff interaction with guests in hotel and online. Within the netnography study, the dominance of social and hedonic postings were linked to experience value. The customer interviews revealed various points of value like recognition, deals, booking incentives, which contribute towards reciprocal value and exchange value as the customer is receiving some benefit. Experience value was also mentioned where the customer could connect, within the hotel or online, with employee skills and knowledge. In addition, online ease of booking was noted.

When addressing RQ2 and the associated value attributes, management interviews were linked to proposed value and experience value as the conversation was centred on co-creation of consumer experience, sense of belonging with other like-minded guests, and valuable content and photos. When analysing the netnography content, enabling the consumers to connect with the online communities through experiences was determined an experience value as well as a proposed value. Comments from the customer interviews suggested that memories, connecting with like-minded others, purpose driven users, history, beautiful hotels, online posting of photos, viewing of recipes, online word of mouth that the customers provided – all showed examples of experience value, exchange value, value-in-content, proposed value and reciprocal value (See table GG: Linking RQ1 & RQ2 to Theory).

Table GG: Linking RQ1 & RQ2 to Theory

<p>Perspectives Through Each Research Phase</p> <p>Key Alignment</p>	<p>Corporate Document Analysis (Press Releases &amp; Strategy Presentation)</p>	<p>Management Interview Themes (15 Management Interviews) (Vargo &amp; Lusch, 2004, 2008)</p>	<p>Netnography (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007) 100 website postings</p>	<p>Customer Interview Themes (50 Customer Interviews)</p>
<p><b>RQ1 Brand Goals &amp; Objectives – Brand Message (Marketing Message)</b></p>	<p>Goal: Online Memories Objective: Provide interesting content &amp; engage with consumer online through contests - <b>Online Experience, Exchange &amp; Propose Value</b></p>	<p>Innovation, Technology, Employee Engagement. Memories linked to experience, Social Media - <b>Online Experience, Exchange Value, Proposed Value</b></p>	<p>“Memories”, “Experiences”, “Beautiful views” - sharing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – <b>Exchange Value</b></p>	<p>Well Trained Staff, Easy to use Website, “know you’ll get an incredible experience”, “Canadian”, Recognition program – <b>Operant &amp; Operand Resources, Loyalty, Trust</b></p>
<p><b>RQ1 Value Co-Creation (Consumer and Hotel Connection)</b></p>	<p>Encourage photo sharing through contests, chefs post recipes – <b>Online Experience, Exchange &amp; Propose Value</b></p>	<p>Employee skills and know ledge, training - <b>Unique Value, Proposed Value, Co-created Value</b></p>	<p>Social &amp; Hedonic – 82/100 of postings, Altruistic (12/100), Economic (6/100) – <b>Experience Value, Exchange Value, Social &amp; Hedonic Value</b></p>	<p>Recognition (Online and Offline), Deals, Booking Incentives, Online Ease, Value for money, Spa, Amenities, Gold Floor, Employee Skills- <b>Experience Value, Exchange Value</b></p>
<p><b>RQ2 Brand Community Role</b></p>	<p>Bring together like minded fans with similar lifestyles &amp; interests: Fitness, Drinks, Food, Environment - <b>Experience Value, Proposed Value, Hedonic &amp; Social Value</b></p>	<p>Co-creation of consumer experience, sense of belonging with other like-minded guests, valuable content and photos – <b>Experience value, Proposed Value</b></p>	<p>Enabling the consumers to connect with the online communities through experiences – <b>Experience Value, Reciprocal Value</b></p>	<p>Memories, Connecting with Like-Minded Others, History, Beautiful Hotels, Online posting of Photos, Viewing of Recipes, Online Word of Mouth – <b>Experience Value, Exchange Value, Reciprocal Value, Value in Content, Proposed Value</b></p>

#### 4.4. Value Co-Creation Discussion Within Service Dominant Logic – Online Experience Measurement

A focus on value co-creation between the customer and the brand is a source of connection; it forms a two-way online dialog and highlights content of interest. This results in value-in-context for the customer, which is one of the main reasons the customer reads and searches online for such items as recipes or articles. Value in context can be identified within FP8, unique co-created online content – proposed engagement by the brand resulting in dialog.

A second identified value premise is reciprocity where providing something generates the reciprocal desire to return the favour. Reciprocity of customers saying thank you to employees is discussed in more detail through FM examples. Reciprocity is linked to unique value within FP6 of this study. The co-created content and dialog between employees and customers is often initiated when the Fairmont proposes contests on FM where the motivation to enter a competition extends an invitation to participate.

These 3 value focused FP’s in SD Logic are distinctive within FP6, 7 & 8 (Table HH). This value framework is used to identify and connect with the characteristics of unique, co-created, and propositioned value within the SD Logic framework; it further investigates the online content analysis through netnography. The netnography analysis generates deeper value discussion of the customer and brand generated online content and allows for the researcher to better understand what the customer is saying online. Following the netnography analysis, the customer interviews reinforce what was found in the online content and elaborates on the motivations from online search and brand loyalty.

**Table HH: Foundational Premises, Value Axiom and Qualities Associated**

<b>Service Dominant Logic</b>	<b>Axiom</b>	<b>Qualities</b>
Foundation Premise 6 (FP6, Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008)	Value	Co-Created Value (Reciprocal) – Shared content online, consumers and hotel can decide what is important to each through posting content in the form of photos and comments. Customers saying “thank you” to the staff online.



Foundational Premise 7 (FP7, Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008)	Value	Proposition Value (Contests) – The company can only propose value to the customer, and the customer must decide if they want to engage. In our case the Fairmont can only offer contests online as proposed value and the customer can choose to enter.
Foundational Premise 8 (FP 8, Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008)	Value	Unique Value (Relationships) – Involves distinct, non-replicable product and service. The differentiation of the Fairmont brand is in the history and service has been a point of mention by the customers interviewed.

**4.4.1 Value Propositions and the Use with Online Communities**

Within the SD Logic discussion and information technology services context, value propositions have been viewed as “a request from one service system entity to others to run a procedure or an algorithm” (Maglio and Spohrer, 2013, p. 367). The resulting relationship characteristics and discussion between customer and company often acknowledges that the value propositions relate to specific users and use situations (e.g. Ballantyne et al., 2011; Cova and Salle, 2008; Johnson et al., 2008; Lusch et al., 2007; Grönroos, 2007, 2009; Arnould et al., 2006).

The concept of a value proposition is often discussed as having been introduced by Lanning and Michaels at McKinsey & Company in the 1980’s (Ballantyne et al., 2011). It has meant dividing the value proposition into two categories - benefit and sacrifice. These can be most commonly described as economic, functional, emotional and symbolic benefits, and monetary and nonmonetary sacrifices.

However with the exception of Arnould et al. (2006), researchers argue for establishing meaningful links between the value propositions and consumers’ goals and resources. In using

value propositions to enhance and benefit the consumers, the roles and value taken from the experience benefits the customer.

The researcher refers to experiencing a value proposition as a relativistic experience where customers will compare one value proposition against another. This often results in the exchange of value being significantly lower than the experience value. As a result, the desired sign value of the same value proposition varies from context to context. This can be seen when customers choose to enter a contest. Some may have difficulty in making a decision to enter and expose their photo entry online through social networks in order to potentially benefit from a prize of, for example, a free nights stay. While others may not see this as a difficult choice. It is entirely personal and based on the individual's set of values.

In this study, the customers or guests have the power to accept value propositions or not (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Acquiring an offering is an explicit sign of the acceptance of the value proposition. Also, given that deriving value from the offerings always requires resource integration from consumers, a value proposition is invariably linked with more consumer resources. As an example, the packaging of spa products may include the value proposition that hints about the way consumers could use the products, such as using one beauty product after another – body scrub then moisturizer that are sold in a package together. These value propositions can invite the user to the offering before purchase or after a spa treatment to which the products were used; post demonstration of the product may increase chances of the products being purchased. The spa could also ask for guest suggestions of co-development, where customers may come up with a new way to use the product and they can choose to pursue their own ideas to the offering. This allows the consumers to apply value propositions with flexibility and fit with their own value-creation circumstances. “Consumers can then weave their own combination of products and services to satisfy their specific needs and desires – to get what they like, when and how they like it” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 13).

Consumers experience and evaluate the value propositions idiosyncratically and subjectively in each specific resource-integration context (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). When evaluating the value propositions, the consumers judge how they can fit the value proposition-related offerings with their other resources in order to derive value from their use. Because consumer goals and

resources vary by consumer or by consumer network (Arnould et al., 2006), and by context in the case of the same consumer, the consumers might imagine different uses and resource integrations for the same value propositions.

The role of the brand is to support the customer-learning process so that the customers can materialize the desired value (Payne et al., 2009; Arnould, 2005). As a result, the scope of value propositions varies according to the resource integration that is needed to take the desired value from the offering. Firms can and do control the scope of the consumers' resource integration. For example, the quantity, quality and price point of Fairmont rooftop produced honey being used in the restaurants and being sold in the gift shop will dictate the customers' purchasing choices.

#### **4.4.2 Creating Meaningful Relationships – Value in Context**

The brand's relationship with the customer is important within FP8: a service-centred view is inherently customer oriented and relational. It may be argued that relationship marketing is necessary, but not a condition for SD Logic in marketing (Gummerson, 2006). Within the FM case study, the communication from the marketing department showcases relevant content like offers, reminders, or various Fairmont programs of interest. Successful postings will generate more "likes" and "shares", and hopefully draw customers to the hotel for future business. These discussions are consistent with the creation of value between the customer and company as co-creators of value (Cova and Pace, 2006; Cova et al. 2011; Pongsakornrungrsilp and Schroeder, 2011; Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). From a hotel management perspective, the propositions must be led by the company within this online community. From a marketing perspective, this means creating relationships through memorable experiences whether they are online, offline or both (Smith and Wheeler, 2002; Ballantyne and Varey, 2006).

Value creation is value-in-use, and by online extension, value-in-context derived from the FP6 and FP10 which indicates that the customer is always a co-creator of value (Vargo and Lusch, 2008d). This is based on the premise that until an offering is used, there is no value, and that phenomenologically consumer experiences and perceptions are essential to determining that value. It is argued the customer is always a co-creator of value, and the company is a facilitator

of that value which suggests that SD Logic does not fully account for value without the customer.

As an example, a posting “Castles agree with me!” is shown to have 3 Facebook likes, and 1 Pin from Pinterest. This indicates there is interaction online; thus, the content is of interest to share online. Finding new ways to harness relevant content is an on-going challenge for most brands online.

The most posted content within Holbrook’s (2008) framework was postings regarding social and hedonic value. Predominantly beautiful photos at pools, restaurants or bars are showcasing guest experiences at the hotel. These findings are consistent with overall hospitality related content – hedonic in nature as the guest is on vacation, relaxed, spending money, all very indulgent in nature.

From the customer interviews, it was noted that the postings are used by the 20-40 year demographics to communicate and share their travel experience with friends on social feeds. Through checking in at the hotel or hastagging #fairmontpoolside, these guests are happy to share what they are doing on vacation and these social and hedonic postings are the most important engaging tool for online posting. Therefore the brand is aware that generating these posts may be the most effective way to get others to post content as well.

From a management perspective, in order to capture these moments the website is enabled to easily transfer and share photos and comments across social feeds and capture hashtags. The valuable content shared by guests is categorized by the hashtag for the Fairmont marketing department to use as a marketing entity. We can see the consumers are sharing their content and this is valuable to both the guest through sharing socially with friends and valuable for the Fairmont marketing department. It is argued that the customer is always a co-creator of value, and the company is a facilitator of that value; therefore SD Logic does not fully account for value without the customer.

#### **4.4.3 Contests as Company Value Propositions**

Company proposed contests are an effective way to encourage the customer to participate in online content sharing. These propositions can be defined within FP7: “the enterprise cannot

deliver value, but only offer value propositions”. Companies can offer their applied resources for value creation but cannot create or deliver value independently. Value propositions are defined as a marketing tactic to generate interest and engage the customer online.

In the FM case study the hotel launched a photo contest with the prize of a complementary night at the hotel. From a customer perspective, these “offers” act as an economic incentive where “free” nights are the reason to post photos online. For the company the value proposition lies in the posting by the consumer of actual photos of the hotel, its grounds, spa, beach, or pool, which authentically showcases and shows off the hotel property and its experiences.

Within Holbrook’s (2008) topology, the self-oriented intrinsic context indicates a “hedonic” post where beautiful scenes or just fun moments were shared in a posting. This could come in the form of an employee posting a picture of guests on a Fairmont golf course on a sunny day, with a caption, “Wish you were here?” enticing guests to book a round of golf. From the customer side, others oriented extrinsic is where a “show off” interpretation is recognized from a posting as status-enhancing.

The value for an organization to participate comes from their investment in information and resources to aid in co-creating value. What the value proposition does is set the expectations for what these values-in-content might be (Frow & Payne, 2011); value is not intrinsic to participating, it must be continually created and recreated through the interactions of the partners, especially online to encourage the customer to participate and in this case submit entries to the contest.

The value offered from an actor-centric perspective is not something the company can produce, but can only offer suggestions and invite the consumer to participate. The value proposed is often viewed as a set of promises of benefit with no expected cost (not necessarily an economic term). Traditionally viewed as the marketing mix, where product, price, marketing communication, distribution and branding are present, the end offer should focus on the beneficiary actor. As an example, a firm’s brand community may, through social media, influence the brand’s image and reputation. With FM, the reputation and image is 99% positive as the site operates as a fan destination where the guests generally create positive feedback and content.

The brand's intention with a marketing focused website such as FM is to create a platform that inspires and provides ideas for future experiences. Inspiration is a powerful offering in the hospitality sector, where consumers often spend a great deal of time planning. Enticing images are used in marketing to create the desire and interest and are a powerful promotional message when used correctly.

The customer interviews confirm that the 20-30 and 30-40 year demographic is most interested in the value proposed by posting photos, tagging, hash tagging and checking into spas, golf courses and restaurants at the hotels. The socially elevating and recognized action is the social network connection the brand is hoping to achieve – a volume of interaction from social media platforms to the FM platform. This marketing interaction from the consumer reaching back to the brand by hashtagging #Fairmontpool, #Fairmontgolf, #Fairmontfun, as some examples. This interaction with online marketing for the brand is where this FM website comes into its element and the marketers receive the online interaction for which they are hoping.

#### **4.4.4 Reciprocal Value Propositions**

SD Logic's current service centric view refers to a service-for-service exchange and the co-creation of value, sometimes through reciprocal market phenomena. FP6 is aligned with this viewpoint and recognizes FM posts where a guest is saying "thank you" to the staff members by name or by work area (eg. front desk, room service). Management may recognize these staff members for a job well done, and in turn employees feel valued by the customers. Overall the website offers an outlet for both staff motivation and a forum where guests can have their say in recognition of employees.

SD Logic researchers such as Ballantyne et al., 2011; Cova and Salle, 2008; Payne et al., 2009, emphasize that value propositions need to contribute to reciprocal value creation. Therefore, the value propositions have been conceptualized as an interactive process and as a dialog of crafting reciprocal value promises (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Payne et al., 2009). In this way the value propositions facilitate value co-creation among different stakeholders in the value network (Payne et al., 2001). A co-crafting reciprocal value proposition contributes to the achieving of

mutual benefits from the resource integration. Involving the customer in the proposition results in more meaningful contributions to both the customer and the company.

It is argued that customer value is still a prerequisite for value co-creation in most cases in modern markets where monopolies are seldom and cartels forbidden. Unless the anticipated sign value and its expected materialization into customer experience exceeds the exchange value for the customers, they will not accept the value proposition and thus there will be no value co-creation in the first place. However, at the same time, value propositions need to address and materialize the desirable cultural discourses and the goals of the other stakeholders, such as marketers and their suppliers. Otherwise these stakeholders are not willing or able to invest their knowledge and skills in co-designing the value propositions with or for their customers in the long run. Consequently, from the value co-creation design perspective, this study introduces the value propositions as design architecture for reciprocal sign value, experience value, exchange value, and resource integration.

The hotel also recognized staff skill, which can be seen in an example where a chef at the Fairmont Mayakoba was nominated in the S. Pellegrino best chef competition. The Mayakoba posted a congratulatory post, wishing the young chef good luck in the finals. The moral boosting value to staff in recognition of these type of achievement is beneficial. This can also be seen as a reciprocal “thank you” from the Fairmont to staff.

Both brand and consumer benefit from the reciprocal value created. A platform such as FM provides structure for linking the development of reciprocal value propositions to the co-creation and improvement of reciprocal value over time. In this case, the research shows how a contest with an economic incentive can offer value to the brand and consumer. An example of a customer “thank you” to the hotel staff is recognized in “A 5 Year Old Boy’s Wish”. A mother of a special needs child posts on FM an endorsement detailing the child’s wish and how Fairmont staff went over and above the guest’s expectation.

Unique value is reciprocated to hotel employees when the hotel management contributes recipes on the FM websites. If customers are interested and “like”, “share”, or add comments about the recipes, it provides unique value, job satisfaction and. a powerful motivator to the hotel chef. The

Fairmont can gain an understanding of what resonates online and what does not. This information is fundamentally useful as the value can only be determined by the customer.

The conversation online is called co-created value in the SD Logic framework and the value creating process and online relationships that are created are important for the brand. From a company standpoint, the focus on value emerges in the support of the value-creation process. The emergence and adoption of technology and online learning is key in the roles that both consumer and brand play in the process.

Through the FM website, consumers can initiate conversation with the brand on topics ranging from service issues to trip planning, thus current and appropriate are necessary dialog tools in the hospitality industry. From a company perspective it is important to understand why the control rests in the Fairmont's hands as although the brand may not be able to control the online conversation, it can guide and help shape it. Different social media platforms offer different benefits and have different strengths which must be understood and managed by the hotel.

The way consumers are adopting and integrating social media into their lives is also an important part of the discussion. Societal norms and expectations with the adoption of smart phones and other technology and the ease of contributing content has evolved significantly over the past few years. As smart phones and tablet numbers have increased, it has resulted in a higher volume of content on FM. This notion is expressed in comments from FRHI employees as to why consumers contribute.

Holbrook's (2008) altruistic and economic value dimensions became more relevant as the content of use of returned gesture was becoming more popular, for example, in order to win a free night, the user was motivated to post a photo. Through the customer interviews it was evident that some consumers, specifically the 20-30 demographic group, were interested in the causes, social stance and programs such as the rooftop bees and herb gardens. These programs are given a space on the website so the guests are aware of them and thus another marketing tool for the brand.

Both brand and consumer benefit from the reciprocal value created. A platform such as FM provides structure for linking the development of reciprocal value propositions to the co-creation



and improvement of reciprocal value over time. In this case, the research shows how a contest with an economic incentive can offer value to the brand and consumer.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Value Exchange in Support of an Online Luxury Co-Creation Website

This research contributes to the literature that illustrates the value of a hotel brand's online community as a relationship-marketing tool. Past studies such as Wang et al. (2015), Bai et al. (2006) and Gan et al. (2006) consider consumers input and views as critical to the brand website's effectiveness (Law and Leung, 2000). This online experience draws the consumer closer as they become more vested in the brand experience online and offline. This experiential view towards value creation between the company and the customer is an area this study addresses in order to improve the brand's marketing to consumers (Vukadin et al. 2016). Past research has called for more focus in co-creation of experience (Merz et al, 2009; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014) and this study indicates that socialization or hedonism are the main co-creation areas of interest to the consumer who is engaged and posting online

Effective hotel websites are an increasingly important distribution channel, and provide an opportunity for the hotel to increase the building of relationships with the consumer. In another study, where individual consumer interviews among leisure and business travellers were conducted, Hawk Partners (2012) found that among all online channels for travellers researching and booking rooms, hotel websites are the most often cited source.

However, Wang (2015) found that hotels have yet to fully utilize their website as a relationship marketing platform, and in order to capture the online business, hoteliers should allocate more resources to develop websites into multifunctional platforms that would meet consumer needs for information, design, and relationship (Wang et al. 2015).

As more and more travellers rely on their mobile devices to research travel and to book hotels, it is no surprise that major hotels have adopted and developed an online mobile presence in an attempt to meet this raising demand. For example according to a study conducted by TripAdvisor, 74% of the hotel facilities thought that it was important to offer the option of mobile booking to their customers (O'Connor, 2010).

Mobile bookings have drastically changed the distribution channels for hotels over the past few years and it is estimated that they will become the prevailing distribution channel for hotels in the near future (Inversini and Masiero, 2014).

Enhanced functionality of smartphones in terms of responsiveness and ease of use could presumably influence users' utilitarian value perceptions. Chun et al. (2012) and Yang (2010) investigated the relationship between hedonic and utilitarian performance expectancy in using mobile shopping services. Data collected from 400 mobile users demonstrated hedonic behaviours and value was a driving factor that affected the performance of customers (Chun et al., 2012). In this context, when consumers are provided easy access they are able to achieve their booking goals more efficiently (Ozturk et al., 2016). In addition, when consumers perceive that using mobile booking services is free of effort, their hedonic value perception increases (Yang, 2010).

In relation to this study, the hedonic and social value was most prevalent in online photos and comments which were self-initiated by consumers, many saying "thank you" by recognizing staff by names -- a reciprocation of value created by the consumer. Other content included a response or reaction to a proposition delivered by the brand in the form of a photo contest, an offer of an economic advantage, or an upcoming reminder of a holiday like Fathers Day (Appendix 7.6.5: Fathers Day Specials at the Spa, Fairmont Maui). Utilizing a calendar of events provides customers with an important reminder and easy solution for those interested in a gift idea. The origination of this content was a mix of original material where a login was created on FM, as well as other sources such as Instagram direct feeds (which were enabled by the Fairmont in 2014), and Facebook, Google+, Twitter and You Tube connect.

Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) Value Topology enhances experiential value dimensions to better understand the online communication between brand and consumer. Grönroos (2006) points out that there is a need to recognise customers as value creators in the value-creation process. In an earlier work, he argues that customers can be the "sole creator of value" (Grönroos, 2006, p. 324). That is, while firms can actively engage in customer value creation processes and create value for customers, customers can also create value for themselves (Grönroos, 2009). This view is further supported by Baron and Harris (2008), who suggest that

consumers can be resource integrators through consumption and co-consumption. The service-for-service relationship in SD Logic needs to further recognise consumers' active roles as initiators and mutual participants in the value creation process (a view shared by Grönroos, 2006).

As online luxury consumer experiences continue to grow in importance for brand value co-creation, hedonistic desires have been linked as a value-driving factor (Belk, 1988) through online communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). These experiences will occur both to be inside and outside of the brand. Within this case, the consumer is reading or contributing content to the FM website for socialization and also to discover something new about the Fairmont brand.

According to Vargo and Lusch (2008) resources are applied as operant resources (specialized knowledge and skills), which are the fundamental bases for exchange where offerings (massage in spa, concierge, etc.) are the distributors of the company's skills for the customers use. The primary source of the value propositions is the ability of customers to experience the company's proposition; this means the value propositions inform the customers whether or not they will benefit from the company's skills and knowledge. At the same time, the customers are dependent on the company's operant resources which make the value propositions available for them. The accepted exchange value shows how much the value and its anticipated materialization into experience are worth for the customers. Finally, the exchange value manifests and signifies the value of applied skills and knowledge used for materializing the value into the customers' experience. In this study, this customer experience is evident in the form on online photo posts and comments on the FM website.

This research also supports the basic assumption that customers must participate in order to co-create value with the company. In some of the interviews, customers mention that their children post on social media but they themselves do not. The value potential in the form of self-fulfilling fun, or economic reward (like winning the contest through entering on the FM website) occurs where the benefit is only received when participation occurs. This points to the fact that the company can only encourage and propose reasons to engage and participate but can do no more than that.

Pires et al. (2014) determines that “Distinguishing between value and value propositions, we contend that value propositions may be co-created and co-produced via customer and supplier participation”(pp. 2). Ballantyne and Varey (2006) also point to value propositions as reciprocal promises of value, operating to and from suppliers and customers seeking an equitable exchange.

This thesis adopted Ballantyne and Varey's (2006) definition of value propositions, and use it as the basis for exploring the gap in the literature related to the process of customer and company participation of exchange. Assessed value solely by the company or by customers, for which this thesis is defining as a value proposition, is created by the consumer in co-creation and/or co-production forms of value exchange (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In this study, the customer being interviewed who does not participate in posting photos is passive and merely assesses and is passive but does not co-creative value. However, the customer's son or daughter may be actively exchanging value by responding to the proposition offered by the company (eg. through entering a photo for the contest).

This customer participation is defined as the degree of a customer's effort and involvement, whether mental or physical, that relates to the production and delivery of a service and can be active or passive (Cermak, File, & Prince, 1994). Customer participation involves the customers' technical resources (e.g., labour and knowledge), and their functional (interactional) qualities, including interpersonal aspects such as friendliness and respect (Ennew & Binks, 1999).

This suggests that application of frameworks to determine and encourage value creation is reliant on the willingness of customers to participate. If the value online (in the form of contests, deals or incentives to encourage online interaction through participation or even reading online content) is not relevant to customers then it will not encourage them to participate in any form. If the marketing is not targeted at the correct demographic, for this case the 20-30/30-40 year old audience of the FM website, then the company will not provide the require motivation and proposition for the customer to visit the website and read or enter the contests. The exchange of value is a key element to the generation of value but is generated by the proposed value and must be examined carefully by the management.

The exchange value means that customers can gain value from the experience with the help of the value proposition. The customers can anticipate whether or not value is likely to materialize

into experience before purchase, such as online comments and recommendations from other guests or brand contests. If the customers have prior knowledge or experience of the skills and knowledge of the hotel, they use this knowledge as an indication for the experience value. The customers can actively search for information in order to become convinced that the proposed value will materialize into experience. An example of online peer sharing experience occurs when the customer discusses another guest's review website such as TripAdvisor. Another example is when users are sharing, on the FM website, visual photos of locations with captions so that consumers can have a much better visual aid for deciding on the potential value opportunity.

The emphasis on active customer participation online and in hotel is key in value co-creation. The creation of actors' competencies, other actors' knowledge and skills creates an environment where actors are engaging together through behaviours in an ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). This ecosystem is the environment within the hotel brand website which is using social media to post, for example, photos and comments on the FM website. Lusch & Vargo, (2014) note that posts can be shared and liked in order to exchange for value and reach new audience users. This service ecosystem emerges as a "relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource integrating actors connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange" (p. 161).

From Vargo's and Lusch's (2006c) perspective, the work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) and Holbrook (2008) demonstrates that the characteristics of value can emerge through a variety of consumer experiences. Holbrook's (2008) interactive experience offers an account of value, which corresponds to how value is understood in SD Logic. Holbrook suggests that value can be relative, depending on the comparative, situational, or personal contexts in which goods or services can be assigned. In a study by Pongsakornrungrasri and Schroeder (2011), online football fan communities utilized both Holbrook (2006) and SD Logic perspectives to understand the relationships within fan communities. Their research is supported by this study where SD Logic and Holbrook's (2008) insight help shape the understanding of the online user.

Using the website as a marketing tool to communicate and create customer experiences online is often difficult to implement for many companies. However, Fairmont's marketing is doing this

well, by engaging customers in various online contests and hastags, co-created content and sharing of photos and messages from company and consumer actors with the most value being back to the company. As well, unique value is experienced by Fairmont customers whose treasured memories and experiences can be shared on line is instrumental. These luxury brand consumers are choosing the Fairmont hotel for its in hotel quality of brand and level of service. The brand receives value when these consumer posts, shares, likes or hastags online with the overall goal for the Fairmont being to showcase these customer stories and create a connection online.

In Graffigna and Gambetti's (2015) study on a failed B to C online brand community, they addressed a need and called for successful firm managed websites; misalignment was recognized between brand and consumers. In the Fairmont case, the brand decision makers have a very clear direction and similar voice in terms of brand goals, values and objectives for the website as well as to what the consumer was expecting. Schembri (2006) notes that there is often too much focus on the company and consumer as two completely separate entities; whereas we can see in this study the hotel management are sensitive and working at understanding and connecting the hotel online with the consumer.

The second point is that within value co-creation theory, the concepts should be tested empirically in real world settings (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Cova and Pace (2015) discuss working customers as employees more so than brand volunteers whose work can be exploited (Cova & Pace, 2015). However in this case we perceive customers who collaborate and contribute as a type of "self-disciplined customers" (Shankar et al., 2006); they are motivated by brand commitment and reciprocation. Within the SD Logic's current service centric view, reciprocation is referred to as a service-for-service exchange, and focuses on reciprocal market phenomena. We align FP6 with "Service [is] a process of the co-creation of reciprocal value, where the output of an entity is viewed as an input into a continuing process of resource integration" (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a, p. 1).

Rewarding customers for their participation in collaborative programmes, such as posting photo contents online, could be viewed as volunteer or customer participation that is intrinsically

rewarding. Antorini et al. (2012) studied a Lego collaborative program and suggested that the intrinsic rewards associated with designing and building products are frequently more motivating than financial rewards. “Lego recognized this and has tended to pay outside collaborators with a combination of experience, access and Lego products” (p.77). These contribute towards the company’s marketing strategy by providing the contributors with unpaid immaterial products (ideas, innovations, experience) and other social value related experiences (recognition and respect) rather than economic incentives (Arvidsson et al. 2008). In this work with the Fairmont, social and hedonic value were the main sources of exchange and experience value.

Other brand communities provide examples where the consumers contribute ideas to the company such as Starbucks with “My Starbucks Ideas”, and “Dell computers with Idea Storm: Where Your Ideas Reign” (Westerski et al., 2013). In these studies the consumers provide ideas and recommendations for various sources of value like new products or innovative ideas with the prospective of being chosen for a reward of product. This is a proposed value offer from the company asking for the ideas and the user who responds with feedback and entries exchanged for economic value incentives.

This research details the benefits and parameters around co-creation and value interaction between the company through SD Logic (Vargo and Lusch 2004a) and Holbrook and Woodside’s value dimensions (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). Together these models can be used to create a more holistic framework for the company to best market and connect with the consumer in the online brand environment.

### **5.1.1 Linking Marketing Theory with the FM Luxury Website Case**

#### **Study**

The results of this study suggest that designing reciprocal value propositions can take at least three paths. The first focuses on understanding how existing value propositions could better materialize desirable exchange discourses, such as moving cultural ideals into customer experience. For example, a hotel marketer could aim at creating a family package “weekend” (value proposition), which addresses and materializes all dimensions of a specific socio-economic family. Another example could be from creating a spa “work week recovery” package



where weekend programs allow for an escape from weekday work stress in a busy city location like Toronto.

The second path takes a cultural ideal and a relating identity project as a starting point for designing value propositions. For example, a hotel marketer targeting families could aim at helping parents to enact their “good parent project”; a step above current value propositions. This would mean investigating how parents enact their good parenting (spending quality time, healthy eating) across practices which influence their children’s well being. As an outcome, the hotel marketer could propose to parents’ value propositions through a stay at the hotel that suggests quality food and cooking programs using the rooftop herbs and local honey to promote a healthy lifestyle for families.

The third path takes current offerings as a starting point for enhancing value co-creation and envisioning how new customer practices could be integrated. A marketer perceives markets as customer practices. For example, a flower company could perceive a hotel’s banqueting rooms as a business’ spatial resource for carrying events, such as meetings, conferences or weddings. Irrespective of the chosen design path, the marketer needs to understand how it can help its customers to better materialize value into experience in customer practices. This means understanding what type of value customers want to experience in their practices and what obstacles they then face. Thus the design of experience value translates to planning which kind of resources need to be integrated and how, so that the customers can materialize the sign value into customer experience. The planning acknowledges that the exchange value cannot exceed the other two value elements. McCracken (2005) suggests perceiving marketing as “meaning management” (p.175). Effective marketing communication addresses cultural meanings or cultural contradictions. This could be as simple as celebrating local holidays or traditions by the international hotel group. This study adds a practical resource management dimension to meaning management; the marketers need to integrate resources so that desired cultural discourses, such as cultural ideals, can be materialized into customers’ lived experience in different practices. Resource integration planning includes the practices of the marketer and a larger value network. It is about identifying partner brands or companies that could also benefit and then design value proposition so that the customers can experience the desired outcome. This

could be the use of a spa like Willow Stream, restaurants like Nobu or athletic brands like Reebok to partner with in hotel.

There is also a financial benefit to finding partners that fit with the brand and customer base, which has implications for the design of the exchange value. The exchange value needs to be high enough so that it makes sense for a company and consumers to participate in value co-creation. At the same time, the exchange value must not exceed the sign and experience value because is not worth making the mistake of finding the wrong partners as this will deteriorate the experience value of the customer. It is worth noting that the hotel can enter value co-creation for other benefits rather than financial benefits only. In the ideal case, the involved stakeholders experience improved value through co-creation according to their subjective standards informed by hotel based culture and practices.

The concept of a value proposition in online community practices contributes to marketing theory, especially to the discussion within SD Logic. First, this study extends understanding on the demographic and situational character of value propositions, value creation in context and reciprocal value co-creation. It links the generic benefits and sacrifices of the value propositions to the consumers' practices where the consumers try to enact available resources with offerings. Consequently, this study pinpoints what the root of the value propositions is in the customers' real-life contexts - the ability of offerings to help the customers to enact desirable outcomes into experience in practice. From the customers' perspective, this study constructs the value propositions as the companies' proposals, which integrate experience value, exchange value and resources. In this case, it was found the 20-30 year old demographic were most active and comfortable posting and sharing their information online so this group would be targeted with contests.

Second, suggested by Venkatesh et al. (2007) and SD Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), this study integrates different value concepts. These are experience value and active exchange value as customers' decision-making criteria for accepting value propositions. By introducing the experience value and the exchange value, this study conceptually captures the customers' value emphasis. As a result, this study directs the theoretical debate from the exchange value (of GD Logic) versus the value-in-context or use value (SD Logic) to the primacy of sign value. Thereby

this study extends current theorizing (Kowalkowski, 2011) on how a circumstance, both on the company and consumer side, influences the value emphasis of exchange - exchange value versus use value.

Third, this investigation highlights the importance of practices in resource integration. The employees through social media inform customers of the meanings of value propositions, and thus which value propositions are desirable and thereby guide the customers' trip planning and resource integration decisions. In addition, they guide resource integration in the hotel brand. Staff suggest skills and knowledge that are needed for choosing the value propositions which their customers will value and accept and which will benefit the brand. This study suggests that individuals and practices inform the hotel brand as to where to focus in terms of skills and knowledge. For example if packages for families were a popular booking, then having a crèche, a family friendly restaurant and a pool with staff that accommodate children's needs. The sales and needs of customers mentioned in online social media should guide how different actors (like the hotel employees), as potential beneficiaries, are willing to place an emphasis on training. Consequently, from the value co-creation perspective, this study constructs the value propositions as a vehicle for reciprocal value, value in context, experience value, exchange value, and resource integration. Therefore these areas of value creation offer the company a conceptual tool for designing more effective value propositions where the effectiveness refers to the ability of the value propositions to address and inspire the customers reaction.

Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of customers in value co-creation. It is the customers who accept and use value propositions in their own ways irrespective of the company. Value is created by customers for customers (Heinonen et al., 2010). Vargo and Lusch (2008) suggest that value becomes co-created when customers use offerings. Compared to Vargo and Lusch's (2008) view on value co-creation, this study takes a narrower perspective. It suggests that value becomes co-created only when the customers can enact desirable cultural discourses in practices by integrating the companies' offerings with their other resources – and as a result experience value. Experience value online is an area that requires uniquely valuable experiences for the consumer; customers will decide what is important to them independently of what the brand would like.

## **5.1.2 Linking the Marketing Literature: SD Logic Discussion & Value**

### **Co-Creation**

This thesis has explored how the use of SD Logic and value dimensions can provide an effective framework of analysis for Fairmont hotel online marketing strategy. SD Logic recognizes the importance of sustaining relationships by focusing on the quality of service interaction with hotel employees (actors). The study has argued that collaborative interaction between consumer and brand actors enacts the marketing experience and enables the value creating process. Collaboration and learning together can become key strategies for knowledge building in a complex digital environment. The findings with relation to SD Logic support the notion that a firm's competitive advantage is dependent on continuously updating its technology competencies.

The 9 fundamental premises of SD Logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2008) applied specifically to hotel services form the basis of questions for this case study. These premises provide an inclusion of service delivery from the brand (as opposed to GD Logic where service is not accounted for). This paper contributes to the existing knowledge on SD Logic and shows that certain propositions are more applicable within the hospitality and tourism setting than others.

The first research question is directed by SD Logic value propositions where questions were created in the areas of value, service, resources, and innovation, and carried out with 15 managers of the Fairmont brand. The results show that the managers interviewed act as operant resources to both brand and consumers by knowledge sharing as employee actors. It can be concluded that the website FM and Fairmont brand support the overall goals of a co-creation website between brand and consumer.

In the second question, Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) value dimensions are utilized to provide greater understanding around SD Logic's customer value discussion, where greater depth was needed to demonstrate the experiential nature of customers online.

The gaps in theory supported using SD Logic and Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) Value Topology together, specifically where online environments evade SD Logic's ability to provide a framework around the experiential nature of online customer value. The analysis of interviews and web content from the FM website provides practical discussion around the implementation of this theory, where both SD Logic and Holbrook's Topology can help management integrate their online marketing. This goes beyond previous academic research.

The use of both SD Logic and Holbrook's Value Topology in this case provides greater understanding of value co-creation within an online environment. The complementary nature of Holbrook's topology in the discussion provides a more tangible framework to reflect the experiential nature of the social and hedonic postings of the online consumer.

SD Logic uses the singular term "service" not to reflect units of output, but rather to reflect the process that is involved in conjunction with another actor. This distinction is important because goods and services are not alternative forms of products in SD Logic.

The social currency within the SD Logic service is created through the employee and the online customer through the platform FM. The employee actors speak about the importance for the company of the connection with the customer. The conclusions from RQ1 involved the interviews and the corporate document analysis which were integrated into the SD Logic main areas of context with the Foundation Premises.

These areas of integration following a relationship marketing approach is required by the brand in order to develop value propositions that are relevant and useful to the customer (actor) in order to assist with value-in-context. This means that the content must be worthy of the commitment of the customer's consumption habits and intended to provide interesting and valuable use of the online conversation. The areas of clarification and emphasis that this thesis provides, supports SD Logic.

First is the importance of value co-creation. A company or brand must understand that the consumer is an integral part of determining value. The value co-creator (actor) and the brand or service provider's role is to help create the experience as the service facilitator (hotel brand in this case).

Second, the operant resources are essential and differentiate one company from another. The hotel brand must stress the skills and knowledge of their employees (operant resources), with the skills of the customer (operant resource) online and offline. Thus, a competitive advantage can be achieved, as the brand differentiates itself from its competition through specialized knowledge. Consumers will remember and connect the experience with the hotel and the employees as a single unit that is reflected in the brand memories.

Third, the hotel must continually innovate and update technological resources. Using the co-created resources of the online content (photo, video, comments), the brand has access to original and valuable content created by the consumer. This unique material allows the brand to provide something new and differentiated, which can allow for new ideas, feedback and request from users, potentially leading to new partnerships with brands or new products/services of the hotel brand (i.e. new spa treatments by request) or even using online to offline material in advertisement campaigns (eg. print media examples from online sources).

Fourth, collaborations of unique and interesting brands through the service provider (the hotel) by choosing unique and interesting partner brands that share values can offer a competitive advantage to the hotel and differentiate their brand. This also exposes the consumer to like-minded products and services they may find of interest. The use of complementary products like BMW bikes and Rebook gym products fills a service/product gap by leveraging partner brands. This also opens up marketing opportunities and exposure for new audiences to the hotel brand.

### **5.1.3 Holbrook and Woodside's Value Topology Application to an Online Luxury Brand Community**

In Holbrook and Woodside 2007's version, the value dimension categories were reduced from 8 to 4, resulting in a more practical application of the topology. Academics had criticised Holbrook in the past for his inapplicable model, as the eight-topology version was seen to result in more of a theoretical discussion than a usable model (LeroiWerelds et al., 2014). The 4 category topology

version was selected for of its ease of use for marketers, and the acknowledgment of the experiential nature of the online subject matter.

The 4 dimensions are described as: economic value (self-oriented), hedonic value (self-oriented), social value (others-oriented), and altruistic value (other-oriented). This reduced topology plays an important role in determining the role of online consumer content. However in this study, there was a further reduction to 3 value attributes specifically for online use. Hedonic and social value were combined as they were found to overlap in content and parameters.

This second research question investigated the netnographic content of the FM website through the lens of Holbrook and Woodside's value topology application, and the results illustrate the importance of hedonic and social content. The customer and the hotel contributed a high number of both self-orientated and others-orientated photos and comments. Holbrook (2005a) has suggested that the categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that some photos and comments may encompass more than one topology category. This supports the discussion that hedonic consumption is appropriate to online content as "those facets of consumer behaviour relate to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p. 152).

With regards to the online experience, especially in addressing the luxury online consumer is the customer's experiential, hedonic, playful and social characteristics, which encourages and enables the user to have fun (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The marketing and advertising of luxury retail stores and hotels is an emotional experience with marketers trying to steer consumers towards a memorable multi-sensory experience (Vukadin et al., 2016). Online luxury communities are linked to searching for experiences that are associated with emotion and hedonic gradification (Chaudhuri, 2002). However there are few studies involving the luxury online community and distribution channels (Sanguanpiyan and Jasper, 2010). This study reinforces the importance of using a multi-faceted topology focusing on consumer value within the online environment. Within this brand managed luxury hotel website, the consumers are often searching for new sensations and experiences. Providing a unique online experience provides a challenge for the Fairmont brand.

#### **5.1.4 Active versus Passive Customer Participation – Exchange Process**

This work also underpins the basic assumption that customer must participate in order to co-create value with the company. As some of the customer interviews mention, their children post on social media but they do not. The value potential in the form of self fulfilling fun, or economic reward like winning the contest through entering on the FM website, where the benefit is only received when participation occurs. This suggests that the company can only encourage and propose reasons to engage and participate but can do no more than that.

In the one instance, the interviewee who does not participate in posting photos, is passive and merely assesses (assigns some notion of potential value to) the proposition of value. However the child of the customer participates actively in the exchange process, by co-creating the value proposition offered by the company in entering a photo contest, which involves a value-adding aspect by shared production of the core offering itself (Lusch & Vargo, 2006).

Customer participation is defined as the degree of a customer's effort and involvement, whether mental or physical that relate to the production and delivery of a service (Chan et al. 2011). Customer participation involves the customers' technical resources (e.g., labour and knowledge), and their functional (interactional) qualities, including interpersonal aspects such as friendliness and respect (Chan et al. 2011).

This suggests that application of frameworks to determine and encourage value creation is reliant on the willingness of customers to participate. If the value online in the form of contests, deals or incentives to encourage online interaction through participation or even reading online content – if it is not relevant to the customer then it will not encourage them to participate in any form (Nambisan & Baron, 2009). If the marketing is not targeted at the correct demographic, for this case the 20-30/30-40 year old audience of the FM website, then the company will not provide the require motivation for the customer to visit the website and read or enter the contests. The exchange of value is a key element to the generation of value and must be examined by the management carefully.



## 5.2 Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations to this study that should be noted. First, the underlying basis of the research is taken from a management perspective within the hospitality industry. Other industries should be investigated, especially those which are service centric such as airlines, where online interfaces are heavily used to communicate with customers.

Second, the use of a single case study reduces its generalizability; however, the single case study has provided unique insight into a brand managed website, and has offered organizational insight, especially in the areas of SD Logic value propositions, reciprocal value, and value in context. Research conducted in the future should be focused on one of the three value areas mentioned in order to generate deeper insights into a brand-managed website. From a customer standpoint the use of Holbrook & Woodside's (2007) topology provided a customer value measurement in order to understand the content online. Future research could focus on a larger volume of customer postings and, to gain deeper insight, and perhaps on only 1 posting area such as photos or comments.

Third, the use of qualitative research is appropriate for investigating the theory surrounding SD Logic and Holbrook's Topology; in future, quantitative research will refine and further elaborate the concept once it has been more widely adopted into theory and practice.

This study focuses solely on the marketing department and the use of the brand managed web platform. Future research should include other departments, in order to gain a more holistic impact of the use of SD Logic and Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) topology. Customers were addressed in this study, but co-consuming groups and fans could also be studied, as a great deal of momentum exists within collective consumer groups online and opportunities for researchers to investigate further. Future research could also explore how the strategic roles and operational activities of other areas are influenced when an organization fully integrates SD Logic & Holbrook's Topology.

Future research could also include empirical examination from consumers as customers to all the beneficiaries in a specific value network, in order to learn more from the contextualized value

proposition. This study recognizes that customers cannot always materialize the desired value by integrating value propositions with their other resources. An empirical examination of value proposition failures would be a valuable approach in order to learn more from the contextualized value proposition and from customer learning.

The qualitative method used in this case study through 4 phases is also an area of development within theoretical methods advancements. This work followed Graffigna and Gambetti's (2015) work and builds on the idea that various phases enhance the quality and rigor of case work but also independently allow each phase to reflect an individual study; together the triangulation enhances the holistic view of the work.

### 5.3 Methodological Implications

The 4 phases used in this study build on the theory of qualitative multiple phase research. These individual phases could be used as a stand-alone study or as part of a larger holistic case study. Graffigna and Gambetti (2015) note that within the phases of management motivations, semiotic website analysis and narrative customer research phases, and document analysis, results reflect that both customer and firm provided multiple sources of important input to the success of a marketing program

Within this thesis, Graffigna and Gambetti's (2015) multiple phase design was used as a template to add additional interviews and documents in order to strengthen and build on the replication of design within a multiple phase case study. The increased number of interviews and data gathered is done so to strengthen the validity of the qualitative research. Brodie and de Chernatony (2009) suggested that value co-creation can be a useful approach to theorizing when the focus is on the interface between theory and practice to ensure managerial relevance. This work supports multiple phase studies in order to strengthen corporate strategy (with both internal and external phases) and to best understand their marketing strategy which is understood and supported by an online brand community.

In the management and customer interviews, snowball sampling was used to select those to be interviewed. This sampling method is a research technique that can be perceived to be prone to bias as one interviewee suggests another interviewee (Van Meter, 1990; Kaplan et al, 1987). The work in this thesis supports the use of snowball sampling as a means to connect with online community members who can be difficult to reach. The use of snowball samples in combination with other forms of research methods (like netnography and semi-structured interviews contributed through both the firm and the online community members) mitigates the risk associated with a single use form of snowball sampling. This study supports multiple method research phases and designs to encourage and strengthen the validity of the overall research methodology.

#### 5.4 Managerial Implications

The optimal brand-consumer relationship focuses on encouraging value co-creation online of content between the brand and consumers. The brand strategy of fostering co-creation of content encourages the free flow of ideas and values that represent important memories and moments of consumers who are pleased to post photos or messages showcasing Fairmont hotels around the world. These postings of personal moments, for example, in or around the hotels, restaurants, pools, golf courses, that in turn offer important brand awareness and a virtual interface to engage both consumer and brand. An online co-creation process initiated by the brand is presented in the form of photo contests that incentivise consumers to post and share “summer memories” or “romantic moments” within this online community. The increase in traffic online also improves participation of other social networks linked to the website, and is at the centre of the brand strategy. The content posted by the consumer is recognized within the Fairmont’s marketing strategy to hold value, as the consumer’s “trusted” and “real” reviews hold more weight than manufactured marketing content.

The research has also provided practical contributions, which benefit the hospitality brands and social marketers. First, the research outlines the value that consumers bring to social network marketing by the firm when engaging consumers online. This knowledge is useful when

planning social media campaigns and in understanding the expectation generated within online communities and brand value. Second, the research can be used as a diagnostic tool for brands looking to understand various factors in managing their online communities in order to maximize potential results. Third, the research provides insights into consumers' satisfaction and repeat usage as well as insights into more effective organizational strategies around online communities and social marketing strategies.

The concepts in this paper support SD Logic and Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) Topology working in combination as an integrated management solution within a company operated marketing website. Both frameworks have the potential to change the organization's overall management of the website. However factors that were observed in the case may depend on the marketing department's commitment to the overall integration and implementation of the theory. The adoption of a marketing strategy must take place at both corporate marketing and individual hotel level. This would include staff training, budgeting of resources, and a commitment to integrate the marketing practices suggested in this study.

This casework demonstrates how Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) customer value topology can be used to categorize online content in order to understand what the customer values online. As a result of the study, marketing departments now have a categorization system to help marketing employees identify value-creating posts. It is imperative for the employees to understand what type of content the customers are posting. The "sharing" and "liking" of posts is an important measure, which demonstrates what the customer values from the content. If the majority of customer shares or likes are only hedonic or social postings, then the marketing department will know the customer would prefer to see more of these postings.

The success of any new online marketing system relies on the overall training and commitment of the marketing executives. Marketing departments at each hotel should have specific social media training in order to best understand how to integrate customer value topologies on the appropriate social media platforms. Instagram is the ideal social media platform for image based social and hedonic posting, whereas Twitter and Facebook are more often used to post economic and altruistic value posting of, for example, upcoming holiday reminders, promotions and

awareness of programs. It is important that the company uses different platforms in the correct way in order to best communicate with the online customer.

Content online is viewed, shared, liked and commented on when the customer finds it of interest. Storytelling about Fairmont history, Canine Ambassador Programs, The Fairmont Fit partnership with Reebok and the Rooftop Bees are all postings that generate interest among the customer actors in sharing, liking and commenting. Another important factor that influences website marketing is the continued development and proliferation of smart phones, ipads and various android hardware. The ease of use and access to these devices has made it easy and convenient for consumers to quickly submit a review or share photos. Technology advancements like Connect on Facebook or Instagram allows one submission to create multiple postings on various social media platforms. This evolving technological environment requires the company to stay abreast of the latest technology and the integration of online software.

This case also identifies the importance of employee attitude and culture. Positive employee behaviour goes beyond delineated role requirements (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and improves the customer satisfaction levels. It was noted in many of the interviews that several of the managers mentioned using self-analysis in order to improve their own skill set and performance.

This work demonstrates that SD Logic and Holbrook and Woodside's (2007) Topology can be used to complement each other in a real world setting. The practical framework has showcased its usefulness and application of value co-creation between the customer and company within online hospitality marketing. The direction of this study has been strongly focused on the brand's perspective and specifically the lead role that management has in the creation of value with their customers online. This study identifies the need for management to take leadership and invite employees themselves to encourage consumers to become online fans. It is not enough for the brand to create, manage or participate in an online community or other social media; participation must happen for the value to be experienced by the customer.

Within an online community the brand must first consider employees to be the best representation of the brand and ensure that their knowledge, training, investment and confidence

will act as the voice of the brand. The employees can co-create but also co-destroy the brand value if they are not respected and treated well by the brand – the employees’ happiness in their roles can be felt by customers. Second, the trust felt by the brand towards the employees grants them a relationship where the employees are to think as their customers do and interact spontaneously, rapidly and in a credible way (Finne and Gronroos, 2009). Marketing strategies of online brand communities can identify and encourage meaningful consumer identification and exchanges of consumer to consumer and brand to consumer (Arnone et al. 2009).

As noted, the direct link of social behaviours and trends online have allowed for the natural development and interaction of the website with customers. Consumers sharing their lives and “showing off” in our “selfie” obsessed culture, have produced a catalyst to the creation of content on FM. This social currency of rewarding and encouraging online sharing has provided a marketing ecosystem that harnesses self-focused activities to benefit the brand. Consumer loyalty is created when the brand can speak on a deeper level to fans and explore more branded content that is of interest to customers. Previously we discussed company value propositions in online photo contests with economic incentive as the draw for customer submissions. The “free” night provided by the hotel as the incentive draws the customer to post photos and videos online. Economic incentive of contests is an important element because the bulk of photo and comments are a result of contest entries.

This economic currency is an important driver to new fan awareness or existing fan loyalty online. Providing incentives like packaged offers of three nights for the price of two, or a complementary glass of champagne are an important part of advertising and promotions within the hotel industry. The main advantage of communicating to brand aware guests is recognition of their loyalty through the FM website. Economic incentive is specifically relevant for the 20-30/30-40 year demographic as these are the targeted individuals who are responding and posting photos for the contests. As well, this age group are generally beginning their careers and are highly motivated by content as well as contests as a form of economic incentive; the FM website needs to specifically address this audience. Many of the recipes and cocktails are general; however it may be more effective to encourage participation in hotel restaurants, followed by online contests for food related content (win a dinner) or contests promoting participation with the chef to create a unique dish.

Maintaining and innovating the technology experience are of prime importance for the hotel/customer interaction online. The redesign of the FM website to create a Pinterest look and feel keeps the site fresh and relevant to the consumer. The social media feeds are reactions to the constant evolution in technology; programs like Facebook Connect allow for easy integration of feeds into corporate websites. This provides ease of use and therefore increases the likelihood of consumer engagement. YouTube videos and Instagram photos posted by the consumer and the brand also provide on-going and seamless interaction, resulting in the inseparability of the hotel and the experience. The brand experience is only as good as the investment by the company; thus, the Fairmont needs to continue to invest in technology resources, whether that be staff training or in the latest software and/or hardware. In hotel use of tablets in room also encourages the guest to post online. Often the customer is communicated with by the hotel post-stay to share their experience; however if the hotel can make it easy for the customer to participate while at the hotel by posting photos or communicating with the concierge on twitter, the potential of the customer to engage would be higher.

As mobile bookings and information search on mobile phones continue gaining popularity, hotels should take advantage of this growth to engage with the travellers, especially with the rise in Millennial travellers who are highly dependent on their smartphones. According to PhoCusWright, 1 in 4 hotel bookings comes from a mobile device and Millennials alone add up to 38% of these bookings (PhoCusWright, 2016).

Having the hotel's booking engine optimized for mobile viewing can offer guests a convenient option to book. Hotels can also try connecting with their guests pre-arrival through mobile apps that can help in a variety of ways, like assisting guests with directions, sending notifications of the seasonal packages and offers, or inviting a repeat stay from an old guest. Strong mobile promotions can be used as a key marketing and sales strategy by hotels.

Website integrated live chats can be another very helpful way to both increase bookings and assist guests with questions pre booking as well as customer service while staying in hotel. There has been debates over the live chat feature on a hotel's website due to the cost and infrastructure involved; however it can be seen as one the best ways to connect with a potential guest. Live chat may be expensive, but it has been shown to help in increasing sales while providing a

convenient platform for interaction. With a live chat option, the hotel can easily tap into such travellers easily on the company website and quickly and simply address any questions online rather than a customer having to pick up the phone or send an email. This also helps eliminate website bounce rates as the live chat assists guests through every stage until they complete their action. By engaging potential guests through this feature, it would make potential guests feel valued and the company has more control of converting conversation into bookings.

Using artificial intelligence to aid in the hotel customer experience followed by awareness and viral campaigns online is something being explored within the hospitality domain. Current programs like Google's voice recognition technology has claimed to be 98% accurate. Facebook also has a program called DeepFace to recognize online photos and is claimed to be 97% accurate. Relationships between the company and consumers are changing through technology interfaces and specifically through customer service offerings online.

Hospitality is one of the sectors considering the opportunities of artificial intelligence (AI). Luxury hotel brand, The Dorchester Collection, is currently using AI to identify what guest's want, not what marketers think they want. The customer experience is employing an AI platform called Metis which is used to standardize hotel measurement techniques to directly tap into digital customer feedback and deliver customer satisfaction surveys.

The Dorchester Collection's Director for Global Guest experience and Innovation, has explained that "Metis reads thousands of customer reviews and tells us what really matters to our customers, think of Metis as a giant focus group that not only facilitates the sessions in multiple languages but also summarises key findings, puts the findings in [context] with competitors and tells us stories worth listening to." The brand has completed a comprehensive study by Metis which involved 7,454 guests reviews from 28 different hotels and 10 major hotel brands across 18 cities and regions. The feedback has provided invaluable insight, further redefining the relationship with customers and reinforcing what is needed to provide a unique experience for customers in hotel and online.



Another example of a hotel that is using AI to improve customer experience is the Hilton which is using “Connie”, the hospitality industry’s first Watson-enabled robot concierge, to cater to guests’ needs for information about a hotel and the surrounding area. The focus of Connie is providing on the spot, quick customer access to personalized information through cogitative reasoning. Hilton argues that Connie enhances the customer experience. Examples of interactions guests have with the robot include business travellers asking Connie for directions to their conference room or a family asking when the pool closes. AI is being used in different sectors to improve efficiency, reduce costs, increase revenues and boost customer satisfaction by improving and enhancing the customer experience. As technology improvements are made so is the guest experience in hotel as well as online. Another example is Starwood’s use of “Edward” the “virtual host” where guests receive, via text message, interaction such as check in before arrival and dinner, golf and spa reservations.

Gathering guest data in order to offer AI or other personalised services is another important point for managers – the more data, the closer customer can be. The technology allows hotels to engage with the guests on a personal level by pushing special offers based on their location, request for special services, access to view maps, or connect with the hotel’s social media channels. Other hotel brands are using third party companies that assist the hotel in implementing and adding technology services like this. As an example, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Marriott International have implemented a Beacon technology to assist them with this service.

Tablets have been widely introduced at the hotel’s front desk, an area that is one of the busiest, as they are instrumental for quick check in/out as well as providing common answers and requesting feedback on the guests’ stay. Proficient business and well-travelled individuals appreciate a self-sufficient approach at check in/out to save time. Technology allows guests to check-in via tablets or phones using a QR code which captures their expected time of arrival. As well, checking-out could also be done via smartphones or tablets from a guest’s room using technology like a mobile optimized hotel software. Self check-in technology also eliminates errors and speeds the process. Ritz Carlton has been using this technology for their guests to check-in via QR codes through their mobile app.

As well as providing front desk tablets, many hotels have started investing in tablets in room and are installing third party apps to give their guests the control of room lights, AC, TV and more. Within the service areas, restaurant, bars, spas, these locations are where guests are more likely to engage with tablets as they browse through the menus and packages. Tablets can also be used for digital signage by displaying information on nearby attractions, local maps and to encourage guests to sign up for future email marketing. An app, for example, “OnSpot Social” collects email addresses and guest data to engage with them through various digital marketing strategies. In addition, hotels can encourage guests to give real-time feedback on the services.

Another very important way to deliver interesting and relevant content to the consumer is through partner brands. Currently BMW bikes, Reebok, Nobu, and the Willowstream spa brand are all high profile consumer names connected with the Fairmont brand. However, new and relevant content is key in engaging on-going online interest. In the “experience economy” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), customers are constantly looking for trusted and exciting new product introductions. Recent programs like “Fairmont Fit,” where guests are provided with Reebok fitness clothing and shoes, are well received by both business and leisure guests. The Fairmont’s partner spa brand, Willow Stream, is a major contributor to the FM website, providing a variety of online content including promotional “wellness” packages and products to “help make life easier” (Interview 3). The Fairmont must continue to explore and work with trusted partners in order to introduce guests to new online experiences and add value.

The website offers unique value through the distinctive experience that resonates from the guests contributing, reading and interacting with the online content. The FM website categories, Guest Stories, Destinations, Food & Drink, Spa & Wellness, Weddings, Arts & Culture, Fairmont Magazine, and Fairmont Cocktails, all provide the opportunity for the customers to select content based on personal interest. These topics have been crafted and adapted to reflect the changing needs of the customer, based on guest feedback, as well as indicating the content that is trending online. The value for the brand is in managing a website where the customers enjoy a genuine and rewarding online experience.

Changing consumer trends is an issue that cannot be controlled directly by the brand, but the brand must remain up to speed and connected to what is trending in the industry. The brand must

not only keep in touch with the latest hospitality innovations, eg. organic mattresses, pillow bars, but must also listen to consumers, proactively addressing their needs and wants. The hotel brand must continue to invest resources to keep the website up-to-date, and should maintain regular social media activity in order to stay proactive and pick up valuable customer feedback.

The introduction of a Chief Cultural Officer (CCO) was proposed by McCracken (2009) and has been adopted by many brands since. In Gambetti et al.'s (2015) study, the task managers and roles should encourage brand managers to build, personalize and make the brands more vivid and attractive in order to encourage consumers as co-partners in co-creation. A role dedicated entirely to encourage and exchange the moments of value and meaning and to genuinely encourage value co-creation is a role that is continuing to grow; it demands more creativity by the brands. The creation of this new role would be of value for a brand such as the Fairmont, which shows a true commitment to expanding and developing their online reach and online connection to consumers.

It is also critical to focus on the brand community that exists on the website. The need for consumers and employees to continue to create a service ecosystem where the consumer and actor interact is the main point of the FM website. Because the website is not a revenue generating distinction, less emphasis may be placed on the economic development of this section in the service environment. Within our customer interviews, it was found that the main contributors of content were the 20-30 year old audience. However in the document analysis phase, it was discovered that the average guest age was 47 and it is important not to alienate this audience online. The 47 year old may not be interested in contests, but the younger demographic is and will enter photos and provide valuable content to the Fairmont. The importance lies in finding interesting and unique content for multiple audiences and providing continual resources focused on the online customer experience.

Overall the more free spirited approach to a relaxed blogging style website managed by the brand is a good investment as the younger guests are online more and more. The integration between online and offline is becoming non-negotiable and a must for any hotel brand to connect with guests or before and after a stay. These brand messages and communications will only continue to improve the relationship between the consumer and brand going forward.

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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1 Corporate Press Release Documents

#### 7.1.1 Everyonesanoriginal.com



#### Everyonesanoriginal.com To Serve As A Virtual Gathering Place For Guests of the Luxury Hotel Brand

**TORONTO, February 8, 2010** – As social networking continues to grow and shape the way people communicate, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts today announced the creation of its new online community platform [www.everyonesanoriginal.com](http://www.everyonesanoriginal.com) (EAO).

A mix of customer-generated media and non-traditional Fairmont content, the new site will serve as a virtual gathering place for Fairmont guests, colleagues, and others and be an interactive environment where fans of the brand can post photos or video from a memorable trip, participate in exclusive polls and contests, access exclusive hotel and destination content, and engage in dialogue with other site users about their Fairmont travel experiences.

On top of being a platform for brand and hotel storytelling, the EAO site will also serve as a timely and comprehensive resource for travellers seeking hotel and destination information and visuals. Designed to support and house rich media content including high quality digital video and podcasts, vignettes from Fairmont will range from tours of suites made famous by visiting VIP or celebrities to tips on how to fully explore the locale, whether it's eyeing The Big Five on a game drive at Fairmont Mara Safari Club in Kenya or exploring the cultural diversity of Boston's North End during a visit to the Fairmont Battery Wharf. Ensuring a sense of authenticity, Fairmont guests will also be encouraged to post short vignettes from their travels.

Generating some buzz and excitement around the new web platform is the company's ***Original Memories Photo Contest***. A call for creative or interesting photography from a past Fairmont experience, guests are being encouraged to submit their top images along with a short post about why the photo holds a special place in their heart for a chance to win one of three exciting prizes. The contest's Grand Prize consists of a five-night stay to any one of Fairmont's world-class hotels in addition to a \$1,000 airfare credit. \*

"Fairmont is an experiential brand and storytelling is a common theme amongst our guests and hotels," says Brian Richardson, Vice President Brand Marketing & Communication, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. "We see great value in creating an ongoing dialogue with our guests and feel our new EAO platform is an area where they can not only share their stories with us, but also with other like-minded individuals who may share a common interest with them. Our intention with EAO is to try and engage our customers online in a much more meaningful way."

In addition to hosting user generated content and exclusive Fairmont content, Fairmont's new EAO site will also serve as the "hub" for the brand's growing social media presence. Already, Fairmont can boast strong visibility on sites such as Twitter ([www.twitter.com/fairmonthotels](http://www.twitter.com/fairmonthotels)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/fairmonthotels](http://www.facebook.com/fairmonthotels)), and has plans to explore and leverage other top sites like Flickr and LinkedIn throughout 2010.

## ABOUT FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS

With over 60 distinctive hotels, including the iconic Fairmont San Francisco and Fairmont Peace Hotel, Shanghai, and more in development, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is a global hospitality brand known for its warm and engaging service and culturally rich experiences. Located in coveted worldwide destinations, its unrivalled collection of classic hotels imbue a sense of heritage, sophistication, and social importance, and are often considered destinations in and of themselves. Fairmont is also committed to responsible tourism and is an industry leader in sustainable hotel management with its award-winning Green Partnership program. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Holdings Limited, a leading global hotel company with 95 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands. The company also manages Fairmont and Raffles branded residences, estates and luxury private residence club properties. For more information or reservations, please call 1-800-441-1414 or visit **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..**

###

\* For Official Rules and prize descriptions, visit <http://www.everyonesanoriginal.com/>. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. LEGAL RESIDENTS OF CANADA (EXCLUDING QUEBEC), THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE 50 UNITED STATES (D.C.), 18 YEARS AND OLDER who did not purchase any equipment for purposes of entering the Contest. VOID IN QUEBEC WHERE PROHIBITED.  
Enter Contest by: 3/31/10. Sponsor: Fairmont Hotels Inc., 100 Wellington St. West, Ste. 1600, Toronto, ON M5K 1B7, Canada

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## 7.1.2 Romance Through the Ages

Fairmont LAUNCHES GREATEST LOVE STORY PHOTO CONTEST TO WIN A TRIP TO THE LONDON MOVIE PREMIERE OF TITANIC IN 3D

*- Exciting Prizes Include Tickets to the Premiere  
of TITANIC in 3D, a Stay at London's Savoy and More -*

**TORONTO, February 27, 2012** – Valentine's Day may have come and gone, but no matter, love is always in the air at Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. In celebration of the countless affairs of the heart that have taken place at its storied collection of luxury hotels over the last century, Fairmont has introduced its **Greatest Love Story Photo Contest**. The contest is being housed on the brand's [Everyone's An Original](#) site and [Facebook](#) page and features fantastic prizing from romantic escapes to Fairmont locales to gift certificates and more.

Between now and April 27, 2012, Fairmont guests and travellers alike are being encouraged to share a photo that best captures a special moment that they've shared with a loved one over the years. From larger-than-life proposals and cherished honeymoon memories to simple, but unforgettable highlights enjoyed with that a special someone, guests need only to submit an image or photograph that best exemplifies love.

Adding additional excitement to the contest, to commemorate the April 4 release of TITANIC in 3D in theatres, Fairmont is offering an **Early Bird Prize** that will send one lucky couple to the movie's premiere. All entries received by March 9, 2012 will have a chance at winning the Early Bird Prize, which also includes return airfare and three nights of luxurious accommodation at the recently restored The Savoy, a Fairmont managed hotel in London.

For full contest details, terms and conditions and/or to enter, travellers can visit [everyonesanoriginal.com](#), [facebook.com/fairmonthotels](#), or [fairmont.com/titanic](#). All photo entries received by March 9, 2012 will qualify for the Early Bird Prize. All entries received by April 27, 2012 (excluding the Early Bird Prize winner) will have a chance at winning a Grand Prize, First Place Prize and Second Place Prize. Once all contest entries have been received, Fairmont and its sponsors will narrow the submissions to a list of Top 20 photos. Guests will

then be invited to vote for their favorite entry from this selected group during a short voting period with the top rated photos winning the prizing.

## 7.1.3 Overview: Fairmont's Original Take on Social Media

### Sharing

Taken from: [https://hotelexecutive.com/business\\_review/2954/overview-fairmonts-original-take-on-social-media-sharing](https://hotelexecutive.com/business_review/2954/overview-fairmonts-original-take-on-social-media-sharing)

July 18, 2014

By [Hayley Mitchell](#), Social Media & Community Manager, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International

Stories are for sharing, as is social media, making a branded online community the ideal channel for Fairmont Hotels & Resorts to highlight its storied history and unrivalled collection of luxury hotels.

With more than 60 global hotel properties, many of which are deemed historical icons, a storied past is one of the most attractive qualities of the Fairmont Hotels & Resorts brand. Whether it's tales of Tony Bennett first singing "I Left my Heart in San Francisco" in 1962 at the flagship Fairmont San Francisco, or memories

*..pretty saucy for those days* of Marilyn Monroe's infamous midriff baring appearance at London's The Savoy in 1956, celebrity stories abound. There is no lack of silver screen fables to tell as well: with countless motion pictures filmed at Fairmont properties, including classics like *North by Northwest*, *I Confess*, and *The Way We Were*, it's just another part of this long and magical history. And as for personal guest stories, our very favorite type: those are endless. We can estimate with confidence that thousands of proposals and weddings have occurred at grand hotels like Ottawa's Fairmont Chateau Laurier and The Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston (both celebrating their centennials this year), but we can never really know just how many real love stories began here. It's undeniable that every storied property and every magical moment is an original. But the question is how to tell the story; how to share?

Enter social media. While tools like Facebook and Twitter are often utilized by travel brands for customer service, PR and bookings, any community manager knows that engagement is paramount and a healthy social media stance should be based on sharing. At Fairmont we measure our social media successes not by the number of fans or followers we have, but by engagement levels seen in our reports. As hoped for, we noticed that even without prompting, our guests were turning to our various social networks to share their Fairmont stories with us, and to inquire about unique Fairmont information that they were not finding on our various websites ("do you have the recipe for the Perfect Manhattan we had at The Plaza Hotel?"). The user generated content was fantastic, and it became obvious that a more in-depth story-telling hub was necessary. We also realized that the limitations of Facebook and Twitter posting did not allow for us to share more lengthy content that our fans were asking for, such as recipes, historical anecdotes, and unique green efforts, unless we had a place to house this content and link to. The



solution was Everyonesanoriginal.com, launched in 2010 as a Fairmont-branded online community for our hotel guests, fans, friends and colleagues to take their sharing to the next level. The purpose was to create an interactive environment where end-users could post photos, videos, and special memories, and where they could go to do additional research on their travel destinations, based on more personalized property information such as amateur snapshots, chef's recipes and fun facts, versus traditional website information focused on things like rates, maps and local amenities.

everyone's an original | **Fairmont** HOTELS & RESORTS

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## Sharing memories is the best gift of all with Fairmont Photobooks

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	<b>Rising Wolf Mountain: Montana (4 Views)</b> By: FLICKR USER		<b>Winter Wonderland</b> By: OMAROCAT
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Fairmont's www.Everyonesanoriginal.com website keeps guests connected...

Everyonesanoriginal.com is not a hotel review site, and it's not a customer service tool, and fortunately we have not had to police this as of yet, since members seem to understand its purpose and unwritten house rules. Out of the current 16 categories of content on the site, areas where guests are most likely to post include Guest Stories, Videos, Photos and Family Travel; and of course the ever popular Weddings/Honeymoon category, where we see wonderful proposal stories and honeymoon pictures from our visitors. We have had photos sent in from grandchildren whose grandparents spent their wedding night at The Fairmont Empress in 1945 for \$5 a night (we then honored a night at the same rate in the very same room, making for a very special return visit.) We have become acquainted with an engaged couple, Erika and Ryan, who posts repeatedly on the site about their Fairmont travels; their goal is to visit all Canadian Fairmont properties in the next two years, and they have shared photos from each stay with us. Just last month, we were given a photo that caught a surprise proposal that our staff had helped plan for a guest at the Fairmont Washington D.C. Those are just a few examples of personal guests stories that are frequently shared with us via the Everonesanoriginal.com portal. As for our colleagues, they love the opportunity to share their expertise in categories such as Mixology, Culinary Arts, Environmental, Filmography and History. It is a great way to showcase their talents with our guests, and give our colleagues an outlet to express themselves. The "Recipe Finder" located in a prime spot on the right hand bar of the site has been a big success, featuring nearly 200 Fairmont recipes direct form our chefs, and gorgeous food photography to accompany.

With hundreds of stories to read, the site is easily searchable by category, keyword, media type, property or region, allowing users to hone in on the content they are interested in. The conversation cloud also highlights popular keywords, and clicking on that word will lead to multiple posts about that subject. The back-end posting experience is as simple as your average blog platform, so it's easy enough for all levels of computer-literacy to navigate, which also allows the community to attract a demographic and audience that may not be present on our other social networks. In keeping with ease-of-use, users are not required to login in order to view content and browse the site; they only need to create a profile or easier still, sign in through Facebook, only when they would like to post their own material or comments. To encourage more sharing and engagement across other social networks, every post on Everyonesanoriginal.com is equipped with Facebook Like and Google+1 buttons, as well as Email, Rate and Comment capabilities.

From a service standpoint, connecting with our guests on this more personal level, gives our fans and followers an opportunity to tell us what they care about most at Fairmont. But from an insight perspective, the visibility into our guests' activities, interests and passions is priceless. We are able to learn what type of content they appreciate and engage with most, what on-property activities and experiences they feel are worth writing home about, and we are able to identify and create direct contact with some of our biggest brand advocates. It's a way of maintaining our on-property relationship with our guests long after they've checked-out.

The content on Everyonesanoriginal.com is frequently updated, so our database of UGC is growing every day, making the site an enticing place for repeat visitors. This is not a promotional site that offers insider deals at all, so the incentive for guests to return is story-sharing alone, and the resources our properties provide. In 2010, to launch the site and gain awareness, we hosted the Original Memories Photo Contest, which saw photo entries in the thousands, again building our UGC database with unique amateur photos and stories about Fairmont from our guests. Launching on February 24 of this year, we will host a similar Everyonesanoriginal.com photo contest in partnership with Paramount pictures. Our Greatest Love Story Photo Contest will encourage fans to post romantic photos for the chance to win various Fairmont prize packs.



As an alternate to a hotel blog, which is generally one-sided, and as an addition to the traditional social networks we use concurrently, having a branded online community has allowed our fans and guests to find a place and interact with like-minded individuals who value much of the same things they do: travel, luxury and story-telling. In turn, the Everyonesanoriginal.com outlet is the perfect venue for Fairmont to share its unique tales, connect with brand advocates and build an incredible collection of UCG, knowing that every post, photo and interaction is most definitely an original.

As Social Media and Community Manager for Fairmont Raffles Hotels International, Hayley Mitchell is responsible for the day to day management of online reputation on social networks including online review sites, Facebook, Twitter, Location-based marketing and Fairmont's own community website, Everyonesanoriginal.com. Beyond monitoring, engaging and reporting, she is tasked with the long term social strategy for Fairmont, Raffles and Swissotel brands, which includes social campaign management, understanding social media in new markets and determining where and when these brands should be involved. Ms. Mitchell holds an honors BA in both English Literature and Political Science from the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. Ms. Mitchell can be contacted at 416-874-2457 or [hayley.mitchell@fairmont.com](mailto:hayley.mitchell@fairmont.com) ***Extended Bio...***

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## 7.1.4 A Century's Worth of Love!

Coinciding with the ***Greatest Love Story Photo Contest*** and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Titanic, Fairmont is also excited that two of its most notable hotels will be hosting celebrations throughout the year as they mark centennial milestones in 2012. Ottawa's famed castle, Fairmont Château Laurier, opened its doors June 1, 1912. Originally slated to start welcoming guests on April 26, 1912, the opening was delayed when Charles Melville Hays, the visionary behind the hotel, died on the Titanic while returning from business meetings in England. Since then, this legendary château has hosted heads of state, celebrities, dignitaries and guests from around the world and has often been dubbed "the third chamber of Parliament" because of the politicians who regularly roam its corridors. In Boston, The Fairmont Copley Plaza has been a landmark in Back Bay's Copley Square for almost a century and is one of the city's premier social destinations. In 1912 Mayor of Boston John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, President Kennedy's grandfather, presided over a reception of more than 1,000 guests to open the hotel. Nearly every U.S. President since Taft has stayed at the hotel, while many foreign dignitaries, royalty and countless celebrities have also graced the halls. For more information on each hotel's centennial festivities, special offers and more, please visit [fairmont.com/titanic](http://fairmont.com/titanic).

### **Bring a New Love Story to Life**

Celebrate a cherished romance or a new flame by creating lasting, loving memories with a romantic getaway. Whether loves' flames are fanned at a tropical resort or vibrant city center, Fairmont has a host of signature packages and other romantic offers available for a truly remarkable experience. Just visit [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com) and use the site's Package Finder, which will let romantics discover the experience that best suits their passions and help set the stage in bringing love to life. For those who still can't decide, make the easy call and opt for one of

Fairmont's Bed & Breakfast packages which pair elegant accommodations with mouthwatering cuisine.

#### **Fairmont is "Famous" When it Comes to Amour**

Fairmont is "the" place for special occasions, especially when it comes to matters of the heart. And we're not the only ones who think so! Since silent pictures first brought stories to life through film, movies stars and celebrities have checked-in over the years, making Fairmont the preferred locale for their romantic rendezvous. Charlie Chaplin's romantic interlude with Paulette Goddard took them to Shanghai and Fairmont Peace Hotel while Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks "held hands everywhere they went" according to a letter home from one of the summer staff at The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. Elizabeth Taylor spent part of her first honeymoon at The Savoy with bridegroom Nicky Hilton, while Liz and Richard Burton chose Boston's The Fairmont Copley Plaza for their second honeymoon. Vivien Leigh was first introduced to Laurence Olivier in the Savoy Grill while power couple Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones entered into wedded bliss at The Plaza in New York, confirming that Fairmont properties provide engaging backdrops for all sorts of romantic encounters, past and future.

###

#### **ABOUT FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, which will arrive in destinations as diverse as Jaipur, Kyiv and Manila in 2012, is a celebrated collection of more than 60 luxury properties around the globe, including Shanghai's Fairmont Peace Hotel, The Plaza in New York, and Makkah Clock Royal Tower in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The luxury brand's distinctive hotels offer a sense of heritage and sophistication, warm, engaging service and culturally rich experiences. A community and environmental leader, Fairmont is also recognized internationally for its responsible tourism practices and award-winning Green Partnership program. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Holdings Limited, a leading global hotel company with over 100 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands. The company also manages Fairmont and Raffles branded estates and luxury private residences. For more information or reservations, please call 1-800-441-1414 or visit [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com).

### **7.1.5 Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Company Facts**

#### **PROFILE**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts connects guests to the very best of its destinations worldwide, reflecting each locale's energy, culture and history. Passionate travellers choose the luxury hotel brand for its ability to deliver memorable travel experiences, personalized and thoughtful service, and hotels that are one-of-a-kind. Serving as genuine gateways to their destinations, Fairmont hotels offer locally-inspired cuisine and spirited bars and lounges, distinctive design and décor, and a steadfast responsibility to environmental and social priorities. With more than 65 hotels globally, and many more in development, landmark hotels in the Fairmont collection include The Plaza in New York, London's The Savoy, Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai and Quebec City's Fairmont Le Château Frontenac. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Hotels & Resorts, a leading global hotel company with over 105 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands. The company also manages Fairmont, Raffles and Swissôtel branded luxury private residence clubs, whole-ownership residences and serviced residences properties. For more information or reservations, please visit [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com).

#### **FAIRMONT PRESIDENT'S CLUB**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts' guest recognition program, Fairmont President's Club, provides frequent guests with an enhanced level of service, and special benefits and privileges during their stay. Personalized travel profiles afford members customized access to exclusive offers, experiences and benefits based around their indicated travel preferences, interests and passions. In-hotel benefits include complementary high-speed and wireless Internet, Fairmont Fit athletic apparel, use of TaylorMade golf clubs in select locations, a members-only reservations line, expedited check-in and check-out and access to exclusive vacation experiences which connect guests with the best that each destination has to offer. Enrollment is free and guests can join at any Fairmont location worldwide or online.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is a leader in sustainability and was one of the world's first hotel companies to embrace environmental stewardship. The luxury hotel brand has expanded this commitment to include economic, environmental, and social programming through its Fairmont Sustainability Partnership. With the goal of improving the overall well-being of local communities where Fairmont does business, the program focuses on four key areas to achieve change; Responsible Business, Ecosystem, Environment and Engagement. Building on the brand's environmental platform, once described by *National Geographic Traveler* as "the most comprehensive environmental program in the North American hotel industry," ongoing global initiatives include reductions in energy and water consumption, waste generation and carbon emissions, sustainable practices related to design, proactive construction and procurement policies, as well as community outreach through local groups and partnerships. As the first luxury hotel group to address climate change, Fairmont also works with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to achieve established greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, among other strategic initiatives.

## **WILLOW STREAM THE SPAS AT FAIRMONT**

Willow Stream Spas is the award-winning signature spa brand of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. Located in some of the most beautiful places in the world, each Willow Stream Spa draws on the nature, essence and energy of its surroundings – from the desert, the mountains, the sea or the pulse of a cityscape – and all offer Fairmont's unique brand of luxury and outstanding service. Coupled with authentic spa experiences and a place to escape for both solitude and socializing, Willow Stream Spas simply make you feel fantastic. From the sun-washed stone mountains in Scottsdale, Arizona to the vibrant city of Shanghai, Willow Stream Spas inspire living with abundant energy.

## **GOLF & SKI**

Created by renowned designers like Stanley Thompson and Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Jr., Fairmont's visually stunning and technically challenging golf courses are consistently top ranked. In 2013, *Golfweek* included courses at Fairmont St Andrews in Scotland, Mexico's Fairmont Mayakoba, The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge and The Fairmont Banff Springs on a list of the world's best places to hit the links. *SCORE Golf's* listing of the Top Public Courses in Canada for 2013 named The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge first in class and The Fairmont Banff Springs among the top three.

Fairmont's mountain properties have long been a 'cool' spot to hit the slopes. In Canada, Fairmont Tremblant is a popular choice for those who love the charming French atmosphere of this mountain village, and all of Fairmont's Quebec-based properties are an easy drive from classic slopes like Mont Ste. Anne, Stoneham and Le Massif. Other favorites include The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise and The Fairmont Banff Springs, which are cradled by three of the Canadian Rockies' most popular ski resorts and offer some of the finest powder on the planet. Celebrity-favored Fairmont Chateau Whistler offers ski-in/ski-out access to world-famous Whistler Blackcomb, two adjoining mountains with over 200 runs offering terrain for every level of winter enthusiast.

## FAIRMONT GOLD

For discerning travellers, Fairmont Gold is a *hotel within a hotel*, providing discriminating guests with an oasis where the highest level of exceptional service creates an exclusive and personalized stay. Discreet and attentive concierge staff are equipped to anticipate guests' needs and act as local experts, severing as venerable destination curators and ensuring a memorable stay. Additional amenities and privileges of the brand's Fairmont Gold offering include a dedicated private floor with private check-in and check-out area; a comfortable lounge providing sanctuary from the bustle of the hotel; honor bar and cocktail hour canapés; complementary continental breakfast; free high-speed and wireless Internet access; and access to an executive boardroom and other business services.

## RESIDENTIAL OFFERINGS

Meeting the increasing demand for high-end vacation residences and private homes, Fairmont's real estate ventures continue to grow with private residence clubs under the Fairmont Heritage Place brand, whole-ownership Fairmont Residences and long-stay Fairmont Serviced Residences. In destinations such as San Francisco, Acapulco, Dubai, Vancouver, and more, vacation-ownership properties and residences are located in prime city addresses or in resort areas with a nearby beach, ski hill or golf course. Not only are they a luxurious "home away from home," where attentive colleagues are familiar with guest preferences, they also provide an attractive option for investment purposes, and allow for a more immersive experience of the destination.

## FAIRMONT STORES

Located in various Fairmont destinations, Fairmont Stores are a unique retail experience offering luxury goods and authentic, local products. With items ranging from fine leather and exquisite jewelry to golf accessories and commemorative pieces that celebrate brand and individual hotel heritage, Fairmont Stores are the perfect stop for a thoughtful gift or a souvenir to mark a traveler's stay. Fairmont Stores offer pampering items from Willow Stream Spas and from Le Labo, Fairmont's in-room amenity line, as well as luxurious bedding items including plush duvets and Mascioni high-thread count linens. Also available are Fairmont Teas, a line of premium black, green, organic and wellness herbal teas specially created for the luxury hotel brand by the Metropolitan Tea Company Ltd. Items are also available online at [fairmontstore.com](http://fairmontstore.com).

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## 7.1.6 FRHI Hotels & Resorts – by the Numbers

FRHI Hotels & Resorts (FRHI) is a leading luxury hotel management company that operates hotels globally under the Raffles, Fairmont, and Swissôtel brands. The company’s distinctive portfolio of luxury and upper upscale hotels features celebrated icons, world-class resorts and stylish city center hotels. With a corporate vision to be “the world’s preferred hospitality company”, FRHI is focused on providing each and every guest with a unique and meaningful travel experience.

### **FRHI - A Global Perspective**

FRHI currently operates in 32 countries worldwide, with hotels situated in top financial centers, gateway cities and sought after resort locales. FRHI’s reach is diverse ranging from emerging destinations like Azerbaijan and Bangalore to established tourism hotspots such as New York City and Paris. The company’s corporate headquarters is located in Toronto with regional offices found in Zurich, Singapore and Dubai.

### **FRHI Properties Operating and in Development**

Total Properties Currently Open and Operating: 110 hotels\*

Total Properties in Development: more than 40

### **FRHI Property Count by Region**

Americas: 46 hotels

Europe: 23 hotels

Asia Pacific: 23 hotels



MEA: 18 hotels

Upcoming developments will further the hotel count in each of these regions, with a strong focus on growth in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

### **FRHI Room Count**

Total Rooms: 41,610

### **FRHI Colleagues & Global Headcount**

Recognized as an employer of choice in markets globally, FRHI's corporate culture encourages professional development and growth opportunities from within, building a loyal and experienced colleague base of individuals who are passionate about providing meaningful guest experiences.

Global headcount: 47,650 colleagues

### **Telling the Story by Brand**

#### ***Raffles Hotels & Resorts***

Raffles Hotels & Resorts is a portfolio of luxury properties around the world. With a compelling mix of cultures and styles, every hotel in the Raffles family has its own individual personality, with its own story to tell and its own sense of place. However, each one is a oasis that draws on the timeless essence of Raffles – to deliver thoughtful, personal and discreet service to well-traveled guests.

Property count: 10 hotels, 2 residential

Average hotel size: 150 - 250 guestrooms

Notable hotels: Raffles Singapore; Raffles Praslin Seychelles; Raffles Dubai; and Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris

#### ***Fairmont Hotels & Resorts***

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is a luxury hotel collection focused on providing adventurous travellers with genuine experiences in celebrated destinations globally. Fairmont hotels are distinctive, often capturing the spirit or personality of their locale, and can connect guests to the very best that the destination has to offer. Engaging, thoughtful service is also a hallmark of any Fairmont experience.

Property count: 67 hotels, 11 residential

Average hotel size: 350 - 450 guestrooms

Notable hotels: Fairmont Banff Springs; New York's The Plaza; The Savoy, London; Shanghai's Fairmont Peace Hotel

### **Swissôtel Hotels & Resorts**

Inspired by the high standards of living in Switzerland, Swissôtel Hotels & Resorts makes quality of life their promise to their guests. Known for its contemporary Swiss style and locally inspired flair, the brand is also distinguished for a robust commitment to sustainability, as well as an energetic and passionate team. Swissôtel's well-located properties worldwide – with many more in development – serve as testament to the brand's fresh and exciting attitude.

Property count: 31 hotels, 1 residential

Average hotel size: 300 - 350 guestrooms

Notable hotels: *Swissôtel The Bosphorus, Istanbul*; Swissôtel Dresden Am Schloss, Swissôtel Krasnye Holmy, Moscow; and Swissôtel Tallinn, Estonia

### **For further information:**

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\* Total property count also includes *The Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire* in downtown Calgary and *Claremont Hotel Club & Spa*\*\* which are both managed by FRHI. \*\*Claremont Hotel Club & Spa to be rebranded a Fairmont property in late 2014.

### 7.1.7 Stay and Stay Fit

#### FAIRMONT MAKES WORKING OUT AS EASY AS A WALK IN THE PARK

##### *Fairmont President's Club Guests Can Exercise Their Privileges with New Reebok Workout Gear*

**TORONTO, October 3, 2012** – With a long track record of making it easy for guests to stay lean and mean while traveling, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is bolstering its popular **Fairmont Fit** program with new fitness gear, running shoes and other sports apparel from Reebok, a pioneer in the sporting goods industry with a rich and storied heritage in running, training and fitness. As a member of Fairmont President's Club, the luxury hotel brand's complementary loyalty program, the new initiative will give guests access to Reebok workout gear and footwear, which is delivered directly to their guestroom for use in-room, in the gym or to enjoy in the great outdoors.

"Many of our guests have told us that they want to stay active during their travels," said Brian Richardson, vice president, brand marketing and communications at Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. "By adding a partner like Reebok, one of the world's top sportswear companies, we're strengthening one of our key health and wellness offerings and making it easier for our guests to continue their workouts on the road." Adds Richardson, "Personally, I'm a huge fan of our Fairmont Fit program and use it whenever I'm out visiting our hotels. As someone who travels for business, I'm always looking for amenities that streamline my trip, and Fairmont Fit is one of the key ways I do that."

"Our mission at Reebok is to empower people to be fit for life," said John Lynch, vice president, marketing and merchandising at Reebok. "We want to be the brand that helps them meet their fitness goals and this partnership is a great way to allow guests at Fairmont Hotels & Resorts to continue on their fitness path when they are not at home. We hope that Reebok can make the Fairmont Fit experience that much better."

Whether guests are looking to lighten their load and avoid checked bag fees, or simply don't want the hassle of packing workout clothes and running shoes, Fairmont Fit is just a phone call or click away. With the new Reebok product rolling out to all Fairmont hotels this fall and throughout the winter, members can easily add Fairmont Fit preferences to their Fairmont President's Club member profile for in-room delivery or simply call Royal Service if they haven't listed it on their profile yet. Guests can order Reebok ZigLite running shoes, a track jacket, performance t-shirts, and microfiber socks, while women can choose to have capris and sports bras and men can request pants or shorts. Travellers simply enjoy and

leave them in their room when they check out, or call to receive a fresh set whenever they are ready for another workout.

If guests really like their Reebok gear, they can decide to purchase new items at a 15 percent discount and take it home with them. In addition to apparel, guests are provided with pre-loaded mp3 players upon request to use during their workout. In collaboration with EMI Music, Fairmont has compiled extensive playlists that include a variety of contemporary, classical, rock and easy listening music, suitable for running, walking or other leisurely pursuits.

In addition to the new workout gear, Fairmont and its hotels and resorts around the world are innovating new programs and initiatives that motivate and inspire guests to maintain healthy habits while on the road. The luxury brand's Lifestyle Cuisine Plus program offers menus that include heart-healthy, diabetic-friendly, vegan and gluten-free options, while complementary BMW Cruise Bikes are available for guests who want a healthy way to see the sights. And though all hotels can offer tips on jogging routes and many offer running maps of the surrounding area, in Vancouver The Fairmont Waterfront has morning runs with the General Manager on Vancouver's seawall through Stanley Park, and in Montreal Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth's Run Club departs the lobby every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:40am. Other fun fitness offerings include hula hooping at The Fairmont Kea Lani, TRX Suspension Training at The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa and complementary 'Fairmont Fit' classes at The Fairmont Dallas.

And while many hotels hide their gyms away in the basement, a number of Fairmonts have decided to reward travellers who hit the gym with a loftier view. In Boston, The Fairmont Copley Plaza has a new 2,500-square-foot fitness center that lets guests enjoy vistas over bustling Back Bay, and in Monaco, Fairmont Monte Carlo, which has a luxurious Willow Stream Spa on its sixth and seventh floors, offers its own fitness center that boasts soothing views of the Riviera and Principality. Other gyms that have recently been updated include The Fairmont Vancouver Airport; The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton; The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge; Fairmont Heritage Place, Ghirardelli Square; The Plaza, New York; Fairmont Newport Beach; Fairmont Heliopolis & Towers and more.

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts' exclusive guest recognition program, Fairmont President's Club, provides frequent guests with an enhanced level of service and special benefits and privileges. Personalized travel profiles afford members customized access to exclusive offers, experiences and benefits based around their indicated travel preferences, interests and passions. In-hotel benefits include complementary high-speed and wireless Internet access, a members-only reservations line, expedited check-in and checkout, and access to exclusive vacation offerings. Fairmont Fit gear from Reebok is available on a complementary basis to Premier and Platinum members, while Club level members can take advantage of the service for a small fee. Guests can enroll at time of booking or online at [fairmont.com/fpc](http://fairmont.com/fpc).

## 7.1.8 Fairmont Goes to the Dogs

### Canine Ambassadors Bring Extra Level of Comfort to Guests

**TORONTO** – Known for thoughtful and welcoming service, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts offers a distinctive service at select hotels with resident hotel dogs known as Canine Ambassadors. Travellers missing their own furry friend or looking for a companion while taking a walk can bring along the resident Fairmont dog for extra security and the comfort of home. The Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind and other non-profits trained many of the pups and although they didn't end up becoming guide dogs, they are committed to the new goal of making every guest smile. All join their four-legged colleagues as official members of the hotels' Guest Services Teams.

The newest member of Fairmont's Canine Ambassador team is Monte, a Golden Retriever at **Fairmont Le Château Montebello** in Quebec who was originally trained as a seeing-eye dog by the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind in Ottawa. Monte stood out as having a 'larger than life' personality that made him the perfect fit for a new found life in hospitality. For some quiet time, the happy pooch relaxes in his replica log château, specially designed for him by the hotel's engineering team.

Edie, a white Boxer/Labrador Retriever at **Fairmont Pittsburgh** is named after Pittsburgh native Andy Warhol's "superstar" Edie Sedgwick and is readily available to accompany guests on walks around the hotel. Edie began her training in the assistant dog program at Circle Tail, Inc. in Pleasant Plain, Ohio. After completing over a year of training, Edie's friendly and outgoing personality proved to be better suited to the hospitality industry where she gets to meet new people every day.

In Kenya, sisters Tusker and Grammy are a Labrador and Ridgeback mix and work at **Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club**. They can be found around the Club taking walks together, jumping into ponds and chasing birds over 100 acres of picturesque landscape.

Golden Labrador Retriever Marcus, known to his friends as Mark, is the Director of Pet Relations at **The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise** in the Canadian Rockies. He loves to hike and play fetch with guests.

Zeus is a handsome Chocolate Labrador who is overseeing interactive guest appreciation at **Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa** in California. He keeps an eye on a multitude of lobby activities, co-leads guest hikes and assists in grounds supervision of the classic 226-room property.

Smudge, a Golden Labrador Retriever, recently moved to **Fairmont Hotel Macdonald** in Edmonton.

Joining the pack in summer of 2009 was Jordy, a Black Labrador Retriever at **Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu** in Quebec. Jordy meets and greets guests, goes on scheduled walks and runs, and serves as a community liaison.

Catie Copley, a Black Labrador originally trained as a guide dog with the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind in New York, changed careers to become the famed Canine Ambassador for **The Fairmont Copley Plaza Boston**. Catie has been the star of two children's books, the second of which includes her colleague Santol.

At **Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac**, Canine Ambassador Santol was originally bred and trained to be a guide dog by the Mira Foundation. Given his amazing kindness and incredible social skills, the Mira Foundation partnered with the hotel to find Santol a new career where he can constantly socialize!

In Vancouver guests can meet Mavis, a Lab/Retriever mix, and Beau, a Yellow Labrador, at **The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver**. Both are former BC Guide Dog trainees that were better suited to the social life of a hotel ambassador. The Fairmont Waterfront was the first hotel in the company to introduce a K9 Ambassador -- welcoming Morgan, a Black Labrador, in 2002. He is now enjoying his dog days of retirement

As personalized relationships are at the heart of Fairmont service, guests can stay in touch with their furry friends, by sending some "ani-mail" either by snail mail to the hotel or via email: [edie.woof@fairmont.com](mailto:edie.woof@fairmont.com), [catie.copley@fairmont.com](mailto:catie.copley@fairmont.com), [mavisthedog@fairmont.com](mailto:mavisthedog@fairmont.com), [beauthedog@fairmont.com](mailto:beauthedog@fairmont.com), [cmt.gracie@fairmont.com](mailto:cmt.gracie@fairmont.com) and [lcf.santol@fairmont.com](mailto:lcf.santol@fairmont.com). Guests who want to stay in touch with Catie, Santol and Smudge can keep up with them on their own individual Facebook pages as well.

For a look at all of Fairmont's Canine Ambassadors, visit <http://www.fairmont.com/promotions/canineambassadors>.

## **ABOUT FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is a celebrated collection of more than 65 luxury properties around the globe, including Shanghai's Fairmont Peace Hotel, The Plaza in New York, and Makkah Clock Royal Tower in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The luxury brand's distinctive hotels offer a sense of heritage and sophistication, warm, engaging service and culturally rich experiences. Fairmont balances the company's economic, environmental and social priorities and provides the framework for responsible hotel operations through the Sustainability Partnership program. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Hotels & Resorts, a leading global hotel company with over 105 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands. The company also manages Fairmont, Raffles and Swissôtel branded luxury private residence clubs, whole-ownership residences and serviced residences properties. For more information or reservations, please call 1-800-441-1414 or visit [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com). Become a fan of Fairmont. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [EveryonesAnOriginal](#).

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## 7.1.9 Fairmont Roofs Abuzz With Honeybees

### *Honey is on the Menu as Chefs add On and Offsite Apiaries Across the Brand*

TORONTO - Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has been committed to protecting the environment for over 20 years, and as a part of that commitment is always brainstorming creative ways to enhance the brand's Sustainability Partnership Program. With growing concerns about Colony Collapse Disorder in North American honeybees, Fairmont saw an opportunity to help by placing hives in some hotels' rooftop gardens. Not only does this help the local environment by providing bees to pollinate area gardens and parks, but by harvesting the honey, chefs can offer delicious, local and sustainable honey for use in onsite bars and restaurants. A proven success, the program has now extended beyond North America, with onsite hives thriving in Scotland, Kenya and China as well.

Below is a list of Fairmont's properties that have joined the program. Guests can also check in with Fairmont's bee programs online at [fairmont.com/promotions/fairmontbees](http://fairmont.com/promotions/fairmontbees).

#### United States

**Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown** has guests buzzing after welcoming thousands of Italian honeybees in summer 2009 to their new home: three beehives on the roof, affectionately named Casa Bella, Casa Blanca and Casa Bianca. The bees enhance the hotel's culinary program as well as its interior courtyard garden, which provides fresh herbs and flowers such as edible pansies, in addition to plants, trees and flowers. The hotel's signature cocktail, "The BeeTini", is made with rooftop honey and honeycomb. The Fairmont bees came



from Larry & David Reece in Germantown, Maryland and the first honey was harvested in fall 2009.

**Vital Stats:** 150,000 Italian honeybees living in three beehives produce about 300 pounds of honey per year.

As part **The Fairmont San Francisco's** effort to serve local, organic, and sustainable cuisine, the iconic hotel installed four beehives in its 1,000 square-foot onsite culinary garden in June 2010. The bees came from nearby Marshall's Farm and now dine on the hotel's lavender and herbs to create delicious honey, with each hive boasting more than 50,000 bees when fully mature. Chefs use the harvested honey at afternoon tea service and in cocktails, entrees and desserts at the hotel's three restaurants.

**Vital Stats:** 250,000 honeybees living in four beehives produce approximately 1,200 pounds of honey per year.

**Special Products:** The "Fairmont San Francisco Honey Saison" craft brew was created in partnership with Almanac Beer Co. and is offered on draft in the hotel's Laurel Court Restaurant & Bar and in bottles at its Caffè Cento.

The storied Pyramid Restaurant & Bar at **The Fairmont Dallas** focuses on seasonal and local ingredients and has cultivated a beautiful rooftop garden since 2008. Beehives are the focal point of the terrace garden, having been installed in 2010. Restaurant chefs and the Texas Honeybee Guild harvest the honey several times a year, which is used to complement the flavors of fresh cuisine in dishes such as the local cheese plate, Greek yogurt parfait, burnt honey salad dressing and a Texas bourbon cake dessert.

**Vital Stats:** 80,000 honeybees living in two beehives produce about 70 pounds of honey per year.

Urban bee-keeper Gavin Stephenson (who also happens to be the Executive Chef) and his energetic bee-team, fondly tend to seven bee hives on the roof of **The Fairmont Olympic Hotel** in Seattle. The rooftop could be mistaken for the runways of an international airport, with a half-million bees approaching their final destination or departing on a five-mile journey to

gather pollen. Drizzled over smoked-salmon or poured into a favorite cup of tea, guests may notice hints of blackberries, huckleberries and other local favorite NW flavors.

**Vital Stats:** The hotel's harvest yields 400 lbs of honey. At full capacity, the seven hives will house up to 700,000 bees.

**Special Products:** "Olympic Honey Ale" is infused with rooftop honey and is made in conjunction with [The Pike Brewing Company](#). Rooftop honey is incorporated into menus for The Georgian and Shuckers and is also available for purchase. The rooftop honey is used in the hotel's Rooftop Lemon Drop and also in the Rooftop Honey-glazed Smoked Salmon recipe.

In 2011, **Fairmont Newport Beach** in California saved their current hive of honeybees from extermination when they were found "swarming" in the hotel's ground-level parking lot. The hotel's beekeeping partner, Backyard Bees, rescued the bees before relocating them to a safer home on the rooftop. Hotel chefs personally help the beekeepers cultivate and extract the honey for use in Bambu Restaurant, banquet menus and in-room dining menus as well as for specialty VIP welcome amenities.

**Vital Stats:** 250,000 bees living in three hives can produce 300 pounds of honey.

In partnership with Marshall's Farm, **Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa** has installed honey beehives on the resort's perimeter in order to help support the Valley's bee population, which has decreased in number by 90 percent since the 1980s. Hotel honey is used in soups, salad dressings, pastries, ice cream and on the Santé menu. One highlight: Canelés - a heavenly decadent, custardy treat baked in a traditional fluted mold coated with beeswax.

**Vital Stats:** When the beehives mature, they will each house up to 50,000 bees and are estimated to produce approximately 300 pounds of honey.

Boston's **Fairmont Copley Plaza** is the home of 130,000 Italian honeybees who reside in three hives alongside the hotel's rooftop herb garden. The hotel works with the Best Bees Co., which helps tend to the bees as they dine on the hotel's garden and in nearby Copley Plaza. Guests may sample the hearth-baked bread with honey butter at OAK Long Bar + Kitchen.

**Vital Stats:** Around 130,000 bees in three hives produce about 75 pounds per year.

**Fairmont Battery Wharf** is also cultivating honey bees. Working with Best Bees Co., the hotel maintains hives at the Urban Bee Sanctuary in Boston's South End. The hotel will be featuring the honey in the new Tea by the Sea offering and in the Aragosta Bar & Bistro's summer menu.

In partnership with City Bees™, **The Fairmont San Jose's** Sustainability Team has installed honey beehives on the hotel's rooftop. Beekeeper Robert MacKimmie will establish nascent hives so that the hotel can harvest house honey for use in pastries, ice cream and cheese displays.

**Vital Stats:** When the beehives mature they will each house up to 50,000 bees, which are estimated to produce approximately 100 pounds of honey.

## **Canada**

In June of 2008, **The Fairmont Royal York** in Toronto installed three beehives on its city center roof. The following year, honey production was increased with the addition of three more hives to bring the apiary to its current stable of six. Since its inception, the bees of the hotel's apiary have produced honey that has won first prize in the amber honey category at the world-renowned Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. During the past six years over 3,000 pounds of honey have been harvested from the 14th story apiary, with much of it going into the hotel's mouth-watering cocktails and cuisine. The apiary was established in partnership with the Toronto Beekeepers Cooperative and FoodShare and is a natural extension of the hotel's rooftop garden, flourishing more than a decade.

**Vital Stats:** In summer, 350,000 honeybees living in six beehives produce an average of 750 pounds of honey per year.

**Special Products:** A unique beer, called "Royal Stinger," is made by local Mill Street Brewery and features honey from the hotel. This draught can be found exclusively at The Fairmont Royal York's restaurants and lounges. This summer, The Fairmont Royal York will be running a contest to rename the beer, in conjunction with their 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

**The Fairmont Waterfront** in Vancouver is proud to share its 2,100 square foot herb garden with six honeybee hives on the hotel's third-floor terrace. The hotel's inaugural honeybee season in 2008 produced a harvest from three hives, and a fourth hive of wild bees that outgrew their original home in nearby Stanley Park was added the next year. Guests of the hotel are invited to

join the daily garden and hive tours with 'Bee Butler' Michael King. The Fairmont Waterfront has recently partnered with Hives for Humanity, who have introduced mason bees to the hotel's garden as part of the Pollinator Corridor Project. This community outreach initiative is committed to populating Vancouver green spaces with mason bees and houses in an effort to strengthen the local bee populations. These super pollinators don't produce honey but are great for the garden (and the planet) and live in harmony with the existing honey bees.

**Vital Stats:** 500,000 honeybees living in six beehives produce 600-800 pounds of honey per year, with an additional 4,000 pounds harvested from off-site hives.

**Special Products:** In addition to using their honey in chocolate, pastries, salad dressings and signature cocktails, The Fairmont Waterfront serves a Fairmont 'Stinger' Honey Lager brewed in partnership with local Whistler Brewing Company in its new restaurant ARC.

At **Fairmont Le Château Frontenac** in Quebec, four Queen Bees live in hives in Executive Chef Baptiste Peupion's rooftop garden. The hives produce enough honey for the entire hotel, with the extra being sold in the Fairmont Store. The honey is harvested three times a year (spring, summer and fall) and is used in special honey-based menus (for banquets) and select dishes and drinks in the hotel's restaurants and bars.

**Vital Stats:** 70,000 honeybees living in four beehives produce up to 600 pounds of honey per year, depending on the weather.

**Special Products:** The hotel jars and sells its own honey for guests.

In the summer of 2012, **Fairmont Le Château Montebello** installed an in-house beehive initiative at nearby Kenauk Nature, one of North America's largest and longest-established private fish and game reserves. Visitors staying during the summer months can watch safely from a sheltered gazebo as the kitchen team, with the help of Kenauk Nature guides, harvest honeycomb and extract the fresh honey. The delicious honey is then used by the hotel's culinary teams to enhance the resort's breakfast buffet and in-room welcome amenities.

**Vital Stats:** About 180,000 honeybees living in three beehives produce 180 pounds of honey annually.

**The Fairmont Chateau Whistler** installed four beehives totaling 120,000 bees in 2013. The European Honey Bees help pollinate flowers in the hotel's garden and produce a delicate wildflower honey that is harvested by the hotel's Chefs for use in culinary and cocktail creations. The bees travel up to 3km to pollinate local wildflowers including Lupins.

**The Fairmont Vancouver Airport** has 60 bee colonies happily residing at McDonald Beach Park, located just five minutes from the hotel. In partnership with the Honeybee Centre, the hotel anticipates a ton of the liquid gold at harvest. The culinary team offers a signature line-up of honey harvest offerings as well as a multitude of uses such as sweeteners for teas, coffees, yogurt, waffles, pancakes, dressings, garnishes, cocktails and more.

**Vital Stats:** One million honeybees living in 60 beehives produce one ton of honey per year.

**Special Products:** The hotel offers a 500 gram bottle of their Canada #1 Amber honey and also serves a Fairmont Honey Lager by local Whistler Brewing Company at Jetside Bar and Globe@YVR.

**The Fairmont Empress** in Victoria, British Columbia has been privileged to welcome royalty, but this queen's arrival was a first. Since spring 2011, the hotel has welcomed a Queen Bee and 400,000 honeybees. The bees reside in the hotel's Centennial Garden and pollinate Victoria's most lavish hotel gardens. In total, ten hives of Carniolan bees produce honey that is featured in the hotel's restaurants and world-renowned afternoon tea service. In 2014, The Fairmont Empress welcomes a new apiarist, Theo Fredrich of Fredrich's Honey Farm. The Empress produced 1.2 tons of honey in 2012, 1.4 tons in 2013 and Fredrich estimates 85 – 95 pounds per hive to be produced by the end of the 2014 season.

**Vital Stats:** There are currently approximately 10,000 bees in each of the 10 on-site hives but in the height of summer, that number grows to 50,000.

**Special Products:** "Fairmont Empress Honey Wheat Ale" is made in partnership with local Hoyne Brewery.

**The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge** launched an in-house beehive initiative in the spring of 2012. The hives, which began with 8,000 domestic European honey bees, have grown to house over 150,000 bees. These busy bees provide the culinary team with fresh honey to use in many

delicious pastries, sauces and in-room amenities. Even after all those tasty treats there is enough honey leftover to produce a refreshing Rooftop Honey Lager that is available in The Emerald Lounge.

**Vital Stats:** The hotel's hives can produce 500 pounds of honey in a season.

In 2011, **The Fairmont Palliser's** culinary team in Calgary imported its very own honey bees from New Zealand. One of the original hives, affectionately named the "The Honeybee Hotel", is heading into its 4th season and will be split this year into a second hive. The main nectar sources for the hives are dandelion and clover in addition to a diverse range of flowering plants and trees. The delicious honey is used by the hotel's culinary teams and pastry shop to enhance fabulous desserts throughout the property. The hives are managed by Apiaries and Bees for Communities and used to provide accessible urban beekeeping education.

**Vital Stats:** About 100,000 honeybees living in two beehives produce 100 pounds of honey.

In May 2012, Montreal's **Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth** installed six beehives on the hotel's 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, at an altitude of 352 feet. The six queens and their entourage of 320,000 live next to the Chef's organic garden and help pollinate the city's parks and Mount-Royal. The hotel's garden features 25 varieties of tomatoes and aromatic herbs, several types of edible blooms and fruits including berries, melons and lemons. The hotel has trained three employees as beekeepers who ensure the health of the colonies, collect honey from hives and extract it twice a year in the rooftop honey house. The artisanal urban honey produced is served at afternoon tea. The hotel also collects pollen – now considered a superfood – that is added to dishes for its nutritional value.

**Vital Stats:** About 320,000 honeybees living in six beehives produce a honey harvest twice a year, each of which can yield 200-300 pounds of honey. Each seasonal harvest has a unique taste *based on the nectar source. Every year, the honey is sent to a specialized laboratory to analyze and they have found traces of 21 different plants and trees, including linden, blackberry, lilac, forget-me-not and elderberry.*

**Special Products:** The honey is sold at the hotel's Fairmont Store in jars of 140g and 350g.

## Europe

The resort grounds are buzzing at Scotland's **Fairmont St Andrews**, and the resort is proud to be associated with 'Operation Pollinator', a UK-wide initiative to improve and enhance the environment for the benefit of pollinating bees. The hotel has purchased 10 hives of bees which have been placed in suitable positions around the resort grounds and on both championship golf courses, The Torrance and The Kittocks. These hives will increase the population of bees in the area and in turn continue to provide and preserve beautiful, colourful landscapes for guests to enjoy.

## Asia

Fairmont Yangcheng Lake in Kunshan, China has installed beehives that produce fresh honey on the hotel's namesake lake. The resort has brought in a local expert, who has been in the beekeeping business for 15 years, to tend the beehives and bring in wild bees from the West Mount in Suzhou. Meanwhile, the hotel provides serene surroundings with plenty of trees and flowers in its private organic herb and vegetable farm, which spreads over 200 acres. During the spring, the resident bees can produce around 40 kg of honey daily, which allows chefs to offer guests a natural taste for desserts and entrees throughout the resort.

**Vital Stats:** More than 2,500 honeybees living in 10 beehives produce 40 kg of honey per day in peak season.

**Fairmont Beijing** is devoted to using only the best products from local purveyors. Currently the hotel purchases honey from several parts of China, with the majority of honey coming from Shangri-La farms. The beautiful hills of Shangri-La are home to wildlife grown free of contaminants. These farmers have been given free technical support, tools and training opportunities which have allowed them to produce and bottle pure, organic honey. From the beehive to the dining table, the hotel's honey is bottled at the source, bringing guests a sweet taste of peaceful nature.

**Vital Stats:** An industrious worker bee may visit 2,000 flowers per day. (don't think this fits, not about the hotel)

**Fairmont Makati** in Manila installed beehives in select portions of the hotel in 2013 as part of their commitment to the use of sustainably-sourced local ingredients, enlisting the help of one of the country's pioneer beekeepers for the installation and maintenance of these hives. A rooftop apiary was created on the second floor, and Spectrum, the hotel's all-day dining outlet, features a display hive as part of the dessert selection. Once the honey is cultivated and extracted for use, the hotel chefs infuse it with spices like vanilla, star anise, cinnamon and nutmeg.

**Special Products:** A special honey station at Spectrum features a spread of sweet, signature dessert treats made with the ingredient. The most popular honey desserts are the Mascarpone cheese on a bed of honey and the raw honeycomb with sugar-free dark chocolate.

## **Africa**

Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club has recently cultivated an additional bee project: a field of over ¾'s of an acre of English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*); we have decided to develop two types of honey on the property Wild Honey from the Mount Kenya forest and property where we have partnered with local beekeeper Stephen Macharia, who has been in the beekeeping business for over 17 years, to bring fresh wild honey to our guests. We also recently introduced bee hives into our Lavender fields in an attempt to recreate a replica of true lavender honey from the Provence region of France. The preliminary results are amazing and we are delighted with the product! Each beehive hosts approximately 4,000 bees and produces an average of 30kg of high quality wild and lavender honey. Interesting fact: African Bees will gather nectar and pollen from our flowers, trees and lavender during the night on a full moon!

**Vital Stats:** 32,000 honeybees live in eight beehives.

## **Bermuda & Mexico**

**The Fairmont Southampton** is committed to preserving and protecting Bermuda's natural resources, and as part of this commitment, has established a beehive in partnership with local beekeepers. As Bermuda's bee population has dwindled dramatically in recent years, this project contributes to ongoing efforts to increase the number of healthy bees on the island. In time, tours will be conducted to the hive where locals and visitors alike can learn about the



significant role played by bees in the island's agricultural industry, the sustainable development of the island and food security. The honey produced by the bees will be utilized by chefs in kitchens throughout the resort's eight restaurants.

Mexico's **Fairmont Mayakoba** cultivates rare and endangered *Melipona beecheii* bees which produce a type of honey that's known for its medicinal purposes. The *Melipona* has remained an important part of the Mayan culture for over one thousand years. The ancient Mayans used the *Melipona*'s honey and wax as a form of trade and in modern times, the honey has been used as a natural antibiotic, to prevent throat infections and to soften a mother's muscles during childbirth. At Fairmont Mayakoba, the honey is used in locally- inspired treatments at the Willow Stream Spa.

**Vital Stats:** About 5,000 *Melipona* bees living in two beehives produce approximately two pounds of honey per year.

## **ABOUT FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS**

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts connects guests to the very best of its destinations worldwide, reflecting each locale's energy, culture and history. Passionate travellers choose the luxury hotel brand for its ability to deliver memorable travel experiences, personalized and thoughtful service, and hotels that are one-of-a-kind. Serving as genuine gateways to their destinations, Fairmont hotels offer locally-inspired cuisine and spirited bars and lounges, distinctive design and décor, and a steadfast responsibility to environmental and social priorities. With more than 65 hotels globally, and many more in development, landmark hotels in the Fairmont collection include The Plaza in New York, London's The Savoy, Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai and Quebec City's Fairmont Le Château Frontenac. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Hotels & Resorts, a leading global hotel company with over 110 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands. The company also manages Fairmont, Raffles and Swissôtel branded luxury private residence clubs, whole-ownership residences and serviced residences properties. For more information or reservations, please visit [fairmont.com](https://www.fairmont.com).

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## 7.2 Management Interviews

### 7.2.1 INTERVIEW 1

I: (Intro question) Can you tell me about your position and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

A: I am the Director of Social Media and part of that is managing the overall direction of everyone's an original website. So In that respect that would be I guess coming up with the concept that, why we need it, community development, that and also in along with the content development there.

It was about 5-6 years ago when we first started doing this in the advent of social media. We noticed a real storytelling trend, and we realized that as the Fairmont brand we actually have many stories to share from guest and experience to our employees. So we needed a place to do this. Facebook, twitter wasn't enough. Twitter wasn't long enough and we needed to develop a portal to share. They don't dive into stories. The entire goal was an easy place to share memories. We made it a sign on system where you create an account and as a guest you can sign up, tell your story, upload photos and share stories. The same as each property, they can log on and tell the story of each unique property.

Traditional hotel website will tell you like obviously things like the cost, the amenities that are available. Direct information, more a list format where it's really telling you the basics of what you need to know when booking the hotel. At EAO we have the ability to go deeper and explore more, up load recipes that might be seasonal that are unique property, talk about things that are more current as well.

(FP7): How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

A: One of two ways. I think we provide value because we're giving customers an outlet and a place to give feedback. EAO is a platform to share. A ton of value to us – its trust. Additionally people when they want to communicate us, its more of a platform to actually share that create value for them with user generated content. If people see other people have had actual experiences, it is more powerful than anything we could put on a regular website. From a marketing angle to the real user experience, rather than telling you that is a great place to stay, it is much more powerful from a customer to upload an image to everyone's an original. We do have in our terms and legal conditions dictate that we have the right to use the photos and content in future marketing which of course extremely valuable to because building a database of real images that become part of the collection.

(FP9): Why do you think the hotel is in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

A: Um do you mean the hotel brand? Of course we are in the best position to maintain it and moderate. But it also allows us the ability to guide conversations in the right direction. Kind of icebreakers, and slightly guide the conversation, give people new ideas to do, look at, think about.

I think people are only driven to an action when there is a real reason. Well I think mainly people are driven to take action that when they have either a extremely great experience or an extremely poor experience. Generally you don't usually see people that it was satisfactory. In extreme so what generally driving people to post on everyone's original which is good for us is wonderful. What is driving people to contribute to EAO is positive experiences. It's a thank you to us. The booklet that is resonating with them are further they as they feel the need and let share it on their own blog they have posted in Facebook affects of a lot of people don't really have their own... They're looking for somewhere to share pictures and the bank statement... To learn about what we did some property's it is an amazing thank you and that the drive limited to such an incredible experience that its actually making them want to share and re live it.

(FP6): How does FRHI enhance the customer experience with the customer online?

A: The outcome for using it is building a huge database of content. But it is more than that to us. We would rather have amazing stories than 10,000 medial ones, so it is about the quality of the content. We are able to learn about what is important to the guests. Which is pretty amazing and you can search different terms and properties and understand what would people posting about what people really care about at each property.

(FP3) Is information technology and online technologies an important part of the company's overall marketing strategy?

A: Ya definitely it is, I can't give you any revealing statistics right now I don't manage our website, but you will probably get more detailed information from our Marketing Manager.

(FP5) My next question is- how EAO help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation?

We actually did a big change to the website. Were looking at doing something else where we have created an Instagram and Facebook aggregator. The beautiful images on these websites have created a new way for our EAO website to look great. We are always looking at different technologies to make things easier.

(FP2) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

A: Yes we do have guidelines It's not an employee form, or HR tool. It is not for internal communication at all. Because of this we have given everyone pretty clear direction on what the intention are of the website – providing a place for customers and the employees to engage and share beautiful photos and tips. If something was off the wall from a customer, we would of course take it down and advise the contributor. But up to this point we haven't had that issue.

(FP1) Please explain how the employee knowledge and expertise are incorporated into the original?

A: Employee share their expertise, like the chefs will post recipes for specific properties that use local cuisine and ingredients. Unique ingredients that are being used that are local that make a resort special.

As employees we are asked that if we feel like there is something worth seeing or doing they are welcome to write an article and have their own space to create knowledge and expertise. As an example the concierge can give the top 10 things to do – giving their personal insight.

(FP8) How does Everyone's Original fit into the overall marketing strategy of the hotel and provides value in looking at the marketing strategy?

A: Fairmont fits in, the brand it's self lends itself to experience because we are a historic brand. People have experiences that they do not forget. Hence the name: Everyone's an Original. It essentially means each property is a unique place. Our overall marketing of properties surrounds the originality and uniqueness of the properties and experiences happening in each. Experiences that you won't soon forget – it's not a check in check out experience. As an overall marketing campaign this is essentially a celebration of this. We don't sell on this website. Our marketing messages all year round correspond – if you look they are about celebrating memories and experiences. It's more about the experience, the website ties in nicely because we don't sell, you can't book on Everyone's an Original. Keeping the theme of the marketing tactics is – a subtle way of pulling things together and keeping the theme of the marketing tactics but essentially not doing the selling online is important.

(FP4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

A: Well it where it is it really gives them a spot to discuss what is most important. Some cool spa tips that a spa director shares. A restaurant with really interesting local ingredients in July, they

can do this there. It gives us as a brand the opportunity to get more content up on the internet. Improving our search results online. If someone is searching ‘local ingredients in Banff’ and our article comes up.

### **7.2.2 INTERVIEW 2**

(FP7) How does Everyone’s An Original help you collaborate with your customers and provide value to them?

A: I think giving people a sense of empowerment and inviting people to share experiences and post pictures – it gives people the safe space. Its co beneficial – we actually then have ability to use the photos and stories. We have a legal clause that allows us once something is posted – we can use the material for our own. And it brings some real life to a campaign. Not only can guest express themselves, there is a contents element opportunity where people can win trips and stays.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

A: I think it started at the brand level, rather than the individual hotel level. We’ll come up with the strategy model and the funding model, and resources to back it, launch it, execute it, and filter any guidelines and standards on how to manage and run it on a day to day platform. Chefs will go on and post recipes to peak guests at the properties interest. I think back in the day we were one of the first to launch. At the time we wer also small enough to manage. If we were 1000 hotel brand chain we wouldn’t be able to manage it easily.

(FP6): How does the Fairmont enhance the customer experience with the customer online?

A: I think it’s all routed in the notion of wanting to be heard, I don’t want you say bragging, but by posting on other social media channels. I think ultimately and selfishly at the end of the day,

if there is something in it for them, I don't want to sound judgmental but it provides more motivation and interest.

(FP3): Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: IT is important part of marketing strategy. Yes digital marketing is at the helm of everything we do and every customer touch point today. In fact I just put together a slide for our CMO – there is this one slide – all of these bubbles and shows how connected we are and the future. I will send this to you.

Digital marketing is the foundation of everything we do at the and that ties into the distribution strategy, technology, data and insight, b to b, service strategy – everything from user generated content, mobile strategies, blogs, online, user generated content, partnerships, multilingual, - it all evolves around digital.

(FP5) How does Everyone's An Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: Given our active community it helps build the case and we need to continue to invest in these platforms. It's a very dynamic world, a very reactionary world and if anything comes across as negative it needs to be dealt with right away.

There is a filter, checks and balances that alert those needed to look

(FP2) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff and (FP1) Please explain how the employee's knowledge and expertise are incorporated into Everyone's An Original?

Absolutely we'll work with the individual properties, global brand partnership teams, as an example, Reebok world-wide (bought out by Adidas), leaning on our PR and digital. It's all very

collaborative – I think the platform touches everyone in the organization.

(FP8) How does Everyone's An Original fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel to provide value to the brand?

I think social, social is big. All properties have social – have dedicated twitter feed. As much as possible, we want to make sure the loop is closed and keeping business in our own channels – guests and potential guests close – rather than going to third party platforms for bookings. I think it's a part of the entire brand strategy. I think furthermore, we leverage the name, EAO, summer and winter contests, by coming up with dual offer strategies, our loyal members, double points with our partners – the name and the platform expands more than just this platform it represents the essence of the company.

(FP4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners like Reebok & BMW bikes offer a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

I don't know if other brands are doing it. Another advantage for the community member base is they get early access to the tactical – main advantage is to get heads in beds and drive revenues in the hotels. If we can offer an extra percentage off, and flagging at an operation as a community member and if they continue to talk positively about us it is all worth it.

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### **7.2.3 INTERVIEW 3**

(FP7) How does Everyone's An Original help you collaborate with your customers and provide value to them?

A: It's another platform for them to share trip photos and vacation memories – with other fans who will appreciate these photos because they are also fans of the brand. I'm sure you know the website – but food and drinks – a great repository for food and recipes, a place to go and get



inspiration for their home life s well. Hosting a party or a cocktail, they can serve these at home to their friends.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

A: What's interesting about the site is that even the hotels can go on the site – and share ideas and recipes from various locations around the world. We're in the best position because it's our brand to showcase.

(FP6): How does FRHI enhance the customer experience with the customer online?

A: Great connection with the brand, it shows them we enjoy their Fairmont moments. I think it drives that connection. Actually a great story came through today – I can share this with you. A family, was blown away by an experience and needed to go online and post.

(FP3) Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: Yes I would think so, but the question is better suited to Chris.

Yes we definitely try and stay on top of digital marketing and everything that is evolving in technology.

(FP5) How does Everyone's An Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: I think that when you see everything that people share you get a better idea of what they share and what they like. People seem to like this hub to share their lives.

And it gives you better perspective and understand what impacts them. Hey 'this is what we love

or this is the highlight for us'

(FP2) (FP1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff and please explain how the employee's knowledge and expertise are incorporated into Everyone's An Original?

I would think so. It goes back to the essence of sharing. It gives properties around the world it gives them the chance to talk about what is happening. A good way to stay connected. Chefs sharing recipes feeling motivated that other people are interested in what they are doing?

Some hotels are better at contributing than others.

(FP8) How does Everyone's An Original fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel to provide value to the brand?

A: I think that it adds a lot of value to the brand it's a very unique platform and very interactive. It's a place where they can share these photos and memories where people know they fit into.

(FP4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners in in the co-creation of content on Everyone's An Original offers a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: I think it offers a wider perspective. It shows we are connected with like minded brands. The same values that our customers would e interested. The Fairmont fit program, allows you to have athletic wear to be waiting in your room when you arrive. It makes life easier.

#### **7.2.4 INTERVIEW 4**

(FP7) How does Everyone's An Original help you collaborate with your customers and provide value to them?

A: Social media site gives the opportunity for guests to read and get inspiration on our properties. It's very engaging. It's underutilized at our company to drive traffic to our site. Just

as the traveller wants to go to one of the properties – user content of our guests is far more appealing for potential guests to read rather than pre fabricated marketing stuff the brand creates.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online??

A: I think part of it is EAO fills a void that TripAdvisor doesn't. EAO is very different because it is more story telling – like a customer review. That extra voice you need. You'll use TA to check the rating but use EAO to shape your trip and what you will do.

(FP6) What do you think drives the customer to engage and co-create content with the hotel on Everyone's An Original?

A: I think part of it is human nature to want to one-up one another. I think people are interested in trying to impress and natural for human beings want to show off. Kind of how Facebook developed, and this I think is what drives it. The advantage for the brand is free advertisement. Its like having 10's of thousands of stories where people are writing endorsements for your company.

(FP3) Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: Yes definitely – we are heading in a more digital focus.

(FP5) How does Everyone's An Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: I think EAO is underutilized because I have never heard anyone uses the site to generate ideas on where more funding should be spent – what people are responding to and getting most enjoyment out of.

(FP2) (FP1): Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices

amongst its staff also please explain how the employee's knowledge and expertise are incorporated into Everyone's An Original?

A: Can't speak from a hotel level. We do at corporate office because most of our teams have multiple disciplines within them. Again I'm part of the digital marketing team between the loyalty team, a lot of knowledge sharing – so yes I think we do this quite well. Meetings we share best practices, conferences, emails, and online systems we use.

I think hotels are being left to utilize EOA from a hotel level – some hotels use the site more than other hotels. There is no standard; each hotel is left to do their own thing.

(FP8): How does Everyone's An Original fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel to provide value to the brand?

A: Like I've said, I think EAO is underutilized. I think guests post check out could direct people to the site and not everyone is engaged in the platform. I definitely think it is a competitive advantage we just need to get more content up there and drive traffic.

(FP4): How do you think engaging customers and value partners like Reebok & BMW bikes offer a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: I think it is an opportunity because guests don't know the spa is owned by the hotel but definitely there are opportunities to leverage these partnerships more fully on EAO.

But Reebok could help in a greater possibility to contribute content. They have athletes and runners around the world that could offer running routes at the hotels. They could provide routines of how they exercise when they travel – routines that could be done in room or at any of the hotel gyms. Underutilized once again.

## 7.2.5 INTERVIEW 5

(FP7): How does FRHI provide value to the customer?

A: We give what is possible - more tips for each destination as value online through the content online. I think the value is in what the consumers and what they take away. Some consumers choose to communicate on Twitter with the concierge, some through Facebook or TripAdvisor, others on EAO. It's about the communication value each customer is looking for. Others just want to communicate when they arrive at the hotel or pick up the phone to make a restaurant reservation just before they arrive. More and more are communicating online through social media platforms.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

When we look at sharing and posting, we know people travelling are on the top. We know we are in the middle of this relationship and need to utilize our best marketing efforts to capture and enhance the conversation online.

Yes there will always be some challenges but we are in the best position to provide the platforms to customers because we can be involved in the communication. Not necessarily controlling the communication but involved and helping to shape it.

FP6 How does FRHI enhance the customer experience with the customers online?

A: We gather a lot of different data in our loyalty program. As an example, if a member orders one dish or drink - through all the hotels and all the different brands this is available so we can see what they like. A way we try and be a similar and share information to please the guest. Data and information is key for us to feel close to the customer. Comparison to other hotels, I don't know, I think most hotels are data heavy but it is how you use the data that offers the value. I

would like to think we are using the data well and trying to offer innovative solutions to customers so they come back to us.

(FP3): Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: I think in the hotel industry it is the biggest challenge – finding resources. With the larger hotel chains, yes it has to be spend with smaller chains its about finding the resources. The investment and capital funding are key to finding money in the budget.

(FP5) : How does EOA help gain customer experience insight to help w innovation?

A: Yes I think we get a lot of data and information from the guests online. Andrea Johnson and her team is very focused on this big data to leverage – services and local product knowledge.

(FP2): Does the FRHI work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff? Please give any examples.

A: We know it is an objective and goal. Until now we see barriers between departments from front office to marketing to corporate offices. We know this is a challenge and will continue to work on getting better at it.

(FP8) : How does Everyone's an Original fit into the overall marketing strategy of the hotel and provide value to the brand? Can you give me some examples?

A: Yes more and more. We see new channels like Instagram is becoming more important than others. Key value in the last 14 months. In terms of engagement we are trying to find out the influencer we see a lot of traditional Facebook, Twitter and now Intagram.

Important part about co-creation is that it provides a bit more information and makes it real by giving examples and real situations, we know that content is key.

(FP4) : How do you think engaging customers and value partners like Reebok and BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: Also coming from Andreas team. Our clientele are willing to have companies like Reebok are on a true partnership – not trying to sell something, but trying to provide value and benefit like shoes or clothing in the room.

### **7.2.6 INTERVIEW 6**

(FP7) Is engaging with customers and fans online an important marketing tool for FRHI and can you please give me some examples?

Co-creation and engagement online – yes, co-collaborations – defined in a few different areas. Direct respect to my team is getting customers and insight on the business objectives and decisions that we need to derive. Customers are no longer passive, they are active market participants and their loyalty to brands are being considerably challenged and their insight is imperative with respect to the decisions we need to make from a travel business point of view. Another area of co-collaboration is a social media channel where our properties are involved in discussing feedback and service issues – we have a strong service culture, service issues are taken very seriously... Making sure of what we do is having a solid understanding of our guests. Another area is anchoring their experiences. It's no longer about brands sharing our experiences; it's about sharing and involving customers so it seems real. An example of something we did 2 years ago. I reached out to guests who posted experiences and stories online and we used this in print. We got their permission and thought it was the best way to articulate the engagement online, offline.

An example is when I reached out two years ago to guest that posted pictures on EAO and reached out and used their real examples in print advertisement that we ran for the year.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to manage this platform and manage the co-creation online?

I would say this is because we own the direction of the message. As a brand we need to position and move the message into a beneficial direction. It is a marketing tool for us.

(FP6): How does FRHI enhance the customer experience with the consumer online?

A: The big data we have shows us what the customer likes and wants through past decisions; through our loyalty program The Presidents Club. Our role is to enhance and know what they will want before they ask. I think this enhances the experience they receive overall with the brand and that is our goal – to give them an exceptional experiences(FP3) Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy? Yes definitely, it needs to be in this industry to stay competitive. The consumers and guests are online and more and more search and booking comes from mobile and tablets, we need to stay abreast.

(FP5) How does Everyone's An Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: A lot of innovation in the systems created to capture the information so we can act upon it.

Last example was a good example, however I think it is about having the systems in place to be able to listen and understand what the customer wants.

(FP2) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

A: Yes I would say so. We have an internal intranet that we use for internal communication and communication on email is an important daily activity amongst departments and colleagues that are in different cities

(FP1) Please explain how the employees knowledge and expertise are incorporated into EAO?

A: I would say for hotel locations this is a great way various employees can connect and share knowledge with the guests. Either before the guest steps on the property, during the stay or after the stay, guests are logging on and sharing their experiences and learning from staff. Staff knowledge and the ability to touch guests in a memorable way is the key to great guests experiences.



(FP8): How does Everyone's An Original fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel to provide value to the brand?

A: When someone goes on property they experience more than brick and mortar and our partnerships extend to the experience and this is how we use a partner to extend into a business travel experience. Most benefit business travellers – want the routine. In recognition of a partnership . We are not going to get into the business of managing shoes so this is where our partnerships come in. BMW bikes is also a example as I discussed earlier.

(FP4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners like Reebok & BMW bikes offer a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: They are looking for the experience and service they have come to expect. And our partnerships with Reebok is a great case and point, to create a positive experience through the positive shared values. The Fit program is experienced mainly by corporate business travellers who don't want to pack their bulky shoes. And not have to check their bag and still have the convenience and the routine – in recognition, is an intuitive foundation for our partnership to extend that help. We're not going to get into the business of making shoes but by creating synergies. BMW we use the bikes with extensive properties. This allows guests to cycle and get to know the city or destination from an exercise angle and it's very accessible and easy for guests to access with the bikes on property.

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### **7.2.7 INTERVIEW 7**

(FP7): Is engaging with customers and fans online is an important marketing tool for FRHI? Can you give me some examples?

A: Marketing has shifted. Marketing and PR has blended and that is what social media is. People don't want to be broadcasted to, they want to converse. We have seen success in that space so far and I thinking it's only about to continue.

People are jaded. There is so much information out there. How do you differentiate out there. People are looking for their peers – word of mouth on steroids, from various consumers. There is greater validity or a greater trust factor. The explosion of these sites, people are looking to various content creators and are looking to find the information that is relevant. And I also think you can't put all your eggs in one basket. I also think you can't find the middle ground and find where they all balance out. People want various types of information. Who do you trust. If you find the middle ground of both good and bad where they both balance out.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

A: There are two things. 1. The brand engagement, we are having much more control of the experience. Trip advisor there are many other brands there, whereas on EAO they are getting a more authentic experience with a touch, feel, sensing the brand experience and getting to know the positioning, how does it make me feel? Another thing we are finding guests with a strong connection to the company, and find others with a shared interest.

(FP6) How does FRHI enhance the customer experience online?

A: It comes down to a product differentiation. How do you differentiate each product in the luxury travel sector. I think having extensive guest loyalty programs to reward and recognition is certainly important and it's about recognizing loyalty and trying to make our guest stay with us meaningful, personalization rather than rewarding with points to stay with us. Innovation is something we look to with innovating guest programming that sets out brands and hotels apart. We could be developing an innovative program by setting it apart.

(FP3): Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: Technology is so integrated in every functional area, to everything a colleague does in a day to day basis. Even with guest, you see people being check in on ipads. If you don't have good

technology systems, ... good technology applications to extract and leverage data then it is pointless.

(FP5) How does Everyone's an Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: I think staying connected with the consumer is an integral part of our role in marketing and communication. EAO helps us stay connected and understand their needs and wants from us as a hotel brand. It's imperative we are innovative and gather insight from the conversations online.

(FP2) Does the FRHI work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff? (FP1) Please explain how the employees knowledge is incorporated? .

A: About best practices between hotels – they put it into place, they measure it, they see if it works and if it does work well they usually adopt by other hotels in the chain. Another thing, we pursue at a brand level, they begin at a hotel level and grown organically and have the potential to grow into a much larger initiatives. And the and rolled out to other hotels. Examples – knowledge sharing , social relevance – twitter flash sales going back a few years. 3-4 years ago they weren't doing this . It's finding key learnings, what worked, or what did not and continue to build on it. Our Canine ambassador program. Guest feedback was so positive that other hotels viewed it as a way to differentiate from other hotels and a way to drive up guest satisfaction results. Now there are 15-20 hotels now.

(FP8) How does FRHI provide value to the customer?

A: Our brands. It is what our guests look to – is that consistent experience they will get globally. That may sound like an easy answer. The value of our brands is what our guests look for.

(FP4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners in (Reebok, Branded Restaurants, BMW etc) offers a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: Guest benefits are research driven. We have asked our guests – what do you value, what is of interest? Fitness and health and wellness is key and critical to our guests and Reebok fitness offers guests something important and valuable because they have told us this. We have been able to provide unique experiences, special offers or pre launch product trials to make them feel special.

### **7.2.8 INTERVIEW 8**

(FP7): Is engaging with customers and fans online is an important marketing tool for FRHI? Can you give me some examples?

A: EAO always a focus for Fairmont. As a company strategy it is important and going forward will continue to grow – engaging guests in the story and marketing.

(FP9) Why is the hotel in the best position to provide this platform and manage the co-creation online?

A: The user is behind glass with the websites and get their feedback and change the design and based on the flow of design. Focus groups online – to allow us to see and change the design as can, as need be.

Fairmont only has the website EAO and because of the history – Banff springs, Lake Louise – out hotels are a must see for people. This is one of the main reasons – the content is a repository for this content to talk about the stories and history of the various properties. There is so much user content, we didn't have a place to host it. That is why Fairmont and historically do so well on that. It's more of a history thing.

(FP6) What do you think drives the customer to engage and co-create content ONLINE?

A: We operate in a world of conversation online, people contributing are speaking to others and the brand. People can trust a story or a review. You can't make this stuff up. It's straight from the customer. It's much more powerful.

Each brand is different and each property has their own hotel offer and design. With EAO the customer's memories and experiences are housed online for others to benefit from. The customer's experience are enhanced online and I don't think other hotels have a website quite the same as EAO. The closest might be Four Season's blog like websites for various passion senses but it's not quite the same as ours.

(FP3): Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: When I speak to venders they say we are ahead of the curve. Ahead of our competition. . EAO is built with responsive design. Works on tablet and on a mobile devise. We have thought of everything and have the latest analytics. And is as cutting edge as we can be I think.

(FP5) How does Everyone's An Original help gain customer experience insight and help with innovation?

A: Engaging with the customer is the only way you can stay innovative and connected to stay top of mind to the consumer. We don't book online through EAO but if we can connect on memories and connect emotionally, they will be more inclined for a return visit.

(FP2) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff? (FP1) Please explain how the employee's knowledge and expertise are incorporated into Everyone's An Original?

A: After a reorganization in June 2013. Yes we are harnessing best practices but we could be better. We are still working on it. Tough in the beginning, we are now with a regional model. Swisshotel was in Zurich Raffles in Singapore, Fairmont in Canada which seems to be working better. Allowing us to separate duties and responsibilities based on geography, time line, language and it's the way it was when we combined brands, and it's returned that way because it seems to be the best approach.

(FP8): How does Everyone's An Original fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel to provide value to the brand?

A: Fairmont – moments and memories, Raffles, more street luxury, Swiss Hotel, green eco-friendly business traveller. Offer language is different, Swiss hotel is very lifestyle hotel communication, the website reflects that. So the Everyone's An Original fits into the memories and moments reflection of the brand and allows us to showcase this.

(FP4) How do you think engaging customers and value partners in like Reebok and BMW bike offers a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: The ideas that come out of this partnership, the real tangible outcomes – like the Fit program – get an ipod, gym clothing and shoes. Offering real value to the customers based on what they have told us they want. Customers have told us this is what they want when travelling – to not bring along bulky shoes and guy wear, this is why they use the program and find value in partners we bring in.

### **7.2.9 INTERVIEW 9**

(FP7) How does Everyone's an Original help the Fairmont engage and provide value to the customer/fan?

A: Yea no question. Co-creation around content is critically important. Both by the nature of our brand. Both by we have a very experiential product. And one that consumers are very willing to share their experiences, their photos and videos and written content about experiences and memories at where we have hotels. What it does is improve our search engine marketing results it adds rich content for other prospects and guests to read and do for our product line. What it does is ultimately drives more engagement and usage of our website. What it does in turn with a good property experience is enhance the over all customer experience.

(FP9) Why is hotel in best position to manage the co-creation online?

A: So it's a shared strategy – the importance for us when we did this, because we started this in 2009 – ultimately an integration on our website. Our goal is to book directly through us. This can be integrated now with Flickr, and other platforms. We found that in order to categorize and make it easier to find our content, it was important to create this platform. The hotels have a lot of rich content to use. A lot of the platforms are last in first out. Where as this platform allows users to easily search the content. Much of the content can be easily found and something about our hotels with all the history and memories, it just didn't make sense on social media platforms or on our website. So we feel this platform and using both co-creation of our hotels and guests is the best.

(FP6) How does FRHI enhance the customer experience with the customer online?

A: I think we enhance the customer experience through well-run and managed platforms and content that users want to see. The only way to know this is for the engagement online. So far we are pleased with out Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, EAO, but we can't sit on our past proficiencies, we need to always be looking forward to new ways to engage and better ways to enhance the experience. We are always learning and trying new ways to improve, so at the moment looking for new technologies and innovations to improve the experience is part of the process and our role within the brand.

(FP3) Is IT and technologies an important part of the company marketing strategy?

A: Yea 100% so much of marketing is relying on technology, and products. CRM, data mining, Analytics, marketing automation, sms, email marketing, payment - everything we do has technology behind it.

(FP5) And how does EAO help gain customer insight and help with innovation?

A: We're always learning from our guests and gaining insight. Innovation and continual adoption of technologies is imperative, especially in our line of business – hotels, we are a information rich business and need to stay on top of what the information means through continual innovation.

(FP2) Does Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst staff?

A: Certainly through email communications we share with hotel teams. More of a push. We also have an internal Internet site where we have the ability to educate and provide Ideas Count – that is a platform where colleagues in hotels, if they have a good case study or something that is effective – not necessarily tied to every one's and original. We have quarterly awards that were adopted by the organization. It works quite well. It started with the Fairmont and we've rolled it out to the other brands.

(FP1) Please explain how the employees knowledge and expertise are incorporated into Everyone's An Original? A: Within everyone's and original, I can't say it is differentiating. I can't say other hotels are doing the same thing. Other hotels haven't created a portal like this. They tend to be doing this through other portals, which I think this has some inherent disadvantages. And certainly we're on Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, but this is a little bit richer and in having that blend of our rich content, history, recipes, along with user feedback and content, and what we want to do is draw in the content from other platforms, like flicker, which pulls in this content and rich content from other platforms, can provide a richer experience.

(FP8) How does EAO fit into the marketing strategy of the hotel and provide value to the brand?

A: At a high level the way the brand provides value is creating great guest experiences and memories. Creating value has to be about both the product and the service. For Fairmont, differentiation is really about the fact that each of our properties are unique and no two are the same or alike. No cookie cutter experience. And it's about experiencing the destination where each of the properties reside. This makes it even more unique and bringing into the hotel the flavours and recipes of to make the property even more unique. This is a high level is how we bring value to the guest.

(FP4) How do you think engage customers and value partners like Reebok & BMW bikes offer a competitive advantage for the Fairmont?

A: The main rationale behind brand partnerships, is a real opportunity to prospect. From our perspective its being able to reach new consumers who may not know about the Fairmont. But also give our brand peer brands of a certain lifestyle or activity that are closely aligned with



people that travel, like customers and leverage our prospecting. We do a lot of joint marketing to drive consumers to the brand. From a consumer perspective, it's exposing the consumer to the brand and hopefully we are in the considerations.

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#### **7.2.10 INTERVIEW 10**

(FP7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

I look after anything and everything related to the colleague experience, as well as the guest experience. I manage the operational flow from the room experience to the food and beverage experience so the how we interact with the guest in terms of the products we have in the guest rooms – is all under my umbrella. Always from the guest experience and working backwards. 3 years in the role / 21 years with the Fairmont brand

(FP9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

A great example is yesterday in the Americas region, a new SMS texting platform. Are we doing it great well, it's a relative term; technology advances as guests technology advances and they have access to information at their fingertips and we adjust – keep re-evaluation what we currently do and adjust. It's relative to a point in time. The new texting platform allows us to text sms while they are on property and communicate after their stay may it be for a new reservation or general queries. It's interfaced with some of our systems so allows for quick seamless experience on the guest terms. Allows us to take the data and have a seamless – quick efficiently fashion, and track for a delivery purposes a feedback system. The platform recognizes that it's a tool that allows the customer to communicate on their terms. I think Judi mentioned you conducted interviews a few years ago and since then with the sale of our company, the project previously funded was put on hold so we've found a way to adjust and come up with a new

communication platform that allows the guest to communicate on our terms – and yes more offline than other social media tools. Rather than it coming off the website, it's directed at the hotel level upon arrival. Whether it will be interfaced back online – time will tell, the original plan didn't come to fruition and this is the result.

(FP3&5) How does it runs in original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with kind and discuss this back in in respect to innovation?

I think it is an important part and relevant in many different facets on the customer experience at the hotel level. I think, online preference in communication, there is certainly opportunity to communicate with guest pre-arrival. I think guests are looking for that information. We have all these different platforms that allow us to communicate in different ways. For example, having the trend in the industry right now, the room key off a mobile phone. Maybe, we'll go down that direction. Our opinion is that if there is a real advantage for the customer experience, then yes, but if it's just following a trend for the sake of it then maybe not. Rather than it being trendy and just keeping up – it needs to be a customer experience that can be sustained long term. Like most technology advances and change every few years, we don't want to do a massive investment and then have to re-do it in a few years, because the technology is so out-dated. Whereas in our guest rooms, we want the experience to be seamless and super easy to use. Especially when guests are travelling internationally the guests are exhausted when they get to the room, the first thing they need to do can't be complicated. If that's opening the door or finding drinks or adjusting lighting, or temperature it can't be complicated, it needs to be super easy. We need to speak the local language.

(FP1 &2) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

Absolutely, we have two different platforms to allow the information to be shared on the guest. One is for non-loyalty members. We have three loyalty members we have 3 million loyalty members and this information is shared worldwide. Could be as simple as the guest sleeps on the left side of the bed or whether they have allergies, or they are particular sports fans, all of this information allows us to personalize the experience and engage with certain member in conversation. All 72 hotels this information is shared. For our non-loyalty guests, we are very aware of the laws around privacy. There is certain information that will only be obtained for that stay or that reservation. This information would be housed within that hotel only unless the guest gives us permission to share with the other hotels.

(FP 8 &4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

When we launched some of these programs we were leading the industry. I think it's providing an additional value propositions to the guest that elevates more than what the guest stay was about. The original premise for the stay. But if that guest is athletic and normally goes to the gym everyday, how do we take that knowledge and enhance the stay – provide a value propositions. This is where our partnership with Reebok comes into play. Their product consistency and quality aligned directly with what we stay form. Our product alignment with the guest is as important as why we selected them in the first place. We need to provide a niche experience or with the Fairmont fit program we are saving them time and space in their suitcase. Part of it is also a thoughtful touch and part of that is partnering with the right partners that have shared values of consistency and quality which is something that is very important to our brand as well.

### **7.2.11 INTERVIEW 11**

(FP7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

I have been here for 10 years and I'm the Director of Partners Marketing. Same position for 10 years but it's changed significantly over the years. We've gone from Fairmont only, to shared

services, to a huge organization change 3 years ago with Accor Hotels. Partnership within the Americas and sales and marketing within Americas, the idea is to have a local expertise. There is someone in Asia and the Middle East that does the same thing as I do. I much prefer the engagement at the hotel level with partnerships at a local hotel level. Manage partnerships like credit cards, airlines, Fairmont co brand card (USA only), BMW and Cadillac. Airlines – traditional, with frequent flyer programs, la lobo scents (our product for lobby scents, in room products, luggage) BMW cars and bikes, pollinator programs and bee houses on the roof, Reebok (Fairmont Fit).

(FP9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

I would say yes, we do. I think we have evolved, but I think there are always things to be done, and making the booking experience quick, intuitive, it's an evolution. Our new brand look is more experiential, cleaner, but there is always room to make things with mobile apps online.

(FP3 &5) How does it runs in original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with kind and discuss this back in in respect to innovation?

Absolutely, and continues to be. Certainly we do lots of research, marketing research – a team that focuses on JD Power surveys and depending on what we are trying to learn. So the other thing we do well, with Fairmont Moments, engaging with customers online through experiences and sharing of photos and stories. There is something about Fairmont with the history; people want to tell their story. I meet people all the time – “oh I had tea at the Empress”. I think we are Iconic and it brings good memories to people.

(FP2 &1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

Yes, speaking from my own team, there is a group of us with director of digital, campaign marketing, more of a project management focus, coming from the brand and knowing the brand. So we do collaborate across areas including the Director of PR. When we are working on a program it is everyone across expertise that reach out to partners, overlaid with digital – we are very collaborative.

(FP8 &4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

The programs are invaluable. I do believe, especially business travellers, they know when they arrive they can count on the Reebok products and in room equipment. BMW cars, driving to a meeting. It's not just check in check out, it's additional services and points of advantage. I believe that leisure travellers are there to experience the hotel and they love the environment and the local things – we are the curator of concierge. For business it's where should I dine, using BMW cars. It's also bringing the family back on another trip.

#### **7.2.12 INTERVIEW 12**

(FP7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

I'm the Director of Integrative Marketing, my responsibilities is the strategy and planning behind all the Omni channel distributions on behalf of Fairmont, Raffles, and Swiss Hotel. I've been in this role for 1 year, 8 years with Fairmont.

(FP9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

Yes I would say so. We're now in the process of launching a sweepstakes. It's around customer engagement. It's where customers are providing their hashtags or handles with us. It could be a Tweet or an Instagram post with our hashtag we will be awarding them additional entries into our contests. It provides opportunities for us to help spread the word on our brand and awareness of our hashtag Fairmont Moments. Which ties to our social site. And also get the word out and have customers engage with us and remember to engage with us while on property and really enjoy our brand. Most posts are done when the guest is enjoying our properties, on location, we are also awarding customers who are tweeting about an upcoming stay. Two ways really for the customer to engage – pre trip and on trip. When you get your email communication on the booking, you can click through on an image and more info will come up on the hotel you are staying at as the guest and information on the contest and entry by tweeting or instagraming. That is really our push to the customer from a marketing standpoint. Then the next element from a marketing standpoint is when the customers are posting these hashtags and photos – it seem more authentic and the customers are doing our work. Then they are able to tweet their own photos while on property.

Hashtags definitely are used as a way to connect and organize category of content. Whether they are doing something on Snapchat or Pinterest, it's about whether they want to share the information with us through a hashtag. Facebook, Instagram and followed by Twitter are the most used social sites for us at the moment.

(FP 3 & 5) How does everyone's an original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with respect to innovation?

Yes absolutely. The world is becoming more connected and lifecycle marketing can only be done through technology. Our budgets have, in the 8 years I've been here changed from more traditionally channels to online – now I would say 90% digital channels now.

(FP 2& 1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

Ya I would say so. We have a decentralised business model but I work on the centre team, under the digital marketing umbrella. Our responsibility is to set the standard and best practices for digital marketing for search, display, web, email that all falls under us. And then we cascade these practices to colleagues in different regions – we teach them, and they are the ones that execute in their markets. When something standard happens, we have processes and how things get done, who needs to be involved in the conversation and the tools are set out.

(FP 8 & 4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

I think some brands that we partners align nicely with our demographic and have an affinity with our brands and their brands. A company such as BMW has such a huge out network of clients, and for us to align ourselves with them and gain access to their customer is very valuable. To speak to their customers and are already BMW owners, and think of I better associate with Fairmont because they are aligned. Also on the other side, if we don't align with premium products and there are not the same demographic following then there are some problems and it's not a valuable marketing alignment.

### **7.2.13 INTERVIEW 13**

(FP7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

My role is quite unique in the company and within the industry. I've been in the role for 1.5 years (newly created) (same with company). Fairmont as a brand was a leader in the industry at creating brand partnerships. And my role was created a few years ago to focus on public relations just with these brand partnerships and that's my sole focus – creating pr opportunities

around these brands. The partnership programs are divided into 1. strategic and global (ie Fairmont Fit) (fewer) and 2. Promotional or initiatives specific partners total 20-30

(FP 9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them??

I think so, it's not as much of a focus in our department but I know from a social perspective there is lots of engagement and focus globally and regionally around from a hotel and brand level. Fairmont Moments where guests can put their own stories on and see them come to life on that blog. And then on Instagram and Twitter and seeing what guests say. Strong teams targeting e marketing that help to drive what guests are interested in. At Fairmont we know our guests see themselves as adventurous, and sophisticated and have different passion points – these emails are very targeted at the guests interests.

(FP 3 & 5) How does it runs in original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with kind and discuss this back in in respect to innovation?

Absolutely, guest experience in the room and how you interact with different technological components. Guests are hyper connected and are engaged online and at work and we need to connect with them

(FP 2 & 1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

I see things from the global corporate centre level. Everything is integrated so we're on functional units. I'm pr there is digital, loyalty, and what I've found that the different units is the communication is very good. We couldn't get buy in - it's its food a beverage we need to all get the buy in from different owners and the success of a projects is critical to get each department to work together.



(FP8 & 4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

As I had mentioned we were the first to start using strategic partnerships, my FP Alex Bloom at that time really built up the business from nothing. The way we approach partners is two ways. First is everything must be valuable to the customer first. An example is Fairmont Fit where the benefits or value to the customer by not having to use valuable luggage space to pack shoes and workout gear and then return home with smelly kit is something that offers real value to guests. It's something that is a guiding principal for any partnership that we have – first and foremost what is the guest value. And the second piece is more around the narrative story alignment that we can build on more operational guest facing – more fun engaging packages, experiences, dinners, which is a value add rather than an operationally value add. I know that partnerships is viewed internal and external partners – not like sponsorship – it's created with partners that we can't offer alone. It's viewed as a distinct offering and a competitive advantage. I think people really view this as a distinctive element. We have recently been undergoing a transition with Accor hotels and I know they viewed this as a real competitive advantage.

#### **7.3.14 INTERVIEW 14**

(FP7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

My role is in innovation, on the operations side but I'm directly involved with different teams on projects to develop new products and services. I work with operations to implement these services. I've been in the role for 2 years, and that's in total with the company. Previously I was working in marketing consulting.

(FP9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

I think its getting better. I wouldn't say it was bad, but it's improving as are most companies. Investing and changing, trying to stay up with the customers. What is better is using more channels, mobile and more visitor and textural. A big change we are going through and it's getting better.

(FP 3 & 5) How does it runs in original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with kind and discuss this back in in respect to innovation?

It's very important within the Fairmont. It's an enabler. An example is, one thing we are focusing on is the guest experience on the needs, how do we use technology to improve this. How people see the information, use the information from getting into the room and using new tools and technology is based on guests and research.

(FP 2 & 1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

Yes certainly, together we always try to collaborate. The teams we work on are multifunctional. After a project we look at what we did well, how we could do this better in the future. Mainly on a ad-hoc basis, this is best because we can adapt and change based on each project and on a as need be basis.

(FP 8 & 4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

Brands that are meaningful is important. Brand that are engaging with – like Reebok – moving beyond a typical brand. This means focusing on the guest but looking at the history which is what the Fairmont is – to bring the best of the brand to the customer. That is important to Fairmont, if you look at the history with partnership brands we have a long record with Reebok and other brands to work in partnership and bring the very best to the customer. These brands are

selected because they have shared values and shared goals with the Fairmont. We think we can grow together and so far our track record shows this is working.

### **7.2.15 INTERVIEW 15**

(FP 7) Can you please tell me about your role and explain why Everyone's an Original was developed by the Fairmont?

My role is specifically focused on our consumer loyalty offering. I am responsible for the acquisitions and engagement of our growth of our Fairmont, Swiss hotel and Raffles, with that being said, my main focus is the Fairmont recognition program, it is our biggest program and works as a consumer facing platform. I'm responsible for the program globally, and has spent 2.5 years total (and in role).

(FP 9 & 6) How does Everyone's An Original help you engage with your customers and provide value to them?

I think the Fairmont brand does a reasonable job of it's brand positioning online. From what I have seen, focusing more tradition social media platforms on Instagram, Facebook, I think they have done a lot of effort into the way they look to engage with guests and potential guests online.

(FP 3 & 5) How does it runs in original help gain customer experience insight and help within innovation with kind and discuss this back in in respect to innovation?

I think it's part of it, I don't think it overshadows more traditional approaches. We are very much keeping up with the competitive set but we are not leading anywhere in these areas. I do not think this is a bad thing; this is how we manage our assets. Could we do more, potentially. However where we insert ourselves for our demographic and where we sit globally for our market position.

(FP 2 & 1) Does the Fairmont work in collaboration internally to harness best practices amongst its staff?

I think we do, the strategy comes from the centre that the vision is region looks to the centre, and adapt to the individual markets. I think there is a great deal of integration and adaptation so there is flexibility for how the regional markets can adjust to cultural factors, and as they need to, in order to the individual nuances are considered.

(FP 8 & 4) How you think engaging the customers and the value partner like Reebok & BMW bikes offers a competitive advantage?

I think it offers a competitive advantage in our luxury segment. When we look at partners they have to stand for the same thing, have shared values and objectives, and I think Fairmont does a great job aligning themselves with similar partners. In terms of the quality of the offering, and how that brand themselves set themselves apart and engage with consumers and gives us an advantage in the market place and sets the bar – our guests have an expectation – to align ourselves with the partners that our guests expect.

On Recognition and loyalty: I think it's two parts, recognition is what sets us apart and Fairmont presidents club was never structured to be a points based system. When you are looking to a luxury business, it means more than transactional points,  $x$  equals  $y$ , it means you are afforded special privileges, not only of who you are but of the association that you have with our hotels. Not only who you are, we know, and data certainly drives this recognition and our from tend hotel staff being meticulous about the information they collect, and what the data can mean to mobilize our loyalty offering, but to provide a near to perfect guest experience on site. And we do have a very comprehensive training program to help hotel staff record this information and create the most complete preferences and information globally. It's not just about one hotel collecting information, it's about sharing the information on our global network and we create the guest experience. How we know who you are, and how we know our guests expect to be treated by any Swiss hotel or Raffles hotel globally. And of course we could all be smarter and better about recording the information for marketing tactics and I think we are getting there and I

think we could have another conversation about how we integrate this information into social programs. We're getting there, but currently for us what we are doing now, is trying to create the near perfect guest experience. The feedback that we are getting from our guest is not only how much they appreciate what pillow they prefer, but that we know the very nature of the loyalty program - we know how long you've been staying with us, and their history, a deep sense of understanding our customers.

### **7.2.16 Additional Information from FM Manager**

Further Information on Everyone's An Original (FM) Program

#### **Q&A Manager Digital Media, FRHI**

- Ease the barrier's to entry to the website through Facebook, Youtube (google account) connect, sign up. Facebook in 50-60 percent range – come through this way. Otherwise a “Presidents club” (the Fairmont loyalty program) log in is used.
- Contest are for north American only entry. So most of the traffic and users are from North America.
- Roughly 12,000 users
- Those that are classified as “very active” – posting monthly, 120 users a month.
- Very much hotel content in the beginning – contests 5-600 submission for photo contents builds up the user generated content. Roughly 50-50 content between hotel and user in terms of volume of content.

- Facebook and twitter feeds – quality of content would change. The quality would go down because only short twitter feeds of less than 140 characters, instead of rich story telling that currently happens with the dedicated posts on Everyone’s An Original.
- Instagram and flickr feeds – currently pulling in the content. Images are very important to the website – provides rich content in the site.
- Chris moderates before it goes live. Language filters – not needed and he hasn’t declined anything. No imagery or language issues. In fact if anything is slightly negative from a resort standpoint, we have the resort follow up immediately.
- Negative / positive 99% positive.

### 7.3 Data From Netnography of FM Website

Date	Author	Title	Source	Actor	Social Media	Value	Exchange	Coding Words associated	Key Phrases
10/1/2012	Muchmu Ch	Good morning Lake Louise!	Photo and comments	Guest Story	3 FB shares / 1 Pin	Social	Complex	Thank you, amazing view, memorable, moment	The next morning when we saw out from the window, we were blown out by the amazing view of Lake Louise! It was the best hotel view in the world. Period. Can't say anything more! Thank you Fairmont for providing another memorable moment to me and my girlfriend, and she's now my fiancée.
3/26/2015	Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali	Kawung Pattern	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	Restricted	connect, past and present	Ceiling reliefs that connect Bali's past and present. The motif was originally worn only by the Sultan in Java and his family and was one of the forbidden batik motifs for the general population. In this context the Kawung was linked with power, wisdom and justice and was thought to imbue these qualities to the wearer
3/24/2015	Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali	Joglo	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	restricted	tradition, social status,	Joglo is a traditional vernacular house of Javanese people.... Joglo also reflect Javanese social status; this type of building is only reserved for palace (keraton), official residence, government estate, .. A pair of these joglos are located at our Lobby Lounge.
3/31/2016	Rachitk2312	1st Year Marriage anniversary celebration	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	loved, staff, thank you, remarkable (memorable)	"Loved the stay. Had gone to UAE for my 1st marriage anniversary, the hotel staff was so courteous that Santosh at the front desk upgraded me to a bigger room when he got to know that. A cake was sent to my room wishing me anniversary. ...Thanks guys for making this time a remarkable one."

3/17/2015	Maurice Shriqui	Une histoire de famille	Comment	Guest	None	Altruistic	restricted	packages, staff contact, relationships	" We participated in the Christmas packages, New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween and even now the incident on Christmas Eve, and the engagement of my son...Our children were eager to find some staff and we always kept my contact with life at the Chateau Montebello Céline Longue"
3/26/2015	Farrell Monaco	A Fairmont courtship calls for a Fairmont wedding.		Guest	None	Social	restricted	memories, Fairmont properties	"When Sam met Farrell, an Italian-American courted a British-Canadian in the most memorable of ways. From lunches, shopping and post-hockey game drinks at the Hotel Vancouver to weekend getaways at The Empress; the Monaco's shared their fondest memories of early courtship at Fairmont properties. "
16-Aug-14	The Fairmont Copley Plaza	Alexandra & Jared's Wedding at The Fairmont Copley Plaza	Photo and comments	Fairmont	One recommendation	Social	complex	wedding, history, grandeur	"Married in a location that epitomized the history and grandeur of Boston..."Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont?
3/17/2015	Tlmitch	Easter Weekend at the Empress	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	memories, beauty, celebrate	I visited this beautiful hotel when I was a kid and had wonderful memories. I was excited to return and make more memories with my own kids. We spent a beautiful spring weekend at the Empress enjoying the pool, walking the beautiful grounds full of blooming tulips, and celebrating with a wonderful Easter brunch at the hotel.



3/8/2015	Dr David Cawood	A Golden night at the airport in Vancouver...	Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	Gold room, details, staff	"Everything about the stay in a Gold room was perfect thank you. I can't think of any detail that was not attended to! My wife also was especially pleased. I was particularly impressed with the standard of evening snacks and then what is really a full breakfast"
2/11/2015	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	It's Heavy, Man!	Photo and comments	Fairmont	None	Social	restricted	staff (by name)	"The tour, which starts at the Fairmont, includes local parks, some of Chicago's world-famous architecture and, of course, heated jackets...Recently our Sales Team journeyed out with Margaret and took advantage of everything Chicago has to offer in the winter!"
1/24/2015	Heather Mccoll	Wonderful Memories	Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	thank you, impeccable service, multiple hotels mentioned	"I always stay will stay at the Royal York while I visited Toronto. I have also stayed at The Fairmount Empress in Victoria, Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.. All wonderful. I hope to stay at the Fairmont in New York City during March Break with my so..Thank you so much for all the years of impeccable service Royal York and Fairmont!"
1/18/2015	Gabrielle Vézina	Frederick & Gabrielle 23-08-2014, salle de bal du Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	true fairy tale, marriage, memorable day, dream location	"We had a beautiful testimonial from several people that we like very much, it was very moving. .... It was a memorable day in a dream location. A true fairy counted !!!! (Fairmont not mentioned)"
1/30/2015	HailToTheGael	A Calgary Christmas	Video and comments	Guest	None	Social	restricted	staff, culture, the best time	"My sister and I were fortunate enough to stay at the Fairmont Palliser during the holiday season. Calgary is a beautiful city with so much culture. The hotel employees are wonderful! They made sure we had the best time during our stay, and we did!"

7/15/2014	Chet313	Bermuda Adventure	Photo and comments	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	beautiful, thank you, warm hospitality	"A beautiful getaway to the island of Bermuda! Thank you for the warm sunshine and hospitality!"
7/12/2014	Ct	Super Excited at the Fairmont Beijing	Comments	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	exceptional experience, staff	"Just had an exceptional experience at the Fairmont, Beijing....Cannot recommend enjoying this experience yourself enough if you are in Beijing. A restaurant and staff that Fairmont can be very proud. "
10/26/2014	Jeffrey	Early Autumn at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge	Photo and comments	Guest	None	Hedonic	restricted	Fairmont	"I decided on a driving visit from Calgary to Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.... In the Grand Lodge, the best views are in the Emerald Lounge and in the Cavell Dining Room"
10/3/2014	Fairmont Royal York	"Fluffy Bear"	Photo and Comment	Fairmont	None	Hedonic	restricted	housekeeping team, client's child	A young guest lost his stuffed animal buddy named, "Fluffy Bear" and our Housekeeping team was called to assist. After finding the bear, we called the young guest's parents to advise them that fluffy bear was found, but would like to wash him if possible. We gave the bear a "bath" and returned him to the guest. Accompanying Fluffy Bear was a stuffed lion and a note that read, "I am sorry I was not with you last night. I went on an adventure with my new friend, Roy. I hope we can make him part of our family? Your friend, Fluffy bear.
6/25/2014	joypecknold.	Wombs for the Grownups	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Spa	"Wombs for grownups."
6/25/2014	islandfeversisters.	In Honor of National Flip Flop Day	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex		"In honor of National Flip Flop Day, the only pair of @ipanemausa that came with us on our trip last weekend. #ipanemausa #ipanemabossa ☐"
6/26/2014	Ji	Fairmont Queen Elizabeth	Photo and Comment	Guest	7 FB, 1 Tweet	Hedonic	complex	view, Gold Lounge	"View from Fairmont Gold Club Lounge"

6/25/2014	willowstreamspa.	Ladies Lunch and Spa Day	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	celebrate, Willow Stream Spa	"Good times are even better when they're shared. This spring, celebrate with your friends and loved ones in a Fairmont suite, then relax and #findyourenergy in our luxurious #spa. Get Social @willowstreamspa - Tag your #spaselfie #spasocial #spaday' "
6/25/2014	willowstreamspa	Wellness Wednesday	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Willow Stream Spa, unique	"WellnessWednesday Tip: Feel like you're floating on water with the "wave table" at our Willow Stream Spa. This unique treatment table moves with the soft, rhythmic motions of the therapist, creating a deeply relaxing escape"
6/25/2014	Fairmont kealani	Pick your favourite Colour	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Maui Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Willow Stream Spa	"Pick your favorite color! We now have several different colors of travel size OPI polish to play with! #WillowStreamSpa #WillowStreamMaui #NailPolish #Travelsize' "
6/25/2014	Fairmont kealani	Fathers Day Offer	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Maui Spa	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Father day, promotion,	"Father's Day is right around the corner! Why not treat dad to a day at the spa? The Willow Stream Spa is now offering \$25 off any regular priced spa experiences through Wednesday, June 18, just for dads! He'll be happy you did! Call 808.875.2229 for details and reservations. #Maui #willowstreamspa #FathersDay"
6/25/2014	Dosaismylife	Beautiful Food	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Beautiful food	"Beautiful food. #cakes #pastries #afternoontea #thesavoy #posh #family #qualitea #orientalbeauty #matcha"

6/25/2014	azerbaycanch1v1nstagram	Foto @aircooled1302	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Economic	complex	Fire of Baku	"Foto: @aircooled1302 Andrea Casati #FlameTowers Dear friends! We announced the #project "#Fire of #Baku" To participate in the project: add under the photo made by you 1) #azerbaycanch1v1nstagram and 2)@azerbaycanch1v1nstagram #FireofBaku The project also involve photos of our active followers, attracted attention and other random pages"
6/25/2014	fairmontcopley/	Carly Copley Canine	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Copley	From Instagram	Social	complex	Dog Program	"Carly Copley learning some new tricks! "
12/20/2014	Jeffrey	Teddy Bear Suite at The Fairmont Olympic Hotel Seattle	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic/ Altruistic	restricted	Time-out break, Charity	I have taken a "time-out". "benefit for Seattle Children's Hospital."
12/12/2014	Travelfriend	A tale of Exceptional Service	Photo and Comment	Guest	Dialog in comments Fairmont Mayakoba & Guest	Hedonic	complex	Service (staff by name), staff training	"As part of our reservation we were assigned Ricardo Bahena as our butler....Thank you Ricardo and kudos to the Fairmont for hiring and training staff that truly puts the needs of the guest first."
10/2/2014	Tinu Mathur	Beautiful Sunset SoCal style	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Thank you, love Fairmont	"September evening view from my balcony. Thank you to the wonderful staff especially Jackie Kearns for her hospitality. Love this property!"
6/25/2014	fairmontbeijing.	Imagine a day spent floating on Houhai Lake...	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Beijing	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	relaxing, Willow Stream Spa	"Imagine a day spent floating on Houhai Lake. Then, after a day of restaurants, bars, and lounging on the water come back to Fairmont abridging and treat yourself to a famous Relaxation massage at our Willow Stream Spa"
6/25/2014	elliegraceashton	Welcome to my day! #willowstream #gym #relaxation	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Willow Stream Spa	"Welcome to my day! #willowstream #gym #relaxation"

6/25/2014	Fairmont southampton	We are obsessed with our new @joyastudio hand & body cream	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Southampton	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Willow Stream Spa service	"hand & body cream in our signature lemongrass & guava scent at our @willowstreamspa"
6/25/2014	fairmont kealani.	Yesterday at the employee appreciation lunch...	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Kealani	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	cuisine, Amal (restaurant)	"at the employee appreciation luncheon, all of the staff had the opportunity to taste the cuisine from our new poolside restaurant, Amal! A favourite was the Grilled Fish Taco with Spicy Mango Salsa! "
6/25/2014	point4dave.	#RoomView #BanffSprings Hotel	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	View	#RoomView #BanffSpringsHotel
6/25/2014	fairmont whistler.	Flash back Friday #fbf	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Whistler	From Instagram	Hedonic/Altruistic	complex	Catering quality of décor	"We had snowflake ice sculptures as centre pieces on all 30 tables during a recent gala from late March"
6/17/2014	Ester	Unforgettable experience at the Fairmont	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic	restricted	Unforgettable experience, gorgeous sea view, delicious, thank you	"Unforgettable experience at Fairmont...gorgeous sea view from our Deluxe, stunning sunrises on the high terrace overlooking Montecarlo and the sea while having the delicious breakfast at l'Horizon....everything you could wish for a perfect (even though short) vacation. Thank you to all of U!"
5/30/2014	Bybrucerussell	Tiffani & Ari - The Savoy	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic	restricted	wedding	The Savoy wedding
20-Apr-13	fairmont copley	A Fairmont Wedding at The Fairmont Copley Plaza	24 Photos and comments	Fairmont Copley	Google plus share	Social	complex	beauty, grandeur,	"The beauty and grandeur of The Fairmont Copley Plaza's Grand Ballroom" Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont?.."
5/15/2014	Martine Kelly	Happy	Photo and Comment	Guest	FB share	Hedonic	complex	Happy, excitement (photo jumping for joy)	"Writing how I feel in the sand staying at Fairmont the palm Dubai and jumping for joy ..HAPPY :-)"

3/7/2014	fairmont copley	You never know who might check you in...'	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Copley	From Instagram	Social	complex	Dog Program	'You never know who might check you in...' by Instagram user fairmontcopley.
3/7/2014	suzanne wenz	I never get tired of walking down Peacock Alley. #fairmonthotels #historicboston #boston #igersboston #copleyplaza	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Fairmont design	I never get tired of walking down Peacock Alley.
3/7/2014	airmontnanjing.	Food tastings are most definitely not the hardest part of the job	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Nanjing	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Employee benefits, positive	"Food tastings are most definitely not the hardest part of the job"
3/18/2014	Fatpandavan	'Sushi at a spa. Only in Vancouver'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Food Restaurant (Vancouver)	Sushi at a spa. Only in Vancouver' by Instagram user fatpandavan.
3/18/2014	fairmontnanjing	58 RMB all you can drink for ladies at Music@61 at The Fairmont Nanjing.	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Nanjing	From Instagram	Economic /Social Value	complex	Fairmont Offer	"58 RMB all you can drink for ladies at Music@61 at The Fairmont Nanjing. Starts tomorrow and lasts until March 15th!"

3/7/2014	lady_light	The vows! #ckandray #fairmontmayakoba #mayakoba #wedding #playaweddings #playadelcarmen	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Wedding	"The vows! #ckandray #fairmontmayakoba #mayakoba #wedding #playaweddings #playadelcarmen"
3/7/2014	jinlovestoat.	Happy Birthday	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Thank you, beauty	"Thank you, Chef Miko, for creating this beauty!"
2/24/2014	Jrioux	Weekend getaway Feb 21	Photo and Comment	Guest	6 FB shares	Hedonic	complex	Pamper, Welcoming, pamper,	"On this weekend I was making it a point to pamper my sweetie with a stay at Montebello and a stay at Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. "
3/7/2014	Rohitinspace	Beautiful Evening At #FairmontJaipur. #AravaliHills #Rajasthan.	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	Beautiful evening	Beautiful Evening At #FairmontJaipur. #AravaliHills #Rajasthan.
3/7/2014	Fairmont 1234	Ghirardelli chocolate shop is ready for the holidays! #sfre #fairmontghirardelli	Photo and Comment	Fairmont	From Instagram	Social	complex	Local purveyor	Ghirardelli chocolate shop is ready for the holidays! #sfre #fairmontghirardelli
2/17/2014	Monica	Staff Meeting at the Fairmont	Photo and Comment	Guest Story	No	Hedonic	restricted	Staff trip, fabulous location	"Our Dental Office enjoyed a week at the Fairmont in Wailea , Maui. Fabulous location, we enjoyed the villa, the beach and all that this beautiful location had to offer"

2/18/2014	Fairmont Heliopolis	FAIRMONT HELIOPOLIS & TOWERS HOSTS ERICSSON TOP EXECUTIVES MEETING	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Heliopolis	1 Pin	Social	complex	Management meeting Fairmont selected	"Fairmont Heliopolis & Towers has been selected to host a half day meeting of senior delegation of top management from Sweden and key players in the telecom industry in Egypt and the North African region"
2/4/2014	Fairmont Pacific	"Like" if this is what you had in mind for Cocktail Hour.'	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Pacific	From Instagram	Hedonic	complex	SM sharing, Bar	"Like" if this is what you had in mind for Cocktail Hour.' by Instagram user fairmontpacific.
2/4/2014	fuad788	#baku #flametowers #azerbaijan #home'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Fairmont design	#baku #flametowers #azerbaijan #home' by Instagram user fuad788.
1/31/2014	Mkbeautylife	I've just had one of the best weekends of my life! My mom, sister and I went to the #banffsprings hotel this year instead of giving one another gifts	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Social	complex	Best weekends, view, Willow Stream Spa, Lounge,	"I've just had one of the best weekends of my life... The bottom picture was our #view from the #spa #lounge where we sipped on citrus water and cucumber mint water, and snacked on in house made granola bars and a bento box which came with sushi, edaname, seared steak, and quinoa. Everything about this place promotes #natural #healing for both the #bodyandsoul"
1/30/2014	rors1981.	Dubai then and now...amazing !'	Photo and Comment	Guest	From Instagram	Altruistic	complex	Location	Dubai then and now...amazing!' by Instagram user rors1981. (Photo of dubai in 1995 and 2012)
2/4/2014	kingsinlove	Upgrades & Ice Wine	Comment	Guest	No	Social	restricted	Cherished memories, staff	"We had booked the honeymoon suite, but when we arrived the previous occupants had decided to stay an additional night so the hotel upgraded us to an amazing suite just down the steps from the concierge...One evening we were sitting in the wine bar and we were introduced to Vin de Glace, or Ice Wine. We are celebrating our 16th



									anniversary this May and are still drinking Ice Wine. Those are some of our most cherished memories.
1/30/2014	Fairmont Pacific	Toasted to perfection.'	Photo and comments	Fairmont Pacific	Instagram	Social	complex	Food	(photo of lemon merange cakes)
1/29/2014	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	Chicago Concierge Day!	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	None	Altruistic	restricted	Concierge, in honour	"This day is dedicated to all concierge—from residential and corporate to hotel and other types—as a way to formally pay tribute for all they do to make Chicago the world class destination it is...They surely deserve it: Each year, the Chicago Concierge Community makes almost five millions referrals with more than 1.3 million dining recommendations,..."
1/30/2014	vancouverexoticluxury	Matte pink Lamborghini Aventador parked at Fairmont Pacific Rim, spotted the other night.	Photo and Comment	Guest	Instagram	Social	complex	Luxury Cars	Matte pink Lamborghini Aventador parked at Fairmont Pacific Rim, spotted the other night. Follow us and use our hashtag #vancouverEL... @mmdesign_car_wrap' by Instagram user vancouverexoticluxury.
1/30/2014	instamelsa.	Dog sledding in Montebello	Photo and Comment	Guest	Instagram	Social	complex	dog sledding	Dog sledding in Montebello #fairmont #montebello #winter #dogsled #chateaumontebello' by Instagram user instamelsa.
6/26/2013	Willow Stream Spa	Fit Bliss: 8 ways to stay in shape on the road	Photo and Comment	Guest	2 Tweets	Social	complex	Fairmont Fit, Reebok, MP3	" If you're a member of Fairmont President's Club, check out Fairmont Fit (a service that is free for premier and platinum members) It provides Reebok workout apparel and shoes delivered to your room, along with an MP3 player loaded with music, a yoga mat and stretch bands."

4/17/2012	Lshearer	Luxury Vancouver Hotel - Fairmont Pacific Rim	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	incredible experience, BMW Bikes, location, modern design, room features,	The Fairmont Pacific Rim, the newest property, offers guests an incredible experience from check-in to check-out. The modern design and room features are top notch, and the location puts you near all the action. One thing that you must do is use the in-house BMW bikes to ride from the hotel doorsteps around Stanley Park
9/14/2011	Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth	A Day in the Life of a BMW bike at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montréal	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Montreal	None	Social	restricted	BMW bike,	At Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, fashionable & complementary BMW bicycles are at guests' disposal, so hop on and take a day to explore La Belle Ville in style
7/30/2013	efoss3	Perfect stay at the Plaza NYC	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	Happy, extraordinary service, concierge, BMW bikes, welcoming, service	We were so happy with the way we were treated during our stay. All departments gave us service that was extraordinary. The concierge attendants arranged for our use of the BMW bikes and even adjusted the seats for us. A welcoming letter was sent to us ahead of our stay and I mentioned that the stay was a belated birthday for my daughter and a cake was delivered to our room.
4/27/2010	Fairmont Vancouver Airport	Earth Day with Fairmont Vancouver Airport	Comment	Fairmont	None	Altruistic	restricted	Earth day, Charity, community	"On Earth Day colleagues from The Fairmont Vancouver Airport trekked out to McDonald Park for their quarterly clean-up party"
8/25/2013	Lagiosv	Icon of Quebec City	Photo and Comment	Guest	74 FB shares, 1 google, 14 website comments	Social	complex	fairy tale, feel like royalty	(Contest Winner) "Arriving at the Chateau Frontenac is like walking into a fairy tail.....I was made to feel like royalty throughout the visit. Magical."

9/9/2013	cavefish	Henry's First Birthday	Photo and Comment	Guest	536FB shares, 5 google, 31 tweets, 7 pins, 11 website comments	Social	complex	pampered, relaxing, robe	(First Prize) We all really enjoyed being pampered at the Fairmont Pacific Rim in Vancouver. Nothing beats relaxing in a fluffy Fairmont robe on your birthday!
9/7/2013	Tejas Mehta	Best Road Trip Ever!	Photo and Comment	Guest	73FB, 4 google, 16 tweets, 2 pins, 17 website comments	Social	complex	experience, spectacular, actives, property, beauty, wildlife, thank you, memories	(second prize) "The experience was nothing short of spectacular - from the activities at the property to all the surrounding beauty of the park, including our luck in spotting all kinds of wildlife. ... This photo was taken after the sun had set on a gorgeous day and the clouds offered a nice backdrop to the place we called "home" for a week! Thanks for the memories!"
10/10/2013	osweiler family	An Epic Family Celebration at the Fairmont Kea Lani	Photo and Comment	Guest	40 FB, 2 tweets, 2pins	Social	complex	celebrate, property's beach, thank you, memories, staff, property	(contest) I'm the most fortunate man in the world to have gotten to celebrate both 20 years with my wife Kathy and the 4-year birthday of our cherished daughter Elke last month with a few glorious days at the Fairmont Kea Lani on Maui. Here are my gals taking part in our nightly sunset ritual of running around, swimming, laughing, and playing on the property's Polo Beach. Thank you for the stunning memories Fairmont staff and property!
10/8/2013	mellegrsley	A Trip Out West	Photo and Comment	Guest	3 FB likes, 4pins	Social	complex	Lake Louise	We stopped by Lake Louise, walked around the lake, I even tried to go for a swim, but man was it ever cold :P Then we stopped in Banff and took breath taking pictures of both locations.(No Fairmont Connection)

10/8/2013	Gloria	A Fantabulous Home Away From Home!	Photo and Comment	Guest	11FB, 3 webcomments	Social	complex	clean, attentive staff, greeted, staff (name), smile	I can honestly say that we have never stayed in a cleaner or more attentive hotel. On arrival we were greeted by Justin (doorman) who has the biggest smile.
10/6/2013	Birthday gal	Picture Perfect Lac Beauvert	Photo and Comment	Guest	2 FB shares	Social	complex	beautiful, Canadian Rockies	It was early morning and the sun was just hitting the boat dock area. The still water produced amazing reflections. It was the perfect scene. In all my travels, I have yet to find a place as beautiful as the Canadian Rockies.
9/29/2013	tpmehta	Cannot beat the Fairmont Banff Springs Experience!	Photo and Comment	Guest	6 FB shares	Social	complex	everything about the stay, views, activities, food, staff, thank you	"Everything about the stay - the activities, the views, the food, and obviously the surrounding attractions made this trip one of the best we've ever been on....What a great vacation! Thanks Fairmont!"
9/23/2013	Michel Loiselle	Fairmont Fireworks!	Photo and Comment	Guest	9FB, 1 tweet, 1 pin	Social	complex	Fairmont Fireworks	This year, I wanted to get a new perspective on this amazing event, so I positioned myself in line with the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa. As you can see, Fairmont Fireworks does not disappoint.
9/18/2013	Sillydebate	The Little Man	Photo and Comment	Guest	13 FB shares	Social	complex	experience, warm greeting, staff (name), bathrobe for child, thrilled	"Our family made a visit to the Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel in Vancouver this June for a long weekend away and it was quite an experience for our toddler son. Each day he was graced with warm greetings from the staff, especially Patrick the concierge who added a greeting for our infant son and a fist bump from time to time as well...One surprise for us was to find a bathrobe that was just our son's size and we still aren't sure who was more thrilled to have it. "

9/22/2013	DT	The amazing beautiful Fairmont Empress in Victoria, BC	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	immaculate, amazing grounds	"I had the opportunity to take my wife for a one night stay at this beautiful hotel before a business trip to Vancouver... The grounds and the hotel were immaculate. Look forward to taking my children to see this amazing hotel in the future."
9/14/2013	Kerry Simpson	Retirement in Paradise.	Photo and Comment	Guest	1FB share	Social	complex	amazing, paradise	After many decades of work with occasional breaks at The Orchid, my wife and I were finally both retired. We found ourselves in a lucky time when real estate was just right to let us sell our home and invest in two smaller homes for our retirement years. We found one place at Oakmont near Santa Rosa CA...and hoped to find a place near our favorite Orchid. We came to Hawaii for three weeks and at the last moment found a condo at The Fairways just minutes from the Orchid! We are now set for an amazing retirement in Paradise!!
9/17/2013	SonaliJaya	Bermuda Dreaming	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 Pin	Social	complex	guest experience, friendly staff	During the past 2 years, I've visited Bermuda twice, staying at the Fairmont both times. Both Fairmont's on the island are so distinct, one from the other, that guests really experience two hotels - the resort-like Southampton and the business-friendly Hamilton Princess.
9/13/2013	Gloria	Fairmont Makati + Boracay = The Perfect Weekend Getaway!	Photo and Comment	Guest	5 FB shares, 1 tweet, 2 web comments	Social	complex		"Staying at Fairmont Makati in the metro gives us the ease of mind of having a feeling of home away from home... On our third day of staycation, we asked the concierge what famous place in the Philippines they would recommend and they gladly told us Boracay is the perfect place!"

9/8/2013	muskwa	Engaged	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	memory, engagement, Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, lifetime	A memory of a life time captured on camera haha.. Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise
9/6/2013	Melissa Mix Hart	Hiking Amongst Ancient Cedars as Chateau Whistler	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share, 2Googleplus, 1 tweet, 2 pins	Social	complex	celebrate, birthday, weekend, activities, dream escape	On the August long weekend, my birthday, my family escaped to Whistler, BC for an exhilarating break of hiking, hiking, hiking in the coastal mountains and then swimming, swimming, swimming and relaxing at the Chateau Whistler Fairmont Hotel. It was a dream escape, we played hard!
9/6/2013	Melissa Mix Hart	Summer Long Weekend at Chateau Whistler	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share, 2 Google, 1 tweet, 3 pins	Social	complex	great service, love	The Chateau Whistler is a Fairmont hotel and I love Fairmonts. I can always count on them to give us great service
9/6/2013	Daniel Généreux	Victoria	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Hedonic	complex	wonderful weekend	We spent a wonderful week at the Empress
9/6/2013	mcmaryl098	sultry summer night	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Social	complex	staff, grounds, great memories	Mom and I just spent some time at the Fairmont Scottsdale. The staff and grounds were amazing and welcoming in spite of the Arizona heat in August! We had a great stay and will keep great memories of our visit.
9/5/2013	Hharder	Feeling Special	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Hedonic	restricted	bar, relaxing day, Willow Stream Spa	Sitting in the Rundle Lounge feeling special with a fancy drink before dinner at the Banffshire Club in the Banff Springs after a long relaxing day at the willow stream spa. Doesn't get any better!

9/5/2013	I-dig-castles	Castles agree with me! ;)	Photo and Comment	Guest	3 FB likes, 1 pin	Altruistic	complex	Dogs welcome, staff, treated like royalty,	"Canine Assisted Intervention Dog, Rowan, loves "her" castle at the Fairmont Banff Springs. Pleased to be able to join her dad at a conference this summer, she enjoyed the majestic scenery, inside and out at the Banff Springs....Fairmont Hotels treat their Canine Guests like Royalty..... and Rowan doesn't mind it one bit! And Rowan wanted me to add, the "Fairmont Artisan Baked Dog Treats" are extremely delicious, and she'd love a few more bags! (wink , wink!)"
9/2/2013	Rose	Fairmont Banff Springs - One of a kind view ... Tag? Priceless!!	Photo and Comment	Guest	2 FB shares	Hedonic	complex	views, incredible experience	Visited the Fairmont Banff Springs in Banff this summer and went to the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course. The views are amazing!!! ...Such an incredible experience!!"
8/28/2013	Daniel Reid	Valet Parking	Photo and Comment	Guest	15 FB Shares	Social	complex	staff (by name)	Jaxon valet parking his stryder bike so we can go in for a swim. This photo was taken at JPL last week when we stayed at the Athabasca cottage for two nights. He was so pumped to Valet park his bike and kept saying how safe it was> :)
8/28/2013	Renata Martinz	Dream Wedding	Photo and Comment	Guest	None	Social	restricted	fairy tale wedding	My son got married in August at the Fairmont Lake Louise. It was a fairy tale wedding.
8/26/2013	Joyce Lehman	The Fairmont Chateau Montebello, where ordinary people experience extra-ordinary dreams come true	Photo and Comment	Guest	No	Social	restricted	anniversary celebration	"A few years ago we stumbled upon the Fairmont Chateau Montebello while driving through Quebec and decided then and there, to visit for our 30th anniversary...It's a place everyone should try to cross off their bucket list. Relaxing by the water with a beverage is a dream come true!!"
10/11/2013	Marilyn	Athabasca Falls	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Hedonic	complex	Fairmont Jasper Park lodge, beautiful	We recently drove to Athabasca Falls to explore the area, while staying at the beautiful Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, which was our home base for many exciting days of sightseeing.

8/28/2013	Banff Springs	End of Summer Getaway	Photo and Comment	Guest	1 FB share	Hedonic/Social	complex	level of service, extraordinary, delicious lunch, views	The level of service we have received from the staff has been second to none, which has made our visit to the Fairmount Banff Springs even more extraordinary. Our picture was taken while we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Rundle Lounge Patio; and is meant to reflect the amazing views that we enjoyed during our lunch.
4/9/2015	The Fairmont Kea Lani, Maui	Fairmont Kea Lani Seared Ahi Salad	Photo and Comment	The Fairmont Kea Lani, Maui	No	Social	restricted	Recipe	Recipe
3/26/2015	Fairmont Mayakoba	Semifinalists at the World Class Competition 2015	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Mayakoba	No	Social	restricted	staff bartender promotion	Meet Ana & Gregorio! They are part of our team at Fairmont Mayakoba, and both are in the semifinals of the World Class 2015 competition! Let's go Ana & Gregorio! We are rooting for you!
3/24/2015	The Fairmont Waterfront	They're Baaaack!! The Buzz on Bees with Bee Butler Michael King	Photo and Comment	The Fairmont Waterfront	None	Altruistic	restricted	Fairmont Eco Bee Program	Help us welcome the humble and underrated Mason bee, nature's early season pollinator and the insect most likely to help fruit trees like apple, cherry, pear and plum develop their fruit later in the season and a sure sign to all of us that spring in this part of the world at least, is on the way! Learn more about our bees and #BeeButler at: <a href="http://bit.ly/greenhotelinitiatives">http://bit.ly/greenhotelinitiatives</a>
3/24/2015	The Fairmont Waterfront	Hand Crafted Marshmallows	Photo and Comment	The Fairmont Waterfront	None	Hedonic	restricted	Recipe	Recipe



3/16/2015	The Fairmont San Jose	Fairmont San Jose Hosts Inaugural San Jose Craft Cocktail Challenge	Photo and Comment	The Fairmont San Jose	No	Altruistic	restricted	Charity, fund raising	"The Fairmont San Jose hosted our inaugural San Jose Craft Cocktail Challenge benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Million Dollar Mission this past Friday, March 13... The Fairmont San Jose has pledged to raise \$10,000 toward the mission"
3/6/2015	The Fairmont Banff Springs	The Fairmont Banff Springs - Chef of the Month	Photo and Comment	The Fairmont Banff Springs	11 Tweets	Social	complex	staff chef promotion	Tyler Paquette is one to watch. After completing the culinary apprenticeship program at the Fairmont Banff Springs, Tyler worked with a team of Chefs to win a gold medal in the Chaine des Rotisseurs for the Alberta Provincials and 3rd place for the Canadian Nationals
2/10/2015	Fairmont Mayakoba	El Puerto Restaurant chef will represent Fairmont Mayakoba in the 2015 S Pellegrino Young Chef competition	Photo and Comment	Fairmont Mayakoba	No	Social	restricted	Staff chef promotion	S.Pellegrino launched a global talent search to find the best new Young Chef for 2015. With great pleasure we share with you that Chef Diego Stefan, restaurant chef of el Puerto Restaurant (AAA 4 Diamond Award), will be representing Fairmont Mayakoba in the LATAM - Caribe semifinal in Brazil in March, where he will go through 20 different challenges in front of the local juries.
3/19/2011	Monty01	What a disappointment	Comment	Guest	No	Social	Restricted	save your money (warning), arrogate staff	" I think that the staff are some of the most unpleasant, arrogant individuals you are ever likely to meet. The staff looked for any excuse to avoid doing their job. When you consider you are paying a premium and Fairmont sells the whole experience, I would suggest you save your money, it's not worth it."

## 7.4 Customer Interviews

### 7.4.1 INTERVIEW 1

Age: 30-40

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes definitely. I use hotels.com to do most of my bookings. I use it because it keeps all my bookings organized in one place and I get points/free nights based on my bookings. Really it just keeps me organized and I know where to find my reservations.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I like good photos, also use the videos sometimes. Sometimes I use reviews to confirm a booking choice – never really to find a hotel. I want the corporate website to be simple, clear, to the point – price, location, availability, amenities all easily found.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I am loyal to the hotels.com as I mentioned. Other brands give me an understanding of what to expect in terms of quality and price. For example – St Regis collection is the higher end price point for Starwood – I'd stay at the W hotels in New York mainly, price point and location suits, Le Meridian in Europe maybe and Westin sometimes when I need to find something cheaper. Overall the branding for me offers a reference point of what I can expect. I'm not that loyal because I like to try new places and only stay in hotels for personal trips, not business.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I love the level of service and the gold floor option. When I'm in Banff I always try and book on the gold floor because it's a real treat.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well?

Answer: I do, they're not amazing but I wouldn't expect it. The hotel stands for quality and I think they are on social media but it's not the main focus for the brand which is fine.

## **7.4.2 INTERVIEW 2**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yeh absolutely. Anytime I'm looking for a trip/travel I look online. For instance I use icscape. There is too much information online, I like a curated edited version rather than being inundated by information. So whether it's a website that has a number of hotels on their site, or the Fairmont where I know what I'm going to expect.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Firstly ease of use, also social media, even just the real people, you can look up peoples Instagram account. You're not going to hashtag Fairmont unless you like the brand. Authentic content, travel bloggers that I respect.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I think it's consistency, if I know what I'm going to expect and staying in a foreign country that I know, still getting a great experience. Research online and good customers review. So I escapes. I guess you always look at trip advisor. I don't always trust TripAdvidosr, it's not always people like me if that makes sense. As I mentioned iescapes, I've stayed in self-catering, or the Fairmont I know it is going to be excellent service, and they know my name.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: So I'd stay, I often go to the Fairmont when my husband travels and it's for work and it's on the corporate bill. I know it will be top notch, and they always remember who you are and that's nice. Um yeah.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Yes, I don't know them well online but the website sounds like a place that is trying to engage and has interesting content I would like to read, not necessarily post myself thought.

### 7.4.3 INTERVIEW 3

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: I would look on TripAdvisor and maybe select the top 3-4 hotels. I would look at value for money. It would also have to be aesthetically pleasing. For example we went to a wedding in Wales and the hotel we choose to stay in, I picked it because out of all the hotels it had the most character. And that was literally my reason for it. Brand would not be a reason to pick a hotel.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: There was one in Australia that we selected because of a good deal with a bottle of wine. The hotel didn't have to pay commission if you booked online. And I'm also attracted to ease of use. If a website is too difficult to use or too cluttered, I then question what the rest of the admin is like at the hotel. As long as the hotel has invested in the website and appear to care about their online look, that's important to me.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: If I was somewhere strange that I didn't know, I may use a brand like Best Western or Hilton to help me choose the hotel but otherwise choosing a brand over a unique stay is never going to be my top choice.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Location would be a key factor and consistency in the level of service and knowing they (the brand) wants to maintain a level of customer satisfaction. Knowing your not going to be fobbed off on something.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well?

Answer: That does sound like a website I would use, I haven't used Fairmont Moments before a stay at Fairmont, but I do research and spend time reading up on the hotels amenities and restaurants. Like I said, ease of use, and a well maintained website with nice photos is a big plus when I'm researching.

#### **7.4.4 INTERVIEW 4**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes I would look for incentives and offers but um, that's not the only thing. I'd be interested to see what the restaurant faculties are. I would also go ahead and book online.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Yes. Well I like to search online, go to TripAdvisor and look at what facilities the hotel has. Does it have a gym and photos.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: It might be a brand that I tend to follow and support in my travels. Incentives and deals are also interesting sometimes.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Fairmont is a hotel I know well and have stayed at extensively. It is a brand that I trust. I have stayed with them in countries all over the world and would choose to stay at them because I know how I will be treated and know what to expect.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well?

Answer: Yes I have been on Fairmont moments and have found it interesting and useful to pull up recipes of meals I have had in some of the restaurants.

#### **7.4.5 INTERVIEW 5**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: professional designation

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Well it's pretty much the only thing I use. I use my iphone a lot, I use my mac and my airbook when I'm travelling.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Um well I always look for the websites where I can get points and loyalty. I often check on contests. For pleasure I'm always conscious of price. I sometimes splurge but often I'm quite

aware because I don't have a lot of disposable income, I'm building my career at the moment. When my company puts me up im often staying centrally and staying at the Fairmont which is one of my favourites.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Um there are two things. I like older hotels, I like the heritage, the old photos, I'm a bit of a history buff. Im also conscious of the environment. I like the fact when they have, you put your towels on the rack and you have the same linen for a few nights. I also like when they have herbs on the roof and I think I saw something about a bee program on the roofs as well at some Fairmonts. All the environmental points are important to me. Oh also the social part, where some of the staff does something nice for special needs children or a family or someone in need.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Yes environment, social programs and history are the key things with the Fairmont that are appealing.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Ya ya, I've visited before and I've contributed. It's a nice touch, it's not hardcore marketing. It's real and staff are responding to any communication. When I have time waiting for a flight, I often go on those sorts of websites.

#### **7.4.6 INTERVIEW 6**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F



What level of education have you completed: masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes. I would identify the website on their corporate website. I also go to TripAdvisor to check on what other people are saying. I'm more interested in the corporate website, less on bloggers.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Deals are important to me, contests less so.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

I think good reviews would help me choose a hotel. Not loyal to any particular brand.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont

Answer: Great personal customer service.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I think I would be more likely to view the photos if it was on Instagram or facebook. If I had to go to a separate website, I probably wouldn't but if it's on the social sites I'm on. If I want to read up or write a review I may go to Facebook. If I want to see photos then Instagram.

#### **7.4.7 INTERVIEW 7**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes I look online for most of my bookings. I often use an app to book – hotels.com or sometimes I'll go directly to the brand I'm looking for. There are so many apps these days for booking. I often refer to customer reviews or websites for information first like Iescape. I love good photos, a must on any website.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Yes. Packages I often will go for. With a family of three kids at different ages we often need a suite set up kind of room and that can get pricy so often I'm looking for some kind of deal or incentive to book.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: As I mentioned deals or incentives are good but often I know I'm going to a certain location for certain dates and I compare the hotels that fit my needs. Some bloggers are ok but often I'm searching and looking for no nonsense kinds of stuff – tips, reviews, warning signs for certain hotels.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Fairmont is a hotel I know well through growing up with the brand in Vancouver/Victoria. I like the familiarity and knowing what I can expect. I also like the use of the gold floor at certain hotels, as I mentioned with a family it all makes a difference.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Yes I have been on Fairmont moments and have found it interesting and useful but often I find I don't have much time for entering contests or searching recipes. I feel like I know the hotel and what to expect that unless I'm looking for something specific like – I want a few more photos of the Dubai Fairmont as I haven't stayed there before,... I probably wouldn't spend much time on a website without a real purpose.

#### **7.4.8 INTERVIEW 8**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yeah, cause I'm so busy with work, it's the best way to get things done. If I know specifically where I'm going I'll go to the corporate site. Otherwise I'll search on Expedia get a better idea of the area and the hotels around where I want to go.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Usability. Finding what I need, putting in the dates that I need and getting to the reservation area. If it's a new site then I also want to see lots of photos.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: With business I'm loyal to the Hilton type. If it's personal, then I span out the search and the website becomes more important and I can get more creative.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont? Answer: I'll always return for the service. It makes it easier to return to a hotel where you know what to expect and the personal touches that they provide by calling me by my name.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: If it was for a personal trip then yes, I would and share with others so yes I would post and yes I would be interested in viewing other peoples photos.

#### **7.4.9 INTERVIEW 9**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Uh yes leading up to travel. Depends on what level of hotel – whether it's for work or for personal travel. Personal for what 's close by, location of the hotel. Professional would be is there a restaurant that I can eat at, is there a gym.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I use review sites and I also use the corporate website. Also use hotels.com

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Navigation ease, examples are pretty important. Like if they post the menu for the restaurant so I can see the sorts of food and the price. Also like nice photos. Brand not that important unless I'm using Marriot for a points program for work.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: It's definitely customer service, a big component of that. If you need to extend or have some flexibility in the stay then that's a big thing. The overall experience is important at the Fairmont.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Ya I think they should also, as a user, if it was more integrated into the main corporate website. An easy way to find it, if it's not linked, I wouldn't find it. There is so yes, the focus on future trips liked to the hotel that I'm booked into. As opposed to other hotels in their portfolio that I'm not that interested – I want to know about the hotel and things associated with the one I'm going to.

#### **7.4.10 INTERVIEW 10**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes. Value. So something that meets our minimum grade. We don't stay in the cheapest places, but what I would call middle income hotels. I look at the corporate websites and often an aggregator like Trivago. I often find the direct website provides us the best price.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: It's just price. We look, we see the features they have. The kids love to swim - do they have a pool, and exercise area – those things are important o us. If we're going skiing, are they close to skiing. Chris and I do a once a year retreat, something romantic, up in the hills.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: We don't consumer enough beyond our Air Miles points. So it's just on a dollar basis. If we did a lot, we just have the one points systems so it's not big with us.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: From my perspective its price range. So that's where I would stay but for very special occasions. Our wedding anniversary, honeymoon a gift from my work. We may have stayed a few other times but it's not our normal.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I recall when I booked previously I have looked at the website. It's a good idea. Any way that caters to the consumer. The big issue with search engines is the turn and the use won't be as high if it doesn't come up. It changes if people are brand loyal and you can reward them. I am fairly loyal to high value car brands. I know that I frequent the same brand then there is more potential to get more incentives. Our kids would post and engage with social media. For myself I'm more conservative with what I do online in posting location, more private. Age and people that advertise what they do – can be both. We are the non-advertising kind of people.

#### **7.4.11 INTERVIEW 11**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender M/F - F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes very. I do all of my research online, take into account what others say – word of mouth of friends, but then I'll take their recommendations and research further online.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Photos, amenities – like a pool. We have three kids and it becomes all about what they want. I use corporate websites but often find an app I use – hotels.com to be quite simple, they rank the hotels and have reviews also, so find that quite easy to book.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Brand gives a re-assurance and that's nice when you're travelling to a country you don't know well. We lived in Asia for a while and had a lot of hit or miss hotels and found to book a brand we knew provided a lot of reassurance.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I like the Fairmont in Asia, very luxurious, a high level of service standard, and always beautiful hotels and pools at that.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I would go on the website, my kids would probably post or hashtag us in but I would have a look at the recipes and articles.

#### **7.4.12 INTERVIEW 12**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: Masters



Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes um, I wouldn't say it's the all be it. I also go on recommendations, and from the recommendation I'll go on the website to get more information. Both friends and family recommendations, that you put more weight on certain people's recommendations based on knowing their preferences.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Everything needs to be easy, I want to see a contact phone number, I don't want to have to dig for it. Photos, lots of beautiful photos help. Videos, not don't do. I don't mind, I just usually find I'm doing it on the go so I can't really watch or listen to it. I'm using my phone and my ipad. Limited text – marketing bla is annoying. Lots of very visual, easy to navigate, mobile friendly. Booking I normally 50/50 call or book online. Fairmont as an example I don't find it that easy to book online. I call to book with them. Normally stay at the Banff Fairmont, that is where we had our wedding. I find it easy to call them there. In between ¾ layers, with boutique hotels it's usually easier online.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Recognition is important to me. Loyalty points isn't something that dictates points. Most hotels are work related at the moment and that is done through work and if I'm going for pleasure the only hotel I would stay at for pleasure is Sofitel. I hate Hilton, through work experiences would not choose to stay with them for pleasure. The same time I'll recognize Fairmont or Four Seasons, if I can afford a stay with them, as a Canadian, I would choose to stay at either of them. Child friendly attitude now, and because my husband is with his company, this next trip, being dictated is our choice in hotel.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Fairmont because it's Canadian. I recognize the heritage, CP Rail hotel, locations as a result of that carries onto my allegiance internationally. For me Fairmont is comfortable, heritage, feels like home and I know what to expect.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I haven't spent much time on it but in theory it sounds great, but at the same time I stay at the Fairmont semi-regularly and haven't spent much time. The concept of great images, recipes and teasers sounds like a good idea but maybe because I know the hotel well enough I don't need to look at a website like that for marketing reasons.

#### **7.4.13 INTERVIEW 13**

Please state your age 40-50

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes absolutely I always look at photos and amenities. I generally start at the hotel website. If I'm looking for booking I use other sites because you can often get better deals. I often do a google search and try new sites every time.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website?

Answer: I wouldn't say contests but certainly if there is a deal or incentive. We often travel with the 4 of us and the kids always want a pool so that usually dictates where we go.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Not necessarily, if we are going somewhere I will look at hotels in the area. I'm not usually loyal to a certain brand however I know we go to Kanaasikis regularly and the hotel we stay at has a points system so that often dictates that we return there because we go there often.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Ya I think just knowing the quality, the food, all the features you know – the standard, the service.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Possibly. For me it's getting the best deal so there isn't a great deal of loyalty. If you were talking to my kids you would get a different answers. In my demographic at the moment, it's all about the money.

#### **7.4.14 INTERVIEW 14**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Masters/

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: No

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Deals and nearby amenities

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: We've had a few loyalty programs over the years but it's not important to us.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: The history, old CP buildings - wandering around the old historical hotels is a real joy.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: No not important

#### **7.4.15 INTERVIEW 15**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes. For both business and leisure online information is always the first point of contact. I travel a lot for work internationally and although I have to go with the company brands for travel within the Starwood network, its important for me to find out local information online about the hotel restaurants, gym, local area etc.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Simple, clear, concise website. I think a website is the face of the brand now. Online needs to represent the true essence of the brand. It's not always easy to translate the experience online but I think for hotels now it's a must as their customers are all online first before staying at the hotel.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Well as I said for work it's Starwood. For pleasure I stay at an array of places from AirBnB, cottage rentals, Four Seasons and Fairmont are a few favourites.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I like the expectation of experience. Some of their hotels are a bit dated, in need of a renovation but I know the staff will be friendly and try their hardest. I find they are trained very well.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I'm not sure they're that on, but this website is a good resource to gain a local taste of what the individual hotel characteristics will be like. I also like to read the magazine and I noticed this is where the content is housed so if I was looking for an article I read at the hotel I would look it up here. Interesting and connecting to social but I'm not sure they're quite connecting with the guests online. Just my thoughts.

#### **7.4.16 INTERVIEW 16**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender M -

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Definitely. I travel a lot for work and it's always the first place I go for information and booking. It's where you go to and it's where you make your decision. I often go to Sky scanner first to suss out the cost of the flight, then go to an aggregator like Kayak and Expedia to suss out the hotels.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I definitely value a nice looking website, if it doesn't look good online then it think this will be reflected in the hotel. It's important these days to have a good online presence.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I love brands that I know. I will chose a trip based on the hotels I know, it gives me a reassurance and trust to book. Mandarin Oriental is a favourite or Raffles if I can, but these are

for my Asia trips often. North America – Four Seasons, Hyatt, Fairmont. Europe, often Starwood is quite good.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: For me, it's knowing I'm getting the service I expect. Often I use the business centres and it really helps when I know what I'm going to get before going on the trip.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I think they are ok. The website is nice and the content even the Magazine articles I do like and find interesting. I'm probably not going to post photos but I do like looking at others photos and stories – it helps me know what to expect at hotels I haven't been to.

#### **7.4.17 INTERVIEW 17**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender M -

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yep, predominantly online it's all about a recommendation. No id start by googling about it, and reviews and phrases. Book online as well. I think we predominantly book directly to a companies website, my wife usually books.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website .

Answer: Deals are always welcome. Very clear photos or facilities. More photos than videos, lists of facilities. Child friendly, spas and pools.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another .

Answer: Um I wouldn't say I would brands are useful, it provides a level of confidence. Absolutely important that the website is polished enough or the style of the site wasn't to my taste.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I would like to be recognized and would appreciate the welcome.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I don't think it's something I would check out, because I'm normally looking for negative but if that information was appearing in my social media feed it may change my opinion and impression of it. By either friends staying in the hotel or paid advertisement if it was coming up in my feed I may feel more favourably in checking it out.

#### **7.4.18 INTERVIEW 18**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Masters



Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes that's the primary way I get information besides the places I know well. Most of my travel is days travelled – more work than leisure. I wouldn't really do much research for that – those choices are made for me at work. Leisure or vacation, it's a lot of online research.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Loyalty points mean nothing to me. I just think it's become so annoying, everyone has loyalty points. More images, pictures of the place the surrounding areas and ideas of what you can do there would be important. In some ways I don't inherently trust the websites of the operator – I use more the TripAdvisor where it's customer populated.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: It's not points, its not name recognition, it's a place that has some character and uniqueness as a place that would determine the choice. For the same amount of money – to stay at a place that has history, or stories and a quirkiness, I would pick that over a fancier option.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: It's just if it's a good hotel and good history and interesting it would make me stay there rather than a brand.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) ?

Answer: I'm not that well versed with Fairmont moments, but that wouldn't be interesting to me. I feel like everyone is trying to do that and it's not very transparent to me. I feel used as a customer. Not interesting in posting content.

#### **7.4.19 INTERVIEW 19**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender M -

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: I like to check out a picture of the hotel. Access, how to gain access, air or road. Gym also is important. Standard of the food is also important.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Yes, as I mentioned in the previous question.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Um the brand not particularly, although a well known hotel that has a package or incentive that give the right price at a particular time of the year that is value for money I'm looking for.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: It's always nice to be recognized and to be welcomed but um just as important, is when you arrive, drive up its nice to be greeted and someone carrying your bag.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I'm not sure I would spend any time on a website like that. The Fairmont given the name, I would expect a certain level of service having used it just the once, whatever the website says is second to the experience I have in the hotel.

#### **7.4.20 INTERVIEW 20**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: Undergraduate

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes we certainly don't use a travel agent anymore. So yes we use online sources. You're looking for price, location and amenities.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Ease of navigation. I don't like pop up websites they irritate me.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Yes recognition and points, being retired and budget conscious in many trips and stays we often stay for longer times and so price is important. Loyalty points are important

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Yes points, being recognized is nice to feel important. Usually it's locations and the Fairmont are in good locations so that is a draw for us.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) ?

Answer: I would go to their corporate website probably. I don't want to fuss around, I want price, availability. If I was blue skiing and trying to find something then yes I would spend time but I often know what Im looking for.

#### **7.4.21 INTERVIEW 21**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: professional designation

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Ya mainly review websites, probably Expedia and Orbitz – I stick to my two or three.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website?

Answer: No deals incentives or contest. Privacy, private butler service, if there is a floor that offers additional food or wine then that is important. Good restaurants.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Yes, guaranteed service is what I think of.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: The service, the quality of the room and the decor. Um typically I like the decor of the hotels and the service is always great. Other than Dallas, it has the worst Fairmont I've been to.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Unfortunately no, I'm more interested in booking for specific conferences, possible upgrades. Because I have a relationship with the Fairmont, that also signifies why I return and also the amenities.

#### **7.4.22 INTERVIEW 22**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: high school/university/masters/professional designation – university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes I definitely search online. I go to review websites, company websites, some blogs like iTrip I like for the good photos. I also scroll my Facebook feeds or see the sorts of people that check in to various hotels on Facebook to get a better feel for the sort of customer that they attract.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website .

Answer: I like up to date information. Feel it reflects the sort of hotel they are if they have a nice looking, well organized website with good photos that reflects well. If any information is out of date or the website looks dated, I'll assume the same about the hotel.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I'm loyal to a hotel brand if I've had good experiences and they appreciate my business through points or some kind of loyalty system. I do like to return to hotels where I know I can expect a certain level of service and quality of rooms. I quite like Hilton and Accor hotels as examples I often return to.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I love their hotels from a historical point of view there is such rich history. I do find the brand to be quite expensive but it's nice for a treat, an anniversary dinner and stay weekend with my wife or another special occasion. I'm happy to spend as long as I feel the quality is there and I have always had good experiences with the Fairmont. I also like how they use my name on visits, there must be a good customer data base they use to record information from previous stays.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I don't often use Fairmont Moments, I prefer to just go through the corporate website to book. Often I know what I'm looking for – price, availability – neither of which is on the Fairmont Moments website. So I wouldn't say I'm a really active user. I have posted once before for a photo contest but that was ages ago. It use to be Everyone's an original – yes? Still has the same idea with guest photos and stories, recipes, and contests. Which is good I just don't have much time to scroll around pre booking, maybe after a stay I would use it to look up a recipe from a restaurant.

#### **7.4.23 INTERVIEW 23**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: high school

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: I'd say yes. I use my laptop and look at the company's website to see the amenities like the facilities, the spa and the exercise rooms. Bookings I prefer to phone.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I'm not particularly interested in incentives. Up to date information is important to me. I want to know they are looking at it an paying attention to the online information.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another?

Answer: Service, if I have good service I'll return there. I'm a loyal to brands I like.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Recognition is what I like on the gold floor. We go there quite a bit in Banff and I like it that they know who I am and what I like.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Not really I'm not interested in recipes or looking at personal photos.

#### **7.4.24 INTERVIEW 24**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes I use my computer and smart phone to look up and research trips. I always refer to the online searching and corporate websites when booking. I really like the Four Seasons and my dad loved staying in nice hotels so that was fantastic when we were travelling to Cape Town or Switzerland.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.



Answer: Definitely photos, sometimes videos, but definitely recommendations from friends.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I do like the reassurance that comes with a hotel brand. I know the service will be good at the Four Seasons and the Raffles hotel we often stay in Asia. It's comforting to know a brand will provide that.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: When I'm in Canada or Europe – Monaco and London, I know the Fairmont brand well and know I will like the location and hotel service.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I have used the website to check out my favourite drink cocktail before but haven't written and posts. I use social but so far I haven't posted to this website.

#### **7.4.25 INTERVIEW 25**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: high school

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Extremely so. As much information as possible, whether its for business or leisure. I want to know the facilities a place has, location, good photos.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website .

Answer: If I did a huge amount of business travel I probably would get into the points system. Although that said, past business travel, I never really did. It would be a secondary issue, the priorities would be choosing something on merit. That would be the first thing, as second thing the points would be a bonus. To get back to you first question – I want to see a good corporate website, deals well, the truth is it really is the price on that bed. The last time I spent a decent amount on the hotel it was Vegas, and the driver in terms of deals, financial side of it, what rate can I find on that day. That would define what I was looking at and on the web there is a lot of smoke and mirrors.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: For me personally I've found hotel brands to be disappointing in terms of expectation, in terms of broadly, and I don't have enough experience of the high end leisure, but in the business area, no not particularly. The brand thing, like Hilton, their brand is so mixed, from high end to ordinary. I have increasingly found the brand draw to be less and less important.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: If the Fairmont is able to deliver strong personal service, and I trusted that wherever I went into one of their hotels – they have a particular way of delivering service, that would pull

me back. I'm not interested in the fine dining or pool. But if I can get great service,... that that is what would draw me back.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I think that by doing this the Fairmont was trying to do something different, rather than a very corporate website, then I would be interested. I'm a bit sceptical of user reviews. I think of TripAdvisor, and you are always going to get some idiots on their. I think posting photos is something other people do but I probably wouldn't do it. I would value to a degree I guess there will always be amazing corporate photos, but that doesn't always give you the true idea. So customer photos would be interesting.

#### **7.4.26 INTERVIEW 26**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Not at the beginning. I mostly take a recommendation from a friend then from there I would go online.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: I like to look at some of the pictures. No videos, just still photos. If they have specials I would look at that but other than that = I look for a phone number. I use to call to make the reservation but not I book online.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: Um definitely not that loyal. I don't use points, don't find them that useful. Mostly, it depends where I want to go, then it would be somewhere I know. Then value for money. We often go to heritage hotels, like in Amsterdam it was right on the canal and a small boutique feel. Those are the sorts of hotels we prefer.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: started taking our staff to the Fairmont for Christmas parties, it was a really good program and it was good value. The people were lovely and because it was a heritage building, it was beautiful.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I haven't done but I might try it now. I like the idea of the recipes but I don't think I would post any photos myself.

#### **7.4.27 INTERVIEW 27**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender F-

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: 100%. I look at travel websites first like Conde Nast Traveller and the recommendations they provide or Travel and Leisure and then I'll typically pick out a few options from those lists and check out TripAdvisor and see what they say then check out the rates.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: Location of the hotel is the biggest for me if a I don't know the language or b don't know the town. So I'd say location is the first. Second, I like to look at pictures and see if the aesthetic is something I'm drawn to. I also want to understand the general feedback, was it a pleasant stay, were the staff helpful. I'd say those are my top three.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: Ya fore sure. I definitely like to get my points. Also if I m familiar with, there are certain brands that I know I like and get consistent service there. There are other brands that I know I don't like and try to avoid. I travel a lot for work and Starwood is often a choice where close to my office would be or Marriot, or the next echelon, the Mandarin Oriental, is lovely and one of my favourites, same with the Fairmont, and Four Seasons and the Hyatt.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Um, the experience I love the old historical vibe. Although I think some of the hotels could use some updating in some of the rooms. I still like the charm and some of the aesthetic. The staff are always very helpful and I know what kind of experience I will end up having when I stay at the Fairmont.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Yes, because it gives me some insight into what the hotel will be like. I wouldn't post photos but I like to look at other peoples photos and it helps me in my research.

#### **7.4.28 INTERVIEW 28**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes it is. Yeah I book most of my travel through booking.com. Why because in the beginning I found there was a lot of chose and in the beginning as a member I can rank and rate the hotels. I look for 8/10 rating in my search and then from there I look at photos. I find from the first few photos you can tell a lot and go from there.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website .

Answer: Photos, deals definitely and that's something booking.com. I've contributed to so many reviews on booking.com that I'm now deemed a 'genius' on booking.com and get a discount. I often find by going to booking.com I can get a better deal from this website than going to the hotels website itself. I've had a few situations where the hotel has told me they can't match the price on booking.com and I've had to go back and book through the booking.com website.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: not at this point in my life. Our financial situation at the moment. When I was working in investment banking, it was, but as an entrepreneur now, it's not important.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: So I know the Savoy reasonable well, I've been there for lunch. It's a beautiful hotel, the service, is a completely different level, with well trained friendly staff.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Um definitely, based on my limited experience, and my more recent use of social media as a business I think it's really important. This next generation that is what they do.

#### **7.4.29 INTERVIEW 29**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Of course, um I use Mr & Mrs Smith when I'm looking for places in Europe. I look on Conde Nast online. I don't tend to look at the magazine just online. I look at icscape. I would look at brands of hotels that I'm dreaming about like 6 senses or Aman hotels – do they have new locations. I visit review sites once I've found the hotel – to check, or confirm my choice. I don't use it to find the hotel but I use it to confirm there are no really bad experiences

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: Just having up to date information. If a hotel doesn't have the price or availability, if I have to email them I don't bother. If they have information about children, then you know they will provide the cot which makes my life easier. Also if you see a hotels website will have the best price on their website as opposed to a sketchy third party.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: It isn't for me because I haven't stayed at one hotel brand very much. If I was travelling for business it probably would. If I've been to one hotel and had a good experience, I will look to another location as a reference.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Fairmont doesn't stick out as a place I immediately want to stay. If I see that a hotel is a Fairmont, then I know it will be a nice hotel. But I wouldn't; go out of my way to stay there. Just because I like quite modern hotels but I know the service is wonderful. I like the recognition, I don't mind that information being used.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Probably not.

### **7.4.30 INTERVIEW 30**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F



What level of education have you completed: high school/university/masters/professional designation – professional

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes definitely, I do all my bookings on booking.com or hotels.com. Usually an app on my iphone. I like how the app holds all my information and I can book with one click. I don't often go through a brand's own website. I like the point system on the app – get a free nights stay every ten nights booked.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: points and loyalty, yes like I said, the every ten nights suits me on my app.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: I often look for deals or some kind of incentive like a price reduction or second night free stay with the apps. It really depends where and when you're going – high or low season. When I'm travelling for work I'm often in Hilton hotels or Starwood which I like, but for leisure I do like to find unique, more quirky hotels that are a bit different. Not so corporate feeling.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I know the brand through my parents, they stay at the Fairmont a lot. We will go to Banff Springs or Lake Louise every year as a family trip and it's great. I do find the stays more luxurious than I'm use to when I'm spending my own money. I've been working for just under two years with KPMG accounting firm so I'm still very much trying to save and not spend too frivolously.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Umm, yes. Because I'm not staying at the hotels much I probably am not searching them out online. To me the brand is a place my parents stay. So it's probably not a hotel I would book on my own or do much research on online. I have checked in and posted a photo on Fairmont moments through my Instagram account on our last trip to Banff Springs Spa. I know the hotel re-posted the image to their Facebook feed which is kind of cool, they must have liked my photos. But anyway, yes I don't use the site often but have used it once or twice.

#### **7.4.31 INTERVIEW 31**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes, travel review sites mainly, TripAdvisor.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Um mostly like customer reviews and photos. Mostly for good and bad reviews and overall rating. Yeah when I'm going to a resort, I look for overall ratings, amenities, cleanliness, food, and I think photos tell a lot. I always go to both professional and customer reviews. I've watched videos on trip advisor as well.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: We went to Mexico in June and we booked with the same chain as the one my family booked when we went to the Dominican Republic a year ago. It gave us something to trust with the brand.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I think of luxury, and for me in my age group it would only be for special occasions. The only time I stay there is with my family or for weddings.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Yeah I don't think there is any harm with trying to keep up with websites. I don't think it's going to have a high impact with my age range, but there are a lot of people my parents age that are quite tech savvy, and have the budget to stay at the Fairmont hotels.

#### **7.4.32 INTERVIEW 32**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes it's become more and more so as I've been able to use. I'm using as I get more familiar with being online. Except when we stay at the Fairmont at Banff springs where we stay a number of times a year, and I call the gold floor and make direct bookings.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: The simplicity of it. I like to see the phone number, pictures, all right there, so I don't have to search. I like the photos, not so much the videos. I don't often have a lot of time. I want to see rates, availability all right there.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Probably familiarity. I like the Fairmont brand. I also take into account recommendations from friends that are similar to myself in style. Often choosing locations that are appealing close to opera or the symphony.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?.

Answer: Pretty much the staff. The front desk staff, and of course the Gold Floor staff they all know my name. The maids in the rooms all very friendly and professional and um, pretty much that's it.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Yes ive visited it once when I have time. I like reading the stories of staff that go an extra mile. Now that you've mentioned it I'll go back.

### **7.4.33 INTERVIEW 33**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: professional designation

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes. Always look online first for information

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Needs to be easy to use with nice photos. The first point of contact often with the guest so it needs to have all the information in a well organized way.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another?

Answer: I'm not a big brands person but what a brand does is give the customer an idea of what to expect – from price to level of service. I'm more of an AirBnB guy.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I know the brand and have stayed at various Western Canada ones for weddings in the past. Beautiful locations usually and a high level of service. A bit pricy for me as a general rule but would stay for a special occasion.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I don't know the website but it sounds like they are trying to connect to the younger consumer through the online portal. Good idea, the next generation of customers.

#### **7.4.34 INTERVIEW 34**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes my only form of research. I've used Priceline a lot, Expedia a lot. I love Trip Advisor, and Yelp, it can be a bit hit or miss.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website .

Answer: I definitely like a lot of pictures, so I can see what might stand out about that hotel.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I definitely am, I will have the same ones over and over but sometimes choose a boutique hotel to have something different.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Something unique, personal service, something that personally makes me feel welcome.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I would definitely be interested in the recipes, and to engage with other customer, what type of people are staying there, and engaging with them makes it feel more personal.

#### **7.4.35 INTERVIEW 35**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: Professional Designation

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: It is but it's not the only source of information I use when planning trips. I take friends recommendations quite seriously because I know that, based on the person and their similarity with my preferences that I will like what they have recommended. I will then check all the hotel information online from there but initially it's probably not the place I will go to decide on where/when I will be going.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I like some kind of incentive to book – whether it's an add on item like a bottle of wine in the room or an incentive to book a spa treatment. It makes you feel appreciated in some way but Its not mandatory for me. I will return to hotels that I know will do that when I book. I often book suits as I have two children and need more space so it's nice when hotels recognize you're paying more for the space.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: As I mentioned I'm loyal to brands that appreciate my business and I feel comfortable in. In north America I'll book Starwood hotels, and Fairmont, Four Seasons on occasion. It really depends what is in the city or destination that I'm picking and reason. Sometimes for work I need

to go to Hilton hotels as my company has a deal with them but I wouldn't choose Hilton out of choice for personal trips.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I do love the gold floors. They're not in every hotel but it's the sort of place that makes you feel more relaxed, having access to food, comfortable couches, entertainment in books, magazines and TV. Feels like an extension of home and that's so valuable with children.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I'm probably not the ideal customer as I'm really more interested in the dates, price, etc. I can understand a younger generation engaging more through social media but it's not my thing. My daughter may like to post photos and share some of the gorgeous pool scenes. When we were in Monaco the pool roof is just incredible so I can see why people post it's just not something I would do but the Fairmont needs to find ways to connecting to new and next generation customers and I think they're doing the right thing by starting early, staying abreast with the technologies and really committing to the customers online.

#### **7.4.36 INTERVIEW 36**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: high school/university/masters/professional designation – high school

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?



Answer: The only way I find my information. I like to check out the images, amenities, location is always really important to me – is it near all the places I need or want to be by. Often I like a good front desk area space, where I can connect to Wi-fi and just hang out at the hotel, rather than the room if I have some time to kill.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: points and loyalty, yes I find I try to collect points when it works out but I'm not completely held to one program or brand. I often check on contests. I like entering contests, it's always nice to win something free. For pleasure I'm always conscious of price. If I'm travelling for work that's different, it's on the companies card. I sometimes splurge but often I'm quite aware because I don't have a lot of disposable income.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I like to pick companies that are socially aware of issues and choose to support different non-profits or causes. I know Fairmont has done quite a bit with the muscular sclerosis charities which I support as well. Also especially hotels that have so much laundry and waste, hotels that are especially conscious for example, hotels that allow you to choose if you want the towels /sheets everyday.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Yes environment, social programs and history are the key things with the Fairmont that are appealing.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: It's ok, yes I know the website Fairmont Moments and I have entered contests in the past but it's not a big driver for me. I like some of the photos and to check out others activities at certain hotels before I go is use full – to see some of the dishes at a Fairmont restaurant for example. It's not hardcore marketing. It's real and staff are responding to any communication. When I have time when I'm planning a trip, I often go on those sorts of websites.

#### **7.4.37 INTERVIEW 37**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: professional

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes, I find all my information online. It's really the only place I research information for travel or hotel stays.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Incentives, sure it's nice to be recognized as a frequent guest but contests no, can't be bothered don't have time. I follow a few bloggers mainly from my social media feeds. I generally am travelling for work with conferences and there is usually a Fairmont hotel that is recommended. Not sure why it always ends up being a Fairmont, maybe they are just always in the cities we are going and they are a good well recognized brand to gauge a level of service by.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another?

Answer: I like to know what to expect it makes me feel more comfortable about travel and I like to visually know how everything will look when I arrive. You can achieve that knowing a brand well.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: The Fairmont feels comfortable, it's a good Canadian brand I know well now and its easy, predictable, know the restaurants will be nice and the service good.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I know the website, have looked at some of the articles and content when I'm staying at a Fairmont in say the middle east where if I haven't stayed there before so it can give me a level of expectation or understanding of the local touches. I haven't posted and probably wouldn't.

#### **7.4.38 INTERVIEW 38**

Characteristics of the respondents:

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Very important. Expedia, TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, occasionally I'll look at the Fairmont and Marriott

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Probably honesty. Easy to navigate, easy to load onto my computer, um photos, and like I do look at reviews of other users.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Yes deals and incentives are important. It would depend on the purpose of the trip, and um convenience and location. If I had to stay by the airport or whatever.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Beautiful interiors, amenities, the lounge, or the Fairmont in Whistler has a very nice pool.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Absolutely, cause its fun, I may try p out a recipe. I'm 29 and I love to post and use Instagram and I'm on Twitter so I like posting.

#### **7.4.39 INTERVIEW 39**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes definitely, I book most everything online. Rarely call. Most information is online and frankly it's easier and quicker to book things online. I always check out review websites or

recommendations by others. You get a feel by reading peoples other choices or reviews and know if they are just annoying complainers or if they seem like reasonable, similar to me vibe.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I like for the layout to be intuitive, bloggers I want to be able to search locations easily enough. Review sites, same – search functionality is important. Within a company website I need the price, availability, facilities and any other interesting information readily available.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I like to know what to expect. I want a brand I find interesting, I'm tired of boring cookie cutter hotels. If I'm travelling for leisure I want history or culture or something going on with my hotel. Deals yes sometimes and I do like points, more so on my airline choice. Hotels it seems are doing less on points, well maybe the bog standard hotel brands – Hilton etc are still very connected to points. I do like being introduced to other brands at my hotel. Years ago with W hotels they used Acura cars as a partner brand and I found it so great to be taken around New York by the hotel drivers and Acura rather than a taxi. I figure if I like the hotel brand they will pick other brands I may like so it's a good thing.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I return to the Fairmont because I know the brand and it's comforting. My family has been going to the hotel since I was young and so wherever I go around the world I look to the Fairmont brand as a sign of home in a way. Also like the recognition program, they always remember I'm lactose intolerant and it makes it feel reassuring to know that at breakfast they will have soya milk for me.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: I do think they are doing well online but not leading the other travel brands, probably just in the middle of other hotel brands. I think as a higher end hotel brand they want to be elegant, responsive but not edgy or too adventurous which would be required to lead the way. Fairmont Moments I've been on and entered a photo contest a year ago but I don't go on regularly. Sometime I search specific hotels to get a feel for the area, recipes, and just get in the mood by reading up about it on this website because it's more creative rather than feeling like a corporate website.

#### **7.4.40 INTERVIEW 40**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: I'm looking for recommendations, I'm looking for key words, whether it's budget, or a particular experience, or a boutique hotel or being in the centre of town. Word of mouth is very important, the obvious ones is TripAdvisor but there seem to be reviews on so many others now.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Ease of use, and then ease of navigation, it can't be jam packed, if I want something specific and I want something visually attractive and the way the wording is presented, the layout and graphics.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I'm not specifically wedded myself to brands, but I would want a recommendation and want to know about the hotels and the brand. For work I had to stay in Premier Inns and what I liked is they were comfortable beds, they had duvets, I can't bare sheets.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Well a number of things I would measure success on is cleanliness and hygiene. Service, if someone is rude or you have to wait to check out, or maybe you don't have to check out, it could be a choice. Again service, always having someone at the front desk and their not answering, it's really frustrating. The other things that add to the factors or wanting to come back, how good is the service, and the quality of food and the little touches like the shampoos in the room. Some hotels they are cheep and others, you want to stuff them all in your handbag.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Yes, I think for me personally, if you've had a good experience, and you're being offered the opportunity to return. For me I'm quite foodie and would like the recipes. I Think sometimes its quite powerful to have the odd negative one, and it was a prompt not a politicians response, it would make me feel it was honest and not a one sided review. Especially if you've had a nice meal and you want to go on and see the recipes.

#### **7.4.41 INTERVIEW 41**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: Professional designation

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Ya enormously. Now a days I tend to be searching in a particular area, then I look at the brands website, and even on the phone, it all starts online.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I use Trip advisor, Expedia in the past, not particularly bloggers. Probably good images – it's the first thing looking on a website – it's important to have a good image. Up to date content is essential. Feeling the website is being cared for and they are presenting accurate information. I have viewed videos but generally photos.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Quality and price one over another. Now child friendly. Want to feel welcome, not ashamed for bringing a child. I think also a personal feel, rather than a faceless brand. Don't follow points or discounts – only for BA.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Feeling of friendliness, pleased we're there, feeling relaxed. The quality of the finish, of the pool, meals – feeling easy as a family.



Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Ya definitely having a feeling for the brand, rather than a very corporate set up – I would appreciate. I don't go on this website but I do appreciate the sort of feel and easier approach they are taking.

#### **7.4.42 INTERVIEW 42**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender F

What level of education have you completed: Undergraduate

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes, photos are important, some videos but I don't take the time to view them.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Online customer rating websites like Tripadvisor are important to me. I like reading what other guests have experienced and flag up things that you may not be thinking about otherwise or aware of.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another

Answer: Price best deals, some level of quality, it's like a fast food restaurant in a brand – you know what you can expect and you know a Big Mac is going to taste the same at a location in Calgary or London.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Locations and deals are key to use being retired. Also price, again, It's important as we are often driving down to our place in Arizona and stopping for several night on the trip, make it expensive if you don't keep an eye on it.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: It's easy to navigate and find things the search – easy to find information for example my daughter was looking for high-tea information, with engaging lovely pictures. The quality of the pictures was high as a result of smart phones that are improving with technology.

#### **7.4.43 INTERVIEW 43**

Please state your age: 20-30

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: high school

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yay a, I'm always on my computer or iphone looking up information. It's my main source.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I love love love the contests! I actually am really lucky, usually with contests. I also like getting loyalty points. I also like to see beautiful colourful photos. I like to check out the spa and pool area as well on photos.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Well I love the Fairmont but it's quite expensive for me. If I'm going with girlfriends or friends from high school. Fairmont is our favourite when we go to Banff but we often have to go to a cheaper brand.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Well I love the Fairmont but it's quite expensive for me. If I'm going with girlfriends or friends from high school. Fairmont is our favourite when we go to Banff but we often have to go to a cheaper brand.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I like looking at what their doing. I'm kind of an environmentalist type. I like to know what they're doing with the herb gardens on the roofs. I choose to eat there for the food if I can afford it. I think I saw also they have bees for the honey. Some of them have gardens where they grow the vegetables.

#### **7.4.44 INTERVIEW 44**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender M/F - F

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Very important. I always look online first before I make my final decision. Review sites and also, I always telephone the hotel to see what information I can get from the receptionists. Last booking I did was over the phone.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Photos, videos, outside space, a spa, amenities. Yes I do look for a deal as well.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: One that I recognize, brand name is very important. I know that they have a good standard of service, a good spa and the level or cleanliness. Also if they update their beds.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Well I notice at the Fairmont they always have nice breakfast. The restaurants are always lovely and open long hours. They also have good cleanliness. Also good booking service, if you have a long Flight you can go straight to your room.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Yes I would, its nice if there is a chef there and what kind of menus they do have. I think that's very important.

#### **7.4.45 INTERVIEW 45**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender: M

What level of education have you completed: university

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes, I have to say my wife does most of the booking and she does most things online. Our travels recently have been to quite far destination and one of the only ways to get information is online or through email. It's incredible how it's changed over the years with the advent of the Internet.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Well easy to find information, clear, concise information on booking and pricing. Good photos, location

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I'm not a big brands person anymore. Maybe when I was working and using points and had to stay at Hilton hotels. But not now, we are mainly self-catering hotels.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: The Fairmont is quite luxurious and we've stayed when in Canada, the Banff Springs, it's gorgeous. I only know the brand as the Savoy in London and have had a few functions, but overall I've just had a good experience with the level of service.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I haven't really spent much time on the website but it sounds interesting, but not my thing with social media. I wouldn't be posting, just reading.

#### **7.4.46 INTERVIEW 46**

Please state your age: 40-50/

Gender M

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Oh ya fore sure definitely. I think as far as travel goes it's the forefront. Its where you go to and it's where you make your decision. I have a pocket full of websites. I go to Expedia to Skyskanner to get a base of websites that I'm not even aware of. The way the world is moving it changes every time. From Expedia to the newest website there is.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Ya fore sure. When it comes down to – it's picking brands that you're use to. When I look at review sites I want to see brands that I know and it holds much more credibility to me. Really comes down to a website I have used before, then moving forward.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Um ya, 100%, if I was going to book one vacation over another, it would come to the brand I'm most comfortable with and one I've been with before. An example of that, is always booking with the Fairmont. For the same price, similar location always going with a brand I know.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: For me, it's knowing you're getting an unbelievable experience. Its knowing once you click that button that you're going to be getting a vacation you're going to be comfortable. And the people you're booking with will be happy. Also knowing coming back from the vacation that your going to have memorise that are unbelievable.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?

Answer: Ya as I've mentioned it's important to me to find the brands online as a way to trust what I'm booking so yes it sounds like a website with some interesting information. Not just that I may get rewarded but it's a website that I would trust. To get tips that I would use is what I'm looking for and it would be valuable to me.

#### **7.4.47 INTERVIEW 47**

Please state your age: 40-50

Gender M/F - M

What level of education have you completed: University

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes it is. I use recommendations from friends as well but often check everything online. I do most of my booking through Expedia or Orbitz. I've used these websites for ages. There are more recent and newer websites but I've been using these ones for so long.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: I like packages, often find if I feel I'm getting a deal I feel better about booking. Fairmont often has packages to the Royal York and I'll take my wife for a weekend break.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I am loyal to brands that I feel comfortable in. The Hilton I use for work and like the points program. Fairmont and Four Seasons I am loyal to as Canadian brands when I travel for pleasure around the world. Otherwise it really depends where I'm going and what's around.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I like the historic aspect of the hotels, the old CP history of the buildings. These hotels I am familiar with because I use to stay with my parents at the Montreal Fairmont for vacations. With my own family now, I often will book suits at the Banff Springs when we go skiing. Having the extra room and the staff are so great with the children so it makes it a real treat – the play groups and crèche.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how)?



Answer: I think they are ok, what I need is often just the booking corporate website because I know what I want. I have looked at the website when I'm preparing for a trip sometimes I will look to see what other people have done at the hotel I'm going to. I probably wouldn't post anything myself but I do like looking at others photos.

#### **7.4.48 INTERVIEW 48**

Please state your age: 30-40

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes, I check the availability and price online then go the corporate website to book. Sometimes I use a booking aggregator like booking.com

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website

Answer: Mostly room size and location of the hotel.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Not loyal to any points programs.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I look at their offering and recently they had a half price rooms for the children. I've never seen a deal like this from Fairmont. Even in Japan I haven't seen such a good website.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: No, not a website I would spend time on.

#### **7.4.49 INTERVIEW 49**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: high school

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes very important. If it's a holiday we prefer individual smaller places, we don't like large corporate hotels. We tend to enjoy self catering if we're going to Canada its going online. TripAdvisor is a good one to help us find things from overseas.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Up to date information, yeah, incentive I think I'm looking for information, we're looking for location and facilities nearby, and that's what I'm looking for is other peoples views and getting into a conversation with them and judging it from there.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: I actually enjoy the search now, versus when I was working when I had less time. Finding the information, the actual process of booking is more important.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: I do think it's important but for me, we've only been to the Fairmont in Banff and for me, its that type of thing, the recognition, to get it right like the Smiths hotels, from emails of small hotels it's important to know what you like and how to communicate.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: I think again, that I've been on lots of holidays, and you could be anywhere, when we went to visit Jo in Singapore, every website was identical, I think recipes and additional information like the Fairmont Moments will provide a very welcome touch.

#### **7.4.50 INTERVIEW 50**

Please state your age: 50+

Gender: F

What level of education have you completed: Masters

Question: Is online information an important part of your hotel stay / choice?

Answer: Yes I use my computer when I'm at home. When I'm travelling I use my ipad or phone. I'm getting more use to using my phone. Ya I always refer to the online searching when I'm booking. Especially when I'm going on a trip to a city when im not familiar with.

Question: What do you value in a companies website or online blogging website.

Answer: Ya photos, videos, and recommendations from consumer review websites. I watch the dates of reviews, especially things like renovating the hotel when I'm going, I always look to

make sure the consumer review websites up to date on the dates im going for current recommendations.

Question: What makes you choose one hotel brand over another.

Answer: Familiarity. My friends and I talk about the different hotels we stay at. I like the Fairmont because I'm familiarly with the standard. In the past if I've had a problem, it's been address quickly and professionally. I have had problems in the past and I'm pleased with how well they handle it all.

Question: What makes you return to the Fairmont?

Answer: Pretty much their location in the major cities. I like the spa, the resort focused hotels um in particularly in Vancouver and Victoria in the harbour. When I'm in Europe, I often search out the brand as a Canadian I know the brand well.

Question: Do you think Fairmont is engaging with customers – online particularly well (and if so how) with Fairmont Moments?

Answer: Ya, I've used the website and some of the recipes and drinks, some of my guests have asked to have the recipes. I look at the other postings when I have time. When I'm sitting in the airport and Im on my ipad and I have time to do that.

## 7.5 Corporate Document: Key Slides from FRHI Strategy Presentations

### 7.5.1 2014 Objectives

#### INTEGRATED LOYALTY PROGRAM DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

The new program will greatly enhance FRHI's capabilities ...

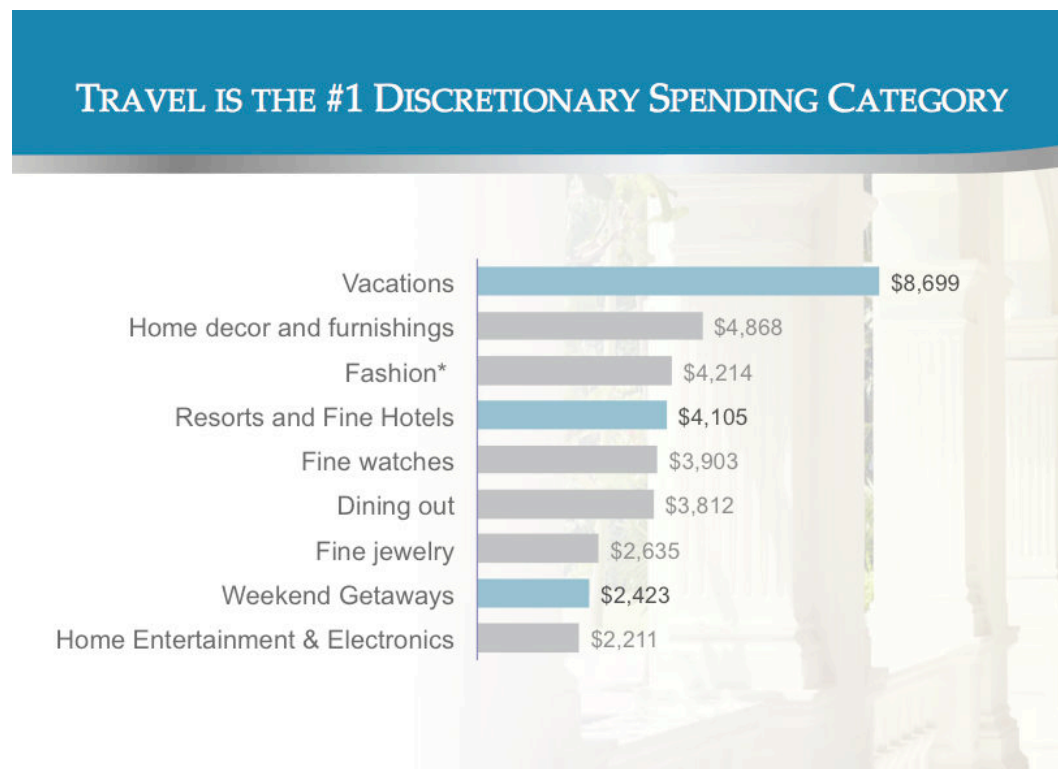
**We are  
investing  
in ...**

- New loyalty brand offering a cross-sell opportunity for our hotels
- New loyalty website, with a multi-brand booking engine and online award redemption
- Enhanced loyalty engine. Members will earn credit on stays, nights or spend (folio and non-folio)
- Cutting edge member mobile app
- Enhanced marketing automation platform, including trigger-based email campaigns
- Introduction of the 'Loyalty Score', an easy-to-understand metric based on lifetime value, to help better prioritize tasks and better serve loyal guests
- A new enhanced colleague mobile app (replacing Profile Plus)

## 7.5.2 Conference Agenda



## 7.5.3 Travel Discretionary Spending



## 7.5.4 Consumer Demographics

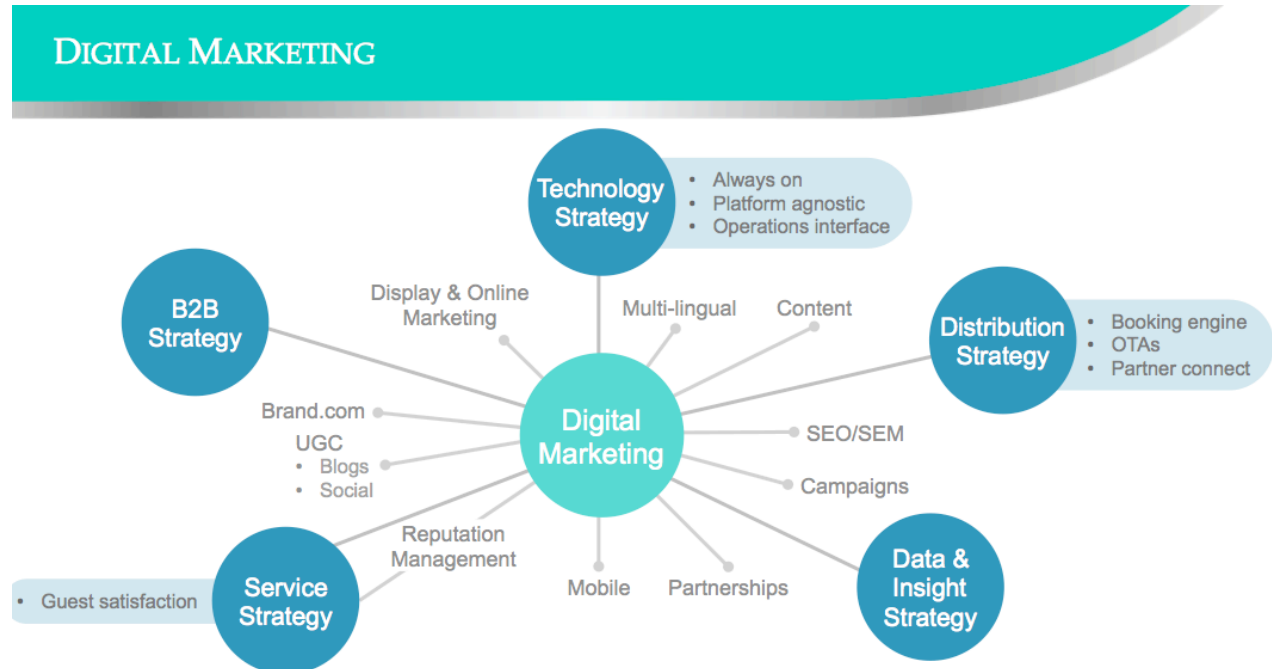


## 7.5.6 Consumer Trust in User Generated Content & Reviews

### CONSUMERS TRUST USER GENERATED CONTENT & REVIEWS



## 7.5.7 Digital Marketing



## 7.5.8 Evolution of Branding





### 7.5.9 Fairmont Values



### 7.5.10 Guest Experience



**Satisfaction** = looking at the total Guest Experience



*Framing the total Guest Experience pre, during and post stay*

### 7.5.11 Key Luxe Trends

## 6 KEY LUXURY CONSUMPTION TRENDS



### 7.5.12 Social Media Strategy Key Focus

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY KEY FOCUS



- Tactics**
- Increase volume of reviews to address quantity and **recency** ranking factors (80% of FRHI reviews are positive)
  - Encourage General Managers to address key findings from online reviews to improve **quality** of future reviews
  - Increase response rate to reviews to improve consumer perception

## 7.6 Netnographic Content: Fairmont Moments

### 7.6.1 The Best Super World Class Customer Service



The Best Super World Class Customer Service ever in all my experience in 5 stars, 6 stars and 7 stars hotels

By: M.Jelll  
POSTED: 6/5/2014

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[Share](#) [+1](#) [Tweet](#) [Pin it](#)

Our family are members in Fairmont Bab Al Bahr facilities and beach; we have been several times there as regular guest and the services there is great as usual and as expected. Till the date we decided to do my daughter birthday party at the premises around the pool, and this is where we saw and realize the different in team who is serving us.

I have visited the most luxuries and fancy hotels in almost more than 50% of the world and never experienced such "satisfaction". The services are great in most of the five star hotels as part of their industry standard, however, the extra mile people takes what makes the different.

Comments

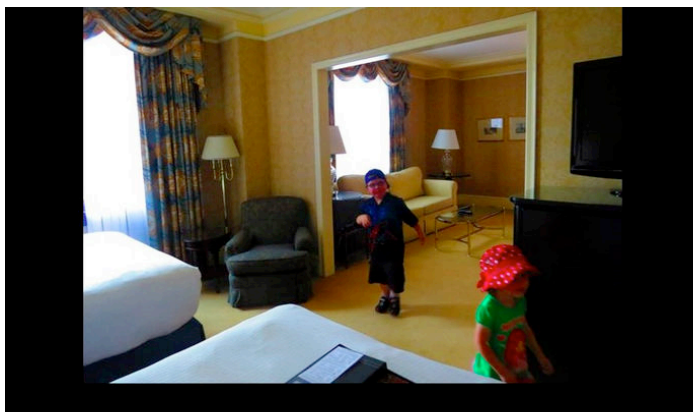
0 Comments Everyone's An Original

Login

Recommend 1 Share

Sort by Best

### 7.6.2 A 5 Year Old Boy's Wish



A 5 Year Old Boy's Wish

By: Buffy Noble-Molleson  
POSTED: 7/16/2014

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[Share](#) [+1](#) [Tweet](#) [Pin it](#)

My son just turned 5 and he is special needs. He is non-verbal and only says a few words. One day while we were visiting a park, he threw a penny in a fountain and he made a wish. Later I asked him what his wish was and he said "SHIP". He said the word clear as day and so I decided to take my son to Toronto to see the Tall Ships and go for a ride on one. I wanted to make his wish come true. I thought I better book a hotel and spend the night in Toronto. I found a standard basic room at the Royal York for a good deal and thought it looked very nice from the photos. I worried a little too nice for some country hicks like us. lol. I emailed the reservations and just wanted to see if we could get a room with a bit of a nice view and maybe a higher floor because of this being a special trip for my son. I explained the story. I didn't think they'd do much but had some hopes. I was TOTALLY BLOWN AWAY by what they did.... When we arrived, we were told we were given a complimentary upgrade to the TOP floor and a signature suite. A view of the CN Tower that blew me away. Room 150. It was incredible and I felt like we were so special. My son was grinning from ear to ear. We didn't want to leave the room. My son then received a special delivery of a happy birthday cheesecake, a plate full of chocolate chip home baked cookies and water bottles. I felt like crying. It was amazing. I will go on about this story forever and I know it created amazing memories for my son. The hotel is beautiful, clean, close to everything and amazing staff.

Comments

0 Comments Everyone's An Original

Recommend Share



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

*“I emailed the reservations and just wanted to see if we could get a room with a bit of a nice view and maybe a higher floor because of this being a special trip for my son. I explained the story. I didn't think they'd do much but had some hopes. I was TOTALLY BLOWN AWAY by what they did.... When we arrived, we were told we were given a complimentary upgrade to the TOP floor and a signature suite. A view of the CN Tower that blew me away. Room 150. It was incredible and I felt like we were so special. My son was grinning from ear to ear. We didn't want to leave the room. My son then received a special delivery of a happy birthday cheesecake, a plate full of chocolate chip home baked cookies and water bottles. I felt like crying. It was amazing.” (Buffy Noble-Molleson, 7/16/14)*

### **7.6.3 Healthy Benefits of Spa-ing, Fairmont Willow Stream Spa**

*“You already know that you look and feel great after a spa getaway. But you may not know it's good for your health, too!*

*People often ask us if spa therapies really work. There is an important new resource for everyone to use that consolidates independent scientific research studies from around the world for the many of the therapies provided in spas. This was compiled by medical doctors.*

**Here are just 5 ways** that going to the spa can help you achieve your wellness goals. (To learn more, check out the [Global Spa Summit's Evidence-Based Portal for Spa & Wellness Therapies](#))

**More energy:** An aromatherapy massage offered more relief than a massage by itself, according to Japanese researchers. (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18637761>)...

### 7.6.4 The Bee's are Back in Town

*“Last night under cover of darkness 4 colonies of honey bees arrived at the hotel after successfully overwintering off property at the Honeybee Centre in Cloverdale.*



*The bees are getting acclimatized to their new surroundings which were prepared ahead of time for their arrivals with some cleaning up of the garden area where they will call home for the next 6 months.*

*...Learn more about our bees and #BeeButler at: <http://bit.ly/greenhotelinitiatives> #FairmontBuzz #BeeButler #BuzzonBees”*

### 7.6.5 Fathers Day Specials at the Spa, Fairmont Maui



Father's Day is right around the corner! Why not treat dad to a day at the spa? The Willow Stream Spa is now offering \$25 off any regular priced spa e

By: Instagram User  
POSTED: 6/25/2014

0 0 0 0

Share +1 Tweet Pin it

*"Father's Day is right around the corner! Why not treat dad to a day at the spa? The Willow Stream Spa is now offering \$25 off any regular priced spa experiences through WedneSDay, June 18, just for dads! He'll be happy you did! Call 808.875.2229 for details and reservations. #Maui #willowstreamspa #FatherSDay" (Fairmont Maui Spa)*

### **7.6.6 Pick your favourite colour**

*Pick your favorite color! We now have several different colors of travel size OPI polish to play with! #WillowStreamSpa #WillowStreamMaui #NailPolish #Travelsize" (Fairmont Maui Spa)*

### **7.6.7 WellnessWednessDay**

*"WellnessWedneSDay Tip: Feel like you're floating on water with the "wave table" at our Willow Stream Spa. This unique treatment table moves with the soft, rhythmic motions of the therapist, creating a deeply relaxing escape" (#Willowstreamspa)*

### **7.6.8 National Flip Flop Day**

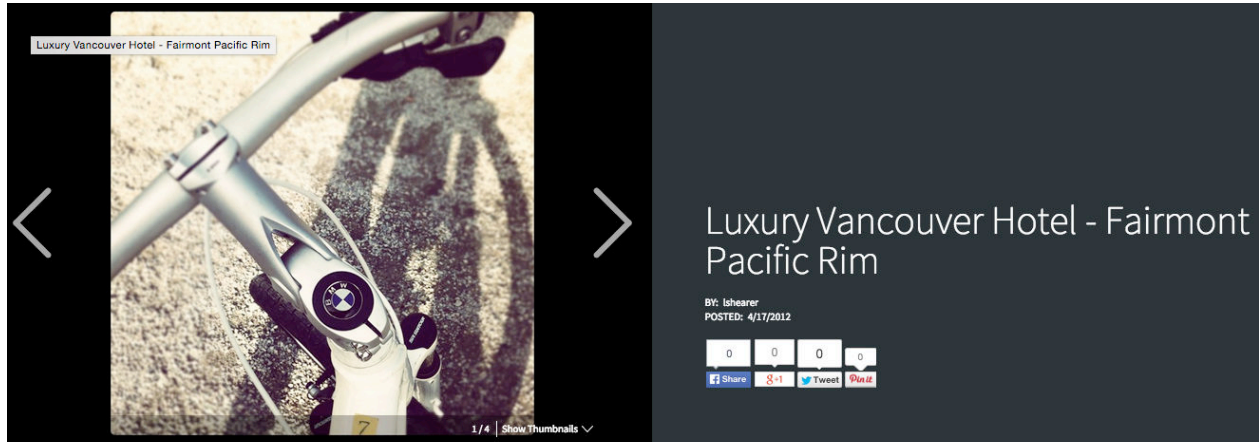


*"In honor of National Flip Flop Day, the only pair of @ipanemausa that came with us on our trip last weekend. #ipanemausa #ipanemabossa ☐" (islandfeversisters)*

### **7.6.9 Beautiful Food**

*"Beautiful food. #cakes #pastries #afternoontea #thesavoy #posh #family #qualitea #orientalbeauty #matcha" (dosaismylife).*

## 7.6.10 Fairmont President's Club



When it comes to Vancouver accommodations Fairmont has four locations in addition to the Fairmont Chateau Whistler not too far away. Each hotel has its unique feel and characteristics. The [Fairmont Pacific Rim](#), the newest property, offers guests an incredible experience from check-in to check-out. The modern design and room features are top notch, and the location puts you near all the action.

One thing that you must do is use the in-house BMW bikes to ride from the hotel doorsteps around Stanley Park. It's such a lovely outing and very convenient. Afterwards you can unwind at the Lobby Lounge and Terrace or sample the dishes at Oru which is making a name for itself on the Vancouver restaurant scene.

Comments

0 Comments Everyone's An Original

1 Login

Recommend Share

Sort by Best

*"If you're a member of Fairmont President's Club, check out Fairmont Fit (a service that is free for premier and platinum members). It provides Reebok workout apparel and shoes delivered to your room, along with an MP3 player loaded with music, a yoga mat and stretch bands." (Willow Stream Spa)*

## 7.6.11 Fairmont Pacific Rim BMW Bikes

*"The Fairmont Pacific Rim, the newest property, offers guests an incredible experience from check-in to check-out. The modern design and room features are top notch, and the location puts you near all the action. One thing that you must do is use the in-house BMW bikes to ride from the hotel doorsteps around Stanley Park"*



### **7.6.12 Negative Staff Feedback**

*"... I think that the staff are some of the most unpleasant, arrogant individuals you are ever likely to meet. The staff looked for any excuse to avoid doing their job. When you consider you are paying a premium and Fairmont sells the whole experience, I would suggest you save your money, it's not worth it..."*

### **7.6.13 Staff Recognition, Fairmont Mayakoba**

*"S.Pellegrino launched a global talent search to find the best new Young Chef for 2015. With great pleasure we share with you that Chef Diego Stefan, restaurant chef of el Puerto Restaurant (AAA 4 Diamond Award), will be representing Fairmont Mayakoba in the LATAM - Caribe semifinal in Brazil in March, where he will go through 20 different challenges in front of the local juries."*

### **7.6.14 Thanking Staff**

*"Perfect stay at the Plaza NYC: We were so happy with the way we were treated during our stay. All departments gave us service that was extraordinary. The concierge attendants arranged for our use of the BMW bikes and even adjusted the seats for us. A welcoming letter was sent to us ahead of our stay and I mentioned that the stay was a belated birthday for my daughter and a cake was delivered to our room."*


### **7.6.15 Thanking Staff for Honeymoon upgrade**

*"We had booked the honeymoon suite, but when we arrived the previous occupants had decided to stay an additional night so the hotel upgraded us to an amazing suite just down the steps from the concierge...One evening we were sitting in the wine bar and we were introduced to Vin de Glace, or Ice*

*Wine. We are celebrating our 16th anniversary this May and are still drinking Ice Wine. Those are some of our most cherished memories.”*

### 7.6.16 Family thank you to Fairmont Maui

An Original Summer Photo Contest [Entries](#) [Finalists](#)



**An Epic Family Celebration at the Fairmont Kea Lani**

By: [osweiler family](#)  
POSTED: 10/10/2013

40 0 2 2

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I'm the most fortunate man in the world to have gotten to celebrate both 20 years with my wife Kathy and the 4-year birthday of our cherished daughter Elke last month with a few glorious days at the Fairmont Kea Lani on Maui. Here are my gals taking part in our nightly sunset ritual of running around, swimming, laughing, and playing on the property's Polo Beach. Thank you for the stunning memories Fairmont staff and property! This was a once-in-a-lifetime for our little family. —Rich Osweiler


Comments

0 Comments [Everyone's An Original](#) [Logi](#)

*“I'm the most fortunate man in the world to have gotten to celebrate both 20 years with my wife Kathy and the 4-year birthday of our cherished daughter Elke last month with a few glorious days at the Fairmont Kea Lani on Maui. Here are my gals taking part in our nightly sunset ritual of running around, swimming, laughing, and playing on the property's Polo Beach. Thank you for the stunning memories Fairmont staff and property!”(Oswwiler family)*

## 7.6.17 Henry's First Birthday

An Original Summer Photo Contest [Entries](#) [Finalists](#)



Henry's First Birthday

BY: cavefish  
POSTED: 9/9/2013

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After a cold and rainy summer in Calgary, we decided to take a vacation to celebrate Henry's first birthday on the West Coast. It was the perfect way to experience a bit of summer heat! We all really enjoyed being pampered at the Fairmont Pacific Rim in Vancouver. Nothing beats relaxing in a fluffy Fairmont robe on your birthday!

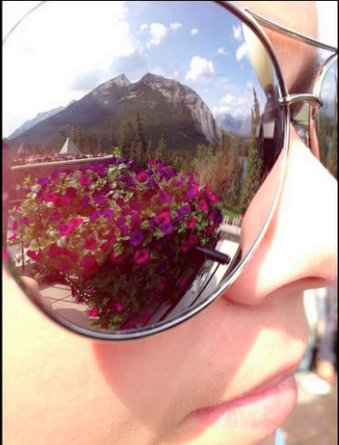
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Comments

11 Comments [Everyone's An Original](#)

## 7.6.18 Banff Springs Sunglass Reflection

An Original Summer Photo Contest [Entries](#) [Finalists](#)



End of Summer Getaway

End of Summer Getaway

BY: Banff Springs  
POSTED: 8/28/2013

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My husband travels away from home a lot for business. This summer we were fortunate enough to join him at the Fairmount Banff Springs! As we drove up to the hotel, the silence in the car spoke volumes. Seeing the Banff Springs for the first time is something our family will never forget. We've experienced the horse back riding, the hotel tour, and the tennis courts in a setting so awesome its almost unreal. The level of service we have received from the staff has been second to none, which has made our visit to the Fairmount Banff Springs even more extraordinary. Our picture was taken while we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Rundle Lounge Patio; and is meant to reflect the amazing views that we enjoyed during our lunch.

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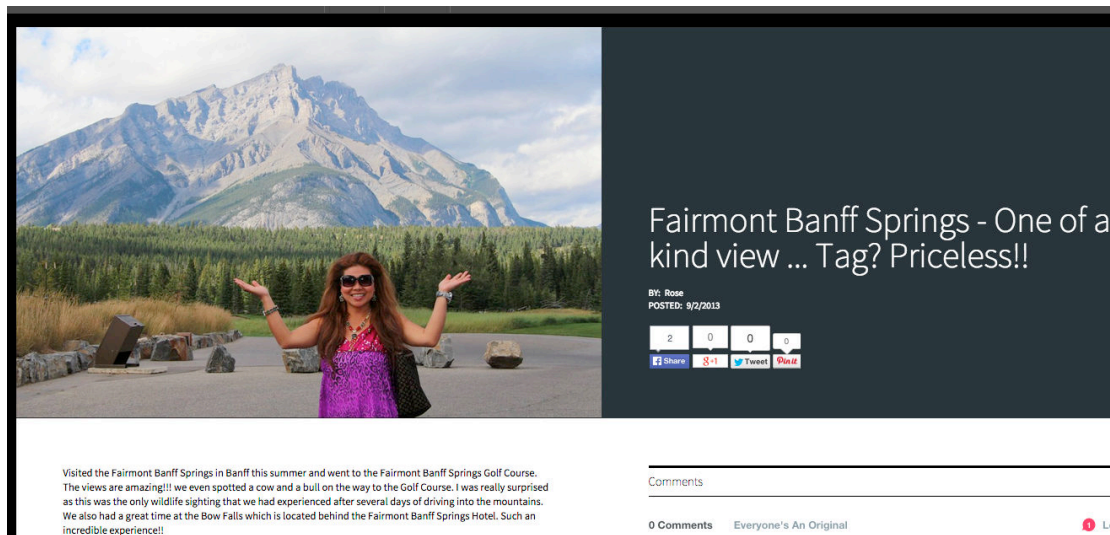
Comments

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“The level of service we have received from the staff has been second to none, which has made our visit to the Fairmount Banff Springs even more extraordinary. Our picture was taken while we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Rundle Lounge Patio, and is meant to reflect the amazing views that we enjoyed during our lunch.” (Banff Springs)

### 7.6.19 View of Banff



Fairmont Banff Springs - One of a kind view ... Tag? Priceless!!

By: Rose  
POSTED: 9/2/2013

2 0 0 0

Share 3.1 Tweet Print

Visited the Fairmont Banff Springs in Banff this summer and went to the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course. The views are amazing!!! we even spotted a cow and a bull on the way to the Golf Course. I was really surprised as this was the only wildlife sighting that we had experienced after several days of driving into the mountains. We also had a great time at the Bow Falls which is located behind the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel. Such an incredible experience!!

Comments

0 Comments Everyone's An Original 1 Lo

*“Visited the Fairmont Banff Springs in Banff this summer and went to the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course. The views are amazing!!! ...Such an incredible experience!!!” (Rose)*

### 7.6.20 Wedding Wow

“Beautiful wedding ;-) Nicole & Leonardo at Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. Photos by Michel Roy [www.digitaldirect.ca](http://www.digitaldirect.ca)”

## 7.6.21 Our Wedding



We are back from our honeymoon in Europe, and we are so excited to share our wedding photos with you all! We had the most wonderful wedding day. It was everything we could have wanted, and to share this day with the people who mean the most to us was very special. We have such a great family and such amazing friends. Our wedding was small and intimate, just 36 guests at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel for the ceremony and high tea afterwards. Our family and guests were blown away (as were we) by the amazing creative designs and production that David and Rachel Clingen created for our wedding. You will have to scroll down and see for yourself how beautiful a job they did for our special day. They are truly masters at their crafts. All of our vendors, actually our friends and family who helped us create this amazing event went above and beyond anything we could have expected. We are so satisfied with our choices. Choosing vendors for a wedding is tough, but we were over the moon happy with everything at our wedding. We think it is mostly because we chose companies and people with great integrity, and people who truly cared about doing a great job for us. Its

### Comments

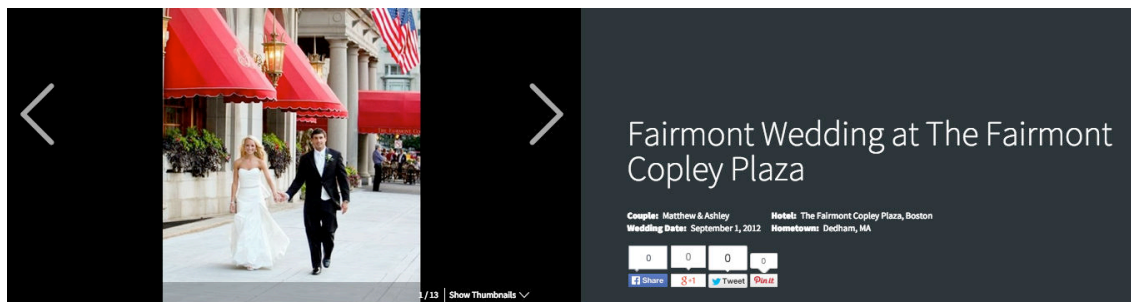
0 Comments Everyone's An Original

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Start the discussion...

## 7.6.22 Wedding Copley Boston



“This hotel wasn't like all the others in Boston. It has a unique look to it.”

Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont?

I loved the location! I also loved that this hotel wasn't like all the others in Boston. It has a classy and unique look to it.



*“This hotel wasn't like all the others in Boston. It has a unique look to it.”*

*Congratulations on your wedding! What made you decide on having your wedding with us at Fairmont? I loved the location! I also loved that this hotel wasn't like all the others in Boston. It has a classy and unique look to it.*

*Where did you have your ceremony? Did you incorporate any special or cultural traditions? We decided to have our ceremony in the Oval Room. We wanted to keep everything simple and all in one place.*

*Tell us about the flowers you chose. Did you go traditional or contemporary? The flowers I chose were white roses, white hydrangea and green berries. I wanted the flowers to be simple.*

*Tell us about the meal you served your guests. We wanted our guests to have options. We chose the filet, chicken, or veggie.*

*What element(s) did you add to make the wedding uniquely 'yours'? I made our table numbers with pictures of Matt and I at the age of the table number.*

*Vendors & Service Providers:*

- Photographer: Dan Doke*
- Band: Night Rhythm*
- Cake: Montilios*
- Flowers: Coleens Flower Shop*
- Wedding Dress: Monique Lhuillier” (Fairmont Copley)*

## 7.6.23 Charity Challenge Fairmont San Jose



The Fairmont San Jose hosted our inaugural San Jose Craft Cocktail Challenge benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Million Dollar Mission this past Friday, March 13. San Jose bartenders and mixologists competed in an exciting battle of muddlers and shakers for a chance to win the top honor "Best Overall - Judge's Choice" selected by a panel of local judges. Our top honor went to Jaime Jimenez, pictured, from The Grill on The Alley, who mixed up a refreshing cocktail called "The Techie." A "People's Choice" award was selected by event attendees and granted to the events most popular libation, the "Passion Fruit Balsamic Shrub Cocktail," from bartender Samuel Reyes with Scott's Seafood. All event proceeds benefit the Million Dollar Mission, a partnership between The California Hotel & Lodging Association and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to raise \$1,000,000 to find a cure for blood cancer. The Fairmont San Jose has pledged to raise \$10,000

Comments

0 Comments Everyone's An Original

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## 7.6.24 BeeButler

*"Help us welcome the humble and underrated Mason bee, nature's early season pollinator and the insect most likely to help fruit trees like apple, cherry, pear and plum develop their fruit later in the season and a sure sign to all of us that spring in this part of the world at least, is on the way!"*

*Learn more about our bees and #BeeButler at: <http://bit.ly/greenhotelinitiatives>"*

## 7.6.25 Thinking Green



## Thinking Green

BY: The Fairmont Waterfront  
POSTED: 9/15/2011



The Fairmont Waterfront recently announced the installation of two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, in partnership with GE Energy Industrial Solutions. On September 15 at 9:00am, The Fairmont Waterfront unveiled their new GE DuraStation EV charging stations. Media was invited for the ribbon-cutting photo opportunity and interviewed representatives from both Fairmont and GE Energy Industrial Solutions.

Quote from Sharon Owen, energy manager for The Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver:  
"Sustainable travel is important in order to minimize our industry's impact on the planet. This is what Fairmont's Green Partnership Program is all about and why The Fairmont Waterfront makes sustainability one of our core values. We're proud to add to the city's electric vehicle infrastructure and our 'drive green' incentive is a way we can reward guests and locals who choose green travel options."

### Comments

0 Comments [Everyone's An Original](#)

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Start the discussion...



### 7.6.26 Fairmont Family at Le Chateau Montebello

Original Post: *“Le Chateau Montebello a été notre destination préférée entre 1981 et 2000*

*Nous avons participé aux forfaits de Noël, Jour de l'An, Saint-Valentin, Pâques, fête des Mères, fête des Pères, et l'Halloween, et même présent de l'incident de la veille de Noël, et les fiançailles de mon fils.*

*Ma fille surnommée par Monsieur Gravel la " la petite tornade" et sans oublier les Olympiques, et aussi les gicleurs qui gelaient par très grand froid.*

*Citer le Chateau sans mentionner les employé(e)s seraient injuste. La remise des cadeaux par le Père Noël sera un souvenir impérissable pour nos deux enfants.*

*Nos enfants avaient hâte de retrouver certains employés et ma nous avons toujours gardé contact avec Céline. Longue vie au Chateau Montebello” (Maurice Shriqui)*

Translated Post:

*“Le Chateau Montebello was our preferred destination between 1981 and 2000 We participated in the Christmas packages, New Year's Day, Valentine's Day , Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween , and even now the incident on Christmas Eve , and engagement my son. My daughter called by Mr. Gravel 's "Little Tornado " ...The presentation of gifts by Santa Claus will be a lasting memory for our two children. Our children were eager to find some staff and we always kept my contact with Celine. Long live the Chateau Montebello” (Maurice Shriqui)*

## 8. French Version of Thesis – Summary, Introduction & Conclusion

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### 8.1 Résumé

Cette thèse présente et analyse les résultats d'une recherche sur la co-crédation de valeur au sein de la communautéd en ligne d'une entreprise du secteur de l'hôtellerie de luxe. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts International (FRHI) est un groupe hôtelier basé au Canada qui gère plus de 74 hôtels dans 21 pays à travers le monde. Fairmont Moments (FM) est le site internet dédié aux clients en ligne de FHRI. Le but de cette étude est de mieux comprendre comment FM a permis à la marque Fairmont de développer de bonnes relations avec sa communauté en ligne.

Avec la multiplication des réseaux sociaux sociaux et l'augmentation du temps passé par les consommateurs à leurs activités en ligne, le domaine de la co-crédation de valeur entre les marques et leurs clients en ligne est devenu un sujet crucial pour les entreprises et leurs responsables marketing (Wang et al., 2016). Les recherches menées jusqu'à présent se sont principalement concentrées sur le consommateur (Cova et Pace, 2006; Cova et al. 2011;

Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2014). Cette étude se différencie par le fait qu'elle porte à la fois sur les clients et sur la marque (et ses représentants) et permet ainsi d'apporter les éléments manquants pour mettre en pratique la théorie de co-création de valeur (Schultz et al., 2007).

Cette recherche utilise une approche holistique basée sur une étude de cas qualitative à phases multiples et apporte des informations importantes sur la relation entre la stratégie numérique d'une marque et sa communauté en ligne. La méthode de recherche utilisée dans cette étude comporte quatre étapes. La première étape évalue la stratégie marketing et les objectifs de l'entreprise. La deuxième étape analyse des données relatives à la stratégie marketing en ligne de l'entreprise, en particulier par rapport à la valeur, l'innovation, les ressources et le service, à partir d'entretiens menés avec 15 managers et directeurs du groupe FRHI. La troisième étape présente l'analyse netnographique de 100 commentaires ou photos postés en ligne et les classe selon quatre thèmes de valeur: sociale, hédoniste, économique et altruiste. La quatrième étape est basée sur 50 entretiens menés avec un échantillon représentatif des clients en ligne de FHRI afin d'identifier la valeur (positive et négative) qu'ils retirent lors de leur interaction avec le site FM.

La recherche menée, décrite dans ce document est fondée sur une étude de cas unique qui a servi à enquêter sur le processus de co-création de valeur entre l'entreprise et le client sur un réseau social numérique. Cette étude a pour objet de répondre aux deux questions de recherches significatives dans le Tableau I.

**Tableau I: Questions de Recherche, Thèmes et Relations**

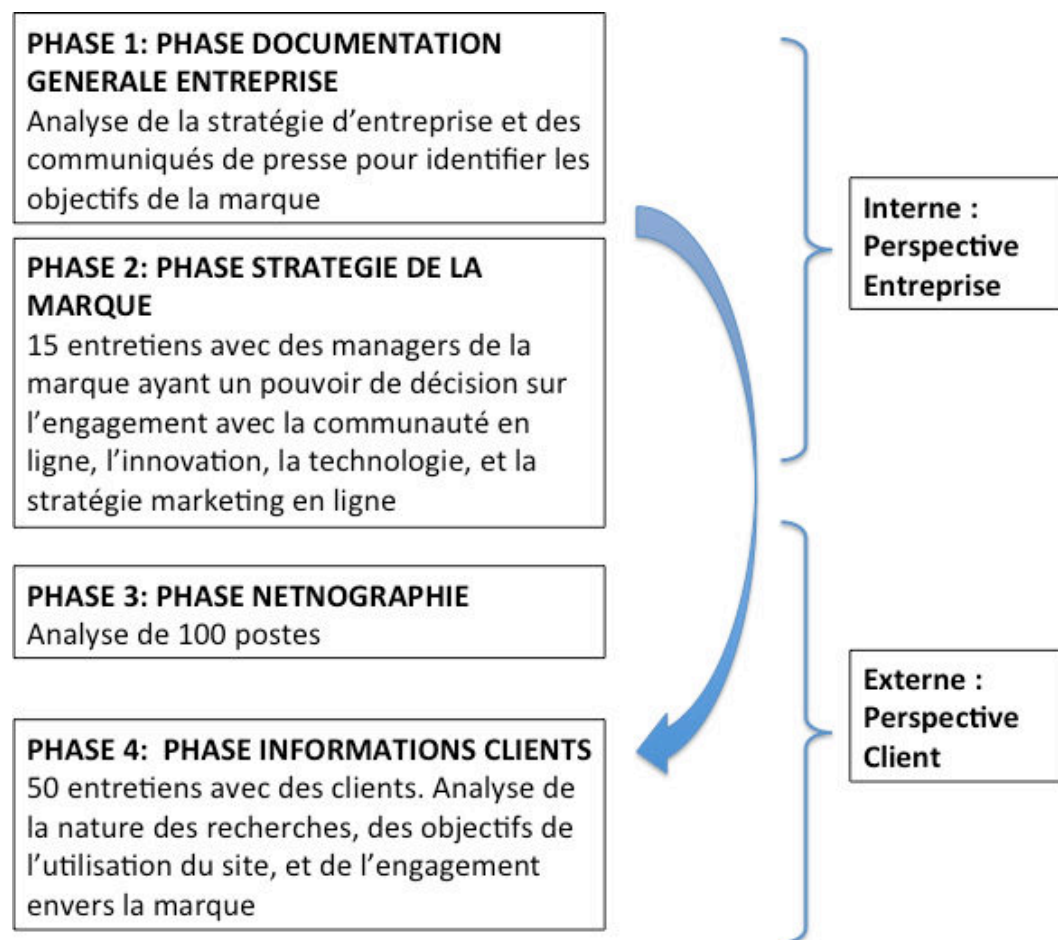
<b>Question de Recherche 1 (QR1)</b>
<i>Thèmes:</i> Innovation et IT, partage des connaissances, co-création et expérience en ligne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Relation:</b> Managers de l'hôtel et théorie <i>S-D Logic</i> (Entretiens)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lien avec QR2:</b> Besoin de comprendre l'aspect expérientiel de la valeur client sur FM</li> </ul>
<b>Question de Recherche 2 (QR2)</b>
<i>Thèmes:</i> Dimensions de valeur économique, sociale, hédoniste, altruiste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Relation:</b> Sociale et Hédoniste: Fidélité à la marque, Valeur de Réciprocité, Valeur de Contexte, Valeur des propositions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lien avec QR1:</b> Contribue à répondre à QR1 (comment)</li> </ul>

La méthodologie utilisée est fondée sur deux perspectives de recherches : la perspective interne de l'entreprise et la perspective externe du client. Pour chaque perspective on analyse d'une part des documents de l'entreprise et d'autre part des informations provenant des clients, ce qui assure une approche duale. Ces quatre phases de la recherche constituent des parties indépendantes ayant un intérêt propre et pouvant donc être utilisées individuellement. Elles peuvent également être analysées comme un ensemble de données donnant une représentation holistique de la stratégie marketing de FRHI ainsi que des opinions des clients (en ligne et hors ligne). Une telle approche multi-phases a été utilisée en 2015 par Gambetti et Graffini. Leur étude a porté sur la co-création de valeur entre « l'intérieur » et « l'extérieur » de l'entreprise d'une part et sa communauté de clients en ligne d'autre part. Gambetti et Graffini ont utilisé un concept de méthode qualitative basée sur trois phases de recherche analysant les motivations et la

stratégie du management de l'entreprise, l'analyse sémiotique du site Web et les témoignages recueillis auprès des clients. Les résultats révèlent un manque d'alignement entre la stratégie de communication de la marque et l'identité de la communauté. Ceci reflète donc une opportunité manquée d'utiliser les informations provenant des clients en ligne pour co-créeer de la valeur pour l'entreprise.

Cette thèse utilise un cadre similaire, mais inclut une phase supplémentaire d'analyse de documents d'entreprise. Elle est basée par ailleurs sur un plus grand nombre d'entretiens: 15 avec les dirigeants de l'entreprise et 50 avec les clients (contre seulement 3 et 15 respectivement dans l'étude de Gambetti et Graffigna). Notre approche consistant à recueillir plus de données renforce ainsi la validité de la recherche qualitative (figure I).

Figure I: La perspective interne de l'entreprise et la perspective externe du client



Une étude de cas est une «stratégie de recherche ou concept qui est utilisé pour étudier un ou plusieurs phénomènes sociaux particuliers afin de comprendre ou d'expliquer ces phénomènes en les plaçant dans un contexte plus général » (Kitay, Callus 1998, p. 103). L'utilisation d'une seule étude de cas peut être justifiée lorsque l'accès à des données similaires n'est pas possible ou critique pour tester la théorie faisant l'objet de la recherche (Yin, 2003). Le secteur de l'hôtellerie ne présente à notre connaissance aucun autre site de co-crédation dans lequel l'entreprise et ses clients communiquent et contribuent ensemble au contenu en ligne. La première partie de cette

recherche utilise des entretiens conduits avec des managers et directeurs marketing. La deuxième partie est fondée sur une analyse netnographique du site internet de l'entreprise.

Deux modèles ont été utilisés pour analyser et interpréter les données: le concept Service Dominant Logic (SD Logic) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2014) et la Topologie de la Valeur de Holbrook et Wooldside (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). Les résultats théoriques de cette thèse confirment l'efficacité de SD Logic, en particulier des principes de base 6, 7 et 8, comme modèle aidant les entreprises à créer de la valeur au sein de leur communauté en ligne. L'application de la Topologie de la Valeur de Holbrook & Woodside met clairement en évidence les avantages d'une approche expérientielle pour construire une communauté en ligne avec succès. En outre, les résultats suggèrent que c'est le contenu de nature hédoniste et sociale du site qui contribue le plus à la création de valeur au niveau de la communauté en ligne. L'ensemble de ces cadres aident ainsi l'entreprise à développer et mettre en œuvre une stratégie marketing permettant d'apporter une expérience en ligne interactive à ses clients et, par conséquent, améliorant l'image de la marque.

Les contributions mettent en évidence une interaction collaborative entre les clients et l'entreprise ayant pour effet une création de valeur à travers l'expérience marketing. La collaboration et l'apprentissage, conjointement, peuvent devenir des stratégies essentielles pour acquérir des connaissances dans un environnement digital complexe. Les résultats par rapport à la théorie *SD Logic* confirment l'idée que l'avantage concurrentiel d'une entreprise est lié à la mise à jour constante de ses caractéristiques technologiques.

## 8.2 Introduction

Au cours des dernières années, les progrès rapides de la technologie et l'omniprésence de la communication par Internet ont relancé la discussion sur la co-crédation de valeur entre les marques et leurs clients (Gensler, et al. 2013) ; dans ce contexte on assiste à un investissement croissant de la part des entreprises, en temps et en ressources, pour mesurer et comprendre le comportement en ligne de leurs clients.

L'objet de cette thèse est donc d'étudier comment les entreprises, à travers le cas de Fairmont Hotels and Resorts International (FRHI), développent des relations avec leurs clients dans cet environnement numérique grâce à la co-crédation de contenu en ligne.

Depuis 2010, le département marketing de FRHI a pris l'engagement stratégique de développer sa propre communauté en ligne et d'accroître la présence de la marque Fairmont sur les réseaux sociaux tels que Facebook, Twitter et Instagram.

Cherchant principalement à mieux communiquer et à interagir directement avec ses clients, la chaîne d'hôtels a donc créé le site Fairmont Moments (FM) afin d'encourager ses clients à partager leurs expériences en ligne et ainsi contribuer activement au développement du contenu du site. En aidant l'entreprise à échanger avec ses clients et à recueillir des informations sur ces



derniers, ce site permet à FHRI d'optimiser ses interactions avec les clients en ligne et, par conséquent, de mieux comprendre leur comportement – ceci en vue de créer à terme un cycle vertueux et d'apporter de la valeur de façon continue.

D'abord appelé Everybody's Original (EAO), ce site a été rebaptisé Fairmont Moments (FM) en 2010 afin de mieux refléter le concept de communauté en ligne. Avec la croissance du marketing numérique au cours de la dernière décennie, on a observé un changement spectaculaire dans la façon dont les entreprises et l'industrie communiquent avec leurs clients (Pew Research Center, 2016). Le développement et l'utilisation exponentielle des réseaux sociaux ont entraîné une forte augmentation des achats en ligne ; avec un nombre d'internautes estimé à 2,95 milliards d'ici 2020 au niveau mondial (Statista, 2017) cette tendance devrait continuer dans les années à venir.

Le but de cette étude est donc d'explorer, en examinant le cas du groupe du groupe FRHI et de son activité marketing en ligne, la façon dont les entreprises communiquent avec leurs clients à travers les expériences proposées sur leur site.

Les études précédentes menées sur l'expérience des clients en ligne suggèrent que la co-création est la solution qui permet à l'entreprise de développer une relation avec ses clients en ligne. La co-création est un processus de création qui a lieu à «l'intersection entre l'entreprise, le client et d'autres partenaires créateurs de valeur» (Lusch et al., 2007, p. 11) et le nombre croissant de recherches sur ce thème nous a déjà permis d'acquérir des connaissances conceptuelles et

empiriques (Gronroos, 2008 ; Prahalad, Ramaswamy, 2004 ; Vargo, Lusch, 2004; Yi, Gong, 2013).

Le terme de co-crédation est ddfini dans cette thèse comme un processus où les clients et les prestataires de service co-crédent la valeur conjointement (Zwass, 2010). D'autre part, toute rrférence à la co-crédation est intrinsèquement liée à la notion de «valeur» (Vargo, Lusch, 2004). L'idée est donc que des relations précieuses entre le client et la marque (Hajli et al., 2017) résultent d'une valeur continue dans le temps (« à vie ») pour les clients (Payne, Frow, 2005).

Selon des études antérieures, l'utilisation de contenu co-crédé pour développer des relations à long terme est plus efficace pour les produits ou services de prix élevé que pour les produits ou services peu chers et de nature transactionnelle (Moore et al., 2015). Dans le cas d'une marque de luxe comme FRHI, qui offre un service haut de gamme à un prix élevé, la stratégie marketing en ligne est précisément d'établir une relation de long terme avec le client.

Le fait que cette étude porte sur la marque de luxe globale Fairmont lui donne une perspective unique. Bien que le marché du luxe en général soit l'une des industries mondiales ayant la plus forte croissance, et bien que l'hôtellerie de luxe (9% du chiffre d'affaires de cette industrie) en soit elle-même l'un des secteurs les plus dynamiques (Bain & Co, 2014), il est en général difficile d'obtenir des données et informations stratégiques sur ces marques. La raison se trouve

dans leur engagement de confidentialité par rapport à leurs clients ainsi que dans leur volonté à ne pas divulguer d'intelligence sur leurs produits.

Plus précisément, il semble y avoir un manque de connaissance et d'expérience sur la façon d'interagir et de se connecter avec les clients en ligne dans le secteur de l'hôtellerie de luxe (Chu, Kamal, Kim, 2013). Le défi pour les équipes marketing et leurs managers est que la communication en ligne a fondamentalement changé les habitudes de consommation en impliquant davantage les clients (Gensler et al., 2013) et créant ainsi un lien direct et précieux entre la marque et l'expérience client (Ramaswamy, Ozcan, 2015). Il est donc maintenant essentiel pour une marque de mieux comprendre ses clients en ligne. Qu'ils partagent du contenu sur Facebook, donnent leur avis sur Tripadvisor ou postent des photos sur Instagram, ils sont devenus une cible primordiale de la communication marketing des entreprises.

Récemment les clients en ligne sont devenus plus proactifs et créatifs dans leur façon de créer et poster du contenu en ligne. Jusqu'à présent, les travaux académiques décrivant les habitudes de consommation en ligne ont porté principalement sur les communautés en ligne – soit l'ensemble des personnes actives sur le site d'une même marque (Holbrook, 1994; Sweeney, Soutar, 2001; Cova *et al.*, 2011) – ainsi que sur les clients de la marque. Cette analyse de l'activité en ligne a permis de faire la lumière sur le processus de co-création. Cependant, une grande partie de ces recherches s'est concentrée sur la capacité des clients à fournir des idées sur de nouveaux produits ou des suggestions d'utilisation. Du point de vue de l'entreprise, il reste beaucoup plus de choses à comprendre sur la co-création en ligne et sur les dimensions de la création de valeur

des individus et de leurs communautés en ligne. A ce jour, les recherches fondées sur des études de cas se plaçant du point de vue de la stratégie marketing de l'entreprise sont encore assez peu nombreuses.

Les marques disposant de budgets importants et de vrais programmes de fidélisation sont souvent favorables à l'idée d'adopter de nouveaux concepts pour renforcer leur engagement ou leur relation avec le client et augmenter ainsi leur avantage concurrentiel (Schultz, Block, 2011). Le défi pour les dirigeants et managers de l'entreprise cependant est d'appliquer ces méthodes de manière efficace, surtout lorsque la création de valeur est difficile (Schultz, 2007; Gambetti, Graffigna, 2015). En considérant à la fois la perspective des dirigeants de l'entreprise et l'expérience des clients, cette étude vise à apporter les éléments manquants pour mettre en pratique la théorie de la création de valeur (Schultz, 2007).

Cela nous amène à la première question de notre recherche : *Comment le marketing d'une entreprise influence-t-il la co-crétion en ligne d'une marque de chaîne hôtelière ?*

Se basant sur les études empiriques réalisées jusqu'à présent, les marques d'hôtels ont appliqué la théorie S-D Logic en tant que cadre de référence pour analyser des entretiens de managers (Petrick, Li, 2008; Shaw et al., 2011; Hayslip, Gallarza, Andreu, 2013; Andreu, Campo, Okazaki, 2011). Hayslip et al., 2013 ont quant à eux utilisé les prémisses fondamentaux de la théorie S-D Logic pour analyser les entretiens détaillés de directeurs d'hôtel afin d'examiner

l'impact de la théorie S-D Logic en tant que stratégie de management (Hayslip, Gallarza, Andreu, 2013). L'étude examine les acteurs de la théorie S-D Logic (les clients) en tant qu'éléments moteurs potentiels de la valeur. Les études de l'industrie hôtelière sont souvent axées sur le service et les interactions entre l'entreprise et le client (Van Raaij, 1986; Weirmeier, Masser, 1996). Le chercheur approuve cette idée et fait valoir que l'expérience de la communauté de clients crée une valeur marketing positive pour l'entreprise.

La théorie S-D Logic propose une approche écosystémique à ces systèmes de services en ligne (Spohrer, Maglio, 2010; Vargo, Lusch, 2011) et offre une meilleure compréhension de la co-création et des systèmes de valeur (Vargo, Akaka, 2012) ainsi que de l'impact de la co-création de valeur sur les actions et interactions des acteurs individuels (Vargo, Lusch, 2011; Ostrom, 2010). L'interaction des acteurs individuels (clients et fournisseurs) est en effet au cœur de la création de valeur (Vargo, Lusch, 2008; 2009) et de la fourniture de services (Ostrom, 2010). L'utilisation de la théorie S-D Logic à des fins marketing a été testée à maintes reprises pour explorer la co-création de valeur entre le client et l'entreprise (Arnould et al., 2006).

Au sein de la théorie S-D Logic on trouve des termes-clé de vocabulaire qui se réfèrent à différents rôles et ressources mentionnés à propos de l'entreprise ou du client. Le terme «ressources opérantes» se réfère à la connaissance ou aux compétences s'appliquant à l'entreprise ou au consommateur. Les ressources opérantes désignent des biens ou des éléments matériels comme la technologie (Vargo, Lusch, 2004). Les «acteurs» sont également une ressource utilisée pour parler des employés ou des clients engagés mutuellement dans une expérience de service.

Vargo et Lusch (2008; 2016) ont mis en évidence des axiomes et propositions dans le cadre de la théorie S-D Logic destinés à fournir des éléments de compréhension du consommateur. Les propositions et axiomes ont été progressivement modifiés et mis à jour. Cette présente recherche est fondée sur la base de la dernière modification en date (2016) (cf. tableau II).

**Tableau II:** Axiomes et propositions de la théorie Service Dominant Logic

Axiom1	FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.
	FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.
	FP3	Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision.
	FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit.
	FP5	All economies are service economies.
Axiom2	FP6	Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary.
	FP7	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions.
	FP8	A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.
Axiom3	FP9	All social and economic actors are resource integrators.
Axiom4	FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.
Axiom5	FP11	Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements.

Source : Vargo, Lush, 2016.

Dans la version de la théorie *S-D Logic* de 2008, Vargo et Lusch étendent le concept de valeur d'usage, et proposent une valeur de contexte afin de se pencher davantage sur la valeur des réseaux en ligne tels qu'ils sont définis dans la proposition n°10 (Vargo, Lusch, 2008c). La valeur de contexte comprend l'idée que l'interprétation d'une expérience par un client dépend du lot de produits/services liés au contexte dans lequel ils sont utilisés (Vargo, Lusch, 2008d). Les réseaux sociaux permettent à une entreprise de se connecter avec un grand volume de clients ou clients potentiels en ligne. L'importance de la gestion des technologies de l'information est adressée par Vargo, Lusch et Tanniru (2010, pp. 22-23) à travers la référence à l'importance des réseaux et des écosystèmes de service dans le contexte de l'internet et des réseaux sociaux numériques. Quand on parle de la co-crédation de valeur, la valeur de contexte représente une dimension importante de la théorie *S-D Logic* car elle encadre le service et les ressources d'un écosystème de service dans sa totalité. On peut noter que Vargo et Lusch ont fait évoluer le concept de valeur d'usage, plus orienté initialement vers l'approche *G-D Logic*, vers le concept de la «valeur de contexte», qui se rapproche plus de la théorie *S-D Logic* (Vargo, 2009; Vargo *et al.*, 2009) en référence aux réseaux et aux écosystèmes de services en ligne. Si une marque partage un contenu Facebook avec ses fans, et ces fans "partagent" à leur tour et "aiment" le contenu, cela peut être considéré comme un réseau d'acteurs qui interagissent et trouvent le contexte en ligne précieux, car ils co-crédent des échanges dans l'écosystème de la plateforme Facebook (Belk, 2009).

Lusch et Vargo (2006d) ont également indiqué que les déterminants fondamentaux ont besoin d'être encore plus finement définis. Le partage d'expérience dans le cadre de l'intégration en ligne d'un site web peut faire partie de ce travail d'approfondissement. Bien qu'il soit convenu que le service est l'essence de la création de valeur, il est nécessaire d'examiner l'applicabilité de la théorie *S-D Logic* dans le cas d'une expérience client en ligne. Ceci n'a pas été activement traité ou exploré dans la littérature portant sur la théorie *S-D Logic* à ce jour. Un exemple de partage d'expérience serait le cas de clients partageant leurs façons personnelles d'utiliser des applications avec d'autres clients dans les communautés en ligne.

Cela conduit à énoncer une deuxième question de la recherche : *Quelles sont les dimensions de valeur entre l'entreprise et les consommateurs au sein du site internet FM?*

Les chercheurs proposent l'intégration d'un autre modèle pour compléter la nature expérientielle de la valeur client au sein de la théorie *S-D Logic*. Vargo et Lusch (2006c) ont identifié que les travaux de Hirschman et Holbrook (1982) et de Holbrook (2006a ; 2006b) démontraient que les caractéristiques de valeur pouvaient résulter d'une variété d'expériences de consommation. L'expérience interactive d'Holbrook (2006a, 2006b) décrit la valeur d'un point de vue relativiste, ce qui correspond à la façon dont la valeur est comprise dans la théorie *S-D Logic*. Holbrook explique que la valeur peut être relative en fonction des contextes comparatifs, situationnels, ou personnels dans lesquels le consommateur se trouve lorsqu'il attribue une valeur à des biens ou services. Dans une étude réalisée par Pongsakornrungruip et Schroeder (2011), des communautés virtuelles de supporters de football ont utilisé à la fois la topologie de Holbrook et les



perspectives de *S-D Logic* pour comprendre les relations en ligne au sein des communautés de supporters (Pongsakornrungsilp, Schroeder, 2011).

On a trouvé que la topologie des valeurs de Holbrook fournissait un modèle approprié car elle inclut à la fois les dimensions de valeur intrinsèques et extrinsèques pour satisfaire l'expérience du consommateur en ligne (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). Dans ce cas, la valeur client est présentée comme un concept multidimensionnel, composé de quatre dimensions: la valeur fonctionnelle, la valeur émotionnelle, la valeur sociale et la valeur altruiste (Holbrook and Woodside, 2007). Ces quatre dimensions peuvent concerner les clients, puisqu'un individu peut éprouver de multiples dimensions de valeur au cours d'une seule expérience de consommation. Les individus recherchent des expériences satisfaisantes dérivées d'un ensemble d'activités. La valeur expérientielle en est ensuite elle-même dérivée. La valeur expérientielle est un aspect important des activités de marketing en ligne, car celles-ci ont une forte probabilité d'être poursuivies. Ces dimensions de valeur ont été conceptualisées et testées au niveau de la pratique du marketing, mais il n'y a pas, par contre, de résultats empiriques sur les dimensions de valeur concernant le marketing des réseaux sociaux.

La topologie de la valeur de Holbrook affine les dimensions de valeur utilisées dans la théorie *S-D Logic*, et comme Grönroos (2006) le souligne, il est nécessaire de considérer les clients comme des créateurs de valeur dans le processus de création de valeur. Dans une étude antérieure, il fait même valoir que les clients peuvent être les "seuls créateurs de valeur" (Grönroos, 2006, p. 324). En d'autres termes, alors que les entreprises peuvent être activement

impliquées dans les processus de création de valeur et peuvent aussi créer de la valeur pour les clients, les clients sont également en mesure de créer de la valeur pour eux-mêmes, notamment, en lançant le développement de nouvelles ressources (Grönroos, 2009). Ce point de vue est également soutenu par Baron et Harris (2008), qui soulignent que les consommateurs peuvent être des intégrateurs de ressources par le biais de la consommation et de la co-consommation. La relation service-pour-service dans la théorie *S-D Logic* doit ainsi reconnaître les rôles d'initiateurs et de participants mutuels que jouent les clients dans le processus de création de valeur. Cette idée est partagée par Grönroos (2006). De ce point de vue, la proposition n°7 stipule que «les acteurs ne peuvent pas apporter de la valeur, mais peuvent participer à la création et à l'offre de propositions de valeur.»

D'autres avis sur la valeur client émanent des études menées par Hirshman et Holbrook (1982) et plus tard par Holbrook (1994) différencient les individus en fonction de leurs motifs de consommation. Hirschman et Holbrook (1982) décrivent les consommateurs comme soit des solutionneurs de problèmes, soit des individus en quête de plaisir et de divertissement, et se réfèrent donc à une consommation utilitaire ou hédoniste. Le concept hédoniste met l'accent sur l'importance d'avoir une expérience amusante ou agréable, par opposition à une démarche de poursuite d'un objectif utilitaire. Holbrook (1994) décrit en outre que les expériences de consommation impliquent très probablement plus d'un type de valeur à la fois (Holbrook, 1994).

Dans des études précédentes analysant la valeur client en ligne, Healy et McDonagh (2013) utilisent le travail de Holbrook et Hirschman (1982) portant sur les possibilités de co-créeer en

ligne en collaboration avec les fans à travers des expériences reflétant leurs préférences (Healy, McDonagh, 2013). La nature expérientielle de la communication en ligne suggère que les valeurs hédonistes et sociales sont importantes pour apprécier les activités en ligne. La perspective du client par rapport à l'évaluation de la co-création de valeur en ligne est donc différente de celle de l'entreprise, et la nécessité de disposer d'un autre modèle pour générer la co-création de valeur est donc claire.

Historiquement, la recherche menée du point de vue de la perspective de l'entreprise a utilisé une approche économique (Payne, Holt, 1999) qui étudie l'expérience de consommation du client, et où l'on considère que l'échange de services inclut les étapes antérieures et postérieures à la consommation (Russell-Bennett, Previte, Zainuddin, 2009). En revanche, l'utilisation par cette étude d'une approche expérientielle identifie la valeur qui existe dans le site actuel et actif d'une marque de chaîne d'hôtels. Quatre dimensions de valeur ont été identifiées et étudiées dans la recherche déjà réalisée sur le marketing social (Holbrook, 2006 ; 1994): les valeurs hédoniste, sociale, économique et altruiste.

L'intégration de la théorie *S-D Logic* et des dimensions de la valeur n'a pas encore été utilisée dans les études de cas. L'utilisation des deux concepts améliore la compréhension de la valeur et des relations entre le consommateur et la marque dans le secteur de l'hôtellerie. Les dimensions de valeur de la topologie de Holbrook complètent le modèle de valeur fondé sur la théorie *S-D Logic*, qui n'inclut pas les dimensions intrinsèques et extrinsèques de la valeur expérientielle.

Cette recherche porte sur le site internet créé et géré par une marque d'hôtel, plus particulièrement une chaîne internationale d'hôtels de luxe. Les principaux consommateurs ciblés sont les personnes partageant des photos, des vidéos et du contenu écrit en se connectant sur le site ou *via* Facebook, Twitter, Instagram et Youtube. Cette communauté de marque est principalement constituée de clients nord-américains, du fait que 43 des 81 hôtels du groupe FRHI sont situés en Amérique du Nord. Seuls les résidents nord-américains peuvent participer aux concours en ligne. Ce site de communauté, co-créé et unique, est bien établi auprès des clients et le contenu est produit depuis 2010. Le choix d'une marque d'hôtels de luxe est basé sur l'importance d'avoir un lien étroit entre l'entreprise et le client dans un but marketing (Kapferer, 2012). Pour qu'un hôtel au Canada soit appelé hôtel «de luxe», il doit avoir 4 ou 5 étoiles selon le système de classement canadien (Canada Select, 2016).

Cette étude cherche donc à expliquer comment la théorie *S-D Logic* peut être utilisée pour bénéficier à l'interaction collaborative entre les consommateurs et les acteurs de la marque. La collaboration et l'apprentissage entre l'entreprise et le client peuvent devenir des stratégies essentielles pour développer les connaissances dans un environnement digital complexe. Les résultats par rapport à la théorie *S-D Logic* confirment que l'avantage concurrentiel d'une entreprise dépend de la mise à jour permanente de ses compétences technologiques. Les lacunes au niveau de la théorie ont justifié l'utilisation conjointe des concepts de la théorie *S-D Logic* et de la topologie de la valeur de Holbrook, en particulier dans les environnements en ligne ne permettant pas à la théorie *S-D Logic* d'identifier la nature expérientielle de la valeur client en

ligne. L'utilisation conjointe de la théorie *S-D Logic* et de la topologie de la valeur d'Holbrook, fournit une meilleure compréhension de la co-crédation de valeur dans un environnement en ligne. La nature complémentaire de la topologie de Holbrook offre un cadre plus concret pour rendre compte de la nature expérientielle des messages sociaux et hédonistes du client en ligne.

Cette thèse se compose de quatre chapitres. L'introduction est suivie par un chapitre qui présente une revue des études existantes concernant le marketing relationnel, le marketing du luxe, les communautés en ligne, la théorie *S-D Logic*, la valeur client ainsi que des données sur l'industrie du tourisme.

Le deuxième chapitre décrit l'approche méthodologique et examine les questions de la recherche. Ce chapitre décrit les lacunes des travaux précédents et les méthodes nécessaires pour répondre aux deux questions de la recherche. Ce chapitre justifie l'utilisation d'une approche à méthodes multiples basée sur une seule étude de cas, en utilisant des méthodes de recherche qualitative. Les procédures de recherche pour les différents types d'analyse de contenu en ligne – netnographie, entretiens semi-structurés, et stratégie de l'entreprise - sont présentées et discutées en détail. Le chapitre se termine par l'exploration des considérations éthiques de cette recherche.

Le troisième chapitre contient les résultats de la recherche où les deux questions étudiées sont analysées en utilisant la théorie *S-D Logic* et la topologie de valeur de Holbrook. Les entretiens individuels semi-structurés et les documents de stratégie d'entreprise sont expliqués en utilisant

la théorie *S-D Logic*. Cela se poursuit par les contributions d'une communauté en ligne collective analysées à l'aide de la topologie de Holbrook, avec une analyse détaillée de 25 commentaires postés sur le site.

Le quatrième chapitre discute les résultats au regard de la littérature, et se concentre principalement sur l'étude dans son ensemble ainsi que sur les contributions faites par les managers de l'entreprise. Cette partie inclut également des informations montrant l'intégration dans la littérature de la théorie *S-D Logic* et de la topologie de valeur de Holbrook. Des suggestions de managers et des exemples tirés de notre étude de cas sont présentés pour souligner les opportunités réelles pour les marques de chaînes d'hôtel. Ce chapitre se termine par une discussion sur les limites et l'avenir des suggestions issues de la recherche.

## 8.3 Conclusion

### **8.3.1 L'utilisation des médias sociaux par les consommateurs de luxe au sein de la communauté FM**

Le marketing et la publicité des hôtels de luxe sont fondés sur une expérience émotionnelle développée par les marketeurs, ayant pour objet de conduire les consommateurs vers une expérience multi-sensorielle mémorable (Brun and Castelli, 2013; Vukadin et al. 2016). La clientèle d'hôtels de luxe dans cette étude était concentrée sur la recherche des photos de vacances en ligne les plus visualisées et sur la collecte d'idées dans le cadre de l'organisation d'un voyage. Ces clients ont recherché du contenu spécifique à l'hôtel qu'ils visiteront ou qu'ils ont visité afin de recueillir des informations sur l'établissement ou une recette d'un chef d'un hôtel-restaurants spécifique. Le site internet de FM a été conçu comme un entrepôt de contenu de valeur à destination des clients qui connaissent bien la communauté en ligne. Les communautés de clientèle de luxe en ligne sont liées à la recherche d'expériences associées à l'émotion (Chaudhuri, 2002). Concernant la clientèle luxe en ligne, l'expérience du consommateur fondée sur la recherche du plaisir, du ludique et de caractéristiques sociales particulières, pousse celui-ci vers des solutions prônant l'amusement ou le divertissement (Holbrook, Hirschman, 1982; Brun, Castelli, 2013). Cette étude souligne à nouveau l'importance de l'usage d'une topologie à multiples facettes centrée sur la valeur éprouvée par le consommateur au sein d'un environnement en ligne. Dans ce site internet de marque d'hôtels de luxe, les consommateurs cherchent souvent de nouvelles sensations et expériences (Sanguanpiyan, Jasper, 2010). Fournir une expérience en ligne unique constitue un défi permanent pour les marques de luxe.

Les données démographiques d'âge dans cette étude ont montré que les utilisateurs les plus actifs sont les individus les plus jeunes. Dans la même étude réalisée par Pew Research Group, il a été signalé que les jeunes adultes continuent de déclarer utiliser Facebook à des taux élevés (Pew Research Group, 2016). Afin de se connecter à des publics de tous âges, la marque d'hôtel doit trouver la meilleure stratégie pour se connecter avec l'utilisateur en ligne. Les personnes qui utilisaient le site internet de FM pour publier du contenu se trouvaient très probablement dans la tranche démographique 20-30 ans. Le concours proposé par la marque permettant de gagner des nuitées a constitué une incitation précieuse pour ce groupe d'âge de 20 à 30 ans afin que ces derniers via les médias sociaux, accèdent au site de FM. Si ce jeune consommateur ne constitue pas pour le moment un consommateur de luxe au regard de son niveau de revenus ou des statistiques de séjours d'hôtel fréquents au Fairmont, il peut s'avérer être un client futur. Ce consommateur est généralement éduqué dans une université, avec un diplôme d'études supérieures et possède une trajectoire de revenu qui le placera dans le revenu élevé au cours des dix prochaines années. Si la marque Fairmont construit une relation en ligne tôt, ce futur consommateur de luxe peut potentiellement développer une relation forte avec la marque, ce qui se traduira par des séjours d'hôtels plus fréquent dans le futur. Du point de vue de l'entreprise, le but de ce site FM n'est pas de gagner des réservations. Il constitue un moyen social et amusant de s'engager avec la marque, où les relations peuvent être construites de façon informelle entre la marque et le consommateur. Ce site internet est utilisé efficacement, car la marque essaie d'atteindre de nouveaux publics grâce à des médias sociaux, sachant que les strates les plus jeunes sont susceptibles de participer à des concours sur les sites de réseaux sociaux numériques.



Les marques ont besoin de changer leur stratégie d'utilisation des médias sociaux afin de communiquer efficacement avec les utilisateurs en ligne.

Les changements nécessaires pour «parler» aux utilisateurs créent des avantages pour les marques (Yannopoulou et al., 2013), en particulier les marques d'hôtels en ligne. L'intérêt des organisations pour l'engagement des consommateurs augmente avec les développements des technologies récentes. À cet égard, Berthon et al. (2012) ont exploré le rôle du réseautage en ligne concernant l'autonomisation et les capacités créatives développées par les consommateurs. Le Web 2.0 est la force motrice permettant ces nouvelles opportunités de développement et d'engagement. Ce concept a également fait évoluer l'utilisation de l'Internet d'une pratique traditionnelle à une mobilisation plus innovante et impliquée. Ceci est rendu possible en modifiant la présentation statique en un contenu mis à jour en permanence par les groupes et les communautés d'utilisateurs. Kaplan et Haenlein (2010) ont également souligné le potentiel du développement Web 2.0, notamment avec la capacité des utilisateurs à créer du contenu généré par d'autres utilisateurs formant ainsi un environnement collaboratif et participatif.

### **8.3.2 Lien entre la théorie marketing – le concept SD Logic appliqué au cas d'étude du site FM – et les propositions de valeur de Fairmont à ses clients**

Les résultats de cette étude suggèrent qu'il y a trois façons possibles de développer des propositions de valeur réciproque. La première consiste à comprendre comment les propositions de valeur existantes pourraient mieux représenter, à travers les expériences client qu'elles

évoquent, les attentes des clients. Par exemple, l'équipe marketing de l'entreprise pourrait créer un forfait familial «week-end» (proposition de valeur) répondant aux besoins de tous les membres d'une famille d'un profil socio-économique donné. Un autre exemple pourrait être de la création d'un forfait spa «Récupérer après une semaine de travail» proposant un programme aidant les habitants des grandes villes à se ressourcer et se détendre après une semaine stressante au travail.

La deuxième approche consiste à utiliser des aspirations culturelles et des projets d'identité correspondants comme point de départ des propositions de valeur. Par exemple, un cadre marketing en charge du segment « familles » pourrait concevoir des propositions de valeur qui aident les parents à être de « bons parents », de façon plus efficace que les propositions de valeur actuelles. Cela signifierait d'abord identifier les bonnes pratiques parentales (passer du temps qualitatif avec leurs enfants, manger sainement, etc.) considérées les plus importantes par les parents. Des propositions de valeur telles que des séjours offrant une cuisine et des produits de qualité pourraient ensuite être conçus par l'équipe marketing de l'hôtel ; cela pourrait inclure la valorisation de produits tels que des herbes aromatiques poussant sur le toit ou le miel des producteurs locaux.

La troisième approche est d'identifier, pour différents segments de marché, de nouvelles pratiques de consommation, et de les intégrer dans les offres actuelles pour améliorer le processus de co-création de valeur. Un fleuriste, par exemple, pourrait voir les salles de banquets d'un hôtel comme un espace potentiel pour organiser des événements telles que des réunions ou

des conférences. Indépendamment de l'approche choisie, les professionnels du marketing doivent identifier comment aider leurs clients à retirer une valeur plus concrète de leur expérience et de leur interaction avec l'hôtel. Cela signifie d'abord comprendre quel type de valeur les clients recherchent et ce qui les empêche de l'obtenir dans l'état actuel des choses. Ceci nécessite ensuite de planifier le type de ressources à intégrer de façon à produire le plus de valeur pour les clients. Ce processus de planification permet de préserver les deux autres dimensions de la valeur (valeur d'échange et valeur d'expérience). McCracken (2005) suggère de considérer le marketing comme la discipline consistant à «gérer le sens des choses» (p.175). Une communication marketing efficace est en effet basée sur des significations ou des contradictions culturelles. Dans le cas d'un hôtel international comme Fairmont, cela pourrait être tout simplement la célébration des fêtes locales ou traditionnelles. Cette étude ajoute cependant une dimension pratique de gestion de ressources à cet aspect gestion de la signification : elle propose que les professionnels du marketing prennent en compte les ressources disponibles de l'entreprise lors de leur planification d'initiatives intégrant les aspirations et besoins culturels des clients. Ceci signifie une coopération du service marketing avec un réseau de partenaires (entreprises ou marques) externes qui pourraient également bénéficier et concevoir des propositions de valeur plus ciblées sur les besoins des clients : par exemple les marques de Spa Willow Stream, les restaurants Nobu ou les marques de sport Reebok.

Le concept d'une proposition de valeur reflétant spécifiquement les pratiques communautaires en ligne s'inscrit bien la théorie marketing, en particulier le concept de SD Logic. Premièrement,

cette étude affine la compréhension des aspects démographiques et situationnels des propositions de valeur ainsi que la compréhension des concepts de création de valeur de contexte et de co-création de valeur réciproque. Elle lie les avantages et les inconvénients des propositions de valeur aux pratiques des clients en essayant de valoriser au mieux les ressources disponibles à travers les offres. Par conséquent, cette étude établit un lien étroit entre les propositions de valeur et le contexte de vie réelle des clients en proposant des expériences qui répondent le mieux possible aux attentes concrètes et aux pratiques des clients de Fairmont. Du point de vue des clients, cette étude développe les propositions de valeur comme des propositions d'entreprise intégrant la valeur de l'expérience, la valeur d'échange et les ressources disponibles. Le groupe des 20-30 ans semblant être le groupe le plus actif et le plus enclin à communiquer en ligne, les offres ciblent cette tranche d'âge en priorité.

Deuxièmement, cette étude respecte les travaux de Venkatesh et al. (2006) et la théorie SD Logic (Vargo et Lusch, 2008) en reconnaissant la valeur d'expérience et la valeur d'échange active comme les critères de décision des clients par rapport aux propositions de valeur. Elle prend donc en compte le concept de valeur client dans son intégralité. Cette étude dépasse donc le débat théorique opposant la valeur d'échange (basée sur les biens) et la valeur de contexte ou la valeur d'usage (basée sur le service) pour donner priorité au sens même de la valeur. Elle va au-delà du modèle théorique actuel (Kowalkowski, 2011) distinguant la valeur d'échange et la valeur d'usage, cette dernière résultant de l'influence des circonstances – aussi bien d'un point de vue entreprise que client- sur la valeur de l'échange.

Troisièmement, cette recherche souligne l'importance des pratiques des clients au niveau de l'intégration des ressources. Le personnel de l'entreprise, par le biais des médias sociaux, informe les clients sur la signification réelle et les bénéfices spécifiques des propositions de valeur, les guidant ainsi à planifier leur voyage et aidant d'autre part l'hôtel Fairmont dans ses décisions d'intégration des ressources. Dans cette étude, les équipes marketing/communication identifient, à travers les habitudes et les pratiques des clients, les compétences et les connaissances nécessaires pour choisir les propositions de valeur les plus attractives pour les clients et les plus bénéfiques pour la marque ; ces informations permettent à l'hôtel d'affiner sa stratégie marketing. Par exemple, si on constate que les offres/forfaits « famille » sont très demandées, la démarche est de proposer également une crèche, un restaurant familial et une piscine avec du personnel pour s'occuper des enfants. En identifiant les achats et les besoins des clients par le biais des médias sociaux en ligne, les différents acteurs (en particulier le personnel de l'hôtel), en tant que bénéficiaires potentiels, vont être plus disposés à recruter ou former du personnel pour adapter les prestations en conséquence. Du point de vue de la co-création de valeur, cette étude développe donc des propositions de valeur qui sont aussi des vecteurs de valeur réciproque, de valeur de contexte, de valeur d'expérience, de valeur d'échange et d'intégration de ressources. Ces domaines de création de valeur offrent ainsi à l'entreprise un outil conceptuel pour créer des propositions de valeur plus efficaces, c'est-à-dire des propositions qui inspirent et répondent mieux aux attentes des clients.

Enfin, cette étude souligne l'importance des clients dans la co-création de valeur. Ce sont les clients qui acceptent et utilisent les propositions de valeur pour leurs propres besoins et

indépendamment de l'entreprise qui les communique. La valeur est créée par les clients pour les clients (Heinonen et al., 2010). Vargo et Lusch (2008) suggèrent que la valeur devient co-créée lorsque les clients utilisent les services offerts. Cette étude adopte une perspective plus étroite que celle de Vargo et Lusch (2008) sur la co-création de valeur. Cette analyse suggère en effet que la valeur ne devient co-créée que lorsque les expériences culturelles proposées aux clients intègrent les services offerts par les entreprises avec leurs autres compétences et atouts – ce n'est que dans ce cas, par conséquent, qu'ils peuvent apprécier la valeur. La valeur de l'expérience en ligne ne peut en effet être appréciée par les clients qu'au travers d'expériences spécifiques et pertinentes. Les clients décident eux-mêmes de ce qui est important pour eux, quelque soient les objectifs de la marque.

### **8.3.3 Participation active et passive des clients - Processus d'échange**

Ce travail confirme également l'hypothèse que le client doit participer au processus de co-création de la valeur avec la société. Comme le mentionnent certains des entretiens avec les clients, ce sont leurs enfants, et pas eux-mêmes, qui postent des commentaires sur les réseaux sociaux. Le potentiel de valeur du site FM, procuré par du contenu amusant ou des prix à gagner, tel que des concours, ne devient réel que suite à une participation du client. Cela souligne que l'entreprise ne peut qu'encourager les clients à participer en leur donnant de bonnes raisons de le faire, elle ne peut pas faire plus.

Dans un des entretiens, la personne interviewée dit qu'elle ne poste pas de photos ; c'est un cas où le client est passif et se contente d'évaluer (c'est-à-dire de lui attribuer une valeur potentielle) la proposition de valeur. Cependant, sa fille, elle, participe activement en postant des photos pour participer aux concours de photos sur le site FM. C'est donc, dans ce cas, la participation active du client à travers l'expérience du concours photo qui permet de percevoir la valeur (Lusch, Vargo, 2006).

Cette participation du client est définie comme le niveau d'effort et d'implication du client, intellectuel ou physique, lié à la production et à la prestation d'un service (Chan et al., 2010). La participation des clients utilise leurs capacités techniques (par exemple pour comprendre et réaliser la tâche à effectuer) et leurs compétences fonctionnelles (interactionnelles), y compris les aspects interpersonnels comme la convivialité et le respect (Ennew, Binks, 1999).

Cela suggère qu'encourager la création de valeur dépend de la volonté de participation des clients. Si la valeur en ligne proposée à travers des concours, offres spéciales ou promotions ne se traduit pas par une réponse des clients sous la forme de leur participation ou même de leur simple lecture du contenu, cela signifie que la proposition n'est pas pertinente pour les clients et ne les encouragera donc à participer en aucune façon. Si le marketing de l'entreprise n'est pas ciblé en fonction des critères démographiques, dans ce cas les utilisateurs du site FM âgés de 20 à 30 ou 30 à 40 ans, alors celle-ci ne parviendra pas à motiver ses clients à visiter son site, à lire son contenu ou à participer aux concours qu'il propose. L'échange de valeur est un élément clé

de la production de valeur et doit donc être examiné avec beaucoup d'attention par l'équipe de direction.

#### **8.3.4 Les concepts marketing : SD Logic et la théorie de la dimension de valeur de Holbrook dans la co-crédation de valeur**

Les résultats thédoriques suggèrent d'étendre les propositions de base P6, P7 et P8 de SD Logic concernant la création de valeur. L'intégration de la théorie de la topologie de la valeur de Holbrook met l'accent sur la nécessité d'une approche en ligne basée sur l'expérience, se concentrant plus particulièrement sur la valeur hédoniste et sociale à la fois pour l'entreprise et pour les clients. Les contributions de l'équipe dirigeante encouragent le marketing en ligne sous la forme d'une interaction dynamique et créatrice de valeur et par le biais d'un site au contenu de nature sociale et hédoniste. Ce contenu peut se présenter sous différentes formes : invitations à participer à des concours, valeur réciproque (remerciant les clients), valeur de contenu (publication de recettes), et valeur d'échange (clics « partage » et « j'aime » des clients sur les réseaux sociaux numériques). La valeur réciproque mentionnée ci-dessus est liée à la notion de valeur unique exprimée dans la proposition P8 de la théorie SD Logic ; c'est aussi une proposition de valeur destinée à favoriser l'interaction entre le client et l'entreprise. Grâce à la collaboration et à l'échange de connaissances entre les clients et l'entreprise, ces deux partis peuvent ainsi devenir des éléments stratégiques du développement des connaissances dans un environnement numérique complexe. Dans le cas du contenu co-crédé par l'action de « partager » or « d'aimer » des photos sur les réseaux sociaux, la création de valeur provient, selon la proposition fondamentale P6 de SD Logic, de l'échange en ligne entre les clients eux-mêmes ou



entre le client et l'entreprise. Ce besoin de comprendre la valeur par le contenu de nature sociale ou hédoniste vient du fait que les dimensions de Holbrook donnent une compréhension plus profonde des principes de base de la valeur co-créée. Dans P7, qui porte sur la valeur de la proposition, on attend que l'entreprise communique à travers des dialogues ou des photos, en proposant un concours ou une raison de poster du contenu sur les réseaux sociaux ou sur le site. La valeur échangée entre le client et l'entreprise permet ainsi une réalisation de la valeur, à travers des propositions de nature sociale et hédoniste (concours de photos). Ces différents concepts permettent à la chaîne d'hôtels Fairmont de créer une stratégie marketing axée sur une plus forte image de marque et sur le développement d'une expérience en ligne interactive pour ses clients.

Les résultats présentés dans ce rapport soutiennent le fait que l'intégration de la théorie SD Logic et de la topologie de Holbrook fournit un modèle potentiel de management d'un site marketing global d'entreprise. Toutefois, cette étude montre également que l'impact dépend de la volonté du département marketing à mettre en œuvre et intégrer ces deux concepts. La stratégie marketing doit être mise en place tant au niveau de l'entreprise en général qu'au niveau des hôtels individuels. Cela implique une formation du personnel, la budgétisation des ressources et un engagement à intégrer les pratiques marketing suggérées dans ce rapport.

Cette étude de cas démontre comment la topologie de valeur de Holbrook peut être utilisée pour catégoriser le contenu en ligne afin d'identifier les éléments du site qui apportent le plus de valeur aux clients. Elle fournit donc aux professionnels du marketing un outil pratique. Il est en

effet impératif que ceux-ci comprennent mieux la réaction des clients au contenu du site. Le fait qu'ils cliquent «partage» et «j'aime», par exemple, est une façon concrète de mesurer leur niveau d'appréciation des différents types de contenu. Si la majorité de leurs actions concernent principalement du contenu de nature hédoniste ou sociale, le département marketing en déduira par exemple que les clients aimeraient voir plus de contenu de ce type sur le site.

En résumé, la collaboration et l'apprentissage entre l'entreprise et le client peuvent devenir des stratégies-clé pour le développement des connaissances dans un environnement numérique complexe. Les conclusions relatives à SD Logic confirment l'idée que l'avantage concurrentiel d'une entreprise dépend de la constante mise à jour de ses compétences technologiques. Les lacunes de la théorie soutiennent d'autre part le besoin d'utiliser SD Logic conjointement avec la topologie des valeurs de Holbrook, en particulier dans le cas des sites pour lesquels le concept SD Logic seul ne suffit pas à prendre la compte l'aspect expérientiel de la valeur. L'utilisation de SD Logic et de la topologie des valeurs de Holbrook permet en effet de mieux comprendre le processus de co-création de valeur dans un environnement en ligne. L'approche de la topologie de Holbrook fournit un cadre complémentaire permettant de refléter la nature expérientielle des messages sociaux et hédonistes postés par les clients en ligne.

Dans la version 2007 de la théorie de Holbrook et Woodside, la dimension de la valeur a été ramenée de huit à quatre catégories afin de rendre l'application de la topologie plus pratique. Le modèle de Holbrook a en effet été critiqué dans le passé par les chercheurs universitaires qui l'ont qualifié d'inapplicable et trop théorique du fait précisément de son nombre trop élevé de

catégories de dimensions de valeur (Babin, Kim, 2001; Gallarza, Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Sanchez-Fernandez, Iniesta-Bonillo, 2006; LeroiWerelds *et al.*, 2014). La version à quatre catégories a donc été retenue car plus facile à utiliser par les professionnels du marketing et prenant mieux en compte la nature expérientielle de la valeur en ligne.

Les quatre dimensions sont les suivantes : valeur économique (centrée sur soi), la valeur hédoniste (centrée sur soi), la valeur sociale (centrée sur les autres), et la valeur altruiste (centrée sur les autres). L'utilisation de cette version réduite de la topologie est très importante pour l'étude du contenu en ligne des consommateurs.

Cette deuxième question de recherche étudie le contenu netnographique du site FM en utilisant le concept de la topologie de la valeur de Holbrook, et les résultats montrent l'importance du contenu hédoniste et social. Il apparaît aussi que les clients ainsi que les hôtels postent un grand nombre de photos et de commentaires liés aux aspects « centré sur soi » et « centré sur les autres » de la valeur. Selon Holbrook, les quatre catégories de dimension de valeur ne sont pas mutuellement exclusives, ce qui signifie que certaines photos ou commentaires peuvent inclure plus d'une catégorie (Holbrook, 2006a). Cela confirme que la notion de consommation hédoniste se retrouve bien au niveau du contenu en ligne et peut être définie comme "les aspects du comportement des consommateurs qui se rapportent à la nature multi-sensorielle, imaginaire, et émotionnelle d'une de ses expériences des produits" (Hirschman, Holbrook, 1982).

Les caractéristiques hédonistes, ludiques et sociales de l'expérience en ligne motivent le client et source de satisfaction et de plaisir (Holbrook, Hirschman, 1982; Babin *et al.*, 1994). Le marketing et la publicité des boutiques et des hôtels de luxe sont en général basés sur les émotions et s'efforcent de donner une expérience multi-sensorielle mémorable au client (Anido Freire, 2010b). Les communautés en ligne dans le secteur du luxe sont elles aussi associées à la recherche d'expériences de nature émotionnelle (Chaudhuri, 2002). Cependant, il existe peu d'études portant sur les communautés en ligne et les canaux de distribution dans le secteur du luxe (Sanguanpiyan, Jasper, 2010). Cette étude renforce l'importance d'utiliser une topologie à plusieurs dimensions mettant l'accent sur la valeur client au sein de l'environnement en ligne. Dans le cas de ce site d'hôtel de luxe, on observe que les clients sont souvent à la recherche de nouvelles sensations et expériences (Boutaud, 2007; Ladwein, 2002). Apporter une expérience en ligne unique aux clients est donc un défi pour la marque Fairmont.

### **8.3.5 Développement de l'approche théorique - Étude de cas et sources multiples**

Les quatre phases utilisées dans cette étude s'appuient sur la théorie de la recherche qualitative à phases multiples. Chacune de ces phases pourrait être utilisée comme une analyse à part entière ou comme une partie d'une étude de cas plus complète. Dans les phases analysant la motivation des dirigeants, la sémiotique du site, et les informations clients et les documents de la recherche, on constate que les contributions faites à la fois par les clients et par les entreprises sont très importantes pour le succès d'un programme marketing (Gambetti, Graffigna, 2014).

Dans cette thèse, l'utilisation du modèle à phases multiples utilisé par Gambetti et Graffigna (2014) a permis d'inclure un plus grand nombre d'entretiens, documents et données et, grâce au concept de réplique, de renforcer ainsi la validité des résultats qualitatifs. Selon Brodie et de Chernatony (2009), l'analyse de la co-création de valeur, en se concentrant sur l'interface entre la théorie et la pratique, peut aider les équipes marketing à développer une stratégie plus appropriée. Ce travail confirme cette idée en montrant que la combinaison de phases internes et externes permet d'élaborer une stratégie marketing plus adaptée aux clients en ligne ciblés par l'entreprise.

On pourrait aussi penser que l'échantillonnage 'boule de neige' est une technique de recherche susceptible d'être biaisée, puisqu'elle est basée sur le fait qu'une personne interrogée suggère à son tour d'autres individus à interroger (Van Meter, 1990 ; Kaplan et al., 1987). Ce travail confirme cependant que cette technique est tout d'abord un moyen de se connecter avec des clients en ligne qui peuvent être difficiles à atteindre. D'autre part, l'utilisation en parallèle d'échantillons « boule de neige » et d'autres méthodes de recherche comme la netnographie et les entretiens semi-structurés avec des membres de la communauté en ligne et du personnel de l'entreprise atténue le risque associé à l'usage seul de cette technique « boule de neige ». Cette étude confirme donc que les méthodes et concepts basés sur plusieurs phases de recherche rendent la méthodologie de recherche utilisée plus solide et pertinente.

### 8.3.6 Implications Pour Le Management

Ce document appuie l'utilisation conjointe de la théorie *S-D Logic* et de la Topologie de Holbrook comme solution de management intégré d'un site marketing. Ces deux modèles peuvent changer la façon dont l'entreprise gère son site dans son ensemble. Cependant les effets observés dans l'étude de cas peuvent varier en fonction du niveau d'engagement du département marketing à intégrer le site et à appliquer ce nouveau concept. Pour mieux fonctionner, l'application est développée à la fois au sein du département marketing de l'entreprise et au sein de chacun des hôtels. Cette contrainte nécessite d'inclure la formation du personnel, la budgétisation des ressources, et un engagement à intégrer les pratiques de marketing proposées dans cette étude.

Cette étude de cas montre comment la topologie de la valeur de Holbrook peut servir à classer le contenu digital afin de comprendre ce que le client en ligne apprécie et trouve important. Suite à cette l'étude, les départements marketing disposent maintenant d'un système de catégorisation pour aider leurs équipes à identifier les messages de création de valeur. Il est impératif que les employés comprennent quel type de contenu les clients postent. Le nombre de «partage» et «j'aime» des messages est une mesure importante, qui montre ce que les clients apprécient particulièrement dans le contenu. Si la majorité des commentaires « partagés » ou « aimés » par les clients sont de nature hédoniste ou sociale, le département marketing saura alors que le client souhaite voir davantage de contenus de ce type.

Le succès de tout nouveau système de marketing en ligne repose sur la formation et l'engagement des employés du marketing. Les départements marketing de chaque hôtel devraient donc avoir des

programmes de formation spécifiques aux réseaux sociaux numériques pour mieux maîtriser l'intégration des topologies de valeur client dans les plateformes de réseaux sociaux. Instagram est la plateforme idéale pour les commentaires à valeur sociale et hédoniste basés sur des photos, alors que Twitter et Facebook devraient être utilisés pour poster des commentaires de valeur économique et altruiste tels que des rappels de vacances qui approchent, des informations sur les promotions spéciales et des programmes divers. L'entreprise est aujourd'hui contrainte de gérer une pluralité de plateformes de la meilleure façon pour communiquer efficacement avec le client en ligne. Le contenu en ligne est vu, partagé, aimé et commenté par le client lorsque celui-ci le trouve intéressant. Les anecdotes sur l'histoire de Fairmont, les programmes « Canine Ambassador » ou « Rooftop Bees », ou encore le partenariat Fairmont Fit avec Reebok sont des initiatives de la marque qui donnent envie aux clients de partager, d'aimer et de commenter.

Un autre facteur important qui influence le marketing en ligne est le nombre croissant de smartphones, tablettes et divers appareils de type androïde. Très simples à utiliser, ils permettent de poster facilement et rapidement une appréciation et de partager des photos. Les progrès technologiques comme Facebook Connect ou Instagram permettent, au moyen d'un seul commentaire, de créer plusieurs annonces sur différentes plateformes de réseaux sociaux. Cet environnement technologique en évolution permanente exige que l'entreprise soit toujours à la pointe en matière de nouvelles technologies et de logiciels en ligne.

Ce cas identifie également l'importance de l'attitude et de la culture des employés. Le comportement positif des employés va au-delà des exigences définies par leur fonction (Katz,

Kahn, 1978) et peut avoir un impact direct sur le niveau de satisfaction de la clientèle. On a remarqué dans les entretiens que plusieurs managers avaient mentionnés l'auto-analyse comme un outil pour développer leurs propres compétences et améliorer leur performance.

Ce travail montre que la théorie *S-D Logic* et la topologie de Holbrook et Woodside peuvent se compléter l'une l'autre dans un contexte de situations réelles. Ce modèle, fondé sur l'utilisation conjointe des deux théories, a prouvé son utilité et sa pertinence pour la co-crédation de valeur entre le client et l'entreprise au niveau du marketing en ligne de l'hôtellerie.

Comme indiqué ci-dessus, le lien direct entre les comportements sociaux et les tendances en ligne ont permis le développement et l'interaction entre le site et ses clients. Les clients qui partagent leur vie et "s'exhibent" dans notre monde obsédéd par les « selfies » a eu un effet catalyseur sur la création de contenu sur FM. Ce moyen social d'encourager et de récompenser le partage en ligne a fourni un écosystème de marketing exploitant les activités « autocentrées » au profit de la marque. La fidélité des consommateurs se développe au fur et à mesure la marque communique de façon plus profonde avec ses fans et propose plus de contenu intéressant à ses clients.

Nous avons parlé précédemment de l'utilisation de propositions de valeur de l'entreprise sous la forme de concours de photo en ligne avec incitation économique comme moyen d'augmenter le nombre de commentaires postés par les clients. La nuitée gratuite offerte aux gagnants pousse les clients à poster des photos et des vidéos en ligne. L'incitation économique des concours est de fait



un élément important, car la plus grande partie des photos et commentaires résultent de participations à des concours.

Ce rôle de monnaie économique est un facteur important pour créer une prise de conscience chez les nouveaux fans ou pour fidéliser les fans existants. Offrir des incitations comme des offres de trois nuits pour le prix de deux, ou une coupe de champagne gratuite constituent une partie importante de la publicité et des promotions au sein du secteur de l'hôtellerie. Le principal avantage de communiquer avec des clients qui connaissent bien la marque est de les fidéliser à travers le site FM.

Maintenir et améliorer l'expérience de la technologie sont de première importance pour que l'hôtel puisse interagir avec les clients à la fois en ligne et hors ligne. La refonte du site FM pour créer un style Pinterest a permis au site de rester toujours à jour et pertinent pour le consommateur. Les commentaires sur les réseaux sociaux numériques résultent de l'évolution constante de la technologie ; des programmes tels que Facebook Connect permettent une intégration facile des commentaires au niveau des sites de l'entreprise. Cela donne une facilité d'utilisation et favorise l'engagement des consommateurs. Les vidéos YouTube et les photos Instagram postées par les clients et la marque fournissent également une source d'interaction continue et transparente, ce qui se traduit par une intégration de l'hôtel et de l'expérience client. La valeur attribuée à l'expérience vécue reflète l'investissement de l'entreprise. Ainsi, le Fairmont doit continuer à investir dans ses ressources technologiques, aussi bien au niveau de la formation du personnel que des logiciels et du matériel.

La meilleure façon de fournir du contenu intéressant et pertinent pour le client est de former des partenariats avec d'autres marques. Maintenant, les marques haut-de-gamme BMW, Reebok, Nobu, et Willowstream sont toutes liées à la marque Fairmont. Cependant, un contenu sans cesse renouvelé et pertinent est essentiel pour engager l'intérêt du client en ligne. Dans l'«économie de l'expérience» (Pine, Gilmore, 1999), les clients sont constamment à la recherche de nouveaux lancements de produits fiables et passionnants. Les programmes récents tels que «Fairmont Fit», qui fournit des vêtements et des chaussures de sport de la marque Reebok aux clients de Fairmont, sont en général bien reçus par les clientèles Affaires et Loisirs. La marque partenaire du Fairmont pour les spas, Willowstream, est un gros contributeur sur le site FM, offrant une variété de contenu en ligne, en particulier des forfaits promotionnels «bien-être» et les produits pour «faciliter la vie» (Entretien 3, VP4). Fairmont doit continuer à explorer et à travailler avec des partenaires de confiance afin de continuer à proposer de nouvelles expériences en ligne et inviter ses clients à créer de la valeur.

La valeur unique du site se traduit par l'expérience spécifique qu'il offre aux clients en leur permettant de contribuer, lire ou avoir des interactions avec le contenu en ligne. Les catégories du site FM – Témoignages des clients, Destinations, Restaurants et Bars, Spa & Bien-être, Mariages, Arts et Culture, Fairmont Magazine, et Fairmont Cocktails- donnent la possibilité aux clients de choisir le contenu en fonction de ce qui les intéresse personnellement. Ces thèmes ont été conçus et adaptés au fil des années pour refléter l'évolution des besoins du client (en fonction du retour reçu) et pour inclure également les nouvelles tendances en matière de contenu en ligne. La valeur

pour la marque réside dans le fait même de gérer un site internet offrant une expérience en ligne authentique et enrichissante.

L'évolution des tendances de consommation est une question qui ne peut être contrôlée directement par la marque. Cependant il est important pour la marque de s'aligner en permanence avec les tendances de son secteur d'activité. Elle doit non seulement suivre et adopter les dernières innovations de l'hôtellerie (par exemple des matelas en matières biologiques ou un choix de différents types d'oreillers) mais aussi écouter ses clients et prendre en compte activement leurs besoins et désirs. La marque est poussée à constamment investir dans la mise à jour du site, et s'efforce à communiquer régulièrement sur les réseaux sociaux numériques afin de continuer à recueillir les commentaires précieux de ses clients.

Grâce aux smartphones, tablettes et autres appareils portables il est très facile pour les clients de donner leur avis sur l'hôtel où ils viennent de séjourner. Il est aussi très facile et rapide de poster du contenu sur des sites comme FM via Instagram, Twitter, Facebook et Pinterest, puisqu'une seule entrée génère plusieurs commentaires. Cet environnement viral a permis l'augmentation exponentielle de co-création en ligne par les consommateurs et la marque.

### **8.3.7 Limitations et Recherche Future**

Il est important d'attirer l'attention sur les limites de cette étude. Tout d'abord, il convient de noter que la recherche se place du point de vue du management d'une entreprise du secteur hôtelier.

D'autres industries devraient donc être étudiées, en particulier celles où le service est la base de toute l'activité, comme par exemple les compagnies aériennes, grandes utilisatrices des plateformes en ligne pour communiquer avec leurs clients.

Deuxièmement, l'utilisation pour cette recherche d'une étude de cas unique en rend les résultats par nature impossibles à généraliser. Cette étude de cas unique a cependant fourni un aperçu sur un site géré par la marque et sur l'entreprise elle-même, principalement par rapport aux propositions de valeur de la théorie *S-D Logic*, ainsi que par rapport aux notions de valeur réciproque et valeur de contexte.

Les recherches qui seront menées à l'avenir devraient donc se concentrer sur l'un de ces trois aspects de valeur afin d'approfondir nos connaissances sur les sites gérés par une marque. Du point de vue du client, l'utilisation de la topologie de Holbrook a fourni des mesures de la valeur client aidant à comprendre le contenu en ligne. Les recherches futures pourraient d'une part se concentrer sur un plus grand volume de commentaires de clients et d'autre part, analyser uniquement des photos ou des commentaires afin d'améliorer la compréhension.

Troisièmement, il faut souligner que si la recherche qualitative était appropriée pour la théorie *S-D Logic* et la topologie de Holbrook, une recherche quantitative pourrait permettre, à l'avenir, d'affiner le concept une fois que celui-ci aura été plus largement adopté en théorie et en pratique.

Cette étude se concentre uniquement sur le département marketing et sur l'utilisation de la plateforme web gérée par la marque. Les recherches futures devraient donc inclure d'autres départements, afin d'obtenir une vue plus globale sur l'impact du concept associant la théorie *S-D Logic* et la topologie de Holbrook. En plus de se pencher spécifiquement sur les clients comme réalisé dans cette étude, il pourrait être utile d'examiner aussi les groupes de co-consommation et les fans de la marque afin de refléter le nombre croissant de groupes collectifs de consommateurs en ligne. Les recherches futures pourraient explorer l'impact de l'intégration de la théorie *S-D Logic* et de la topologie de Holbrook sur les rôles stratégiques et opérationnels au sein d'autres fonctions.

Cette étude a souligné les enjeux liés à l'identification de l'utilisation des médias sociaux par les consommateurs de luxe. Le profil de ce type de consommateur généralement retenu se répartit sur plusieurs tranches d'âge : 20-30 ans, 30-40 ans, 40-50 ans et 50 ans et plus. Force est de constater que les entretiens avec les clients, mettent plus en avant la génération des 20-30 ans, plus en phase avec l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux numériques. Malgré la participation des trentenaires et des quaranténaires, c'est la plus jeune génération qui est la plus dynamique sur les médias sociaux, notamment en ce qui concerne la publication des photos, des commentaires et la participation régulière aux concours. Du point de vue de la marque, il s'est avéré difficile d'identifier qui utilise et consomme le contenu, à moins que l'utilisateur ne publie des photos ou ne participe à des concours lui-même. La difficulté principale a donc été d'identifier les intervenants et d'isoler des informations personnelles supplémentaires susceptibles d'améliorer la connaissance du phénomène. En effet, lors de la publication en ligne, l'enregistrement est axé

sur la vitesse et la simplicité afin de permettre aux utilisateurs de se connecter plus facilement, rendant ainsi difficile voire impossible de récolter ces informations.

Cette facilité d'accès limite la quantité d'informations que les entreprises peuvent obtenir sur l'individu à des fins commerciales. Les recherches futures pourraient se concentrer sur une communauté plus exclusive de membres d'une marque de luxe où les utilisateurs sont identifiés par la marque et invités par opposition à l'auto-sélection de l'utilisateur dans une communauté en ligne. Cela permettrait à la marque de connaître et d'identifier les individus avec lesquels elle souhaite établir des relations plus sélectives en ligne.