

USER RESEARCH FINDINGS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Starting with business needs and user experience questions were the launch of why user research is imperative for improving Marriott's digital properties. Performing user research for Marriott would reveal strengths and weaknesses.

After performing a nano usability test, writing a research memo, creating a presentation and a survey it was time to interview users to refine research findings further. By taking research questions and creating hypotheses, a list of interview questions was created in order to draw information that would aid in improving Marriott's digital properties. Analysis of these interviews can be found within this presentation which reveal who Marriott's users are and how they book a hotel room.

Themes Discovered

- The site should have easily accessible information
- Guests are interested in saving money and reading reviews
- Site should be trustworthy which enhances the ease of use for guests

BACKGROUND

Without preliminary data from various research methods the possibility of performing and analyzing interviews would not have been possible. Intentional research helped gain pertinent information to find what is best for the user and Marriott's business goals.

Throughout this collection of data, it is important to remember that users have different and specific needs. The experience Marriott's digital properties presents must cater to a slew of users who are ready to book a room.

BUSINESS NEEDS

Marriott's business goals include...

- Increase hotel bookings via digital properties by 10%
- Increase reservations for their Luxury and Lifestyle Collection hotel categories
- Gain 10,000 incremental members of the Marriott Rewards loyalty program in the first quarter after the redesign
- Decrease by 20% the number of people starting and then abandoning a reservation
- Increase by 5% the number of people choosing a hotel and flight package (vs. just booking their hotel alone)

BUSINESS NEEDS

Having achievable goals from Marriott laid the ground work in order to start brainstorming tactics for user research. Doing user research allows for an intersection between user needs and business needs to be discovered. That point can be utilized to create the best experience for both parties.

Before any user research could be started, it was important to refer back to Marriott's business goals in order to keep research from drifting off-track.

Building research goals off of Marriott's business needs were necessary to ensure progression toward a redesigned website.

ACHIEVING BUSINESS NEEDS

Research goals were created based off of Marriott's business needs...

- Improve the existing hotel search functionality
- Allow users to change their search results with more customization
- Integrating additional features into the booking process

These goals launched the creation of specific user research questions. From there specific research methods could be utilized to discover information of who Marriott's users are.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to create a successful profile of Marriott's users while adhering to the business and user goals, various research methods were used to accomplish these tasks.

- Nano Usability Testing
- Writing a User Research Memo
- Compiling a presentation on User Research Goals & Questions
- Creating a Questionnaire

NANO USABILITY TESTING

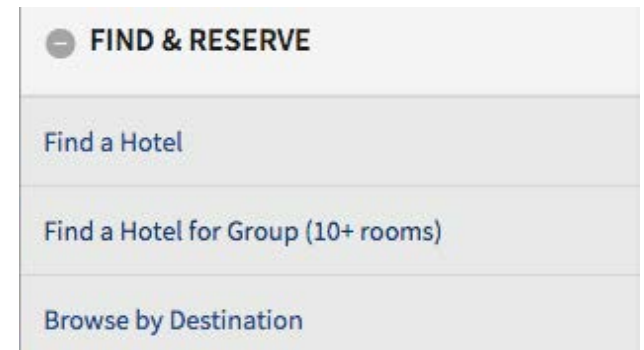
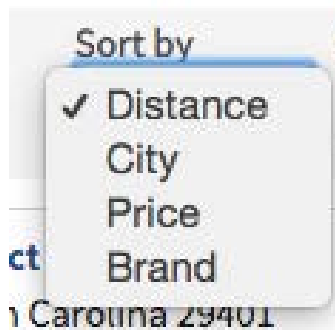
The nano usability test provided valuable information from three participants. By observing them use the Marriott site while speaking aloud, issues with the site that were overlooked by someone already familiar with it were uncovered.

Here were some valuable discoveries...

- Not all participants were able to complete a booking
- Participants wished for more customization during searches
- Each participant had a unique way of navigating through the Marriott site
- Participant frustration was virtually unavoidable, even though the site had beautiful graphics and appeared to be organized on the surface

USER RESEARCH MEMO

The user research memo was a necessary deliverable to stakeholders. It gave an overview of why user research was necessary for redesigning the Marriott website. By providing this quick but informative memo, stakeholders can easily see the value that user research can bring them and ultimately the dollars it can save in the future.



Above: Current search filters & a common avenue of starting a hotel search

USER RESEARCH MEMO

Key points from the memo include...

- Utilizing the nano usability test for evidence of site issues and strengths
- Describing the initial user search and breaking down how each participant began their room booking
- Highlighting search result sorting and issues usability test participants found
- Described what features of the Marriott site users were looking for and what was important to them

USER RESEARCH & QUESTIONS PRESENTATION

Creating a presentation to logically lay out a research plan aids researchers in explaining their plan to stakeholders. This key presentation explains the usefulness and need for performing user research for the Marriott site. The presentation provided...

- User experience issues that hinder Marriott's business goals
- Goals that address aforementioned issues and Marriott's user experience questions
- General Research Questions
- Marriott-Specific Research Questions
- Recommendations for Next Steps

QUESTIONNAIRE

Building off of all previous research allowed for a survey of closed questions to be created in order to learn more about Marriott's user-base. The survey collects quantitative data that can be judged against interviews or other qualitative research in order to come with a richer picture of Marriott's users. The questionnaire provided...

- Information pertaining to who users are, not necessarily how the Marriott site functions
- How users search for a room
- User interest of rewards program and luxury rooms
- What search criteria was most important to users

INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT REEL

The highlight reel below showcases where users search and what types of searches they perform in order to book a hotel room.

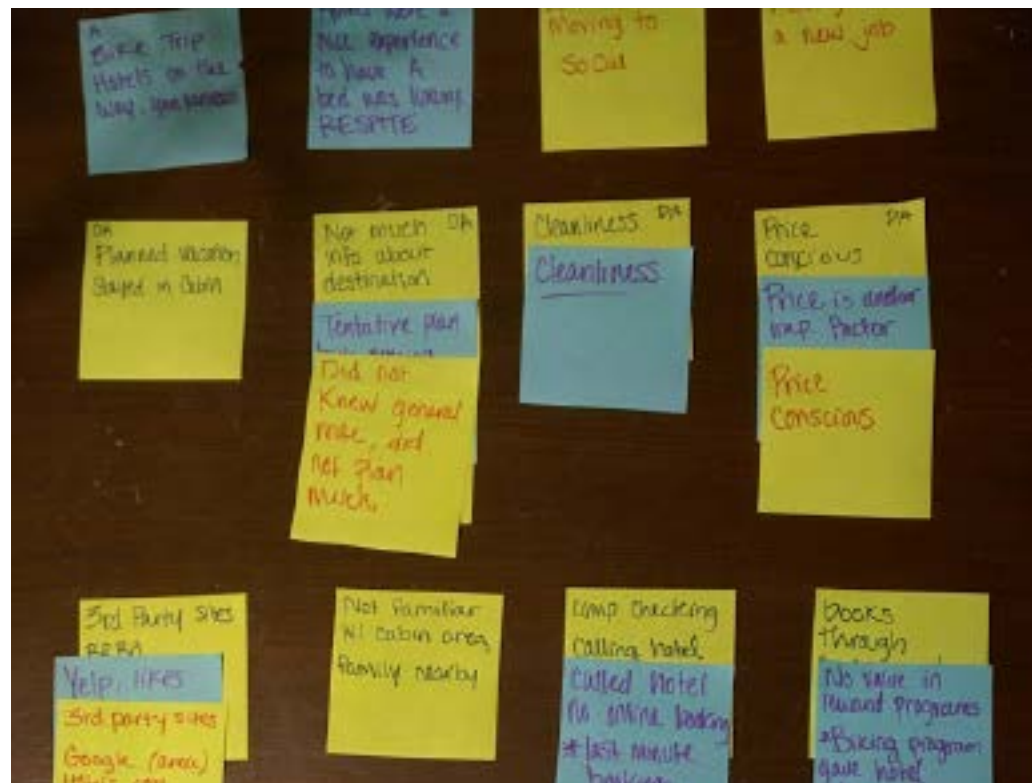
View here at: https://youtu.be/_qXMWbpwbD8

To analyze data certain steps were taken to find similarities and differences between interview participants...

1. Taking notes on interviews (on sticky notes)
2. Sorting each participant
3. Grouping similar answers, behaviors, and needs together

DATA ANALYSIS

Participant responses were grouped together by open sorting. The use of sticky notes allowed for easy access to information that was also easy to organize. The different colors of sticky notes and marker were assigned to each participant and at a glance, patterns appeared.



Above: Open sorting of interview participants with sticky notes

RESEARCH RESULTS

Marriott guests have many needs but after analysis of conducted interviews, common themes were discovered.

Users Desired Search Criteria

- Price
- Hotel Reviews
- Amenities - Cleanliness is very important

Additional User Discoveries

- Need easily accessible information
- Using third party sites to comparison shop
- Did not have an exact route planned or place to stay for trips

Marriott digital properties should be...

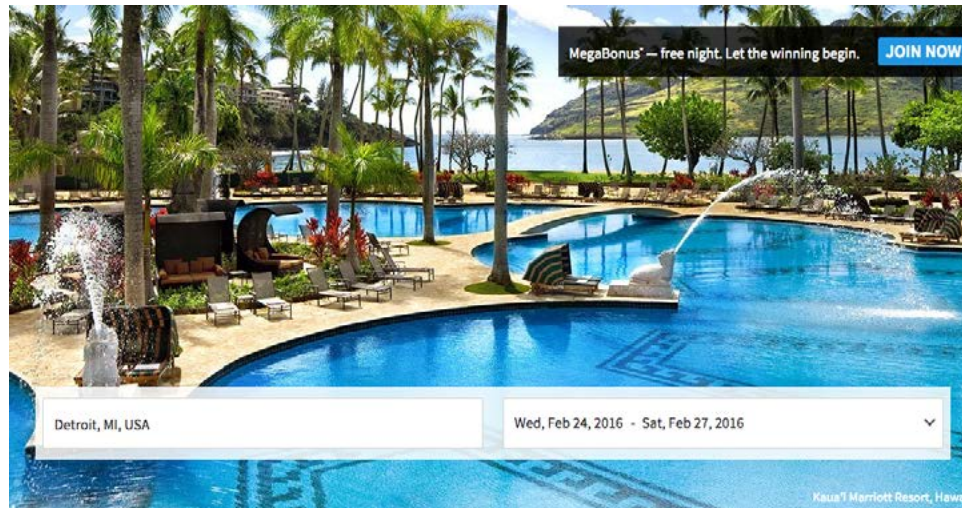
- Easy to use and access
- Simple
- Trustworthy

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Users Desired Search Criteria

- Price
- Hotel Reviews
- Amenities - Cleanliness is very important

Marriott should expand their initial search to include criteria that matters most to its users. The initial search is limited to dates and location. Though these are important more detail should be incorporated in those first steps such as price and customer reviews.



Above: Initial search on Marriott's desktop site

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional User Discoveries

- Need easily accessible information
- Using third party sites to comparison shop
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Users need easily accessible information in order to make an easy booking. They do not want to agonize over decisions of where they are going to sleep. If users only have a general idea of where they will stay during their trip, ease of use is pertinent when the user does not have concrete information. **Marriott should make design decisions that customize and provide information that users are looking for.**

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Marriott digital properties should be...

- Easy to use and access
- Simple
- Trustworthy

Since users were so interested in comparison shopping on third party sites, competitive research would benefit Marriott. A familiar search process would provide users ease of use. Investigating the competition will provide valuable information to design a search process the user trusts.



Above: Third party sites interview participants utilize for trip searching

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS - NEXT STEPS

In short, Marriott can take a few steps to improve their digital properties...

- More options in the initial search such as price and reviews
- Create a streamlined booking process
- Competitive research to take the best parts of the competition and put them to use for Marriott