iscte

**INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA**

Developing the overall marketing strategy for Small Portuguese Hotels in the Spanish market

Lotte Maria van Rijen

Master's in hospitality and Tourism Management

Supervisor:
Professor Rita Vilar Alves Machado de Brito e Cunha, Teaching Assistant, ISCTE Business School

August 2021

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

Developing the overall marketing strategy for Small Portuguese Hotels in the Spanish market

Lotte Maria van Rijen

Master's in hospitality and Tourism Management

Supervisor:
Professor Rita Vilar Alves Machado de Brito e Cunha, Teaching Assistant, ISCTE Business School

August 2021

Acknowledgement

To me, this master thesis was not just a final project I had to fulfil to obtain my diploma. It was a journey, an adventure, and a life lesson. At times it was hard, at times it was stressful, but overall, it was educational, special, eye-opening, and something I never wanted to miss. It taught me how to start from scratch, how to implement creativity, how to cope with different cultures, how to deal with backlashes and a pandemic and how to reach a certain goal without having many guidelines. It confirmed my passion for the hospitality industry and it made me realize how much I am in love with Portugal. Because of this project, I know more who I am as a person and what I want to achieve in life. It made me realize that making decisions can be difficult, that asking for help is something I should do more, that I am more creative than I thought before and that I need to learn to be more patient. This thesis succeeded not just because of me, it did so only because of the support system that always had my back, and this serves as a big thank you to the people that are part of my support system.

To my family, who I unfortunately have not seen at all during the past year due to the pandemic. They have supported me throughout my entire life, raised me in such a way that I felt free, confident, and ready to follow my dreams. You have shaped me in the strong, independent woman I am today and the professional I have become. Special thanks to my father, Frank van Rijen, and my mother Monique van Rijen, who have invested in me, in my education and my personal growth, who showed me infinite love, warmth and compassion. Who gave me the right values, got my back when things were difficult and showed their pride towards me every single day. Thank you.

Besides my family, I would like to thank my supervisor Mrs. Rita Alves Machado, from whom I have learned so much. You are a true inspiration. Thank you for giving me this opportunity, thank you for always sharing your knowledge, kindness, support, and passion. Without you, this thesis would have never been possible. I would also like to thank the other employees of SPH that were involved; Ms. Maria Gomes, Ms. Catarina Conceição, and Ms. Carlota Tavora. Thank you for your warm welcome, your extensive knowledge, and your constant cooperation.
Furthermore, I would like to thank my friends from all over the world, located with me in either Barcelona, Lisbon, or the Netherlands, for their support, motivation, words of encouragement and for being there when I needed you.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who participated with such great enthusiasm in my thesis' survey. I was positively overwhelmed with the number of responses I was able to gather, the helpfulness in sharing the survey and the willing feedback I received from so many.

Thank you all so much. Together we have created this amazing thesis.

Resumo

Este estudo focou-se no desenvolvimento de uma estratégia de marketing sustentável para a Small Portuguese Hotels (SPH) no mercado espanhol e direcionar a start-up tanto a nível estratégico como operacional. Foram aplicados vários modelos teóricos que, utilizados em conjunto, e fundamentados por uma extensa revisão de literatura, completam o desenvolvimento de uma estratégia de marketing bem-sucedida, necessária para o sucesso de qualquer empresa atualmente.

A estratégia resultante foi fundamentada pelos dados recolhidos ao longo de todo o estudo, consistindo em pesquisa documental e trabalho de campo. Em termos da pesquisa realizada em trabalho de campo, foi realizado um questionário online a pessoas de nacionalidade espanhola como análise do cliente. Adicionalmente, foi realizada uma entrevista com a Rita Alves Machado no âmbito da análise interna e com todos os colaboradores da SPH, que participaram em vários questionários, necessários para delinear o quadro mais relevante para a empresa no apuramento de diferentes opções estratégicas e, eventualmente, encontrar a melhor estratégia de marketing pretendida:

"Antes de se focar no promissor mercado espanhol, a SPH deve alcançar os seus objetivos de curto prazo e de gestão do dia-a-dia. Adicionalmente, antes de entrar no mercado espanhol, a SPH necessita de um plano completo e claro de marketing, vendas e redes sociais que possa ser implementado eficazmente, que posicionará fortemente a SPH no mercado espanhol para expandir a sua base de clientes portugueses existente."

O plano integral de marketing, vendas e redes sociais compreende as recomendações tanto a nível estratégico como operacional.

Palavras-chave:

Marketing de Consumo, Aquisição de Clientes, Estudo de Mercado, Comercialização, Estratégia de Marketing, Desenvolvimento Turístico, Marketing Turístico

Sistema de classificação JEL:

M310 – Marketing

Z33 – Turismo: Marketing e Finanças

Abstract

This study's purpose was to develop a successful marketing strategy for Small Portuguese Hotels (SPH) in the Spanish market and provide the start-up with recommendations on both tactical and operational level. Various theoretical models have been applied that when used all together, substantiated by an extensive literature framework, fulfil the process of developing a marketing strategy in a successful way which is needed to succeed as a company nowadays.

The concluded marketing strategy for SPH has been based on all data gathered throughout the entire study, consisting of both desk and field research. In terms of field research, an online survey was conducted among Spaniards as part of the customer analysis. Besides, an interview has been held with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado as part of the internal analysis and several SPH employees have participated in several questionnaires needed to design the most relevant framework for SPH when qualifying different strategic options to eventually find the best fitting marketing strategy:

'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'

The complete and clear marketing, sales and social media plan comprise the recommendations on both tactical and operational level.

Index

x

Glossary

% - Percent

CAGR – Compounded Average Growth Rate

DESTEP – Demographic, Economic, Social, Technological, Ecological and Political (elements)

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estadística

PEST – Political, Economic, Social and Technological (elements)

PESTEL – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Ecological and Legal (elements)

PESTLE – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Ecological (elements)

SEO – Search Engine Optimization

SFA – Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TOWS – Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Strengths

1. Introduction

Research focused on helping a company grow in the best way possible is more than relevant. This study focuses on helping the start-up Small Portuguese Hotels (SPH) expanding internationally after focusing on the domestic market only, by developing a valuable marketing strategy.

SPH, only started in 2020 as a project and now considered as a brand itself, was initiated on behalf of the umbrella organization GuestCentric; a leading provider of cloud-based digital marketing software and services that help extraordinary hoteliers promote their brand, drive direct bookings, and connect with customers on all digital platforms. GuestCentric is a proud provider of solutions that maximize direct bookings to hotel groups and independent hotels from collections such as Design Hotels, Great Hotels of the World, Small Luxury Hotels and Small Danish Hotels. SPH represents different types of independent and unique accommodations in Portugal, covering the entire national territory. Momentarily, 147 independent Portuguese hotel units are registered at the umbrella organisation GuestCentric, consisting of hotels, country houses, apartments and bungalows, Bed and Breakfast, resorts, and spa hotels. All listings are unique, small, or medium in size – less than 150 rooms – within the segment of 3 to 5 stars, score well on Online Reputation platforms with a minimum score of 8.5 and obtain both the clean and safe certificate by Turismo de Portugal and comply with health and safety standards set by SPH itself.

Through the creation of a representation brand for independent Portuguese hotels, the mission of SPH is to support the national economy by creating a new distribution platform for direct reservations, boosting sales, and increasing business in its member hotels.

To decide which international market would be the most relevant for SPH to focus on first, an extensive calculation has been performed by the student using numeric information from published research coming from TravelBI Turismo de Portugal (Annex A). It was found that the Spanish market is the most attractive market for SPH to focus on first, and to target them in the best way, a marketing strategy is needed. This non-existing marketing strategy became the goal of this research to provide the company with define steps they should take to let their business grow, generate sales, and market the company in the Spanish market in the most effective way.

To answer the main research question '*Developing the overall marketing strategy for Small Portuguese Hotels in the Spanish market',* six sub questions were drafted: (1) What is the purpose of developing a marketing strategy nowadays?, (2) How to develop an overall marketing strategy?, (3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of SPH?, (4) What are the opportunities and threats for SPH in the Spanish market?, (5) Which marketing strategy should be applied by SPH in the Spanish market? and (6) Based on the proposed strategy, what do the recommendations for SPH in Spain look like on both tactical and operational level? By using these six sub questions as a guideline throughout the entire study, the most valuable marketing strategy could be developed.

Marketing can be defined as the process by which companies create value for customers and

build strong customer relationships, to capture value from customers in return in the form of sales, profits, and long-term customer equity, which is essential for any company to succeed nowadays in the fast-changing world we live in (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). Designing a customer value-driven marketing strategy is indispensable in the overall marketing process, "the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create this customer value and achieve these profitable relationships" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.74).

To develop this marketing strategy, various theoretical models have been applied throughout this study, all substantiated by literature research. The main theoretical model is the SWOT analysis, a business analysis technique that an organization can perform for each of its products, services and markets when deciding on the best way to achieve future growth (Cadle, Paul & Turner, 2010) and a popular method used by organizations for strategic management and marketing. The process of the SWOT analysis involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the organization during an internal analysis, and opportunities and threats present in the market that it operates in by conducting an external analysis (Cadle et al., 2010).

To perform the most extensive internal analysis possible as input for the SWOT analysis, this study applied two theoretical models. First, the 7S model from Johnson et al., (2017) that offers a resource-based view of the strategic assets available to an organisation, specifically identifying seven elements: (1) Strategy, (2) Structure, (3) Systems, (4) Style (management style), (5) Staff, (6) Skills (reSources) and (7) Shared values (culture) (Waterman, Peters and Phillips in Cox, Pinfield and Rutter, 2019). Second, the Business Model Canvas (BMC), a model that encompasses all aspects of a business and is still easy to use and understand in practice, comprising nine elements: (1) Customers, (2) Customer relationships, (3) Channels, (4) Value proposition, (5) Costs, (6) Revenues, (7) Key resources, (8) Key activities and (9) Key partners.

The external analysis of this study that served as input for the SWOT analysis consisted of various sub-analyses: a market analysis, customer analysis, competitor analysis and macroenvironment analysis. For both the customer analysis and macroenvironment analysis, two theoretical models have been applied to strengthen the research. First, the 6W of Ferrell, which provides insight into customer value and their wants and needs, categorises various customer segments and the attractiveness of the identified segments. Second, the DESTEP framework, which helps to identify major developments and future implications in the macroenvironment and is performed in combination with the SWOT analysis to identify likely threats to the organization its operations and the opportunities to further expansion (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). This macroenvironmental analysis covers the most relevant elements for SPH: Demographic, Ecological, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Economic and Political.

By performing all these different analyses and applying various theoretical models, the most valuable and extensive SWOT analysis has been drafted. However, since the SWOT analysis can solely be considered as a starting point for a more comprehensive view to formulate a marketing

2

strategy, a theoretical model has been applied to link the SWOT analysis' results to formulating a final marketing strategy. This theoretical model, called the confrontation matrix i.e. TOWS matrix (Weihrich, 1982), creates a strategic matrix of connective elements between the external environment (opportunities and threats) and the organization its internal assets (strengths and weaknesses) and identifies four main strategies including various strategic options: (1) The growth strategy that leverages strengths to maximize opportunities, (2) The defence strategy that shows the organization its strengths in consideration of threats, (3) The improve strategy that minimize weaknesses and maximize opportunities and (4) The retreat strategy that shows the organization its weaknesses by comparison with the current external threats.

The final step to achieve the main objective of this study, was qualifying the various strategic options resulting from the TOWS matrix. "Prescriptive strategy has taken the approach that a rational and fact-based analysis of the strategic options will deliver the strategy that is most likely to be successful: logic and evidence are paramount in choosing between the strategic options", (Lynch, 2018, p.387). Lynch (2018, p.387) also mentions that "the content of strategic options therefore needs to be evaluated for their contribution to the organization". To do so, this study applied the SFA model, which considers the Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability of each strategic option and performs a fairly weigh up to eventually come up with the best fitting strategy.

Based on the concluded marketing strategy derived from all the analyses performed, clear and valuable recommendations have been made to SPH on both tactical and operational level.

All data used as input for both the various analyses and theoretical models, has been gathered by performing desk and field research, ranging from interviews and two different types of surveys. Several SPH employees have been involved in the entire process to improve the research quality considering both the reliability and validity. Besides, the impact of the pandemic has not been ignored and has been included throughout the study. However, given that the thesis was written during the pandemic, it is still unclear what the long-term consequences will be. Overall, this entire study can be considered as a long-term marketing process in which creating the actual marketing strategy and providing recommendations to SPH when moving to the Spanish market was the main focus.

<center>**2. Literature review**</center>

2.1. What is the purpose of developing a marketing strategy nowadays?

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2015), today's successful companies are strongly customer focused and heavily committed to marketing. "These companies share a passion for understanding and satisfying customer needs in well-defined target markets. They motivate everyone in the organization to help build lasting customer relationships based on creating value. Customer relationships and value are especially important today. Facing dramatic technological advances and deep economic, social, and environmental challenges, today's customers are relating digitally with companies and each other, spending more carefully, and reassessing how they engage with brands. New digital, mobile, and social media developments have revolutionized how consumers shop and interact, in turn calling for new marketing strategies and tactics. In these fast-changing times, it is now more important than ever to build strong customer relationships based on real and enduring customer value" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p. 28).

Marketing, more than any other business function, deals with customers. Marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationships. The twofold goal of marketing is to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow current customers by delivering satisfaction. "The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary" (Drucker as cited in Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). "Selling and advertising are only part of a larger marketing mix—a set of marketing tools that work together to engage customers, satisfy customer needs, and build customer relationships" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.29). Thus, marketing can be defined as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return in the form of sales, profits, and long-term customer equity (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015).

Bearing in mind the above given definition of marketing, it can be said that marketing is essential for any company to succeed nowadays. To create and capture customer value, a simple five-step model of the marketing process can be applied as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. The Marketing Process – Creating and Capturing Customer Value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p. 31).

As Figure 1.1. shows, designing a customer value-driven marketing strategy (step two) is indispensable in the overall process of creating and capturing customer value and building customer relationships, which is especially important nowadays in the fast-changing world we live in. The actual definition of a marketing strategy from Kotler and Armstrong (2015, p.74) is: "The marketing

logic by which the company hopes to create customer value and achieve profitable customer relationships."

2.2. How to develop a marketing strategy?

2.2.1. Marketing strategy and marketing mix

As illustrated by the Marketing Strategy Wheel (Annex B, Figure B.1), starting from the core, marketing is all about *creating customer value and profitable customer relationships.* "Next comes marketing strategy – the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create this customer value and achieve these profitable relationships" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.74). It involves two key questions: (1) Which customers will we serve (*segmentation and targeting*)? and (2) How can we serve these customers best (*differentiating and positioning*)? (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). "It identifies the total market and then divides it into smaller segments, selects the most promising segments, and focuses on serving and satisfying the customers in these segments" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.74). Guided by the marketing strategy, the company designs an integrated marketing mix that delivers the intended value to targeted customers, using the four Ps: *Product, Price, Promotion and Place* or, from the buyer its viewpoint, the four Cs: *Customer solution, Customer cost, Convenience and Communication* (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). "To find the best marketing strategy and mix, the company continuously engages in *marketing analysis, planning, implementation and control"* (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.74)*,* which is represented by the outer layer. "Through these activities, the company watches and adapts to the actors and forces in the marketing environment" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.74), consisting of the microenvironment and macroenvironment. "The microenvironment consists of the actors close to the company that affect its ability to engage and service its customers: the company, suppliers, customer markets, competitors and publics. The macroenvironment consists of the larger societal forces that affect the microenvironment: demographic, economic, natural, technological, political, and cultural forces" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.95).

2.2.2. Theoretical models

2.2.2.1. The SWOT Analysis

According to Cadle, Paul and Turner (2010) the SWOT analysis is a business analysis technique that an organization can perform for each of its products, services and markets when deciding on the best way to achieve future growth. Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington (2010) note that the SWOT analysis is a useful tool that can be used as a starting point to generate strategic options and asses the future course of an organization. According to Thompson, Strickland, and Gamble (2007, p.97) "The SWOT Analysis is a simple but powerful tool for sizing up an organization's resource capabilities and deficiencies, its market opportunities and the external threats to its future". The process of the SWOT analysis involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the organization during an internal

analysis, and opportunities and threats present in the market that it operates in by conducting an external analysis (Cadle et al., 2010).

According to Thompson et al., (2007) strengths and opportunities are helpful to achieve the organizational objectives; they are favourable for organizations. Weaknesses and threats are harmful to achieving the organizational objectives; they are unfavourable for organizations. Therefore, underlying any successful selection of strategies is an analysis of the organization its internal strengths and weaknesses that are posed by an internal environment and the opportunities and threats that are posed by the external environment (Thompson et al., 2007).

How to make plans or decisions is a concept that is critical to managers and employees of any organization. The SWOT analysis is a popular method used by organizations for strategic management and marketing. According to Cadle et al., (2010) the popularity of the SWOT analysis is down to its simplicity and flexibility as it is easy to understand, and its implementation does not require any technical knowledge or specialist training. Besides, it condenses many situational factors into a manageable number (Cadle et al., 2010). Furthermore, the SWOT analysis is an interactional analysis technique that makes macro evaluations possible. As an analysis tool, SWOT provides the opportunity to focus on both positive and negative aspects of both the internal and external environment of the organization all together in a related perspective (Thompson et al., 2007). The SWOT analysis forms a thinking model as well for organizational managements as an approach and analysis technique. This model gives one the opportunity to limit the agenda in the steps of information gathering and interpretation and shows the points that the decisions are based on. In other words, the SWOT prepares the substructure for strategic (marketing) decisions (Johnson et al., 2010). However, there is criticism directed to the SWOT analysis despite its wide use as an analysis tool. "The SWOT analysis is an analysis technique that has a problem in terms of quality and quantity. In applying the SWOT analysis, many factors can be identified. However, quantity does not mean quality. It is not possible to determine the priorities of the factors identified in the SWOT analysis, focus on them in detail, solve the developments and conflicts in different dimensions, and include views and suggestions based on different data and analyses" (Cojanu & Bilbor, 2007, p.164). Besides, the SWOT analysis overemphasizes a single dimension of strategy as the SWOT analysis just lists the important factors. Sometimes organizations become preoccupied with a single strength or key feature of the product or service they are offering and ignore other factors needed for competitive success (Koch, 2000).

Since the main goal of this study is to assess the future course of SPH in terms of marketing and develop a marketing strategy, the SWOT analysis is an indispensable and important tool that will be used despite its criticism as the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

2.2.2.2. Confrontation matrix

The SWOT analysis is a useful tool that can be considered as a starting point for a more

comprehensive view to formulate a marketing strategy. However, as the SWOT analysis is solely a starting point, it is crucial to examine the link between the SWOT analysis' results and formulating a final marketing strategy.

According to Piercy and Giles (1989), Johnson and Scholes (2002) and Kotler (2003), the information derived from the SWOT analysis becomes meaningful when it is compared using a confrontation matrix i.e., TOWS matrix. Weihrich (1982) developed the TOWS matrix, which shows to what extent the organization can take advantage of the opportunities in the business environment, using its own strengths, or whether it will be undone by its own weaknesses. Threats that are reinforced by an organization its own weaknesses are the main concern (Weihrich, 1982; Piercy & Giles, 1989; Johnson & Scholes, 2002; Kotler, 2003). As the TOWS matrix (Weihrich, 1982) creates a strategic matrix of connective elements between the external environment and the organization its internal assets, four strategies including strategic options will be identified. The four combinations, as developed by Weihrich (1982), are as follows:

- Maxi-maxi strategies (S/O): This concerns an attacking strategy that leverages strengths to maximize opportunities and it must be actionable. It is also called the *'Growth strategy'*.
- Maxi-mini strategies (S/T): This combination shows the organization its strengths in consideration of threats. An organization should strive to use its strengths to avoid or minimise threats. It is also called the *'Defence strategy'*.
- Mini-maxi strategies (W/O): This combination minimize weaknesses and maximize opportunities. Besides, it leverages opportunities and strengths to resolve the weakness. It is also called the *'Improve strategy'*.
- Mini-mini strategies (W/T): This combination shows the organization its weaknesses by comparison with the current external threats. This is the most defensive strategy, as the organization should minimize its weaknesses and avoid external threats. It is also called the *'Retreat strategy'*.

There will be several strategic options, all belonging to a certain strategy, resulting from the TOWS matrix (Weihrich, 1982). For this research, the TOWS matrix (Weihrich, 1982) is indispensable as the aim of this research is to develop a marketing strategy for SPH in the Spanish market, which results from the strategic TOWS matrix of connective elements between the external environment and the organization its internal assets.

2.2.2.3. SFA model

To choose the best fitting marketing strategy, strategic options resulting from the SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix need to be qualified. Therefore, it is relevant to examine how to qualify strategic options. This process of qualifying strategic options will further strengthen the complexity and objectivity of the process of formulating the best fitting marketing strategy for SPH.

"Prescriptive strategy has taken the approach that a rational and fact-based analysis of the strategic options will deliver the strategy that is most likely to be successful: logic and evidence are paramount in choosing between the strategic options", according to Lynch (2018, p.387). Lynch (2018, p.387) also mentions that "the content of strategic options therefore needs to be evaluated for their contribution to the organization. We need to be able to understand in a structured way such comments as, 'Plausible… but not very likely,' we need evaluation criteria" (Lynch, 2018, p.387). In terms of content, strategic choice evaluation means the qualification of the drafted strategic options resulting from the TOWS matrix. There are different methods and frameworks to qualify strategic options. After the process of qualification of the strategic options, there will be one strategic option which fits best.

Johnson, Scholes, Whittington, Regner and Angwin (2017) argue that a strategic option must satisfy three criteria before it can be successful. By using the SFA model, which considers the Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability of each strategic option, a fairly weigh up of strategic options is being performed to eventually come up with the best fitting strategy (Johnson et al., 2017). According to Johnson et al., (2017) suitability is the most important factor in the SFA model, as an option its suitability is the key to whether the strategy will do what the organization wants it to do. Suitability concerns determining if the strategic options are suitable and compatible within the current and expected external environment. The best way to approach the suitability perspective is to determine if the strategic options can help the organization exploit opportunities and overcome or avoid threats in the environment. The chosen strategic option should capitalise on the organization its strengths and core competences. It should also be congruent with the organization its existing culture and in alignment with the broader environmental, political, and social context (Johnson et al., 2017). Feasibility focuses on whether the organization has the resources to pursue the strategic options. It is an analysis of the internal capabilities of the organization: financial, organizational, economic, technical, strategic, legal, and ecological. Numerous internal analytical models are available. To determine important factors to use within the feasibility analysis include the 7S model and the product life cycle analysis for example (Johnson et al., 2017). Acceptability focuses on different aspects: the stakeholders and clients. New strategic directions would encompass changes which might be discomforting for some stakeholders and/or clients (Johnson et al., 2017). The stakeholder aspect of the acceptability analysis evaluates how each strategic option will affect the stakeholders and their likely reactions. The client aspect of the acceptability analysis evaluates how each strategic option will affect the clients and their likely reactions. Both the stakeholder- and client aspect is quite qualitative but important because any new strategy selected can only succeed if there is support from both groups (Johnson et al., 2017).

According to Lynch (2018, p.387), "each organization will have its own criteria in practice. However, and as a starting point, not just three but six main criteria that can be used in evaluation strategic options can be identified". "The six evaluation criteria are as follows: consistency,

suitability, validity, feasibility, business risk and the attractiveness to stakeholders. Consistency means whether it agrees with the objectives of the organisation. Suitability means to be appropriate for the context of the strategy of the organisation both internally and externally. Validity means that the calculations and other assumptions on which the plan is based are well-grounded and meaningful. Feasibility means that the proposed strategies are capable of being carried out. Business risk means that the proposed strategies fit the risk profile of the organization. Attractiveness to stakeholders means that the strategy is sufficiently appealing to those people that the organisation needs to satisfy" (Lynch, 2018, p.388).

Looking at both the SFA model (Johnson et al., 2017) and the criteria stated by Lynch (2018, p.388), there is some overlap. Of course, there are already three matching criteria: suitability, feasibility, and acceptance by the stakeholders/acceptability (Johnson et al., 2017; Lynch, 2018, p.388). According to Lynch (2018) there is some overlap between suitability and validity within his six criteria. Lynch (2018, p.389) states that "because of the element of judgement in such issues, this is done under the general heading of applying business judgement and guidelines". Besides, as the consistency criteria factor solely means whether it agrees with the objectives of the organisation according to Lynch (2018), both the consistency and the validity criteria can be included within the overall suitability criteria as stated by Johnson et al., (2017). The only criteria factor stated by Lynch (2018) that is not really included within the SFA model of Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington (2017) is the business risk criteria. For this research, looking at both Lynch' (2018) and Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington' (2017) criteria factors, due to both time, relevance and because of the overlap, the best choice is the SFA model.

2.2.2.4. 7S model

The internal analysis serves as a base for the strengths and weaknesses of the SWOT analysis and is very important for this research due to different reasons. First, since the SWOT analysis is the main tool of this study, analyses are needed that serve as an input. Second, considering that the feasibility of the strategic options resulting from the SWOT analysis will be examined through the SFA model, the internal capabilities of the organization must be clear.

As stated by Johnson et al., (2017), the 7S model (Annex B, Figure B.2) is a great model to use when performing an internal analysis. The 7S model offers a resource-based view of the strategic assets available to an organisation, specifically identifying seven elements (Waterman, Peters and Phillips in Cox, Pinfield and Rutter, 2019): (1) Strategy, (2) Structure, (3) Systems, (4) Style (management style), (5) Staff, (6) Skills (reSources) and (7) Shared values (culture).

For an organization, to achieve its strategic objectives particularly in relation to change, the 7S Model was designed to recap the main contributing factors. The first three elements are often viewed as 'hard', more factual, and perceptible and easier to control. The other four elements are considered as 'soft', because they are more intangible and harder to manage directly. Leadership rather than

management is needed to shape them (Watson, in Cox et al., 2019). The 7S Model emphasizes the interconnection of the seven elements and shows how changing one, requires changes in the others. The strength of the model is the weight it gives to alignment of several factors underlying corporate performance.

There have been numerous adaptions of the 7S Model. For example, Higgins (in Cox et al., 2019) proposed that Skills should be replaced by the broader category of reSources, which includes Staff skills, but also technology and money. Higgins (in Cox et al., 2019) considered that Staff already encompasses Skills. The category of reSources overlaps this too, however, it does draw attention to important missing elements of resources within an organization, which is relevant for this study having in mind the SFA model and its feasibility criteria factors.

2.2.2.5. BMC

For this research, solely using the 7S Model will not be enough for the internal analysis. First, the 7S model does not explain how the enterprise works in general, which is required information for this study. Second, since the internal analysis plays a very important role in the overall study, it must be as extensive as possible. Therefore, an additional model should be used.

Today, business models often focus on the company level perspective and can "can be understood as a link between future planning (strategy) and the operative implementation (process management)" (Wirtz, Pistoia, Ullrich and Gottel as cited in Benjaminsson, Kronholm and Erlandsson, 2019). Margretta (in Benjaminsson et al., 2019) described business models as stories that explain how enterprises work, as well as Osterwalder, Pigneur and Tucci (in Benjaminsson et al., 2019) and Osterwalder and Pigneur (in Benjaminsson et al., 2019) who defined business models as a description of how companies create, market, and deliver value to customers, and how this value is to be captured in profitable revenue streams.

The preferred number of components to use when characterizing a business model has differed considerably between authors, with some listing only two or three components while others have included up to nine (Morris, Schindehutte & Allen; Wirtz et al., in Benjaminsson et al., 2019). Osterwalder and Pigneur (in Benjaminsson et al., 2019), while aspiring to create a model that encompassed all aspects of the business but was still easy to use and understand in practice, developed the BMC comprising nine elements (Annex B, Figure B.3): (1) Customers, (2) Customer relationships, (3) Channels, (4) Value proposition, (5) Costs, (6) Revenues, (7) Key resources, (8) Key activities and (9) Key partners. The components are assembled around four core elements: (1) The firm its value proposition (product/service), (2) Customers, (3) Infrastructure, and (4) Finances. According to Joyce and Paquin (as cited in Benjaminsson et al., 2019), the "BMC can help users visually represent the elements of a business model and the potential interconnections and impacts on value creation".

For this research, the BMC will be used in the internal analysis due to its relevance and practical

use. The outcome will be used as an input for the SWOT analysis, to perform the feasibility and acceptability analysis within the SFA model (internal capabilities and acceptability of stakeholder and clients) and as an input for the rest of the microenvironment analysis (customer analysis and industry analysis).

2.2.2.6. 6Ws of Ferrell

The external analysis serves as a base for the opportunities and threats of the SWOT analysis. The following analyses will be performed, covering both the micro and macroenvironment: (1) Industry analysis, (2) Market analysis, (3) Customer analysis, (4) Competitor analysis and (5) Macroenvironment analysis. Theoretical models that will strengthen the external analyses of this research are the 6W from Ferrell and the DESTEP framework.

If you want to succeed as a company in today's competitive marketplace, you must be customer focused. Within companies, there is a growing search for deeper insights – analytical and intuitive, predictive, and personal – to be relevant in finding, engaging, and growing with the best customers over time (Fisk, in Janse 2019). Building a positive customer experience (customer-focus) is a crucial feature towards customer recognition, loyalty, and profits. Enterprises must win customers from competitors and then engage and grow them by delivering greater value. Taking all of this into account, it can be stated that companies should understand customer needs and wants first to build the best customer experience possible. Thus, solid marketing requires careful customer analysis.

To carry out a clear and comprehensive customer analysis, a tool that supports a good indication of what the analysis should answer can be considered useful. Therefore, this study will use the 6Ws of Ferrell (in Janse, 2019) as a base in both the online survey format and creation of three personas. This tool provides insight into the customer value and the wants and needs of the customers. Besides, it categorises various customer segments and the attractiveness of the identified segments (segment size and growth potentials, attractiveness and potential profitability, resources and skills of the organization, compatibility with the organizations' objectives and cost of reaching the market). The questions of the 6W model of Ferrell are: (1) Who are the current and potential customers? (2) What do current and potential customers do with the product or service? (3) Where do current and potential customers purchase the product or service? (4) When do current and potential customers purchase the product or service? (5) Why do our current and potential customers purchase the product or service? and (6) Why do our current and potential customers not purchase our products?

2.2.2.7. DESTEP framework

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2015), the macroenvironment is an environment that consists of variables that are beyond the control of an organization, but which necessitate analysis to readjust corporate and marketing strategy to shifting business environments. The major forces in the macroenvironment are believed to be political, economic, social, technological, legal, ecological, demographical, ethical, and regulatory (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). The objective of a

macroenvironment analysis, is to help organizations identify major developments and future implications and is performed in combination with the SWOT analysis to identify likely threats to the organization its operations and the opportunities to further expansion (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015).

The trick to remember the macro variables is by using the different nomenclature of analytical tools, tools such as: PEST, PESTEL or PESTLE or DESTEP. For this study, the DESTEP framework covers the most elements that are relevant. When developing a marketing strategy for SPH in Spain, the macroenvironment must be analysed as comprehensive as possible. However, when performing the macroenvironmental analysis, not all elements will be as relevant for the company and need to get the same amount of attention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research approach

There are two main research approaches: the deductive and inductive method. Using a deductive method revolves around testing a theory, whereas inductive regards the drafting of a theory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The deductive approach will be used during this research, as in this research existing models and theories will be applied.

3.2. Research method

The research method chosen determines the way in which the main questions will be answered. Three forms of research are described by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012): descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory research. For this study, exploratory research – defining unclear problems, figuring out the 'lay of land' with respect to a particular topic and answering question like what, why and how – is best suited as there is a willingness to market the company in a new market, but there is no knowledge available yet how this should be done.

3.3. Time horizons

The duration of data collection for a research is called time horizon. Two different types of time horizons can be distinguished: cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Saunders et al., 2009). Longitudinal studies are repeated over an extended period. Cross-sectional studies are limited to a specific time frame. For this research, the cross-sectional time horizon is used.

3.4. Field and desk research

Using existing sources that are already available about a certain subject can be described as desk research (Saunders et al., 2012) and is a synonym for secondary research. It can be divided into internal and external desk research. Literature study is like desk research and is necessary to theoretically substantiate this research.

To gather information outside the organisation about a specific subject, can be described as field research (Saunders et al., 2012) and is a synonym for primary research. It is a type of research that requires the researcher to participate directly in the data-gathering process and gives the researcher absolute ownership of the data collected.

3.5. Qualitative vs. quantitative research

To answer the main-and sub questions, it is essential to formulate a clear strategy that fits the research method. There are two types of primary research: qualitative and quantitative. According to Creswell and Clark (2017) qualitative research concerns research without numerical data; it has open-ended information. Quantitative research concerns the process of collecting numerical data; it has close-ended information (Creswell & Clark, 2017). When using a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection, it is

called triangulation (Saunders et al., 2012). Creswell and Clark (2017) argue that the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative methods can be overcome by using more than one method. They state that triangulation provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research question than using solely one method of data analysis. The main purpose of triangulation is to gain good understanding from different perspectives of a research question and to increase the level of knowledge about something. In addition, triangulation is to strengthen the researcher his or her standpoint from various aspects, instead of cross-checking data from multiple methods and confirming if it is correct or not. For this research, both qualitative and quantitative research methods will be applied due to the many advantages as stated above.

3.6. Research strategy

To estimate which research method impacts each sub-question individually, a research matrix (Annex B, Table B.4) has been created. This research matrix shows the relating theory and/or method of research.

3.6.1. In-depth interviews

As a form of qualitative research, an in-depth interview will be carried out using a list of topics and some open-ended questions. This semi structured type of in-depth interviews will give respondents the freedom to add valuable and relevant information (Saunders et al., 2009). This type of interview has been chosen to ask questions for clarifying and gathering more specific information. The interview will offer the researcher the opportunity to uncover information that is probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations. All in-depth interview questions can be found in Annex G, Section 1. The names, company names, functions, and contact details of the person being interviewed or persons who have been personally spoken to, are described in Annex F. Furthermore, the date, method of approach and part of the research for which information will be used is included.

3.6.2. Surveys

Two surveys as a form of quantitative research will be used in this study, a customer analysis survey (Survey 1) and a SFA model analysis survey (Survey 2). "Surveys involve interviews with a large number of respondents using a predesigned questionnaire" (Malhorta in Burns & Bush, 2006, p.234). "Compared with observation or other qualitative methods, survey methods offer five advantages relevant to this study: (1) Standardization, (2) Ease of administration, (3) Ability to tap the 'unseen', (4) Suitability to tabulation and statistical analysis and (5) Sensitivity to subgroup differences" (Burns & Bush, 2006, p.235).

3.6.2.1. Survey 1: Customer analysis

Survey 1 will be used to gain insight into the wishes, needs and consumer behaviour of potential customers in the Spanish market. The questions of Survey 1 (Annex H, Section 3) will be based on

the 6W principle of Ferrell. The questions will be set up after the student performed the internal analysis and external analysis as comprehensive as possible, since this information is relevant to implement in the questionnaire. Survey 1 will be an online self-administered survey in which the respondent completes the survey on his or her own using SurveyMonkey. This mode of collecting survey information from respondents is chosen due to the current pandemic situation, the ease of creating and posting, the limited time available for this research, the fast turnaround, and the computer data file results. The major disadvantage is that respondents must have access to internet, but nowadays almost everyone does. The survey will be in Spanish.

3.6.2.2. Survey 2: SFA model analysis

To get the best fitting marketing strategy possible, several employees from SPH will be send Survey 2 (both formats) to determine: (1) The weighting scales per SFA factor and (2) The score per SFA factor per strategic option. Survey 2 will be a self-administered survey in English, in which the respondent completes the survey on his or her own via E-Mail. Both survey formats can be found in Annex J, Section 2. First, the weighting scales per SFA factor will be determined by asking the employees to score the importance of every separate SFA factor for SPH when deciding on the best marketing strategy. In the end, the researcher will base the weighing factors on the average score of importance per SFA factor. Secondly, the researcher will ask the employees to score each strategic option on all SFA factors. In the end, the researcher will be able to calculate the total scores per strategic option by multiplying the total number of points by the weighing factors set. To apply the SFA model as carefully as possible to find the best fitting marketing strategy for SPH, it is important to link the correct weighting to the SFA factors from SPH' perspective and to ask the employees themselves to score each strategic option.

3.6.2.3. Population specifications and sample sizes

In consultation with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado, the population for Survey 1 can be defined as 'Spanish residents (men and women) who travel to Portugal'. Based on internal data coming from SPH, it can be stated that Portugal welcomed 2.285.829 Spanish Guests in 2019, which was the latest available data. Besides, using numbers from 2020 will not be representative due to covid19. For Survey 1, snowball sampling will be used. The sample size of the respondents of Survey 1 must be 385 with a confidence interval of 95% and an error margin of 5%. The calculation of the sample size can be found in Annex H, Section 1.

For Survey 2, the population can be defined as 'Three out of the total five employees working on the project SPH[1]'. For Survey 2, no sampling will be used since the population specification is very small and no discussion is possible.

---

1 This excludes both Ms. Catarina Conceição and the fifth employee who has not been involved at all.

3.7. Data analysis method

Of primary importance is the compilation of the data into a summary report to identify common themes. All interviews will first be completely transcribed. Afterwards, the researcher will look for common themes across the transcripts. All themes that have become apparent will be listed and any verbatim responses and/or significant opinion or comment will be noted in the report to support the researcher her conclusions. All quantitative data resulting from Survey 1 will be analysed through the paid membership on SurveyMonkey. The data derived from Survey 2 only needs a calculation which can be performed by the researcher herself, due to the small number of answers.

3.8. Safeguarding of the research quality

3.8.1. Ethics

Research ethics are "The standards of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of a research project, or who are affected by it." (Saunders et. al., 2012, p. 680). To respect the rights of a subject, the aim of the research, the use of the obtained data and who will have access to this data will be clearly communicated. Consequently, the subject voluntarily decides whether to give entire data, to deny certain data, to withdraw from giving data or to remain anonymous. Additionally, to respect the dignity of a subject, any form of harm will be avoided, and any misuse or misinterpretation of data will be overcome by double-checking data with either the company supervisor of the researcher or the subject before publishing.

3.8.2. Research quality

The research quality plays a central role throughout all steps of the research process, from the beginning of a research question and data collection to the analysis and presentation of the results of this research. To assess a research its quality, one should consider both reliability and validity (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.8.3. Reliability

"Reliability means the repeatability of the research; the extent to which the research is free from errors. It is the extent to which data collection techniques will provide the researcher with consistent findings. In other words, similar conclusions must be formed by other researchers when 'repeating' research" (Saunders et.al. 2012, p.680). "There are four different threats to reliability (Saunders et al., 2012, p.681): (1) Participant error; situation where the participant its performance is affected, (2) Participant bias; situation where a false response is given due to fear, (3) Researcher error; situation where the researcher its performance is affected, and the research outcome will be unreliable, and (4) Researcher bias; wrong interpretation of the interview replies, which could affect the reliability of the research."

The participant and researcher error can be limited with conducting the interviews in a favourable setting, for example making use of good working technology and conducting the research method at a

suitable moment for all parties. This also relates to the online and email surveys, since participant error can be limited as respondents can decide when the most convenient moment is for them to answer. In addition, by recording the interview, both the researcher error and bias can be reduced as it allows the researcher to re-listen the interview. In addition, the conditions of the research will be standardized, meaning that the circumstances are being kept as consistent as possible to reduce the influence of external factors that might create variation in any of the results. To reduce the participant bias, agreements will be made about the anonymity of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher bias will be limited by asking Mrs. Rita Alves Machado to review and discuss the outcomes afterwards.

3.8.4. Validity

Validity refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure. Both the internal and external validity will be considered.

3.8.4.1. Internal validity

Internal validity says something about the quality of the research design of the study. A research is internally valid if the correct conclusions can be drawn based on the chosen research methods. To assure the internal validity, at first, both surveys will be tested first with an individual who represents the target group. After testing, the researcher will take all the feedback into account and adjust the questionnaires if needed. The semi-structured interview questions will also be double checked with someone before performing. Secondly, by conducting an in-depth semi structured interview, mutual understanding can be ensured as the interviewer may rephrase or simplify questions that were not understood by her interviewee. As a result, more appropriate answers and, subsequently, more accurate data will be reached. Thirdly, many questions and topics are based on examined theoretical models that have been proven applicable in drafting a marketing strategy. Fourthly, by using triangulation, systematic errors (or 'bias') will be limited as much as possible which assures internal validity. Finally, "in order to minimise any negative influence on the internal validity of research results; an understanding of the researcher's values is of great importance" (Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 137-139). Consequently, the values that the researcher will uphold while conducting this research, are stated in Annex C. The statement forms a good encapsulation of how integrity is established during this research, including objectivity and scepticism in validating research results and conclusions.

3.8.4.2. External validity

The external validity is the degree to which the conclusions of the research can be generalized to the entire population or to other stations, groups or persons that have been studied and is less relevant for the qualitative research methods but for the quantitative one. In this research, external validity is assured by carefully defining the sample size for the questionnaire using the simple random sampling technique which guarantees that every member of the population has an equal chance of being

selected into the sample and therefore, the resulting sample, no matter what the size is, will be a valid representation of the population.

4. Information presentation and analysis

4.1. Internal analysis

4.1.1. BMC

Based on both the interview with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3), Vice President (VP) Sales and Marketing of Great Hotels of the World and working on SPH, and one of the monthly meetings with four employees also working on SPH (personal communication, 09 December 2020), the BMC (Figure 4.1) and 7S Model have been completed. In addition, the strengths and weaknesses of SPH have been identified. This all forms the internal analysis and is needed as input for the SWOT analysis.

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
Key partners from the consumer perspective: customer-oriented partners and media partners. Galp, CTT, Automovel club de Portugal, Rede de Emergencia Alimentar, Radio Comercial, M80 Radio, Delta Cafés, EuropCar, Expresso Newspaper and different influencers and journalists/online blogs (press trips). Key partners from the business perspective: the 147 listings represented by SPH. Working on: partnerships from the business perspective. One partner to improve the metasearch and one with Hotelshop as a hotel supplier. Plans: first setting up more customer-oriented partnerships with big partners who have massive communication channels to create volume and build the brand. Then, improving the business-oriented partnerships.	All accommodations are listed on the website of SPH but linked to the GuestCentric booking engine. SPH can be considered as an external marketing and sales brand with whom the listings, who are all GuestCentric clients, connect with. Bookings are made directly on SPH's website but the customer is using the GuestCentric booking engine.	SPH shows a curated selection of different types of small accommodation online that all meet certain criteria. The website shows in a clear way which listings are currently open and what their health and safety status is. Customers can book via the website or by using the phone helpline. Other features SPH offers are the newsletter, a cash-back program and gift vouchers. SPH is solving the customer problem of having too many options nowadays and too little time available but wanting to book quickly and save time. SPH makes customers feel special. Besides, SPH embraces sustainability as it supports both the national economy and small businesses and drives the trend of travelling with a purpose and fulfils the need of completely switching off. Customers need trust and personal contact, which they can get from SPH.	Cash-back program called Guestbook with a 5% cashback that customers can load on their PayPal, ITunes or Mastercard E-Gift or give to charity. It can be considered as the base of a loyalty program but is far from a loyalty program yet. To make use of this cashback program, people need to sign up via the website and create an account.	Middle aged couples, families, and groups of friends in their late 20s early 30s but with the probability of this age coming down when moving to international markets. For now, SPH focuses on the Portuguese market only.
	Key Resources The IT-system responsible for hosting and designing the entire website and mobile-responsive version, the booking engine of GuestCentric, helpline via mobile phone, and GuestBook as a cashback system that can serve as a loyalty program one day.		**Channels** All social media channels of SPH, which are currently only Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Besides, all the consumer-perspective partnerships as mentioned under 'Key Partners'.	
Cost Structure Since SPH is a project from GuestCentric, there are no direct costs involved. The costs that are linked to SPH are the employees working on the project and the hosted website plus its features.		**Revenue Streams** SPH works with a commission base on bookings only.		

Figure 4.1. BMC of SPH.

4.1.2. 7S Model

Due to overlap with the BMC, not every single component of the 7S model will be mentioned.

Structure. According to Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3) five employees of Great Hotels of The World, which is part of GuestCentric, are working on the project SPH but none of them fulltime. In addition to these five employees, there are other people of GuestCentric jumping in and out. For example, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GuestCentric indirectly fulfils the role of being the CEO of SPH.

Strategy. Based on all information given by Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3) and after double checking with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado over the phone (personal communication, 04 December 2020), SPH its strategy can be defined as follows: "*Offering the largest curated selection of different types of small accommodations in Portugal, filtered by high-quality standards*

that can be booked easily based on relevant up-to-date information, and that offers guests a personal and meaningful experience."

According to Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3) and one of the monthly meetings with the four employees (personal communication, 09 December 2020), the main strategic objectives for SPH are:

1. Setting-up SPH as a brand on Metasearch in 2021.
2. Setting-up SPH as a brand on the main Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) such as Expedia and Booking.com in 2021.
3. Improving the voucher program in 2021.
4. Strengthening the relationship with its member listings in 2021.
5. Offering the website in English in 2021.
6. Growing to 200 listings in 2021.
7. Rolling out services that listings must pay for in 2021.
8. Receiving revenue from partners that want to supply the registered listings of SPH in 2021.

According to Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3), SPH has two types of competitive advantages: one from the customer perspective and one from the business perspective. "In terms of business, the value they see in us is much greater, because they are small. Because they cannot do all these things by themselves. They cannot have a phone line, professional partnerships, being signed up left, right and centre, they do not have their own PR, they cannot launch their own gift vouchers" (Mrs. Rita Alves Machado, Annex G, Section 2 and 3). With other words, SPH its competitive advantage from a business perspective concerns all the relevant features that are valuable for small listings but hard to have themselves due to limited resources. SPH offers their listings wider exposure, brand recognition, cross-sell between hotels, media opportunities and partnerships. Besides, the exclusive benefits that the listings can offer their guests through SPH are the 5% cashback program and the fact that 1% of the bookings goes to Rede Emergência Alimentar - Banco Alimentar contra a Fome[2]. In terms of the customer perspective, the competitive advantages of SPH are the direct bookings and flexibility of cancellations and changes, the level of trust provided through all the listing criteria used by SPH, the exclusive benefits including the 5% cashback program and other partnerships and besides, the strong focus on improving the national economy. "It is the only hotel chain that we know off that has such a strong focus on helping the economy, 1% of our revenue goes directly to the foodbank in Portugal and people really appreciate that. Not just now, I think right now people are more sensitive to all their local economies, so, but I think again that is here to stay" (Mrs. Rita Alves Machado, Annex G, Section 2 and 3). Last, the sense of travelling with a purpose, making

---

[2] Portuguese charity who aims to allow taking food to those who need it and thus supporting those who have low economic resources and are unable to bear the cost of food that is usually delivered by social responses (Banco Alimentar, 2020).

a difference by helping a small company and at the same time feeling special, wanted, and receiving personal attention while switching off and enjoy complete relaxation in a nice environment, are competitive advantages of SPH.

Style. The management style of SPH can be described as a 'test-and-adapt' style, where ideas are being thrown out, tested, and gone ahead. SPH embraces a style of just doing, not thinking too much but trying out and be quick, responding to the environment and situation, otherwise the moment is gone. "Cause, we are essentially tech, we throw out some ideas, we see if they work and we go ahead. It is a very much test-and-adapt style" (Mrs. Rita Alves Machado, Annex G, Section 2 and 3).

Staff. Since SPH is considered as a start-up project and can make use of all the knowledge available within both Great Hotels of the World and GuestCentric, there are no specific positions covered within the team of SPH. However, relevant to mention are the positions of the different employees working for Great Hotels of the World that are intensively involved with SPH: VP Sales and Marketing, Content Developer, Director of Account Management, Marketing Assistant and Group Desk Executive. Instead of competencies, the team is mainly missing time, manpower and budget.

4.1.3. Strengths and Weaknesses

All identified strengths and weaknesses can be found in the SWOT analysis (chapter 5.1.1). The strengths and weaknesses have been both specifically discussed with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (Annex G, Section 2 and 3) and identified by the student based on all the information given throughout the interview with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado and during the monthly meetings with the staff.

4.2. Macroenvironment analysis

4.2.1. Demographic

4.2.1.1. Population, gender, and age.

The resident population in Spain increased by 392.921 people in 2019 and stood at 47.329.981 inhabitants on the 1st of January 2020, of which 24.132.356 women and 23.197.625 men (INE, 2020). When looking at the age groups [3] on the 1st of January 2020, the numbers in Spain are as shown in Annex B, Table B.5. The average age in Spain in 2019 was 44 years old (INE, 2020). The life expectancy of men is 80,87 years, of women 86,22 years and of both genders together 83,59 years old (INE, 2020).

---

[3] Based on the different generations. A generation is a group of people born around the same time and raised around the same place. Generations exhibit similar preferences – because they experienced similar trends at approximately the same life stage and through similar channels (Centre for Generational Kinetics (CGK), 2020). Looking at people through a generational lens offers useful predictability for those trying to reach, inform, or persuade a large cross-section of a population which is relevant for this study (CGK, 2020).

4.2.1.2. Ethnicity

On the first of January 2020, there were 5.235.375 foreign nationals according to INE (2020) subdivided as Annex B, Table B.6. shows.

4.2.1.3. Gross Domestic Product Per Capita.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per Capita in Spain in 2019 was 29.613.7 US Dollars (USD) (World Bank Group, 2020). To put it in contrast, it is relevant to compare the Spanish GDP Per Capita with those countries that form the top 5 of Number (No.) of Nights and No. of Guests in Vacation Rentals in Portugal 2018-2019 (Personal data SPH, 2020). This includes the United Kingdom (42.300.3 USD), Germany (46.258.9 USD), France (40.493.9 USD), Brazil (8.717.2 USD) and the United States (65.118.4 USD) (World Bank Group, 2020). Besides, the Portuguese GDP Per Capita (23.145.0 USD) is relevant to mention since they form the No. 1 in terms of overnight stays and guests in Portugal 2018-2019 plus SPH only targeted the domestic market so far.

4.2.2. Socio-cultural

According to research done by Google together with Ipsos MediaCT (2015) to study how language and culture influence brand consideration, trends in mobile habits and variables that impact purchasing decisions, different interesting insights were found about the Spanish. First, the Spanish consumers are online and on mobile as chapter 4.2.3., explains elaborately. Second, cultural relevance drives engagement and influence. To engage with the Spanish in a meaningful way, culture must be integrated. For the Spanish, it is important for a website its content to be culturally relevant when they are gathering information about a purchase. This applies to ads, too. More Spanish pay attention to an ad when it includes aspects of their culture, and they feel more favourable about a brand that aims to be culturally relevant. This includes speaking to the Spanish cultural sensibilities and include what the Spanish care about. Besides, it was found that the language does matter a lot in Spain and providing Spanish content shows you want to engage with them. In addition, based on the research done by Google and Ipsos MediaCT (2015) it was found that Hispanics really enjoy visuals in which the Hispanic culture is being reflected in a tasteful and identifiable way. In addition, Hispanics value colourful and vibrant entertainment online that appeals to them culturally. Finally, the Spanish enjoy hearing from YouTube creators or other online influencers.

4.2.2.1. Language

When exporting products or services to Spain via an online platform, it is of utmost importance that companies provide their website in Spanish[4]. This will increase the sales potential for businesses as they can reach a very broad potential target group (Webinterpret, 2019). The use of English would

---

[4] In Spain there are five official languages (Castilian, Catalan, Basque, Galician and Aranese) and two non-official languages (Asturian and Aragonese). Castilian / Spanish is Spain's only official national language. The remaining four are official regional languages, which are also the dominant language in some areas.

also be an option. Slowly but steadily, the knowledge of English is increasing in Spain. However, they will probably opt for Spanish.

4.2.2.2. Cultural dimensions

Hofstede his framework is an interpretation of the unstructured idea of culture that turned them into a tractable construct suitable to empirical research (Nakata, 2009). His study is one of the widely applied and referred to within the social sciences and business disciplines including marketing community (Fulford, 2001). For Spain, the scores of Hofstede his framework can be found in Annex B, Figure B.7. The main conclusions from Hofstede his framework for Spain are: (1) Spain has a hierarchical society in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification, (2) Spain is collectivist, however compared with other areas of the world (outside Europe) clearly seen as individualists, (3) Spain is not masculine nor feminine but a country where the key word is consensus; polarization is not well considered or excessive competitiveness appreciated, it is the country opposite to 'the winner takes it all', (4) Spain scores the highest on Uncertainty Avoidance; people like to have rules for everything and changes cause stress, but at the same time they are obliged to avoid rules and laws that make life more complex, (5) Spanish people like to live in the moment without a great concern about the future, there is a need for clear structures and well-defined rules prevailing against more pragmatic and relaxed approaches to life, particularly in the long term and (6) Spain is not an indulgent society; the Spanish society tends to cynicism and pessimism and they do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires.

4.2.2.3. Values and people

Although predominantly conservative, the Spanish have always shown radical contrasts. While in many ways it remains a traditional society, particularly regarding religion, minorities, and the status of women, in other areas the country has led progressive changes over recent decades. For example, it was one of the first countries to legalize same-sex marriages in 2005 and is considered one of the most LGBTQ-friendly countries in the world today. Personal character and integrity are highly valued traits, as is modesty and trust. The family is the central social unit in Spain and holds a special place within the Spanish values. It is a symbol of safety, integrity, recognition and above all, love. Despite the social changes that the family model has experienced within the last few years, Spaniards still turn to family as their first social reference. What is noteworthy is the tendency of Spanish shoppers to turn to their friends and family for recommendations before making any purchase. Like many collectivists' cultures, the Spanish society deeply values group affiliation. However, this does not extend to ideas of greater social responsibility; Spaniards can also exhibit a fierce individualism and are distrustful of the government and authority. Spain is considered a fluid time culture, which places more importance on personal relationships than on deadlines, which are considered flexible. Sports are very important to the Spaniards, like food, local and regional festivities, holidays, music, art, and

other traditions. Among the Spaniards, the happiness of the individual is much more important than money. Every moment should be cherished and spent with loved ones as much as possible.

4.2.3. Technological

When looking at the essential headline data to understand the mobile, internet and social media use in Spain, it can be concluded that in January 2020 the total population consists of 47.33 million with an urbanisation rate of 80%, the unique mobile phone users are 54.11 million vs. the population with a percentage of 116, the internet users consist of 42.40 million with a penetration rate of 91% and the active social media users are 29.00 million with a penetration of 62% (Hootsuite, 2020). The year-on-year change (Jan. 2019 vs. Jan 2020) in the essential indicators in Spain of digital adoption are: +0.07% of the total population, -0.3% of unique mobile phone users, +4.3% of internet users and +3.1% of active social media users (Hootsuite, 2020). When looking at both the global and Spanish penetration rates, it can be concluded that Spain has a much higher internet, mobile and social media use than the average worldwide. However, when comparing the year-on-year growth it can be concluded that the digital adoption in Spain is increasing less rapidly than the one globally, especially regarding the mobile phone users. This argument can be invalidated though by the fact that Spain is already well ahead of the global average.

4.2.3.1. Device ownership in Spain

The most popular device among Spaniards [5] is the mobile phone/smart phone (95%/94%), followed by a laptop or desktop computer (85%), a tablet (57%) and smart watches (25%) (Hootsuite, 2020).

4.2.3.2. Daily time spent with media

Spaniards [6] spend on average most time on the internet (5h 41m), followed by watching television (3h 11m) and social media (1h 51m) (Hootsuite, 2020).

4.2.3.3. Mobile internet use

From the total number of internet users in Spain (42.40 million), 91% uses mobile internet (38.50 million). The share of all internet users accessing via smartphones in Spain is 90% and the average daily time spent using the internet on mobile devices is 2h 34m (Hootsuite, 2020).

4.2.3.4. Share of web traffic by device

When looking at each device its share of total web pages served to web browsers, the most interesting conclusion is that the share of mobile phones increased enormously throughout 2019, whereas the laptop/desktop and tablet computers share decreased strongly in Spain.

---

[5] Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who own each kind of device.
[6] Internet users aged 16 to 64.

4.2.3.5. Online content activities

In Spain, the online content activity performed the most [7] in 2019 was watching online videos (94%), followed by listening to music streaming services (57%), listening to online radio stations (46%), watching vlogs (40%), and listening to podcasts (38%) (Hootsuite, 2020).

4.2.3.6. Most-used social media platforms

In Spain, the top 10 most-used social media platforms differ from the worldwide ranking. YouTube is the number one (87%), followed by WhatsApp (86%), Facebook (79%), Instagram (65%), Twitter (53%), Facebook Messenger (46%), LinkedIn (35%), Pinterest (35%), Skype (28%) and Snapchat (21%).

4.2.3.7. Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/LinkedIn audience overview

The potential number of people that marketers can reach through adverts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn in Spain is being expressed by Hootsuite (2020) which can be relevant for this study (Annex B, Table B.8). Looking at Annex B, Table B.8., it can be concluded that in Spain, the growth in advertising reach is the strongest on LinkedIn while Twitter is experiencing a decline. In terms of the actual number of people that can be reached, Facebook is still the number one. However, considering the quarter-on-quarter changes in advertising reach, there is a high chance of Instagram and LinkedIn becoming more and more influential.

4.2.3.8. Uses of mobile apps by category

When zooming in on the actual mobile apps being used the most by Spaniards[8], it can be concluded that the most popular are chat apps (93%), followed by social networking apps (92%), map apps (81%), entertainment or video apps (78%), shopping apps (69%), music apps (53%), games (48%), banking apps (44%), health and fitness apps (26%) and dating and friendship apps (8.5%) (Hootsuite, 2020).

4.2.3.9. Most-used mobile apps in Spain (active users)

In addition to the most-used social media platforms, Hootsuite (2020) published the most-used mobile apps in Spain by average monthly active users throughout 2019. In Spain, WhatsApp messenger is the most-used mobile app, followed by Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Amazon, Spotify, Twitter, Wallapop, Shazam and Netflix.

4.2.3.10. E-Commerce spends by category

Interesting as well for SPH is to find out what the Spaniards spend their money on online. Throughout 2019, the highest expenditure was on travel (including accommodation) (25.86 billion USD), followed by fashion and beauty (5.08 billion USD), electronics and physical media (5.45 billion

---

[7] Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who consume each kind of content via the internet each month.
[8] Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who report using each type of mobile app each month.

USD), toys, do-it-yourself, and hobbies (3.06 billion USD) and food and personal care (2.30 billion dollars). Each category grew over 2019 in terms of total amount spent in Spain. The food and personal care experienced the strongest growth (+18%), followed by the furniture and appliances (+18%), the fashion and beauty category (+15%), electronics and physical media (+12%) and travel including accommodation (+8.4%).

4.2.3.11. Ecommerce purchases by payment method
In Spain, the most used online payment method is by credit card (49%), followed by E-wallet (22%), bank transfer (13%), cash (11%) or other methods (5.0%).

4.2.3.12. Sources of new brand discovery
Since SPH will be a new online brand in Spain, it is relevant to know how the Spaniards[9] discover new brands and products via each channel. In Spain, most new brands are found through search engines (41%), followed by ads on television (38%), word-of-mouth recommendations (36%), retail websites (31%), product brochures or catalogues (29%), brand or product websites (28%), ads in social media (26%), ads on websites (25%), recommendations or comments on social media (23%) and tv shows or films (22%).

4.2.4. Economic, technological, socio-cultural, and political: covid19 and the impact on Spain
Countries around the world are in uncharted territory. The emergence and spread of covid19 has touched every facet of society, and the scale of the humanitarian crisis has been matched by widespread economic disruption. Covid19 will have a deep impact on Spain its economy and the survival rates of companies. To safeguard both lives and livelihoods, public- and private-sector leaders must act swiftly in a coordinated effort.

4.2.4.1. Spain its pre-crisis starting point
A country its ability to weather the pandemic depends greatly on the fiscal condition of its public sector, businesses, and households. In the approximately ten years following Spain its previous financial crisis, businesses showed significantly lower indebtedness than they did in 2007, putting them close to the European average. Spanish households also reduced their debt levels during this period. However, the government followed a different trajectory: from 2007 to 2018, the public sector increased its ratio of debt to GDP by more than 50 percentage points and now exceeds the average sovereign indebtedness in Europe by almost 20 percentage points. Although companies had a better pre-crisis starting point, three warning signs should be noted when dealing with the current crisis: (1) The Spanish economy is more dependent on tourism than other European economies, (2) The Spanish business structure relies heavily on small and medium enterprises and (3) Although almost all sectors

---

[9] Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who say they discover new brands and products via each channel.

have better capital and liquidity positions now than they did in 2007, some of them may be less resilient in the face of the crisis because of the structural levels at which they operate.

4.2.4.2. Impact on different sectors

Oxford Economics and McKinsey (2020) conducted analyses and developed different macroeconomic scenarios to better understand the impact of the pandemic. It is estimated that Spain its GDP could fall, in real terms, by 5.7% to 14.5% in 2020, by 5.2% to 11.1% in the Eurozone and by 2.7% to 6.5% in the world. These ranges reflect the fact that the pandemic will have a pronounced impact across countries. It is being assumed that Spain its economy will recover (defined as returning to its pre-crisis GDP) by the end of 2023. Most sources agree on the severity of the 2020 GDP shock, but the recovery rate in 2021 and onward is unclear. The impact of covid19 on revenues in Spain will vary by sector, with slower recovery times likely for sectors suffering stronger shocks. In aggregate, and without considering any mitigating actions by the public sector, the covid19 pandemic could cause more than a threefold increase in the rate of default for Spanish companies in 2020. A heavy economic shock implies that many companies may not be able to continue their operations because of not only short-term liquidity problems but also structural capital and debt positions. And every bar, restaurant, store, and other company that closes will have a broader impact on the community. In response, companies in all sectors should plot a strategy informed by their starting points and income shock and the recovery time each sector faces. Public-sector involvement will also be crucial.

4.2.4.3. The government its response to date

Governments around the world have responded to the pandemic by launching sizable stimulus packages to protect lives and livelihoods. For now, the magnitude of the Spanish government its response has been in line with that of other advanced economies: its announced package of measures is equal to about 16% of GDP (versus 15% in France and Portugal, 21% in Germany, and 22% in Italy). However, the stimulus was delivered in the context of a public sector that, given its greater debt, enjoys less room to manoeuvre than other European countries do. Spain should also explore other initiatives and adopt additional measures.

4.2.4.4. The acceleration of trends likely to shape the next normal

Covid19 is expected to cause a permanent shift in the behaviour of societies and economic agents. Since the pandemic started, McKinsey has been tracking consumer sentiment every two weeks. The most relevant outcomes for this study can be found in Chapter 4.5.2. In the coming months, regaining consumers' confidence may be the key to accelerating consumption and speeding up the recovery. In addition, covid19 has already spawned or accelerated the following trends worldwide, including in Spain that may continue to exist or even grow: (1) Rise of contact-free economy and digitization in three areas in particular; e-commerce, telemedicine, and the overall automation of work, (2) Effective remote working for occupations that can be done off-site, which will require additional training,

collaboration, flexibility, and accountability of the workforce, (3) Increasing focus on resilience as well as efficiency and speed of operations, which will require comprehensive reviews of supply chains, (4) Closer scrutiny of businesses, which will have to work more on the 'triple bottom line' (People, Planet, Profit)and keep embedding sustainability and purpose as sources of competitive advantage, (5) More government intervention in the economy, (6) A stronger push to redefine global and local public health and safety policies and investments and (7) An opportunity to embrace the level of innovation and speed that the crisis catalysed across industries.

The true impact of these trends will be known only in the future, but they will help to shape the next normal, and business leaders will need to be ready. In Spain, the impact of the contact-free economy and accelerated digitization has been significant, and likely will continue to be. As the number of first-time adopters of products and services indicates, digitization has been growing during the crisis. In the short term, however, the widespread contraction of consumption due to lockdown measures may be overshadowing digital dynamics that may require additional time to emerge. In the medium and longer terms, though, shopping, learning, and habits of interaction may take new shapes as Spain adapts to the next normal.

4.3. Market analysis

4.3.1. Market size

Statista (2020) states that in 2019, 20.12 million outbound trips were made by Spanish households and 173.75 million domestic ones (Annex B, Figure B.9). This involves travelling outside of the usual environment, including at least one overnight stay but not exceeding a year, irrespective of the purpose. From 2013-2018, both the number of outbound and domestic trips among Spanish households increased. In 2019, however, the number of domestic trips decreased while the outbound trips increased.

In 2019, most of both outbound and domestic trips taken by residents of Spain were made for leisure and holiday purposes (Statista, 2020) (Annex B, Figure B.10). From the 20.12 million outbound trips in 2019, 12.5 million trips were made for leisure, recreation and holiday purposes among the Spanish households, followed by 4.6 million to visit family and friends, 2.2 million for business and work and 0.81 million for other reasons[10].

In order to define the market size in a better way for SPH, data has been used showing the No. of Nights and No. of Guests in vacation rentals by type and market, including indication of annual variation for 2018-2019 for Portugal (Internal data, 2020). The No. of Nights for The Spaniards, who took fourth place in Portugal, were 4.881.685 in 2018 and 5.250.340 in 2019, which resulted in a growth of 7.55% in 2019. The No. of Spanish Guests was 2.069.645 in 2018, 2.285.829 in 2019 with a growth of 10.45% in 2019. It can be concluded that the No. of Spanish Guests rose more sharply

---

10 Studies, health, religion, and others.

than the No. of Nights spent overnight in Portugal in 2018-2019.

When zooming in on the type of vacation rental and the No. of Nights stayed by the Spaniards, it can be concluded that in 2018-2019, the most popular accommodation type was 'Hotéis' (3.440.098 nights in 2019) of which the most popular ones were 4-star hotels (1.548.148 nights in 2019) followed by 'Alojamento local' (804.066 nights in 2019), 'Hotel-Apartamentos' (444.224 nights in 2019), 'Apartamentos Turísticos' (277.835 nights in 2019), 'Aldeamentos Turísticos' (126.274 nights in 2019), 'Turismo No Espaço Rural' (115.220 nights in 2019) and 'Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira' (42.623 nights in 2019). The definitions of the different type of accommodations can be found in Annex D. The type of accommodation that has grown most in terms of No. of nights by the Spanish in 2018-2019 is 'Alojamento local' (+22,86%), followed by 'Turismo No Espaço Rural' (+13,07%), 'Aldeamentos Turísticos' (+9,72%), 'Hotel-Apartamentos' (+7,19%), 'Hotéis' (+4,92%) and 'Apartamentos Turísticos' (+1,93%). The 'Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira' was the only type of accommodation that experienced a decrease in the No. of Nights by the Spanish between 2018-2019 in Portugal (-4,15%).

When zooming in on the type of vacation rental and the No. of Spanish Guests, it can be concluded that in 2018-2019 the type of accommodation attracting most Spanish guests was 'Hotéis' (1.547.863 guests in 2019) of which the 4-star hotels attracted the most (697.416 guests in 2019), followed by 'Alojamento local' (384.788 guests in 2019), 'Hotel-Apartamentos' (147.310 guests in 2019), 'Apartamentos Turísticos' (92.399 guests in 2019), 'Turismo No Espaço Rural' (52,764 guests in 2019), 'Aldeamentos Turísticos' (37.502 guests in 2019) and 'Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira' (23.203 guests in 2019). The type of accommodation that experienced the biggest growth in terms of No. of Spanish guests between 2018-2019 was 'Alojamento local' (+28,71%), followed by 'Aldeamentos Turísticos' (+13,29%), 'Hotel-Apartamentos' (+11,86%), 'Turismo No Espaço Rural' (+9,63%), 'Apartamentos Turísticos' (+9,36%), 'Hotéis' (+6,66%) of which the 2-star hotels experienced the biggest growth (+10,55%) and 'Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira' (+5,39%). Statista (2020) published that in 2019, most outbound trips made by residents in Spain – regardless of the purpose and destination – involved staying in hotels or similar accommodation (10.175.400 trips), followed by non-rented accommodation (5.243.400 trips), other rented accommodation (3.057.200 trips), campsite (636.200 trips), rural home (166.600 trips) or Hostel/inn (124.700 trips) (Annex B, Figure B.11).

It can be concluded that the most popular type of accommodation among Spaniards in 2019 in general has been hotels, where in terms of No. of Guests and No. of Nights in Portugal in 2019 the 4-star hotels were most popular. The type of accommodation that experienced the biggest growth in 2018-2019 in terms of both No. of Nights and Guests in Portugal was the 'Alojamento local'. In addition, when dividing the No. of Nights by the No. of Guests to calculate the average length of stay, it can be concluded that the longest stay by Spaniards was in 'Aldeamentos Turísticos' and the shortest in 'Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira'. When zooming in on the 'Hotéis', the 5-star hotels

experienced the biggest growth in terms of No. of Guests in 2018-2019, while the 2-star hotels experienced the biggest growth in No. of Nights.

4.3.2. Outbound destinations for residents in Spain

Statista (2020) shows that most outbound trips by Spanish travellers in 2019 – regardless of the purpose – were made to Europe (Annex B, Figure B.12). In 2018-2019, there is a decrease in the number of outbound trips by Spanish residents to Americas, Africa, and other countries. Only Europe as a world region of destination had an upward trend during 2018-2019.

The most popular outbound travel destinations overall for residents of Spain from 2015 to 2019 – regardless of the purpose – were France, Portugal, Italy, and the United Kingdom, where France was the main outbound travel destination with over 3.3 million trips taken in 2019 (Annex B, Figure B.13). Looking at the number of trips taken to Portugal, the second most popular outbound travel destination for Spanish travellers, it increased every year from 2017 to 2019. Important to mention however is that preferred destinations differ by generation among the Spanish travellers (TBP, 2018).

4.3.3. Length of stay

According to INE (2020), the average length of outbound trips taken by Spanish travellers – regardless of the purpose – from 2015 to 2019 was 8,52 nights in 2015, 8,37 nights in 2016, 7,72 nights in 2017, 7,47 nights in 2018 and 6,84 nights in 2019. It can be stated that on average, Spanish travellers tend to go on shorter holidays abroad each year. This is being substantiated by the data used in Chapter 4.3.1., stating that the No. of Spanish Guests rose more sharply than the No. of Nights spent overnight in Portugal in 2018-2019.

4.3.4. Seasonality

According to Statista (2020), the highest number of outbound trips in 2019 – regardless of the purpose – took place in August (3.447.000), followed by April (2.012.900), July (1.991.600), September (1.833.400) and December (1.601.800) (Annex B, Figure B.14). The other months were quite similar in numbers. However, in February (1.084.900) and November (1.004.300), the fewest outbound trips took place.

Based on a survey carried out by the travel agency PANGE The Travel Store (October 2020), most Spanish travellers indicated that they prefer to do their trip in 2021 between July and September, coinciding with the summer. Other popular months were the spring (between April and June). The least popular months for 2021 according to that study were between January and March and October and December.

4.3.5. Expenditure on international travel by residents of Spain

According to Statista (2020) and INE (2020), there is a continuously upward trend in annual spending on travel abroad by Spanish households, starting from 11.9 billion euros in 2015 to around 16 billion euros in 2019 (Annex B, Figure B.15). On domestic travel, Spanish households spend around 32

billion euros in 2019. It can be concluded that Spanish households spend much less money when travelling domestically, considering the number of domestic trips and annual spending on domestic travel in 2019.

When looking at the evolution of the average daily expenditure per person on trips abroad of residents in Spain – regardless of the purpose – from the first quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2019, it can be concluded that the highest average daily expenditure per person happens in the second quarter from each year and the lowest in the third quarter from each year[11] (INE, 2020). When zooming in on the second quarters only, an upward trend can be concluded in terms of average daily spending. In 2015, Spanish residents had an average daily expenditure of 105,36 euros while in 2019, it was 136,97 euros.

4.3.6. Spanish outbound tourism forecast

According to GlobalData its 'Tourism Source Market Insight: Spain' report (2019), Spanish tourists will have an increase in disposable income to travel abroad and outbound travel is now financially possible for a much higher percentage of the Spanish population due to the growing Spanish economy, decrease in unemployment rate, increase in pay, the rise of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) and the fact that Spain has well exceeded its level of GDP in 2008. From 2017 to 2019, expenditure grew exponentially at a CAGR of 12.1% from 38.1 billion USD to 47.9 billion USD. This dramatic rate of growth indicates the growing profitability of Spain as a tourism source market (GlobalData, 2019). Spain its increasing growth in outbound expenditure is one of the highest in Europe. The country its forecast CAGR of 15.6% is more than double the growth of the Group of 7 (G7) countries between 2019 and 2021, such as France and Italy (GlobalData, 2019).

GlobalData (2019) forecasts that Spanish outbound spending will start to increase at a higher rate on sightseeing and entertainment activities. The country its financial situation going from strength to strength enables Spanish tourists to spend more money on 'add-on' activities such as these. According to GlobalData (2019), Spanish tourists have travelled domestically for years, to regions such as Andalusia for sun and beach holidays due to financial restrictions and a lack of desire for new experiences. Now, due to social media and the millennial market segment becoming more prevalent, Spanish tourists are visiting cities all over Europe in search for different cultural experiences through entertainment and sightseeing activities. Whilst outbound tourism expenditure is expected to grow continuously for years to come, domestic overnight stays are expected to slow down in 2021. This forecast may be because of usual domestic tourists now utilising LCCs to travel internationally. New Spanish LCCs such as Vueling are making destinations such as Latin America more attractive with new routes. The stereotypical cost-conscious Spanish tourist who needs affordability and accessibility will be attracted to these airlines who can offer them value for money and a direct route to long-haul destinations.

---

[11] Apart from 2015, where the first quarter had the lowest number.

Despite the restrictions and difficulties caused by covid19, Spaniards do not lose the desire to travel, demonstrated by a survey carried out by the travel agency PANGE The Travel Store (October 2020). Regarding the type of travel they choose, most of the Spaniards prefer to have a domestic trip or an international one to other European countries. On the other hand, the survey reflects an obvious interest in traveling in 2021 depending on the conditions, where also now Europe remains the most popular destination. A recent study carried out by the international research company Wakefield Research for Expedia Group (October 2020) indicates that the preference for domestic trips was especially prominent in Spain (42%).

4.3.7. Post-covid19 tourist reservations trends

A study performed by Wakefield Research (October 2020) highlights three global trends and expectations that will influence the decisions of travellers and will alter the tourism sector, including Spain. Similarities can be seen with the post-covid19 trends as described in Chapter 4.5.2:

- Millennials and Generation Z take the reins with greater environmental awareness. These age groups have shown a great desire to resume their travels. In contrast, baby boomers and the so-called 'silent generation' are more reluctant.
- Covid19 has strengthened e-commerce across all age groups, accelerating the transition from physical stores to online shopping by four to six years, and the rapid adoption of e-commerce is likely to continue.
- With the pandemic, the concept of 'social distancing' has been incorporated into our way of life and we already consider it an effective way to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. For a sector such as tourism and hospitality, social distancing could seem counterintuitive and it was a challenge to apply this type of measures at the beginning of the pandemic. The study indicates that almost 70% of the travellers – 68% in the case of Spanish tourists – were in favour of being able to check-in at their accommodation with minimal interaction with the staff.

4.4. Competitor analysis

The list of main competitors has been identified both together with Mrs. Rita Alves Machado (personal communication, 04 December 2020) and by using Google Search. In Google, the top keywords connected to SPH have been used, mainly in Spanish, to see which websites appear in most of the results. The list of competitors was then filtered based on coming across active or non-active.

The main competitors are brand competitors [12], product competitors[13] or a combination of both.

---

[12] Which market products with similar features and benefits to the same customers at similar prices (Ferrell & Hartline, 2010).

[13] Which compete in the same product class but with products that are different in features, benefits, and price (Ferrell & Hartline, 2010).

Generic competitors [14] or total budget competitors [15] have not been considered due to relevance, limited time available, different customer segments being targeted and the huge number of competitors existing in this field of business.

The eight competitors of SPH identified in the Spanish market have first been compared on the most important factors (Annex E, Section 2). Subsequently, it could be concluded that there are not many direct competitors for SPH in the Spanish market, referring to those offering similar products and services in Portugal only, embracing the same mission and targeting the same customer segments. However, if SPH wants to succeed in the Spanish market, the company cannot ignore the existing competitors' strengths and should make use of their weaknesses.

The top three out of eight competitors that have been analysed more extensively for SPH to be as successful as possible in the Spanish market are Rusticae, Secretplaces, and Joandso. Rusticae is the main competitor for SPH in the Spanish market since the company has a similar mission, vision, and strategy, offers similar products and services, targets the same customer segments, and has a strong brand awareness in Spain as this is their main target market. Secretplaces is an interesting competitor for SPH since they offer similar products and services, have many listings in Portugal, are based in Cascais and specifically target the Spanish market. Joandso on the other hand is an interesting competitor to consider since the brand solely offers listings in Portugal which are all small types of accommodation. In addition, Joandso targets the same type of customer segments and aims at international markets. This top three of different types of competitors got analysed extensively on the four Ps, their website, and its social media performances (Annex E, Section 3).

Considering all analyses per competitor regarding the four Ps, the website and social media performances, the most relevant output [16] for SPH has been put together (Annex E, Section 4). Based on this summarized output, the most important information for SPH to consider is as follows:

- All three competitors are more than an online booking platform/representation brand for small/one-of-a-kind listings. Instead, all three offer additional products and/or services (combinations). Particularly Rusticae is a very strong competitor regarding this matter. The company offers many different products and/or services (combinations) and strongly focuses on the relationship with its member listings, while at the same time having a strong brand reputation on both the customer and business perspective in Spain.
- Many different promotion tools are being used by both Rusticae and Secretplaces to stimulate bookings and generate website traffic. Joandso on the other hand focuses more on quality

---

[14] Which market very different products that solve the same problem or satisfy the same basic customer need (Ferell & Hartline, 2010).

[15] Which compete for the limited financial resources of the same customers (Ferell & Hartline, 2010).

[16] Please note that the analysis of Rusticae weighs the most, since this is the main competitor and the only company that specifically targets the Spanish market.

over quantity by delivering the best description and story around the listing possible, rather than working with price discounts, promotions, and special deals.

- In terms of price, both Rusticae and Secretplaces miss the point, as the companies either do not display the prices at all on their websites or use the wrong currencies.
- All three competitors have its core business online. However, mainly Rusticae and Joandso are expanding its products and/or services (combinations) offline as well.
- Joandso by far has the best website in terms of content, design, and user friendliness and is a strong competitor of SPH regarding this feature. However, it is the only competitor that provides a zero-error website, which is beneficial for SPH when positioning itself online in the Spanish market considering the other competitors.
- On all websites of the three competitors, you get inspired as a website visitor in different ways, additional products/services (combinations) are being offered, blogs are being used, personal stories are involved, experiences are highlighted and much more. Mainly Rusticae and Joandso are doing well in terms of website content.
- All three competitors strongly focus on offering experiences.
- In terms of booking systems used, Joandso always redirects, Secretplaces is inconstant and Rusticae only provides direct bookings over the phone between a certain timeframe or highlights the listings' own website.
- None of the three competitors has a very strong social media strategy and presence in general.
- All three competitors are using Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest. Rusticae is the only competitor who is using YouTube and LinkedIn as well.
- In terms of Instagram, none of the three competitors has a very strong Instagram feed and lacks strong engagement. However, all three of them do have some great and inspirational features on their Instagram, of which Joandso in particular.
- Rusticae strongly highlights certain themes on its social media accounts and website, which can also be found at Secretplaces and Joandso. Main themes: history, culture, nature, sports, winning competitions, food, and sustainability.

4.5. Customer analysis

4.5.1. Online survey

The online survey has been filled in by 275 respondents. Annex H, Section 2., extensively describes the overall profile of the 275 respondents. To summarize, most were between 25 and 43 years old, of which approximately 64% female, mainly living in Barcelona or Madrid and all having the Spanish nationality. The online survey consisted of seventeen questions, all in Spanish, and has been mainly distributed using the researcher her own network in Barcelona and several online channels due to the covid19 situation.

The questions used in the customer survey were based on all the different analyses done. The

purposes of the customer survey were to: (1) Confirm the information found in previous analyses, (2) Define the best customer segments for SPH to target in the Spanish market, (3) Create personas for each customer segment, (4) Create the best competitive advantage for SPH in the Spanish market and (5) Be able to come up with the best fitting online (social media) marketing strategies. The most important findings, as comprehensively written down and substantiated with valuable data per survey question in Annex H, Section 4., are as follows:[17]

1. The main purposes to travel among the Spaniards, asked from a pre-covid19 perspective, are to visit family and friends, followed by travelling with leisure/holiday purposes. The fewest Spaniards tend to travel for business purposes (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.1).

2. In terms of destinations, Spain clearly is the most favourite country, followed by Italy, France, Portugal, and Greece ranging from most to less popular. Spaniards are willing to travel outside of Europe but Europe overall remains the most popular travel destination among the respondents (Annex H, Section 4, Figures H.4.2 and H.4.3).

3. Travelling with their partner is most beloved, followed by travelling with their immediate family or friends. Travelling with an organized group or with extended family are the least popular (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.4).

4. Going by plane for a leisure/holiday trip is by far the most popular way of transportation (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.5).

5. When going on a leisure/holiday trip, Spaniards prefer to go for either a weekend, a week, or a little bit less than a week (5 days for example). Going for more than two weeks is an almost no-go (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.6).

6. Even though almost all twelve months are relatively popular among the Spaniards to go on a leisure/holiday trip, the most preferred month is August, strongly followed by December and July. The least popular one is May (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.7).

7. Most Spaniards answered that they would go on a leisure/holiday trip once the high-risk groups are vaccinated. However, a big group of respondents wants to have the whole world vaccinated before going on a trip. Only a small group stated that they are planning not to travel at all, regardless of who is getting vaccinated (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.8).

8. The Spaniards get inspired the most for their leisure/holiday trips through family/friends/colleagues (word-of-mouth). In addition, many get inspired via online search engines like Google, followed by travel review websites like TripAdvisor and online blogs (Annex H, Section 4, Figures H.4.9 and H.4.10).

---

[17] Please note that all questions have been asked regarding going on a trip for leisure/holiday purposes and that some questions in the online survey have been asked from a pre-covid19 perspective while others from a covid perspective (Annex H, Section 3).

9. In terms of social media, most Spaniards tend to get inspired via Instagram, followed by Facebook and YouTube. LinkedIn, Pinterest and TikTok are not being strongly used among the respondents. Once being on the social media platforms itself, the Spaniards tend to listen more to an influencer than to an advertisement (Annex H, Section 4, Figures H.4.9 and H.4.10).

10. The most important features when looking for accommodation among the respondents are by far the location and the price. These features are strongly followed by wanting the accommodation to be clean and safe. In addition, other relatively important features are flexibility in cancelling or changing the stay, covid19 commitment, internet/Wi-Fi, flexible check in/check out, daily housekeeping, access to both nature and cultural activities, having a unique experience and great design. The least important features among the Spaniards are the accommodation being suitable for business meetings, having a wake-up service, being in a remote location, having possible service without personal contact needed and being offered an allergy-friendly/vegetarian menu (Annex H, Section 4, Figures H.4.11, H.4.12, H.4.13 and H.4.14).

11. The preferred types of accommodation for leisure/holiday trips are country houses, followed by Bed & Breakfast and 4-star hotels. Going to a camping or Airbnb are also quite popular among the respondents, in contrast to 2-star hotels, spa/wellness hotels and resorts (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.15).

12. Most money is being spend by the Spaniards on food and drinks during a leisure/holiday trip, as well as on accommodation and different types of activities/experiences. The least money is being spend on shopping (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.16).

13. The respondents mentioned that they prefer to book their leisure/holiday trip directly via the accommodation its own website, followed by price comparison websites. The least popular booking channel was via collective websites. Booking.com and Airbnb were both mentioned a lot as a preferred online booking channel (Annex H, Section 4, Figure H.4.17).

14. Zooming in on the booking channels' features, Spaniards appreciate the feeling of trusting a booking channel 100% the most (covering things such as: available reviews, assured quality of the offered accommodations, professionalism and having an accredited/protected website), strongly followed by having a smooth and fast booking process without any errors and having sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services. The least important feature among the Spaniards is the booking channel contributing to sustainability in any way (Annex H, Section 4, Figures H.4.18, H.4.19 and H.4.20).

Other existing research either substantiates the main findings derived from the online survey or offers extra insights in the customer analysis.

Finding 8 and 9 are being substantiated by the pre-covid19 study entitled 'What Spanish

travellers expect from hotels in 2020'. This study concludes that word-of-mouth continues to have an insurmountable weight when choosing a destination/accommodation, social networks are gaining ground and more and more people use them to get closer to the hotel. This new trend may be one of the keys that can help small and traditional accommodations to approach the new generations of travellers, which is more than relevant for SPH.

The pre-covid19 study entitled 'What Spanish travellers expect from hotels in 2020' also shows the most common requests/important accommodation features coming from Spaniards, as described in finding 10. According to the study, substantiating the outcomes of the online survey, one of the most common requests towards accommodations will be flexibility. Spaniards hope that hotels will offer them the possibility of cancelling or changing their stay if their travel plans stay; they also consider flexible check-in and check-out as essential, since each trip and each person has different needs. In addition, among the greatest demands is that the Wi-Fi connection is exceptional because of the time spend on social networks. Regarding the social networks, many Spaniards use them to ask questions about the hotel and communicate with them both before and during their stay and use them to decide which accommodations to book and post comments or opinions during or after their stay. The most determining factor for the Spanish traveller when choosing a hotel is the price and the location, also being substantiated by a study carried out by the international research company Wakefield Research for Expedia Group (October 2020). What matters least to them is the decoration, which seems to indicate that in most of the cases Spanish travellers give more relevance to living experiences outside the limits of accommodation. This, however, partly contradicts the outcome of the online survey, which indicates that design is indeed an important factor. The pre-covid19 study indicates as well, which did not specifically derive from the online survey, that these travellers would favourably see the hotels offering more added value, which means more services at a tighter price, and even value that hotels act as tourist guides in the destination offering recommendations and suggestions. In addition, Spaniards remain firm on the preference not to pay for the stay until they arrive at the accommodation.

Finding 13 is partly being substantiated by research coming from El Observatorio Cetelem (2019), which states that the preferred channels for booking vacations in Spain for both domestic and outbound travel in 2018 and 2019 were through online travel agencies (+2% compared to 2018), strongly followed by websites of hotels/airlines (+2% compared to 2018) and price comparison websites (+3% compared to 2018). Statista (2020) affirms this finding, as statistics show that Spain is the number one European country that has used OTAs the most for hotel overnight bookings with more than 38% in 2019 while OTAs overall accounted for 29.9% of the market, making it one of the most popular booking distribution channels in Europe. Followed by the top 3 were the physical travel agencies (-3% in 2019) and collective websites (-3% in 2019). Overall, when considering both the findings of the online survey and the existing research, it can be stated that Spaniards prefer to book their holidays through either online travel agencies, directly via the websites of the

accommodation/airline itself or by using price comparison websites. Less popular are physical travel agencies and collective websites.

Regarding finding 14, the three main reasons to choose any booking channel among Spanish travellers were: (1) The price (+3% in 2019), (2) Speed and convenience in the purchase process (-3% in 2019) and (3) The variety of products and services offered (+1% in 2019) (Statista, 2020). According to research performed by Amadeus (2020), the traveller reviews and familiarity are also very strong decisive factors for the Spanish travellers when choosing any booking channel. Interesting to mention are the main reasons to choose for any specific booking channel among Spanish travellers (El Observatorio Cetelem, 2019). Regarding the online travel agencies, the price was the main motivator, whereas with the websites of hotels/airlines, the variety of products was the main reason. Looking at the price comparison websites, the price was obviously the main motivator, whereas the main motivator to use the physical travel agencies was the sellers' attention. Regarding the collective websites, the price was the main reason as well. According to data published by EFE (2020), it is expected that among Spanish travellers, there will be a decrease in terms of use of OTAs and direct online sales due to the growth of Google as a reservation channel. Among the reasons that could explain this growth is the trust that this platform offers, allows you to see evaluations of other guests and provides more security when booking in countries where the social-political situation is more unstable. Besides, the decreasing use of physical travel agencies and the increasing use of different online/social media platforms shows that the way of traveling is changing and with it, the way of searching and experimenting and sharing which gives a different perspective to hotels. Based on a study performed by the travel agency PANGE The Travel Store (2020), travellers prefer to rely on the services of a travel agency in the face of uncertainty and most Spanish travellers will contract their 2021 trip from the hand of an agency compared to the minority who prefer to organize it on their own. Thus, many consider cancellation and reimbursement the most valuable service of an agency now and the personalized advice of experts (PANGE The Travel Story, 2020). In the background are other services such as insurance, budget, or financing.

To summarize, based on both the outcome of the online survey and the findings of the different studies, Spaniards highly value speed and convenience in the purchase process, traveller reviews and familiarity, trust, security and cancellation and reimbursements services. Substantiated by the different studies, Spaniards highly value the different prices offered on the booking channels, the variety of products and services and sellers' attention and expertise. Besides, the studies show that the main reasons to choose for any specific booking channel differ from one and another.

Regarding the actual decision for a specific situation, which has not been asked in the online survey, the pre-covid19 study 'What Spanish travellers expect from hotels in 2020' shows that the budget is the greatest determining factor and leads on the concern for the political stability of the places that are visited. At the bottom of the list is climate change, which does not seem to particularly disturb the Spanish, despite the growing awareness of the industry. This is substantiated by both

finding 14 of the online survey and Amadeus' research (2020) where they have found that Spanish travellers do are concerned about the impact that travelling has on the environment but despite these concerns, say they would only opt for a more environmentally friendly mode of transport if it was the same as the original option in all other respects (including price and ease of payment). Neither does political uncertainty; only a few admit that politics and a possible recession are reasons to change them. The interest in knowing a new place was expected to be the main reason why Spaniards will choose a destination for their vacations during 2020. Based on a survey carried out by the travel agency PANGE The Travel Store (October 2020), safety and the search for covid-free destinations will undoubtedly be one of the deciding factors for the Spanish travellers surveyed. Many say they will choose their destination based on the situation they are in with respect to the pandemic.

4.5.2. Covid19: Spanish consumer sentiment after the pandemic

Despite the fact that while conducting this research covid19 is still happening and no one can fully predict what is going to happen, the impact of the pandemic must be considered for this study. As Spanish consumers continue to feel the economic effects of the covid19 crisis, their pessimism and uncertainty about economic recovery have deepened since April (McKinsey, 2020). There are five fundamental shifts seen by McKinsey (2020) to consumer behaviour in Spain, some of which will have a lasting impact: (1) Shift to value and essentials (up to 60% consumers say they will decrease spend on categories besides groceries and household supplies), (2) Flight to digital and omnichannel (up to 45% net increase in intent to spend online even post-covid19), (3) Shock to loyalty (66% of Spanish consumers have changed stores, brands or the way they shop), (4) Homebody economy (72% of Spanish consumers are not yet resuming 'normal' out-of-home activities) and (5) New holiday outlook (93% of households plan to maintain or reduce holiday spend). The following survey outcomes (McKinsey, 2020) must be mentioned as they can impact this study:

- Spain is among the least optimistic countries in the world in terms of confidence in own country its economic recovery after covid19.
- Most Spanish consumers believe that the impact of covid19 on their routines and personal finances will continue to last for more than four months.
- Spanish consumers are becoming much more mindful of how they spend their money and are adopting new habits to save.
- Outside of groceries and household supplies, consumers expect to continue cutting back, despite increased net intent compared to the initial lockdown. From all categories, the ones with the most negative net intent are domestic flights, international flights and hotel/resort stays.
- More people expect to make a portion of their purchases online post-covid19 than before, with some consumers planning to shift almost completely online.

- Many Spanish consumers intent to continue the new acquired habits during covid19. Relevant accelerated shifts for this study: purchased from social media.
- Two out of three Spanish consumers have tried a new shopping behaviour and most intend to continue with it beyond the crisis. Most popular: different retailer/store/website, followed by different brand, private label/store brand, new digital shopping method and new shopping method.
- More than 70% of the consumers who tried a new brand cite value as the main driver.
- Consumers are paying increased attention to companies' promotion of sustainable and safe solutions.
- Consumers are much more likely to trade down to a less expensive brand or store brand this year compared to last year.
- Most Spaniards are still waiting to see indicators beyond lifting of restrictions (medical authorities deem safe, safety measures considered, seeing other people returning), but more are engaging in 'normal' out-of-home activities.
- Spanish consumers have a high level of concern about traveling by airplane, using shared services, and attending large events.

<center>**5.   Implementation**</center>

5.1. Recommendations on tactical level

5.1.1. Concluded SWOT analysis

The concluded SWOT analysis for SPH can be found in Annex B, Figure B.16.

5.1.2. Confrontation matrix

The confrontation matrix shows the relationship between items identified in the SWOT analysis and then cross-references them to come up with actionable strategies and tactics, i.e., strategic options. Please note that cross-referenced items underlying each given strategy or tactic will be denoted using footnotes like: S1, O2, W3, T4. The confrontation matrix can be found in Annex B, Figure B.17.

5.1.3. SFA table and concluded marketing strategy

The concluded weighing factors for SPH its SFA table, based on the average scores of importance per SFA factor given by SPH its employees, can be found in Annex J, Section 4. The different strategic options and its scores given by SPH its employees on all SFA factors can be found in Annex J, Section 5. Based on these calculations, it can be concluded that the strategic option with the highest score is SO2 with a total of 1233 points (Annex J, Section 6):

'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'

Based on this concluded strategy derived from various analyses, recommendations on practical level including a clear marketing and social media plan will be given in Chapter 5.2.

5.2. Recommendations on practical level [18]

5.2.1. Achieving short-term goals and improving day-to-day business

As the concluded strategy describes, SPH first needs to achieve its short-term goals (by the end of 2021) and improve day-to-day business before moving to the Spanish market. Therefore, based on the internal analysis and overall research, it is recommended to SPH to try to achieve and improve the following:

1.   Create a clear and fair division of tasks among those working on SPH. If the budget allows, consider hiring an extra person in the future who will be focused on the internationalization process.

---

[18] The plan of action is based on the outcomes from all analyses performed throughout this study.

2. Set up SPH as a strong brand on Metasearch through the business-oriented partnership.
3. Set up SPH as a brand on the main OTAs.
4. Improve the voucher program.
5. Strengthen the relationship with SPH its member listings.
6. Grow to 200 listings.
7. Roll out services the listings must pay for.
8. Receive revenue from partners who want to supply the registered listings of SPH.
9. Send out a newsletter every second week.
10. Create consistency among the different social media channels, post regularly by making use of a social media content calendar and develop an overall design/branding used on all platforms.

In the longer run (by the end of 2022), SPH should try to achieve the following:

1. Set up a customer loyalty program.
2. Create a membership community with various benefits.
3. Expand the listings base.

Once SPH achieved its short-term goals and simultaneously improved their day-to-day business and the situation in Spain post-covid19 is improving (increasing optimism, signs of recovery, increasing confidence in own country its economic recovery, increasing holiday spend and a diminishing level of concern about travelling by plane and using shared services) the company can start focusing on moving to the Spanish market, using the proposed marketing, sales, and social media recommendations as described in this chapter.

5.2.2. Targeting the Spanish market

5.2.2.1. The Spanish customers
SPH should focus on similar customer segments in Spain as in the Portuguese market due to the existing knowledge and experience available about these target groups, the existing marketing and sales strategies, limited internal resources available and the high potential among these customer segments in Spain (see Annex I for Spanish personas).

5.2.2.2. Where and how to target the Spanish customers
Based on the outcomes of the various analyses done throughout this study and the expected impact of covid19 on the customer behaviour in Spain (rise of digitization/e-commerce, flight to digital and omnichannel, rise in number of Spaniards making a portion of their purchases online or completely online and an increase in purchasing from social media), SPH should mainly target the Spaniards *online* via various platforms, taken that everything must have a mobile friendly design due to the high penetration rate in terms of mobile phone users. The most important online platforms to target the

Spaniards are search engines like Google, travel review websites like TripAdvisor, online blogs, online booking platforms and social media. In terms of social media, considering both the technological and customer analysis and internal available resources (time, money, and manpower), most important social media platforms for SPH to focus on are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Twitter and Pinterest can be ignored. In terms of social media communication platforms, WhatsApp is by far being used the most and SPH should integrate this communication platform as a form of direct contact via their website. The social media strategies are described more specifically in Chapter 5.2.3.

In addition to the online channels, the most powerful marketing technique in Spain as concluded from the customer analysis is word-of-mouth marketing. Most Spaniards get inspired for their travels and stays through friends and family. SPH should therefore implement word-of-mouth marketing into their strategy when targeting the Spanish market.

5.2.2.3. Word-of-mouth marketing

First, SPH should encourage User-Generated-Content (UGC) by using a unique hashtag to identify content created by customers (#StayWithSPH), incentivizing creating and sharing pictures, videos, and gifs on social media (options could be offering a discount to those who are creating the best content), and by creating a sense of community showcasing the UGC prominently on both SPH its website (homepage and on a dedicated webpage called #StayWithSPH) and Instagram (in an Instagram highlight called '#StayWithSPH' and the most interesting/beautiful UGC can be posted)

Second, customer testimonials/reviews need to be strongly shared by SPH. Written testimonials should be gathered and published on SPH its website and Instagram. SPH must dedicate one website page to this matter only, called 'YOUR stories', display the most fun and convincing ones on the homepage and landing pages and with some of the listings as well. On Instagram, SPH needs to create an Instagram highlight called 'YOUR stories' and post the written testimonials there. Important again is consistency, so people understand that these are reviews and can easily find them on the website as the same title is being used. To obtain the customer reviews, SPH can either try to get them themselves by sending out a post-stay email or maybe even a WhatsApp message to create a more personal feeling. Another option can be to work together with member listings, having them sending out emails, a WhatsApp message or ask for reviews in person.

Third, SPH can consider creating a referral program, which takes offering an incentive when sharing SPH with others one step further. Within this referral program, SPH can for example, offer a free-night-stay in one of the accommodations every time someone booked their stay with SPH referred by 'you'. This can stimulate a lot of business in Spain due to the power of word-of-mouth marketing.

Furthermore, SPH should connect with industry influencers on their main social media channels targeting the Spaniards (Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube). To do so, SPH should discuss with their

member listings whether they can for example, offer them a free night/stay and receive social media content in return. Respecting SPH its budget, most likely micro influencers from Spain should be targeted first.

Last, SPH should offer a unique, shareworthy experience. Spaniards showed that they are keen for having a unique experience when travelling. SPH should together with its member listings focus on offering an experience and stimulate people to share this experience online and offline with their peers.

5.2.2.4. Metasearch and SEO

SPH needs to strongly invest in metasearch to become greatly visible on Google and strongly focus on do-it-yourself SEO due to limited money available. To improve do-it-yourself SEO, SPH can consider the following:

1. Improve title tags. SPH should ask themself whether the title tags make sense and if they can make them more specific or relevant.
2. Master keyword research. SPH can use Google Keyword Planner to find out which words and phrases are being used when people search for their products and services, then translate them in the required languages and start using the best keywords for each theme.
3. Map keywords to each webpage. SPH can create a spreadsheet of all critical pages on SPH its website and map unique primary and secondary keywords to each. Potentially, new pages need to be created for unassigned high-value keywords. SPH should use long-tail keyword themes that drive fewer searches and typically more specific on either their new recommended online blog or FAQ page.
4. Produce regular content. SPH should use its new recommended online blog to produce regular content in a better way.
5. Boost link equity. SPH can reach out to online (Spanish) bloggers/influencers or online travel blogs and ask to put a guest post including links. In addition, SPH should work with affiliate links guiding website visitors through their own webpages.
6. Build a social media network.

5.2.2.5. Being present online

SPH should be present on different travel review websites considering the most popular ones among Spaniards. Respecting the internal resources available, SPH should start with TripAdvisor and go from there in the future. Besides, according to research published by Statista (2020), Booking.com and Expedia together took over 80% of individual hotel reservations made through OTAs in Spain. Respecting available internal resources, SPH should focus on these two OTAs first. When time and budget allow, SPH can start targeting smaller OTAs that also have a relative strong market presence in Spain (Lastminute, Rumbo, Kayak, eDreams etc.).

5.2.2.6. Online blog

SPH must create an online blog, for example called 'Small Hotels, Exceptional Stays' offering the content in Portuguese, Spanish, and English and publish it as a separate website but linked with the main SPH website. The key to success is posting in a consistent way, get the blog posts referred via links on other popular online blog pages, provide content not just in the form of text but also illustrations, photos, videos, UGC, interviews etc. and write about relevant topics that SPH its target customers care about. According to various research, publishing two to four times per week with eleven+ posts a month provides the highest results in terms of both traffic and conversions. In terms of relevant topics, SPH can use popular keywords among the target groups to get inspired. Besides, based on both the customer and competitor analysis, the following topics are examples of interesting topics for Spaniards: switching-off, doing various activities/different types of sports/being active, enjoying life (in a rural environment), culture, history, gastronomy, eating together, talking about typical food from the region, personal stories from the owners of the accommodation and having a unique experience.

5.2.2.7. Direct contact

SPH should create the possibility to have direct WhatsApp contact with their (potential) customers. 'Text us on WhatsApp' should be promoted via SPH its website and Instagram page. In addition, SPH must keep the direct phone line being redirected to one of the employees for now due to limited internal resources available and the importance of having the option to call. Besides, the company should continue the online chatbot function on the website but clearly communicate that people can also use WhatsApp and make sure people are being answered once a Direct Message (DM) is being send on Instagram. SPH should not offer the possibility to text via Facebook Messenger since it will be too much work considering time and manpower available. Overall, SPH should make sure someone always responds within 30 minutes to 1 hour during working hours. In general, one employee should be responsible for all the direct contact channels (WhatsApp, Instagram DM, ChatBot and phone).

5.2.2.8. Website design and content

SPH should consider the following in terms of website design and content:

1. The website must be in Spanish in addition to the Portuguese and English version.
2. There should be a constant focus on having zero errors in the website design and assure a smooth, fast, and perfectly working booking process for each of the listings.
3. A lot of time and effort must be put in creating an attractive design with various visuals, involving both high quality photos and videos. Mainly video content is something that is strongly appreciated among Spaniards while little is offered by competitors. Video content

can for example, be used to show some of the most beautiful/special listings, surroundings, activities, or experiences.

4. The website needs to come across professional and accredited/protected.

5. The cancellation and reimbursement services that are available need to be highlighted on the homepage and per listing.

6. The assured quality of the offered accommodations must be clearly highlighted.

7. The website must contain a perfectly working and updated map that includes all listings. Be as specific as possible in terms of location for the Spaniards.

8. The prices should be displayed in a clear and consistent way, already visible before people click on an actual listing.

9. The filter search option should be improved when looking for a listing on the website. Based on all different analyses done, adding the following filters must be considered: location (also in the filter section, not just separate via the map), a more precise price filter (price per night), type of accommodation, setting (city, coast, countryside, forest, historic quarters, island, lake, mountains, seaside ocean front, village or wine country), internet/Wi-Fi, garden, flexible check-in/check-out available, flexible cancellation available, design hotel, number of rooms/size of the accommodation, restaurants and bars available in the accommodation and activities in the surrounding (filter on nature, sportive, cultural, relaxing and romantic).

10. Start working with clear and consistent symbols per accommodation that easily show all the different features available. In addition to displaying the filters that have been used, the following features should be added: clean and safe, covid19 commitment, daily housekeeping, unique experience available, sustainable, central heating, air conditioning, TV/DVD/music equipment, full bathroom in bedrooms, extra beds, amenities in bathroom, bedding/bathroom/kitchenware, bicycles at hotel, luggage storage, hair dryer, minibar in room, jacuzzi in room, barbecue, allergy/vegetarian menu, picnic service, transfer service from airport/station, safe and kitchen.

11. In addition to the symbols, if the internal resources allow, a more personal touch should be created by including for example, interviews with the listing owners either written or as a video or a short story about the surroundings. It can also be considered to post these stories on the online blog page.

12. There should be a strong focus on different promotion tools to target the Spaniards, for example price stunts, winning competitions, early bird sale, discounts when booked before a certain period or working with hotels/destinations of the week/month. Something to consider working with are the most popular types of accommodation among Spaniards. This involves the most popular types of accommodation in general (country houses, Bed and Breakfasts, 4-star hotels and 5-star hotels) and in Portugal (hotels of which mainly 4-star hotels, 'alojamento local' and hotel apartments).

13. Creating a webpage for experiences only as this is highly valued by the Spaniards, for example called 'Experience Portugal with SPH'. This webpage should display all experiences possible in the surroundings of (some of) their listings. To create this webpage, SPH needs to work together with their member listings to obtain this information. On the webpage itself, SPH should work with clear filter options, including location and type of activity (cultural, nature, relaxing, romantic, sportive, culinary, and adventurous). In terms of booking the actual experiences, SPH can either start working together with the businesses offering these experiences to book it directly via SPH or redirect to the website of the experiences itself. Besides, SPH can discuss with these businesses to offer special deals when booking through SPH or in combination with a certain listing. Overall, it can become an interesting extra revenue model and can even help attracting website visitors.

5.2.2.9. Potential future collaborations

SPH can consider to start working together with Portuguese Universities to create a competition aimed at media/design students either as part of their curriculum or as an extra activity. This competition will be about creating the best video for some of SPH its listings. Students should work in groups, create the best video possible when visiting the listing and participate in the competition. In the end, one group will win and for example gets a free night with their family or partner in the relevant listing. SPH will be able to use the videos for their website and/or social media pages if the quality is good enough. Another option could be to work with Spanish micro influencers, offer them a free stay at one of the listings on the condition that they create valuable content, preferably in the form of video.

To obtain information for the experience webpage, SPH should invest time in creating great relations with businesses that offer interesting activities in the surroundings of their listings. SPH should discuss special deals that can be offered to those who booked their stay through SPH and set up a business model when SPH guests book experiences via SPH its website.

To increase do-it-yourself SEO, SPH should work together with relevant online (Spanish) bloggers that have a well-visited online blog page that can increase the traffic lead to SPH webpages.

To increase brand awareness and improve the sense of a Spanish community, once foot set in the Spanish market, SPH can consider setting up various partnerships as they did in Portugal. Recommended to start with communication channels such as radio stations and/or travel magazines, offering vouchers or host winning competitions. Once brand awareness is being created, more exclusive partnerships can be established.

5.2.3. Social media plan to target the Spanish market

As already described, the most important platforms for SPH to focus on are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn while Twitter and Pinterest can be ignored. In terms of social media communication platforms, WhatsApp is by far being used the most and SPH should integrate this

communication platform as a form of direct contact via the website.

The language used on the different social media channels of SPH should always be English, with the option to continue with the Portuguese language if the internal resources allow and it is being preferred by the employees when targeting the Portuguese market. The main platform for SPH to focus on is Instagram. Via Instagram, all content must be published in a cool and attractive way. Facebook should be used to create the feeling of a community and cannot be ignored (yet). YouTube must be used to post video content, which is something SPH needs to strongly focus on as described throughout the implementation chapter. The videos should also be posted (either completely or in a summarized way) on Instagram. The LinkedIn page of SPH should contain more professional content that differs from the other social media channels but can involve similar topics. In general, Spaniards are more likely to trust influencers than advertisements. However, as the advertisement reach is relatively high on various platforms (Chapter 4.2.3.7), SPH can consider using paid advertisements on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn if the budget allows. Besides, a very important matter for SPH is to start using a social media content calendar to post in a consistent way integrating all platforms as explained in Chapter 5.2.3.5.

5.2.3.1. Instagram

The most important social media channel is Instagram, meaning that SPH should invest more time and effort in creating a valuable Instagram page.

First, the bio. It is recommended to put the following in the Instagram bio of SPH: (1) A personal description, (2) The #StayWithSPH to generate UGC and create a community, (3) The website link, (4) The location of SPH its head office and (5) A call to direct communication/direct action, for example 'Book your stay with us via WhatsApp!' or 'Book your stay with us via DM!'.

Second, there must be consistency in the overall feed and design used. What is being recommended to SPH is to always post a black and white picture that ends up on the left side of the overall feed and the rest in colour. Besides, when posting a video, SPH should make sure that the videos always end up at the same spots in the overall feed. Bursts are cool to use and show a lot of content in an easy way which SPH can consider using. What is very important is the overall style of photos and videos on the Instagram feed. SPH needs to put more time and effort in creating an overall style that fits the brand. Annex K gives an impression of the recommended design.

Third, when posting photos, SPH should tag relevant Instagram accounts and never forget to tag the actual listings' Instagram page. By tagging other accounts, the chances of people finding your Instagram page will be bigger. Besides, SPH should always use three or four of the same hashtags under each post (relevant ones can be #StayWithSPH, #SmallPortugueseHotels, #Portugal) and in addition to those standard ones, SPH should do research for each post which hashtags are popular on Instagram and put them in the description. Next to the hashtags, it is very important to use the same format under each post in terms of writing style and number of paragraphs used. SPH should write in

a funky, fun, young, and modern way and not use more than one or two paragraphs. Regarding themes to post about, based on different analyses done throughout this study, SPH should consider history, culture, nature, sports, winning competitions, swimming pools, gastronomy, eating together and being with family and friends.

Fourth, use the Highlights. Topics of the Highlights that SPH can consider are for example: Who are we? #StayWithSPH, YOUR stories, Q&A, Winning competitions and the different areas representing the listings (Algarve, Alentejo, Centre, Lisbon, Madeira, Azores, Douro & North, Porto and East). Make sure that all Highlights have the same font.

Fifth, make it more personal. SPH should do 'take-over stories' by listings or influencers who are staying at one of the listings. If the budget does not allow influencers, try to find a young/vibrant person who can visit some of the listings around the country, post stories and create nice content. These stories can then be added in the right Instagram Highlights.

Sixth, make sure that people can book their stay directly via Instagram, either through backlinks behind stories or via DM.

Last, make sure there is always something in your story.

5.2.3.2. Facebook

Facebook should not be the focus in terms of social media platforms for SPH. However, it is an important platform to have and to create the sense of a community. SPH should not link their Instagram page directly to their Facebook page like all competitors do, as discussed with Ms. Catarina (personal communication, 7 July 2021). The target audience on Facebook is different than on Instagram, where Instagram content is more visual and Facebook content more textual. SPH should link the online blog posts directly to Facebook though, respecting the limited internal resources, the target audience and preferred content type. In addition, SPH should put reviews on their Facebook page since it is an important factor to create the feeling of trust. As mentioned before, SPH should not give the opportunity to have direct contact over Facebook Messenger but should clearly put its contact details on their Facebook page (including the WhatsApp).

5.2.3.3. YouTube

SPH must create its own YouTube channel, where the best video content should be posted on. It is important to try to always provide the videos in English. In case this is impossible, English subtitles should always be provided.

5.2.3.4. LinkedIn

It is important that SPH focuses on creating a professional LinkedIn page, where relevant content is being posted not targeting the customers but more likely the B2B industry. Topics can be for example: (1) Sustainability, (2) Supporting the national economy, (3) Covid19 commitment or (4) Interesting partnerships. In addition, talking about SPH its collection, what SPH stands for, the opening of new

listings, success stories etc. are relevant topics to write about. Note that LinkedIn requires creating new content in addition to Instagram, YouTube, and the online blog/Facebook posts.

5.2.3.5. Social media content calendar

This two-week social media content calendar is focused on the different social media channels and only wants to give an idea in terms of managing various social media platforms (Annex L), meaning the actual website content and email marketing are not included. The social media content calendar is based on analyses done about when to post on which social media channel to increase awareness, engagement, shares, and traffic in the most effective way possible (GoSchedule, 2021).

The social media content calendar works with a colour scheme laid out by social media channel. Each day has its own theme, where the various social media channels match in terms of content. Besides, the 'themes' as mentioned with the various Instagram stories are linked to the Instagram Highlights that are being recommended. All content themes are based on the overall study performed to target the Spaniards. SPH should consider seasonal content by posting more during the most popular months and by contemplating holidays and national days.

6. Conclusion

Based on this entire study, it can be stated that the Spanish market is a promising one from the perspective of SPH to target in a relatively short period of time – considering the covid19 impact – as a first step to expand its existing Portuguese customer base, only after both the short-term goals have been achieved and the day-to-day business has improved. To target the Spanish market in the best way, SPH should consider applying all operational recommendations derived from this research.

SPH is a promising start-up with many internal strengths that can be used to tackle down the identified internal weaknesses. To illustrate, SPH offers the largest curated selection of different types of small accommodations in Portugal all accessible and easy to book in one platform, filtered by high quality standards and based on relevant up-to-date information. Besides, SPH offers a meaningful and one-of-a-kind experience, embraces a unique way of doing sustainable business, has strong access to relevant and meaningful knowledge/IT resources as it is essentially a tech company (GuestCentric), has both strong knowledge about Portugal and the hospitality and tourism industry and a meaningful network, has a high potential of cross selling as the 147 existing listings can promote each other and benefit from the opportunity to engage with clients from the whole brand, has a strong focus on offering exclusive benefits to both customers in terms of partnerships and cashback programs and member hotels which translates into cost savings in several technological services and marketing initiatives through partnerships, has a 'test-and-adapt' management style and offers valuable features via its website. However, despite all its internal strengths, it can be stated that in the case of SPH it will not be the smartest move to target the Spanish market straight away before several internal weaknesses have been improved and various short-term goals have been achieved. To clarify, first, SPH must improve its limited internal resources in terms of manpower, budget, and time by creating a clear and fair division of tasks and considering hiring an extra person. Second, various time-consuming tasks should be automated such as the overall social media efforts, sending out the newsletter and the different communication channels used. Besides, various internal programs should be set up, such as a voucher program, a membership community for its listings and a loyalty program for its customers. Third, SPH should grow to more listings, focus on strengthening the relationship with its existing member listings and try to roll out services that the listings must pay for. Finally, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH must become a strong brand on Metasearch through business-oriented partnerships and set up the brand on the main OTAs.

The identified external opportunities showcase why SPH should move to the Spanish market soon. From the perspective of SPH, relevant identified opportunities are the fact that Spaniards are a strongly digitalized community with the highest e-commerce spending on travel and accommodation, Portugal already is the second most popular outbound travel destination among Spaniards with rising popularity in different types of accommodations similar to SPH its portfolio, limited direct competitors for SPH have been identified in the Spanish market, a changing way of booking travel

and holidays among Spaniards has been identified including an increasing use of different online/social media platforms and Google search, a beneficial and positive pre-covid19 Spanish outbound tourism forecast has been identified including various positive developments, the global (post-)covid19 (tourist reservation) trends are beneficial for an online business such as SPH as it includes increasing environmental awareness, rapid adaption of e-commerce and increasing usage of services without personal contact, and the positive expected Spanish consumer sentiment after the pandemic, including matters such as flight to digital and omnichannel, shock to loyalty, continuing purchasing from social media, trying new brands/websites/digital shopping methods, value being the new driver, increasing attention to companies' promotion of sustainability and being more likely to trade down to a less expensive brand. When zooming in on the identified external threats in the Spanish market from the perspective of SPH, it can be stated that most of them are being outweighed by the external opportunities.

Considering all internal and external factors, confronting them, and scoring the derived strategic options by applying weighing factors from SPH its perspective, the concluded marketing strategy has been as follows:

'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'

All operational recommendations for SPH when targeting the Spanish market form a clear step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can be straight implemented, respecting the lack of internal resources. When targeting Spain, SPH should focus on similar customer segments in the Spanish market as they do in the Portuguese one, mainly target the Spaniards online via various platforms taken that everything must be mobile friendly, implement word-of-mouth marketing into their strategy, strongly invest in metasearch, be present on different travel review websites considering the most popular ones among Spaniards, create an online blog, improve its direct contact channels, extensively change and improve the website design and content, consider different potential collaborations, strongly improve its social media strategy with the main focus on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn and start using a social media content calendar.

Overall, SPH will be able to target the Spanish market in a clear and efficient way that is substantiated by extensive research, as soon as their internal processes have been improved.

Bibliographical references

Annual spending on travel in Spain in 2015 to 2019, by destination type. (2020, December 15). Statista. https://www-statista-com.rps.hva.nl:2443/statistics/693971/outbound-domestic-travel-spend-by-spanish-travelers/

Así viajarán los españoles este año. (2020, January 17). Expansión. https://www.expansion.com/directivos/estilo-vida/2020/01/17/5e20ce1de5fdeae13a8b4669.html

Brown, J. K. (2021, March 25). *11 Do-it-yourself SEO Tips to Save Money* [Online forum post]. Practical Ecommerce. https://www.practicalecommerce.com/10-do-it-yourself-seo-tips-to-save-money

Benjaminsson, F., Kronholm, T., & Erlandsson, E. (2019a). A framework for characterizing business models applied by forestry service contractors. *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*, *34*(8), 779–788. https://doi.org/10.1080/02827581.2019.1623304

Benjaminsson, F., Kronholm, T., & Erlandsson, E. (2019b). *The Business Model Canvas, with its nine characteristic components* [Illustration]. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02827581.2019.1623304

Burns, A. C., & Bush, R. F. (2006). *Marketing research* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

Cadle, J., & Paul, D., & Turner, P. (2010). *Business Analysis Techniques*. British Computes Society.

Cetelem. (2019, October). *El Observatorio Cetelem Consuma España 2019. https*://elobservatoriocetelem.es/wp-content/uploads/Informes/observatorio-cetelem-consumo-espana-2019-viajes.pdf

Cojanu, V., & Bilbor, M. R. (2007). The SWOT Technique in Action: Strategic Analysis of Development in Romania, Review of Management and Economical Engineering, 6 (5), 162-167

Country Comparison. (2020, August 12). Hofstede Insights. https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/spain/

Cox, A. M., Pinfield, S., & Rutter, S. (2019). Extending McKinsey's 7S model to understand strategic alignment in academic libraries. *Library Management*, *40*(5), 313–326. https://doi.org/10.1108/lm-06-2018-0052

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. P. L. (2017). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ecommerce in Spain: expand into the Spanish online market. (2020, November 20). Webinterpret. https://www.webinterpret.com/au/blog/spain-ecommerce-market/

El 51% de los españoles reserva sus hoteles en OTA. (2020, January 17). Hosteltur. https://www.hosteltur.com/133900_las-reservas-hoteleras-en-otas-y-webs-pierden-peso-frente-a-google.html

GDP per capita (current US$) | Data. (1960–2019). [Dataset]. Worldbank. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD

Globaldata. (2019, March 15). *Spanish outbound tourism* [Online forum post]. Website. https://www.globaldata.com/spanish-outbound-tourism-set-to-be-worth-us64bn-by-2021-says-globaldata/

Hootsuite. (2020). *Global State of Digital 2020 - Spain.* https://hootsuite.com/pages/digital-2020

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE). (2015–2020, January 1–10). *Travels, overnight stays, average stay and expenditure by main destination (12427)* [Dataset]. https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Tabla.htm?t=12427&L=1

Janse, B. (2019). *6W Model of Customer Analysis*. Toolshero. https://www.toolshero.com/marketing/6w-model-of-customer-analysis/

Johnson, G., & Scholes, K. (2002). *Exploring Corporate Strategy* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NY: Financial Times Prentice Hall

Johnson, G., & Scholes, K., & Whittington, R. (2010). *Exploring Corporate Strategy* (8th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Johnson, G., Scholes, K. Whittington, R., Regner, P., & Angwin, D. (2017). *Fundamentals of Strategy*. London, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

Koch, A. J. (2000). "SWOT Does Not Need to be Recalled: It Needs to be Enhanced", Swinburne University of Technology School of Business, 1, pp. 1-14.

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2015a). Managing Marketing Strategies and the Marketing Mix [Illustration]. In *Principles of Marketing* (16th ed., p. 74).

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2015b). *Principles of Marketing (16th Edition)* (16th ed.). Pearson.

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2015c). The Marketing Process - Creating and Capturing Customer Value [Illustration]. In *Principles of Marketing* (16th ed., p. 31).

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2012). *Marketing Management*. Pearson.

Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing Management* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall

Lynch, R. (2018). *Strategic Management* (8th ed.). Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education.

Macroenvironment. (2015). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.weom090501

Nuevas Tendencias Internacionales Que Podrian Acelar las Reservas Turisticas. (2020, October 5). Diario de Gastronomia. https://diariodegastronomia.com/nuevas-tendencias-internacionales-podrian-acelerar-las-reservas-turisticas/

New research shows how to connect with U.S. Hispanics online. (2015, June). Think with Google. https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/future-of-marketing/management-and-culture/diversity-and-inclusion/new-research-shows-how-to-connect-with-digital-hispanics-online/

Piercy, N., Giles, W. (1989). Making SWOT Analysis Work, Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 7 Issue: 5/6, 5-7

Porter, M. E. (1998). *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* (Illustrated ed.). Free Press.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson.

Saunders, M. N. K., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students (5th Edition)* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Savannah, S. (2018, March 23). *Marketing to The Spanish Consumer.* Global Marketing Professor. https://globalmarketingprofessor.com/marketing-to-the-spanish-consumer/

Statista. (2020). *National tourism in Spain.* https://www-statista-com.rps.hva.nl:2443/study/31760/national-tourism-in-spain-statista-dossier/

Sukhraj, R. (2021, April 18). *7 must-have word-of-mouth marketing strategies [infographic].* IMPACT. https://www.impactplus.com/blog/word-of-mouth-marketing-strategies-infographic

Survey: Spanish consumer sentiment during the coronavirus crisis. (2020, December 14). [Slides]. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/survey-spanish-consumer-sentiment-during-the-coronavirus-crisis#

The Business Model Canvas, with its nine characteristic components. (2019). [Illustration]. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02827581.2019.1623304

The Relevance of Porter's Five Forces in Today's Innovative and Changing Business Environment. (2018, January). https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3192207

Thompson, A. A., Strickland, A. J., Gamble, J.E. (2007). *Crafting and Executing strategy-Concepts and Cases,* (15th Edition), USA: McGraw-Hill/Irwin

Th, R. (2020, November 17). *Rusticae prevé retirar 1.400 kilos de plástico al año con sus nuevos amenities.* TecnoHotel. https://tecnohotelnews.com/2020/11/17/rusticae-plastico-amenities/

TravelBI by Turismo de Portugal. (2019, July). Tourism in Portugal 2018. https://travelbi.turismodeportugal.pt/en-us/Documents/Tourism%20in%20Portugal/tourism-in-portugal-2018.pdf

TravelBI by Turismo de Portugal. (2020, September). Turismo em Numeros 2019. https://travelbi.turismodeportugal.pt/pt-pt/Documents/Turismo%20em%20Portugal/turismo-em-numeros-2019.pdf

Un 75% de los viajeros tiene pensado viajar antes de final de año. (2020, October 1). Capital. https://www.capital.es/2020/10/01/un-75-de-los-viajeros-tiene-pensado-viajar-antes-de-final-de-ano/

Understanding the impact of culture on marketing content. (2020, February 3). Smart Insights. https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/understanding-the-impact-of-culture-on-marketing-content/

Weihrich, H. (1982). The TOWS matrix – A tool for situational analysis. Long range planning, 15(2), 54-66.

Appendices

Annex A. Justification for country choice

Annex B. Figures

Annex C: Statement of research values

Annex D. Definition of types of accommodation

Annex E. Competitor analysis

- Section 1. Comparison between eight competitors – SPH information
- Section 2. Comparison between eight competitors – competitor information
- Section 3. Top three competitor analysis
- Section 4. Most relevant output

Annex F. Interview participants

Annex G. In-depth interview

- Section 1. Questions
- Section 2. In-depth interview transcript
- Section 3. In-depth interview coded transcript

Annex H. Survey 1

- Section 1. Survey 1 sample size calculation
- Section 2. Survey 1 respondents
- Section 3. Survey 1 format
- Section 4. Survey 1 results

Annex I. Personas

Annex J. Survey 2

- Section 1. Survey 2 respondents
- Section 2. Survey 2 formats
- Section 3. Results of the first part of Survey 2
- Section 4. Concluded weighing factors for SPH its SFA table
- Section 5. Results of the second part of Survey 2
- Section 6. Concluded SFA table for SPH

Annex K. Proposed new Instagram feed for SPH

Annex L. Proposed social media content calendar for SPH

Annex A. Justification for country choice

To determine to which country this research should be dedicated, i.e., which country should be the next focus country of SPH to let their business grow and generate sales, an extensive calculation has been drafted and applied by the student.

Based on the paper 'Tourism in Numbers – 2019' from TravelBI by Turismo de Portugal, the calculation has been set up. First, the student decided which numbers would be most relevant for SPH to base their decision on. It has been concluded that 'Overnight stays by foreigners' was the most valuable, since SPH represents independent and unique Portuguese hotels covering the entire national territory. Second, the student designed a calculation, using the following numbers:

1. Overnight stays by foreigners in Portugal in total in 2019.
2. Overnight stays by foreigners per region in 2019.

The student considered the actual importance per region relative to the total amount of overnight stays in the whole of Portugal. The following point system has been used:

Table A.1. Top 5 – Point system of the countries.

Position	Points
First	5
Second	4
Third	3
Fourth	2
Fifth	1

Table A.2. Importance per region expressed in weighting – based on the number of overnight stays relative to the total of 2019 in the whole of Portugal.

Region	Weighting
Whole of Portugal	*8
Algarve	*7
Lisbon Metropolitan Area	*6
Madeira	*5
North	*4
Centre	*3
Azores	*2
Alentejo	*1

Instead of just looking at every region and its top 5 inbound countries for overnight stays and then calculate which countries were scoring best, the student considered the actual importance per region relative to the total amount of overnight stays in the entire country. By using the point systems as expressed in Table A.1. and Table A.2., the following outcome has been set up as shown in Table A.3.

Table A.3. Outcome calculations 'Overnight stays by foreigners in Portugal in 2019'.

Country	Number of points
United Kingdom	5 * 8 + 5 * 7 + 4 * 5 = 95 points
Germany	4 * 8 + 1 * 6 + 4 * 7 + 1 * 4 + 2 * 3 + 5 * 2 + 4 * 1 + 5 * 5 = 32 + 6 + 28 + 4 + 6 + 10 + 4 = 90 points
Spain	3 * 8 + 4 * 6 + 5 * 4 + 5 * 3 + 3 * 2 + 5 * 1 + 1 * 5 = 24 + 24 + 20 + 15 + 6 + 5 + 5 = 99 points
France	2 * 8 + 3 * 6 + 1 * 7 + 4 * 4 + 4 * 3 + 2 * 2 + 1 * 1 + 3 * 5 = 89 points
Brazil	1 * 8 + 5 * 6 + 3 * 4 + 3 * 3 + 3 * 1 = 62 points

To clarify, the calculation of one country will be illustrated, in this case the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom scored first in overnight stays by foreigners in the whole of Portugal in 2019; 5 (first position) * 8 (weighting of the whole of Portugal relative to the other regions) = 40. The United Kingdom scored first in overnight stays by foreigners in the Algarve in 2019; 5 (first position) * 7 (weighting of the Algarve relative to the other regions) = 35. The United Kingdom scored second in overnight stays by foreigners in Madeira in 2019; 4 (second position) * 5 (weighting of Madeira relative to the other regions) = 20. This gives the total of 95 points. They did not appear in the top 5 of the other Portuguese regions.

By using the calculation set up by the student, based on the paper 'Tourism in Numbers – 2019' from TravelBI by Turismo de Portugal, it can be concluded that the country that is most interesting for SPH to focus on right now, is Spain (total of 99 points). It can be justified that the Spanish tourists are most interesting to target right now for SPH based on the numbers. Since the hotels that are part of the company are spread throughout the entire country, the calculation is reliable.

Other relevant numbers to consider for this decision as published by the same paper of TravelBI by Turismo de Portugal (2020), are the tourism receipts in 2019. The following countries form the top 5:

1. United Kingdom
2. France
3. Germany
4. Spain
5. United States of America

Although Spain is only in the fourth position, it is less relevant to determine the target country for SPH based on the tourism receipts in 2019 in Portugal per country, since the main goal from the hotels represented is not to attract the biggest spenders.
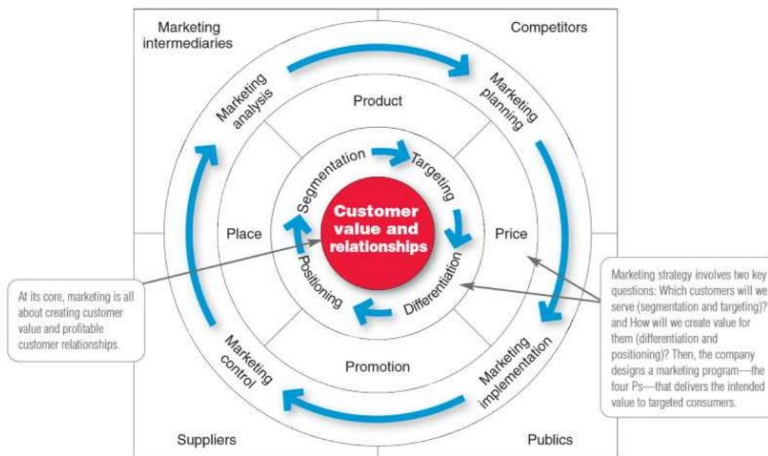
Figure B.1. Marketing Strategy Wheel - Managing Market Strategies and the Marketing Mix (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016, p. 74).
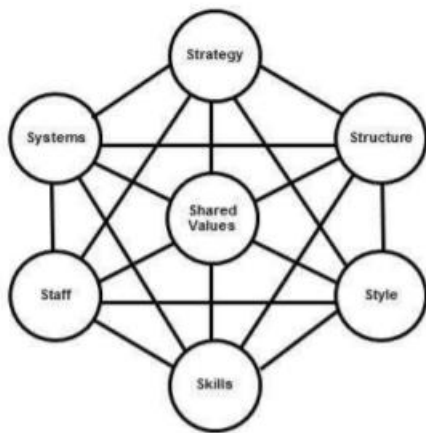
Figure B.2. 7S Model (Waterman, Peters and Phillips in Cox, Pinfield and Rutter, 2019).
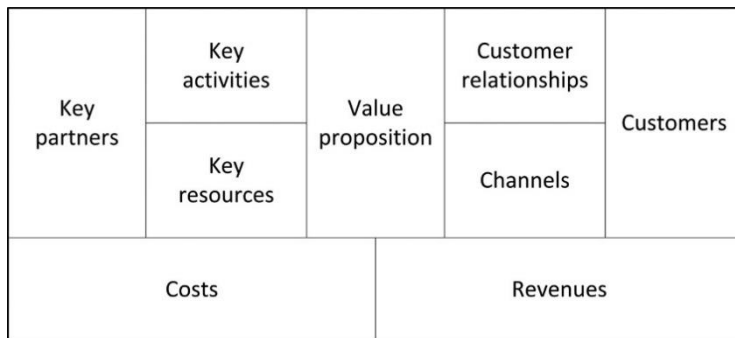
Figure B.3. The BMC, with its nine characteristic components (Osterwalder & Pigneur, in Benjaminsson et al., 2019).

Table B.4. Research matrix.

Research Question	Desk research	Field research	Theory or model
1. What is the purpose of developing a marketing strategy nowadays?	Theoretical framework	-	-
2. How to develop an overall marketing strategy	Theoretical framework	-	SWOT, Confrontation Matrix, SFA model, McKinsey's 7S model, BMC, 6W's of Ferrell and the DESTEP framework
3. What are the internal strengths and weaknesses of SPH?	Internal desk research	In-depth interviews	McKinsey's 7S model and the BMC
4. What are the opportunities and threats for SPH in the Spanish market?	External desk research	In-depth interview and Survey 1	6W's of Ferrell and the DESTEP framework
5. Which marketing strategy should be applied by SPH in the Spanish market?	-	Survey 2	SWOT, Confrontation Matrix and SFA model
6. Based on the proposed strategy, what do the recommendations for SPH in Spain look like on both tactical and operational level?	-	-	-

Table B.5. Resident population by generation (age) in Spain on the 1st of January 2020 (INE, 2020).

Generation	Population numbers
Generation Z (24y and younger[19])	11.627.225
Millennials/Generation Y (25y-43y)	11.795.780
Generation X (44y-55y)	9.074.905
Baby boomers (56y-74y)	10.219.823
Silent generation (75y and older)	4.612.248

Table B.6. Resident population by nationality in Spain on the 1st of January 2020 (INE, 2020)[20].

Nationality	Population numbers
Spanish	42.094.606
From the European Union (excluding Spain)	2.023.059
European country (not within the EU)	288.771
Africa	1.034.785
North America	83.161
South America	1.045.464
Central America and the Caribbean	329.135
Asia	423.800
Oceania	6
Stateless	2.006
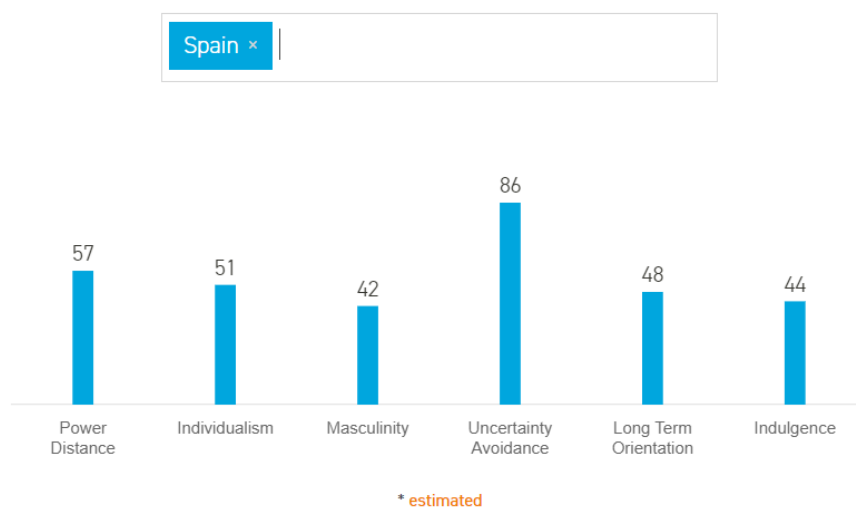
Figure B.7. Geert Hofstede Country Score – Spain (Hofstede, 2020).

---

[19] To be discussed.
[20] 5.188 residents are missing (INE, 2020).

Table B.8. Potential number of people that marketers can reach using adverts on different social media platforms in Spain.

Platform	Number of people that can be reached with adverts	Advertising reach compared to total Spanish population aged 13+	Quarter-on-quarter change in advertising reach
Facebook	21 million	51%	-4.5%
Instagram	16 million	39%	+2.6%
Twitter	7.50 million	18%	-4.6%
LinkedIn	13 million	34%	+8.3%

Figure B.9. Number of trips by residents of Spain from 2005 to 2019, by destination (in millions) (Statista, 2020).

Figure B.10. Number of domestic and outbound trips by residents of Spain in 2019, by purpose of trip (in millions) (Statista, 2020).

Figure B.11. Number of outbound trips by residents in Spain in 2019, by type of accommodation (in 1,000s) (Statista, 2020).

Number of outbound trips by residents in Spain in 2019, by world region of destination (in 1,000s)

Outbound trips from Spain 2019, by destination region

■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

Number of trips in thousands

	Europe	Americas	Africa	Other countries
2017	13,952.3	1,357.5	1,361.3	628.3
2018	15,579.7	1,543.2	1,433.1	804.2
2019	16,570.4	1,462.7	1,417	669.6
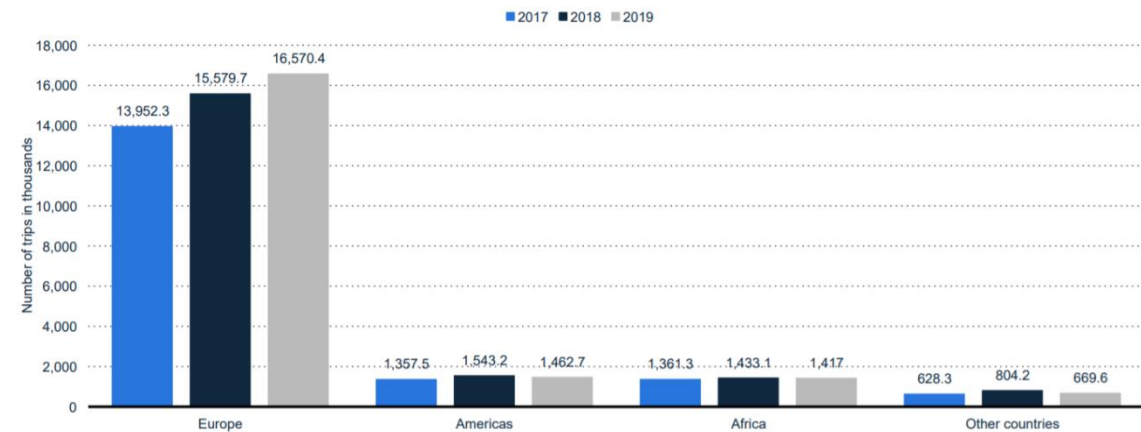
Note: Spain; 2019
Further information regarding this statistic can be found on page 44.
Source(s): INE (Spain); ID 494400

20   Outbound travel   **statista** ✓

Figure B.12. Number of outbound trips by residents in Spain in 2019, by world region of destination (in 1,000s) (Statista, 2020).

Most popular outbound travel destinations for residents of Spain from 2015 to 2019 (in 1,000 trips)

Main outbound destinations for Spanish travelers 2015-2019

■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

Number of trips in thousands

	France	Portugal	Italy	United Kingdom
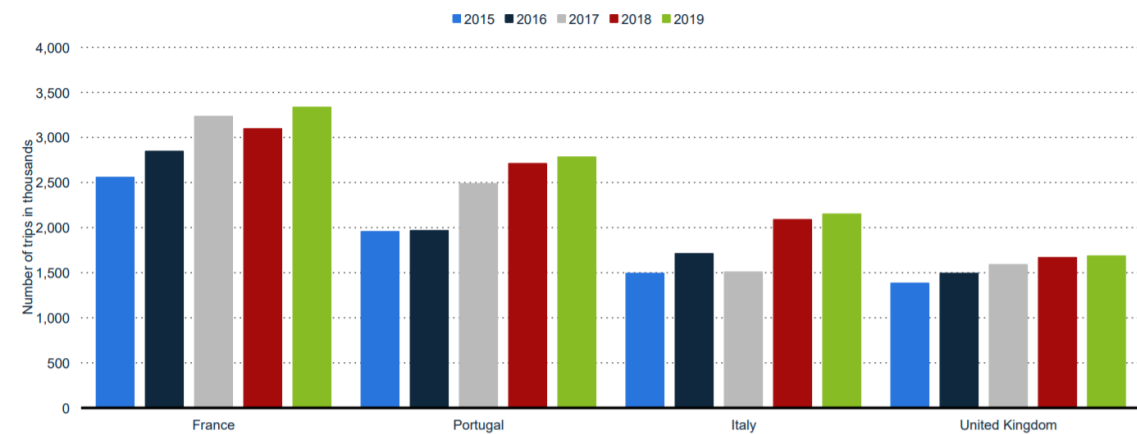
Note: Spain; 2015 to 2019
Further information regarding this statistic can be found on page 45.
Source(s): INE (Spain); ID 494312

21   Outbound travel   **statista** ✓

Figure B.13. Most popular outbound travel destinations for residents of Spain from 2015 to 2019 (in 1,000 trips) (Statista, 2020).

Monthly number of trips by residents of Spain in 2019, by destination* (in 1,000s)

Domestic and outbound trips per month in Spain 2019
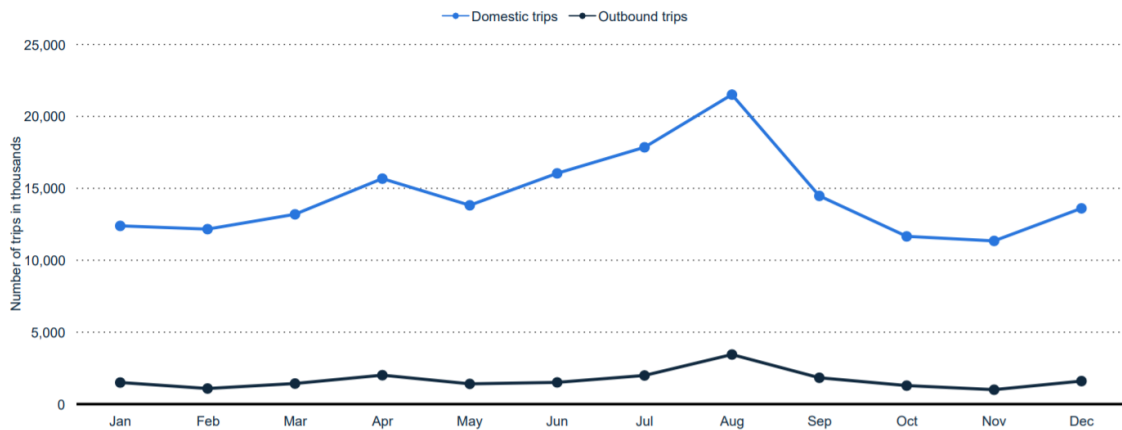
Note: Spain; 2019; residents of Spanish households
Further information regarding this statistic can be found on page 29.
Source(s): INE (Spain); ID 494987

Figure B.14. Monthly number of trips by residents of Spain in 2019, by destination (in 1,000s) (Statista, 2020).

Annual spending on travel in Spain in 2015 to 2019, by destination type (in billion euros)
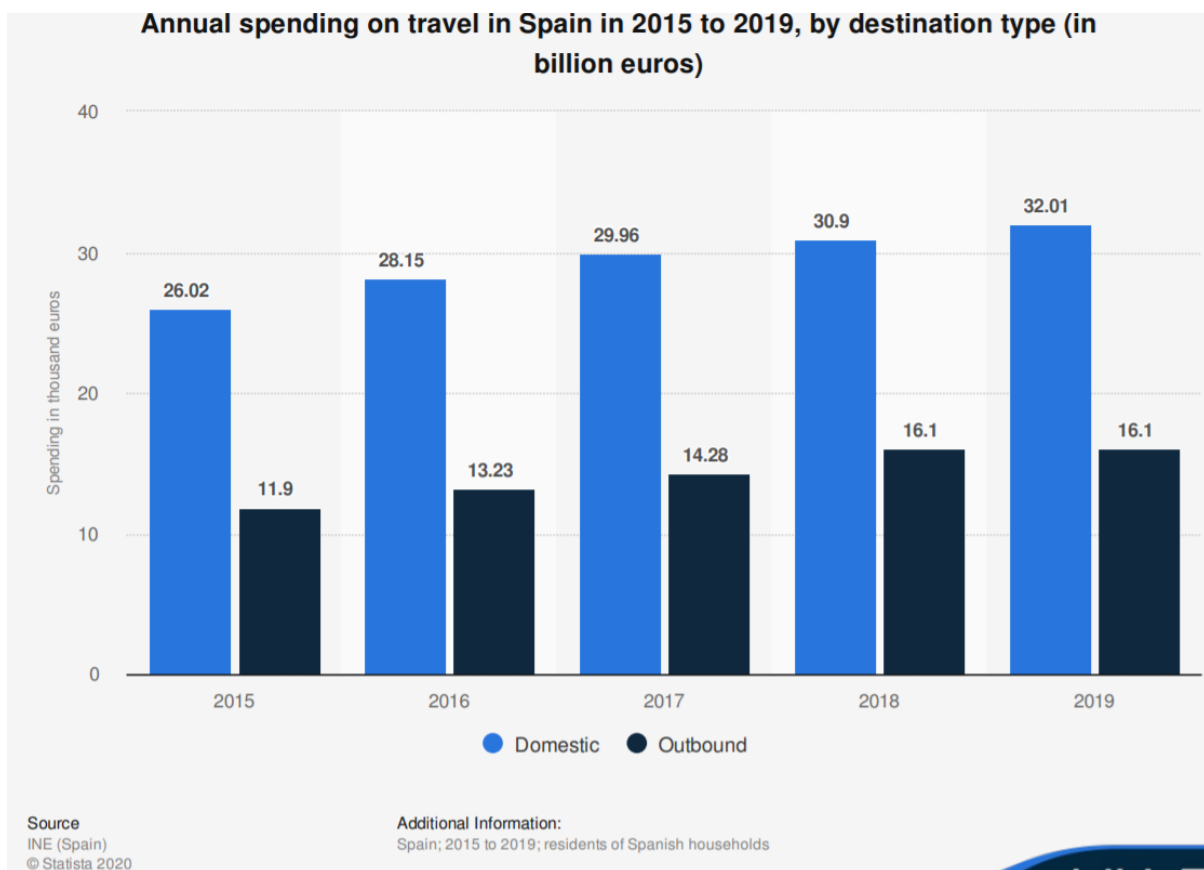
Source
INE (Spain)
© Statista 2020

Additional Information:
Spain; 2015 to 2019; residents of Spanish households

Figure B.15. Annual spending on travel in Spain in 2015 to 2019, by destination type (in billion euros) (Statista, 2020).

Table B.16. Concluded SWOT for SPH.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
S1: Offering the largest curated selection of different types of small accommodations in Portugal all accessible and easy to book in one platform, filtered by high quality standards and based on relevant up-to-date information (for example: covid19 measurements) S2: Booking via SPH can offer a meaningful and one-of-a-kind experience while feeling wanted, receiving personal attention and being able to switch off completely S3: Unique way of doing sustainable business by having both a strong focus on supporting the Portuguese national economy and small businesses S4: Embracing a 'test-and-adapt' management style S5: Relevant and meaningful knowledge/IT resources available as being essentially a tech company (GuestCentric), including the already-existing booking system S6: Among SPH its employees, both strong knowledge about Portugal and the hospitality and tourism industry is available, and a valuable network in Portugal exists S7: Strong focus on offering exclusive benefits to both customers in terms of partnerships and cashback programs and member hotels which translates into cost savings in several technological services and marketing initiatives through partnerships S8: Strong potential of cross selling; 147 listings that can promote each other and benefit from the opportunity to engage with clients from the whole brand S9: Offering valuable features via SPH its website, including a phone helpline, a mobile responsive design and an account profile for users providing the cashback program	W1: Limited resources available in terms of manpower, budget, and time W2: Occupied with time consuming tasks due to limited resources and systems W3: Very clear and strong focus on the Portuguese market, including having a marketing/sales strategy strongly focused on the Portuguese market only W4: No consistent social media strategy and strong social media presence yet W5: Small customer base W6: Having a relatively weak relationship with its member listings W7: Listings can only be on SPH if they use the GuestCentric booking engine
Opportunities: O1: Beneficial and positive pre-covid19 Spanish outbound tourism forecast, including various positive economic developments, rise of LCCs, expected growing outbound travel spending, increasing interest in gaining unique experiences outside of Spain and an expected slowdown of domestic overnight stays O2: Global (post-)covid19 (tourist reservation) trends, including increasing environmental awareness, rapid adaption of e-commerce whereas a seamless digital service is a decisive	**Threats:** T1: The strong negative impact of covid19 in Spain as being one of the most severe affected European countries with recovery only expected by the end of 2023 and Spaniards being one of the least optimistic society in the world T2: The remaining strong presence and popularity of domestic travelling among Spaniards which is currently being reinforced by covid19 T3: Expected Spanish consumer sentiment after the pandemic, including shift to value and essentials, new holiday outlook planning to

factor in getting customers and increasing usage of services without personal contact

O3: Expected Spanish consumer sentiment after the pandemic, including flight to digital and omnichannel, shock to loyalty, intend to continue with new required habits during covid19 such as purchasing from social media and using apps, intend to continue with new shopping behaviours such as trying new brands/websites/digital shopping methods, value being the new driver when trying out a new brand, increasing attention to companies' promotion of sustainable and safe solutions and being more likely to trade down to a less expensive brand

O4: Spaniards are a strongly digitalized community with the highest e-commerce spending on travel and accommodation and a high user rate on both social media and e-commerce in general

O5: Portugal is already the second most popular outbound travel destination among Spaniards, with a growing number of Spanish guests and rising popularity in different types of accommodation in Portugal that are like SPH its portfolio

O6: Limited direct competitors for SPH in the Spanish market with clear weak spots that can relatively easily be played on by SPH

O7: Changing way of booking travel and holidays among the Spaniards, including an expected decrease in the use of physical travel agencies and increase in the use of different online/social media platforms and Google for booking holidays, searching, experimenting, and sharing

O8: In the face of uncertainty, most Spanish travellers will use an agency when contracting their 2021 trip because of the cancellation and reimbursement services and personalized advice of experts

maintain or reduce holiday expenditure, becoming much more mindful of how they spend their money and adopting new habits to save, expect to continue cutting back where from all categories the ones with the most negative net intent are domestic flights, international fights and hotel/resort stays and consumers are more likely to trade down to a less expensive brand or store

T4: Despite the new trends in terms of booking holidays and travels among Spaniards that are beneficial for SPH, there is a highly competitive field of business in general in Spain where they make use of various platforms

T5: The existing most direct competitors of SPH in the Spanish market do have a strong market presence and embrace equal values and USPs as SPH does

T6: Potential low return on investment, mainly during the covid19 recovery years

72

Table B.17. Confrontation matrix.

Maxi-maxi strategies (S/O): Strategies and tactics that leverage SPH its strengths to maximize opportunities. I.e., 'Growth strategy'. S1 + S2 + S3 + S4 + S5 + S6 + S7 + S9 in combination with O1 + O2 + O3 + O4 + O5 + O6 + O7 + O8 'SPH needs to now start targeting the promising, digitalized and growing (post-covid19) online Spanish market through a test-and-adapt style. By offering different types of small accommodations in Portugal through a perfectly working online platform and by making use of both the right social media channels and Google metasearch possibilities, SPH will offer value in delivering a one-of-a-kind experience, by contributing to sustainability, and by creating a sense of trust among its users due to the different services and expertise.'	Mini-maxi strategies (W/O): Strategies and tactics that take advantage of SPH its opportunities to minimize its weaknesses. I.e., 'Improve strategy'. W1 + W2 + W3 + W4 +W5 in combination with O1 + O2 + O3 + O4 + O5 + O6 + O7 + O8 'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'
Maxi-mini strategies (S/T): Strategies and tactics that utilize SPH's strengths to minimize its threats. I.e., 'Defence strategy'. S1 + S2 + S3 + S5 + S6 + S7 + S9 in combination with T1 + T3 +T4 + T5 'SPH should slowly, gradually, and carefully start targeting the Spanish market only when the economic situation has improved in Spain, by offering a perfectly working business model and online platform promoted via different social media channels and highly focusing on the one-of-a-kind experience, sustainability, additional services, benefits and expertise, (IT) knowledge, and the unique listings from different price ranges conquering the expected Spanish customer sentiment and competition.'	Mini-mini strategies (W/T): Strategies and tactics that minimize SPH's weaknesses in the face of threats. I.e., 'Retreat strategy'. W1 + W2 + W4 + W6 in combination with T1 + T2 + T3 + T4 + T5 + T6 'SPH should not start targeting the Spanish market considering the limited amount of internal resources available and more important tasks to be solved first, a too uncertain market due to covid19, negative existing or expected customer trends from SPH its perspective, an enduring popularity of domestic travelling among Spaniards, and a relatively competitive market force that all together creates a too high risk of a low return on investment.'

Annex C. Statement of research values

"First of all, I imply *honesty* in conducting research and in communication about research results and their (possible) implications, fully and without deception. Besides, all who take part in this research will be treated with *fairness* – respect and consideration. I will look beyond my own perceptions and biases to the empirical evidence that validates conclusions, thus stay as *objective* as possible. I will maintain a degree of *scepticism* towards research results and conclusions, so these are ideally examined and improved. Moreover, I aim to be *accountable* and to be able to demonstrate that my results and statements are reliable. Furthermore, I intent to be *open* about my collected data and what I based my results and conclusions on. Finally, I preserve the reliability of the research results by using reliability enhancing methods."

1. Hotéis (Hotels)

"A hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis. Hotels often provide a number of additional guest services, such as a restaurant, a swimming pool or childcare. Some hotels have conference services and meeting rooms and encourage groups to hold conventions and meetings at their location" (Course Hero, 2020).

2. Alojamento local (Local accommodation)

According to Turismo de Portugal (2020), Alojamento Local are those that provide temporary accommodation services, namely to tourists, for a fee if they do not meet the requirements to be considered tourist developments.

Modalities:

- Housing → the establishment of local accommodation whose accommodation unit consists of an autonomous building, of a single-family nature.
- Apartment → the establishment of local accommodation whose accommodation unit consists of an autonomous fraction of a building or part of an urban building susceptible to independent use.
- Accommodation establishments → the establishment of local accommodation whose accommodation units are made up of rooms, integrated in an autonomous fraction of a building, in an urban building or in a part of an urban building susceptible to independent use. They may use the name of hostel when the predominant accommodation unit is a dormitory, that is, when the number of users is greater than the number of users in a room, and if they comply with the other requirements provided for this purpose. As of February 4, 2021, hostels have new requirements - see Ordinance No. 262/2020, of November 6.
- Rooms → the exploration of local accommodation carried out at the holder his or her residence (corresponding to his tax domicile) when the accommodation unit is the room and there are not more than three of them.

According to Turismo de Portugal (2020), the maximum capacity of local accommodation establishments is 9 rooms and 30 users, apart from the hostel that has no capacity limit and rooms that can only be 3 in the holder his or her residence. In terms of users, the capacity is still limited according to the characteristics/size of the dwellings and cannot exceed the number resulting from multiplying the number of rooms by 2. In case of apartments and houses, there is an added possibility of accommodating two more users in the room, according to the INE indicators. In all types of accommodation, and if there are living conditions, up to two additional beds for children up to 12 years old can also be installed.

In the case of the apartment modality, each owner or owner of the exploration of local accommodation can explore more than nine units per building if it does not exceed 75% of the number of existing fractions or independent parts of the building. For the calculation of exploitation, the apartments registered in the name of the spouse, descendants and ascendants of the owner or owner of the holding, as well as those registered in the name of different legal persons, in which there are common partners, are considered (Turismo de Portugal, 2020).

3. Hotel-Apartamentos (Aparthotels)

Also known as a 'Residential Hotel' or 'Extended Stay Hotels'; an Aparthotel is a type of hotel that has long-term housing for guests, but may still have hotel services like housekeeping and on-site dining. Apartment hotels usually include a full kitchen and one or more bedrooms (Xotels, 2020).

4. Apartamentos Turísticos (Tourist Apartments)

Those establishments consisting of accommodation units that are offered as self-contained accommodation, and managed under the business operating unit principle, which are professionally and habitually used for providing temporary accommodation without constituting a change of residence for the person staying there (Eustat, 2020).

5. Turismo No Espaço Rural (Rural Tourism)

According to Direção Geral de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural (2020), Rural Tourism should be:

- Located in rural spaces understood as areas with traditional and significant connection to agriculture or environment and landscape of a strongly rural character.
- Considered as a set of activities and services carried out and provided for remuneration in rural areas, according to different types of accommodation, complementary activities and services for tourism and entertainment, with a view to providing customers with a complete and diversified offer.
- At a rural scale from the point of view of the dimension and architectural characteristics and of the typical building materials of the region.
- Linked to so-called traditional social structures, that is, those that retain the gregarious characteristics, values, ways of life and thinking of rural communities based on family farming models.
- Sustainable, insofar as its development should help maintain the rural characteristics of the region, using local resources and knowledge derived from the knowledge of the populations and not be an instrument of urbanization.

- Differentiated according to the diversity of the environment, the economy and the uniqueness of popular history, traditions, and culture.
- Personalized welcome and in accordance with the tradition of welcoming the community in which it operates.

Casa de campo → country houses are properties located in villages and rural spaces that provide accommodation services to tourists and that, due to their design, building materials and other characteristics, in the typical local architecture.

Village tourism → when five or more country houses located in the same village or parish, or in the neighbouring villages or parishes, are operated in an integrated manner by a single entity, that may use the name Village tourism, without prejudice to the owned by more than one person.

Agrotourism → agrotourism ventures are properties located on agricultural holdings that provide accommodation services to tourists and allow guests to monitor and learn about the agricultural activity, or to participate in the work developed there, according to the rules established by their manager.

Rural hotel → hotels located in rural areas that, due to their architectural design and construction materials, respect the dominant characteristics of the region where they are located, and can be installed in new buildings that occupy the entire building or integrate a unique architectural entity and respect the same characteristics.

6. Aldeamentos Turísticos (Tourist village)

A tourist village is a village of small houses built for people to stay in while on holiday, usually near the sea, a river, or a lake (Macmillan dictionary, 2020).

7. Pousadas - Quintas Da Madeira

A pousada is a Portuguese term for a mostly luxurious hotel that is often located in a historic building, comparable to the Spanish Paradores (Pestana, 2020). Quinta is the Portuguese word for a house or domain in the countryside. From simple holiday homes to luxury holiday villas and a cosy Bed & Breakfast; a Quinta comes in many forms.

Annex E. Competitor Analysis

Section 1. Comparison between eight competitors – SPH information

Table E.1.1. Overview of information from SPH needed for the competitor analysis.

Factors	SPH
Number of listings	147 of which all in Portugal
Types of listings	Apartments, Aparthotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Boutique hotels, Beach houses, Country houses, Countryside retreats, (Eco) lodgings, Family homes, Farmhouses, Guest houses, Hotels, Resorts, Rural hotels, Spa/wellness hotels, Serviced apartments, and Villas
Listing criteria	Small listings with less than 150 rooms located in different areas in Portugal and ranging between 3 to 5 stars, all listings are certified 'Clean and Safe' from Turismo de Portugal and offer services that promote a safe stay. In addition, all listings comply with health and safety measurements set by SPH. Lastly, all listings score well on online reputation platforms (8.5+)
Price segment[21]	Upscale, mid-price, economy, budget
Geography	Only Portugal
In Portugal	Algarve, Alentejo, Alentejo Coast, Centre, Lisbon, Madeira, Azores, Douro & North, Porto and East
Customer segments	Middle aged couples, families, and groups of friends in their late 20s early 30s but with the probability of this age coming down when moving to international markets
Additional products/services on website	Newsletter, helpline via the phone, gift vouchers, 5% cashback system (donate to a charity) and a personal account
Website available in	Portuguese and English
Mobile friendly website and/or app available	No App but mobile friendly website
Year founded	2020
Headquarters	Lisbon
Number of employees	5
Company reviews	Not available yet

---

21 The price segments for this competitor analysis are a combination of the filters used by Booking.com and the market price segments for rural and non-metro markets as stated by STR (2020). Budget is the lowest 20% of average room rates, economy the next 20%, mid-scale the next 20% and upscale the lasting 30% of average room rates (STR, 2020). When combining the price filters used by Booking.com with the market price segments: Budget: 0-50 euro, Economy: 50-100 euro, Mid-price: 100-150 euro and upscale: 150 euro+.

Section 2. Comparison between eight competitors – competitor information

Table E.2.1. Overview of information from eight different competitors needed for the competitor analysis (part 1/2).

Factors	Booking	Secretplaces	Escapio	Welovesmallhotels
Number of listings	29.063.681, 45.655 in Portugal	1.562, 306 in Portugal	8.000, 127 in Portugal	80, all in Portugal
Types of listings	Hotels, Apartments, Resorts, Villas, Cabins, Cottages, Glamping, Serviced apartments, Holiday homes, Guest houses, Hostels, Motels, Bed & Breakfasts, Ryokans, Riads, Holiday parks, Homestays, Campsites, Country houses, Farm stays, Boats, Luxury tents, Self-catering accommodation and Tiny houses	Apartments, Boutique hotels, Aparthotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Beach houses, Country hotels, Camping sites, Castles, Cottages, (Eco) lodgings, Hotels, Luxury hotels, Manor houses, Pousadas, Rural hotels, Riads, Spa hotels and Villas	Types of hotels: Beach, Spa, Romantic, 5-star, 4-star, Boutique, Design, Luxury, Quiet, Small, Country houses, Family, Gourmet, Lakeside, Finca, Ski, Palace, Golf, Castle, Adults-only and Riads	Charming small hotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Countryside retreats, Historical manor houses, Beach hotels and Family homes
Listing criteria	Listings can be registered for free on Booking.com. Once the listing is being created, the property can be opened on the website and bookings can be received. Booking.com will verify the accommodation though before launching it officially	Each listing has been chosen for possessing something truly special, be it excellent service, decor and good taste, atmosphere, singular architecture, or beautiful surroundings. The selection is as diverse as the clients	High Quality as well as a homogenous and persuasive overall concept are critical. In addition, Escapio focuses on high-quality interior design and furniture, a charming atmosphere, perfect service, outstanding location, excellent design, and the very highest degree of guest satisfaction. The	Inspiring places rich in mysterious stories which trigger the imagination, places full of character, delicious breakfasts, and wonderfully comfortable beds. The selection of places is not based on a certain number of stars or a precise number of rooms. It is mainly an emotional selection of places fulfilled with heart and soul

Factors	Booking	Secretplaces	Escapio	Welovesmallhotels
			privilege of being listed by Escapio cannot be bought	
Price segment	Upscale, mid-price, economy, budget	Upscale, mid-price, economy,	Upscale, mid-price, economy, budget	Upscale, mid-price, economy
Geography	226 countries worldwide, especially strong in Europe	30 countries located in Europe, Africa, and South America. 26 countries are in Europe	50 countries worldwide, strongest in Europe	Portugal
In Portugal	Booking.com covers the whole of Portugal. Popular destinations on the website: Lisbon, Serra da Estrela, Porto, Algarve, Alentejo, Douro, Sintra, Aveiro, Geres and Évora	Alentejo, Alentejo Coast/Vicentina Coast, Algarve, Azores, Central Coast & Beiras, Douro & North, Lisbon, Lisbon Coast, Cascais & Sintra, Madeira & Porto Santo, Porto, Ribatejo and Setúbal Península	Alentejo, Algarve, Azores, Central Coast & Beiras, Douro & North, Lisbon, Lisbon Coast, Cascais & Sintra, Madeira, Porto and Setúbal	Azores, North & Douro, Centre of Portugal, Lisbon & Surroundings, Alentejo, Southwest Coast and Algarve.
Customer segments	Worldwide, no specific target group among travellers. 68% who books on Booking.com are families	Like-minded travellers with whatever preference and budget	Individual travellers looking for a high-quality vacation and wanting to book an exceptional hotel	Those who want to experience a different, authentic, and unhurried Portugal, who enjoy sustainable tourism, who want to stay in small accommodations and/or want to enjoy off-the-beaten-track experiences
Additional products/services on website	Flights (directed to GoToGate.com), car rentals, activities, airport	Advice requests, online blog, newsletter,	Newsletter, Escapio Blog and a Wishlist	The main product/service offered by welovesmallhotels.com are different

Factors	Booking	Secretplaces	Escapio	Welovesmallhotels
	transportation, restaurant reservations (directed to opentable.com), affiliate partner program, gift cards, receiving deals via email, online blog/articles, personal account, contact customer service and Booking.com business	and gift vouchers		types of tours created by the company throughout Portugal. In addition to the offered tours, the company offers the 80 listings, shares travel ideas via their online blog, provides tailor made (group/LGBTQ) travel and a newsletter
Website available in	43+ languages and dialects	English, Spanish, German, and Portuguese	English, Spanish, and German	English and Portuguese
Mobile friendly website and/or app available	App and mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website
Year founded	1996	2000	2004	2014
Headquarters	Amsterdam, The Netherlands.	Cascais, Portugal	Berlin, Germany	Penafiel, Porto, Portugal
Number of employees	19.375	8	11-50 employees (9 on LinkedIn)	2-10, 2 on LinkedIn
Company reviews	Trust pilot: 1.6/5 (22.942 reviews) Sitejabber: 1.7/5 (1.792 reviews) Product review: 1.5/5 (1.537 reviews)	Google review: 5/5 stars (7 reviews) Facebook review: 4.1/5 stars (9 reviews)	No online reviews available	We love small hotels tours on TripAdvisor: 5/5 (21 reviews) Facebook review: 5/5 (2 reviews)

Table E.2.2. Overview of information from eight different competitors needed for the competitor analysis (part 2/2).

Factors	Greatsmallhotels	Joandso	Myboutiquehotel	Rusticae
Number of listings	3.551, 123 in Portugal	20 hotels and 167 homes and villas through Airbnb, all in Portugal	3.500 boutique hotels, design hotels and design guest houses, 400 in Portugal	339, 21 in Portugal
Types of listings	GSH features a range of unique small hotels from all over the world	All listings are small hotels: Boutique	Bed & Breakfasts, Apartments, Design villas, Luxury boutique	Full rental houses (farmhouses, mansions), Boutique

Factors	Greatsmallhotels	Joandso	Myboutiquehotel	Rusticae
	because they believe there are many ways to interpret luxury. Historic country inns, luxury retreats, city centre design hotels, charming and traditional guesthouses, castles, palaces, or boutique hotels to suit the tastes of every traveller	hotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Townhouses, Rural hotels, Farmhouses, Spa hotels and Palaces. In association with Airbnb: Holiday rentals, Homes, Villas and Apartments	hotels, 5-star design hotels, Palaces, Hostels, Chalets, Ryokans, Riads, Beach resorts and Ski resorts	hotels and Boutique apartments
Listing criteria	The special establishments are handpicked based on remarkable architecture, outstanding surroundings, or unusual charm. All listings are 'small' and need character; ones which are built in the typical style of the area, situated in outstanding surroundings or which have been given a special charm by their owners	What matters to Joandso is their character, originality, and beauty. Their rule of thumb follows these two questions: 'Would we come back?' and 'Would we recommend it to our best friend?'. All listings are handpicked	Small hotels with a unique or intimate decor, offering luxury, personalized services, and facilities. The interior design must be stylish and trendy, with an intimate and cosy atmosphere	Small, charming hotels that offer moments of relaxation and enjoyment with quality and passion for detail. Unique buildings in spectacular locations, where the host pampers every detail and offers a personalized treatment to each guest
Price segment	Upscale, mid-price, economy, budget	Upscale, mid-price, economy	Upscale, mid-price, economy	Upscale, mid-price, economy
Geography	Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, North America, Pacific. Most countries are in Europe and most listings are in Europe	Portugal	Europe, Asia, Oceania, Middle East, Americas (North, Central, South, Caribbean), Africa and Indian Ocean. Most countries represented by the company are in Europe	Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Panama, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Italy, Peru, France, Mexico, United Kingdom, Ecuador, and Brazil. Most listings in Spain.

Factors	Greatsmallhotels	Joandso	Myboutiquehotel	Rusticae
In Portugal	Alentejo, Algarve, Atlantic Islands, Centre, Lisbon Region, Porto, and North	Lisbon, Lisbon coast, Porto, Alentejo, Douro & North and the Algarve	Azores, Alentejo Coast, Around Lisbon, Douro Valley, Madeira, North Region, East, Alentejo Region, Algarve Region, Central Region, Ribatejo Region and São Miguel	Lisbon, Douro & North, Alentejo Coast, Centre, East, Evora and Portalegre
Customer segments	Discerning travellers looking for a unique and different experience and in search of a warmer and more personal treatment	Joandso is here to create new memories for the endlessly curious traveller	MyBoutiqueHotel.com removes the guest-work and delivers exactly what discerning travellers are looking for in the luxury boutique hotel experience	Those who enjoy the good life in their leisure time. Those who want to leave the city, enjoy the scenery, breathe in the fresh air of the countryside and the sea, indulge in good food, relaxation, and feelings. Guests who seek special places to relax, to be pampered and taken care of. A community of travellers who are your pears and who are respectful, sustainable, and humane travellers
Additional products/services on website	Newsletter and an online blog	Support Joandso with 'Buying them a drink', travel advice, studio JOSO on the hunt for understated luxury, hotel recommendations through a Watchlist and Journal and subscribing to their newsletter	Corporate department that helps booking multi-rooms or find a meeting room in one of the boutique hotels	Rusticae offers Gift Keys (overnight stays in a Rusticae listing, different experiences or a certain amount of money that can be spent on Rusticae.com). In addition, Rusticae offers experiences that you can book per destination. The company also gives trip ideas (like an online blog). Rusticae also has a corporate department, offering creating brand experiences for companies or hosting

Factors	Greatsmallhotels	Joandso	Myboutiquehotel	Rusticae
				meetings and events for companies. Lastly, you can join the Rusticae members club
Website available in	English, Spanish, French, and German	English	English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish	English, Spanish
Mobile friendly website/App available?	No App but mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website	No App but mobile friendly website
Year founded	2003	2016	2005	1996
Headquarters	Barcelona, Spain	Lisbon, Portugal	Paris, France	Madrid, Spain
Number of employees	Unknown	2	2-10 employees, 2 on LinkedIn	9
Company reviews	No online reviews available	No online reviews available.	Facebook review: 3/5 stars (3 reviews)	Google review: 4/5 stars (35 reviews)

Section 3. Top three competitor analysis

1. **Secretplaces**

Summary

When comparing Secretplaces and SPH on the main features as described in Section 1, the biggest difference between the two companies is that Secretplaces offers listings spread all over Europe, Africa, and South America, while SPH solely focuses on Portugal. The number of listings offered by Secretplaces in Portugal are more than SPH does, with a total of 306 spread through the whole country covering almost every possible Portuguese region. Portugal therefore is in the top 3 in terms of countries where Secretplaces offers accommodations, which makes sense since the headquarter of the company is based in Portugal as well. Both companies offer listings for whatever preference and budget. Based on the languages in which the website of Secretplaces is offered, it can be concluded that the company targets internationally, with a strong focus on the German, Spanish, and Portuguese market. It should be considered when analysing the company its website and social media channels, that the company is not specifically only targeting the Spanish market. However, since Secretplaces does target the Spanish market, has similar types of listings of which many in Portugal, the company is considered as a strong competitor of SPH and should be analysed thoroughly.

Products

Types of listings that are being offered on Secretplaces are: Apartments, Boutique hotels, Aparthotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Beach houses, Country hotels, Camping sites, Castles, Cottages, (Eco) lodgings,

Hotels, Luxury hotels, Manor houses, Pousadas, Rural hotels, Riads, Spa hotels and Villas. Services and product/service combinations offered are: (1) Advice requests, (2) Online blog, (3) Newsletter and (4) Gift vouchers.

First, the advice requests. As a website visitor, you can ask for advice by filling out an online form (Figure E.3.1), calling them from 09.00 to 19.00 GMT on four different numbers (British, Portuguese, German, and Spanish) or write an e-mail to info@secretplaces.com.

Figure E.3.1. Online form to ask for advice on Secretplaces.com.

The 'Ask for our advice' button (Figure E.3.2) is on every website page at the same spot. This is a clear way of promoting the different forms of advice requests, which specially nowadays can be very helpful in terms of generating bookings.

Figure E.3.2. 'Ask for our advice' button on Secretplaces.com.

Second, the online blog. Regarding the online blog, Secretplaces has a link on their homepage to their online blog where they post different kinds of articles. The last one has been published on July 13, 2020. As a website visitor, you can filter on different categories, for example delicacies & recipes, fascination destination, finest places to stay, nature activities, travel guides and upcoming events. In addition, Secretplaces works with a destination and hotel of the month. The question is how well up to date this information is. Secretplaces provides its online blog in English and German, not in Spanish nor Portuguese. Secretplaces does not post very frequently.

Thirdly, the newsletter. As a website visitor, you can scroll all the way down and subscribe for the Secretplaces Newsletter. It does not say how often one is being send. All it says is: 'Sign up and be the first to hear about the newest destinations.'

Finally, the gift vouchers. Secretplaces offers gift vouchers which can be redeemed at over 1.350 of their hotels and accommodations. General information includes:

- The voucher can be personalized and include a message
- The voucher can be used all year, no travel date restrictions
- The voucher has no destination restrictions
- No costs involved. Full value can be redeemed
- Free Secretplaces advice when choosing a hotel or destination
- The voucher will be sent to the purchaser by e-mail

The following conditions apply to the voucher:

- Reservations must be made with Secretplaces
- Valid for accommodation only
- No reimbursement for reservations with lower values
- Not valid for cash back (unless required by law)

Place

Secretplaces is an online company, selling and promoting their products and services solely online.

Price

Regarding the price segments of Secretplaces, the listings offered range from economy to upscale. When browsing for listings on the website, Secretplaces shows 'From … EUR' for each accommodation, which is visible without having to click on the specific listing (Figure E.3.3).
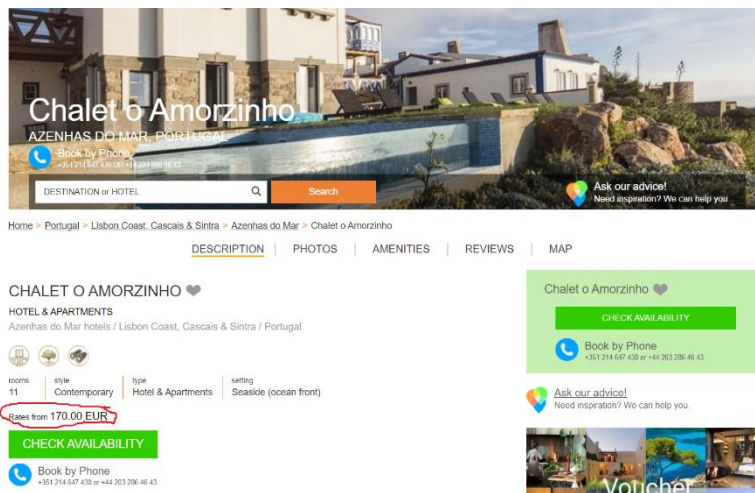
Figure E.3.3. Overview of a specific listing on Secretplaces.com (part 1/2).

Then, when clicked on one of the accommodations you are interested in, Secretplaces shows again 'Rates from … EUR' (Figure E.3.4).
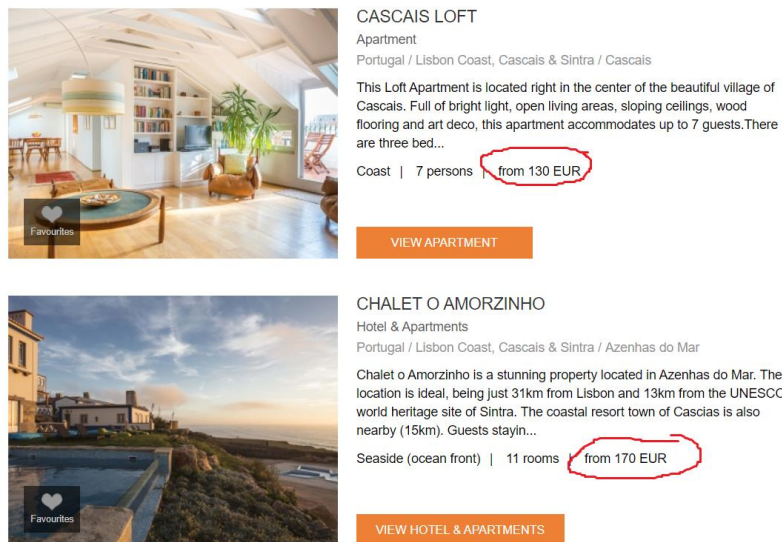
Figure E.3.4. Overview of a specific listing on Secretplaces.com (part 2/2).

Since dynamic pricing is being used, the next step is to click on 'Check availability' to see what prices are being set for your preferred dates. For each individual booking, the payment policy is published once clicked on 'Check availability'. All prices are published in the currency used in that specific country. Since you are being redirected to Booking.com with some listings, the actual prices for your preferred dates and the payment policy are only being shown on Booking.com.

Promotion

Via the Secretplaces website, you can click on different communication channels. The communication channels used by Secretplaces are mostly social media, the online blog, and the newsletter (e-mail). When using Google Search for Secretplaces, it can be concluded that the company is not using paid advertisements. The way Secretplaces promotes the listings on their own website is not through price discounts or something similar. The company promotes the different listings by using a changing banner for promoting different listings on their homepage (Figure E.3.5), by offering free advice, by leading the website visitors to their blog page, by using travel guides/articles/themes to promote certain listings or destinations (Figure E.3.6) or by using top pics (Figure E.3.7).

Figure E.3.5. Changing banner on Secretplaces.com.

DREAM B&BS, HIP HOTELS AND COOL HOLIDAY HOMES
Unique choice of beautiful places to stay with soul and character. Free service. Same price as direct at the hotel.
more about us

FREE HELP AND ADVICE
We will help you find your next wonderful escape and suggest some places so secret that you won't even find them on our website. Just call us or
tell us what you are looking for

TRAVEL BLOG
A collection of stories about the good things in life, insider city guides, best places to go, experiences, gastronomy
and much more ...

SECRET PLACES

AUTHENTIC PLACES TO STAY

HOTEL PULITZER
BARCELONA, BARCELONA, SPAIN

CURATED SELECTION OF BEAUTIFUL HOTELS AND HOLIDAY HOMES
This travel guide is dedicated to those that have retained their sense of adventure, their curiosity for local culture, tradition and gastronomy and take pleasure in every manifestation of beauty. Michael and Bea have put together a collection of unique places to stay in Europe and beyond, independent of price. Whether it is that romantic guest house committed to fine local cuisine, a small charming countryside hotel placed within breathtaking landscapes, an elegant boutique hotel in the bustling city centre or a holiday home nestled above the ocean, they are all places that give you that singular feeling of happiness and wellbeing.

TRAVEL INSPIRATIONS, ITINERARIES AND BEST PLACES TO STAY

Holiday Homes & Villas

Handpicked selection of unique holiday homes and villas for a truly special escape, without losing that homely feeling.

Villas and Vacation Rentals

Beach Hotels & Coastal Getaways

Looking for a luxurious hotel next to a beach with golden sand, a villa above the dark blue of the Mediterranean or a small bed & breakfast in the hills overlooking the ocean …

Coastal Hotels and Villas

Surrounded by Nature

Close your eyes and imagine: just you, the mountains, valleys or the sea. Escape daily routine and enjoy the magic of nature in one of our secluded getaways set in amazing surroundings.

Lodgings in Nature

Figure E.3.6. Offering free advice, online blog page promotion and promoting travel guides/articles/themes on Secretplaces.com.

91

Our Top Countries	Our Top Destinations	Top City Breaks
Spain hotels	Tuscany hotels	Lisbon hotels
Portugal hotels	French Riviera & Provence hotels	Venice hotels
Italy hotels	Algarve hotels	Madrid hotels
France hotels	Majorca hotels	Berlin hotels
Brazil hotels and pousadas	Canary Islands hotels	Rome hotels
Morocco riads and hotels	The Cotswolds hotels	Barcelona hotels
Greece hotels	Catalonia hotels	Amsterdam hotels
England Hotels	Crete hotels	London hotels
South Africa hotels	Brittany hotels	Prague Hotels
Germany hotels	Amalfi Coast hotels	Istanbul hotels
Netherlands hotels	Cornwall hotels	Paris hotels
Belgium hotels		Milan hotels
Austria hotels		Rio de Janeiro hotels
Turkey hotels		Marrakech riads and hotels
Sweden hotels		Copenhagen hotels
Czech Republic hotels		Florence hotels
Ireland hotels		Porto hotels
Scotland hotels		Stockholm hotels
Denmark hotels		Dublin hotels
Croatia Hotels		Budapest hotels
Switzerland hotels		
Poland hotels		

Figure E.3.7: Top picks on Secretplaces.com.

Regarding promotion deals, Secretplaces posts some promotions on their Instagram. The company publishes 'Secret deals' or 'Discount offers' for a specific listing. For example, 5% discount for stays more than 3 nights (valid until a certain date), early bird sale or all stays between a certain period get a certain amount of discount. These promotions are mainly being published on their Instagram Highlights. However, the last secret deal posted on their Instagram was 39 weeks ago, meaning it does not come across like it is something that is being offered a lot. On the website itself, no promotions are highlighted or displayed.

Website features

The website is available in English, German, Spanish, and Portuguese. The online blog is only available in English and German.

The content used on the website is quite decent. For every listing, a clear description is being offered with matching keywords. However, the content on the homepage is not being updated constantly.

When booking a listing on Secretplaces, you can book it over the phone or you are using the online tools. Depending on the listing, you are being redirected to Booking.com or you need to use the booking engine of Secretplaces.

When using the booking engine of Secretplaces, there are four steps that need to be completed. When starting the first step, all information needed is being published in terms of cancellation policy, payment policy and a help and advice helpline. In addition, you can create an account/sign in if you wish to manage your reservations and details online. The Secretplaces booking engine is clear and easy to use.

The design of the website is quite outdated, not very modern and the colours are not very appealing. The photos used do not have the best quality but are beautiful photographs and there are a

lot. It is a clear website and a lot of symbols are being used to clarify certain themes. The main colours used on the website do not fit that well with each other but are based on the brand (green, orange and blue) (Figure E.3.8).

Figure E.3.8: Colours used on Secretplaces.com

    The website is quite user friendly. Almost all features work in the right way and you do not get different information when you click on something you are looking for. However, some things on the website are a bit messy and unclear. For example, the search bar as shown in Figure E.3.9. There is no real consistency in information that you can find there and it is a bit random and unnecessary. This also applies to the fact that there are random phone numbers published on different places on the website which causes confusion. Another thing is that the website is available in Portuguese, but this is only found on the bottom of the page, not on top (where the other languages can be found). The 'Filter your search' function when looking for the right accommodation is quite useful and gives you the opportunity to filter on location, budget, type of listing (although not every type), best for (using the themes as published on the home page), facilities, setting, and activities. By applying these filters, it is much easier to find the best fitting accommodation for your preferences.

Figure E.3.9. Insufficient search bar on Secretplaces.com.

A good thing about the website is that at the bottom of the pages, relevant information can be found as shown in Figure E.3.10. This gives the user a certain level of trust and clarity
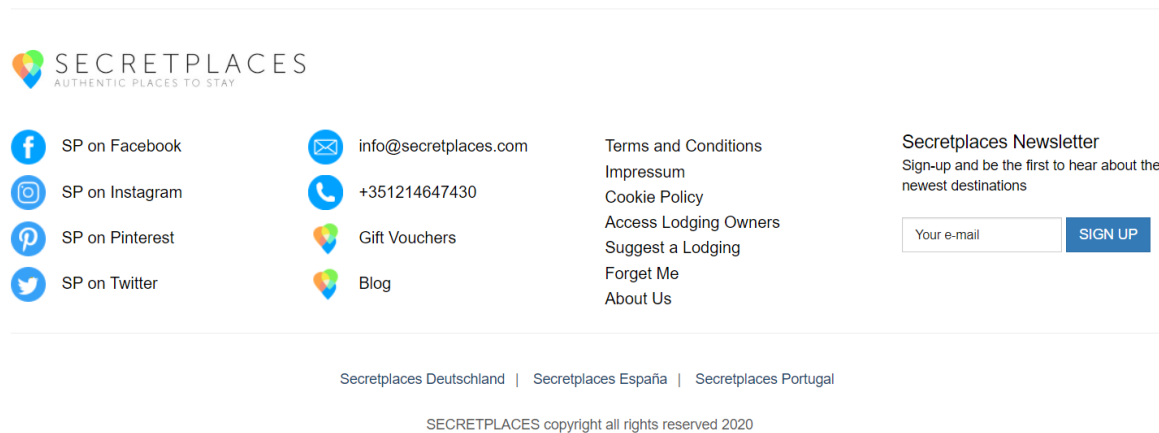
Figure E.3.10. Relevant information on Secretplaces.com.

To summarize, Secretplaces.com is a clear and convenient website that shows all different listings in a nice way and gives you enough opportunities to filter your search to find your best fitting accommodation. However, the design is not very appealing, a bit outdated and the website does contain some errors. Because of this, the company does not come across like a very cool and modern one and gives a bit of a feeling that the business is not up and running.

Social media

Secretplaces is active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest. They do not have a LinkedIn page. All four social media channels are being promoted on their website with direct links to the social media pages. Again, since Secretplaces does not specifically target the Spanish market, SPH should not directly copy social media strategies used by the competitor. However, it is valuable to analyse their social media accounts, see what they do well, use it as an inspiration and learn from their mistakes.

On Instagram, posts: 759, followers: 3.069, following: 1.988. Secretplaces uses their Instagram account a lot and is very consistent in posting. They post something almost every day, but it does not come across that they have set days where they post something on Instagram. They mostly post pictures of a listing they want to highlight and use some nice photos of the listing that they probably imported from the listing its website. The quality sometimes is not the best and it can come across a bit like a Googled image. Below each post, they are very consistent in the way they post the information, including a title, description, and consistent hashtags. Secretplaces tags other relevant Instagram pages in their pictures. This can help attracting new people to their own Instagram page via the tagged pictures of those channels. Besides, it can draw the attention of these Instagram pages. Secretplaces has put their website in their bio and everything is in English throughout their entire Instagram page. In their bio, they also have a phone-emoji stating: 'Ask our advice'. However, to get

94

to the actual phone number, you must go their website which is a bit inconvenient. Secretplaces most of the time works with bursts, where they post multiple pictures of a certain location or destination. The overall feed is not very consistent in terms of design and colours used. The company works with Highlighted Stories, including: (1) Newest hotspots, (2) Gourmet hotels, (3) Secret deals, (4) 2020 trends, (5) Travel blog, (6) Honeymoon hotel, (7) Kid friendly and (8) Favourite hotels. However, the posts are old and a bit outdated and not very 'sexy'. The idea behind it is very smart though. In their bio, the company states: 'Tag us in your Secretplaces adventures', which is a smart way to create a community, receive more tagged pictures and drag people to your Instagram page. In terms of engagement, they receive between 30-100 likes per post approximately and not so many comments, meaning that the engagement is not very strong.

On Facebook, likes: 5.699, followers: 6.003. Page created on 09 June 2008. The Facebook posts are directly linked to their Instagram posts and therefore contain the exact same content, pictures, and hashtags as the Instagram posts. Secretplaces does not post anything else on their Facebook timeline. Their contact details are available on the Facebook page in English and the Facebook Messenger app is being used to have direct contact with their customers or visitors. The company received some reviews on Facebook, which are shown on their Facebook page and can create a level of trust or can work as an extra push to use their booking engine. The likes that Secretplaces receives on their Facebook posts are very little (around an average of 10 likes per post) and mostly no comments are included.

On Twitter, joined September 2009, following: 83, followers: 410, tweets: 199. Things that Secretplaces tweets about are listings, polls, new blogposts, or some news updates (covid related). They include links to their website in their Tweets. On Twitter, they are more consistent in hashtags but still not using the same for every Tweet. They do not post regularly at all and there is almost no engagement on their Twitter account. In 2019, they have posted many of their listings in a consistent way, but it looks like they have stopped doing that in 2020 completely. Secretplaces only posted one Tweet in 2020.

On Pinterest, followers: 619, following: 310, 87K monthly viewers. Own posts always link to Secretplaces.com. Most posts are beautiful pictures of the exterior or interior of their listings or the surroundings of beautiful destinations. When clicking on a Pinterest image posted by Secretplaces from one of their listings or destination, it will redirect you to the corresponded one on their website. In some cases, the Pinterest posts redirect you to the corresponding blog post of Secretplaces or their Instagram. They make use of hashtags on Pinterest. They are not making use of a consistent hashtag on Pinterest as it differs per post. Sometimes the company also includes a description of the listing or destination with the picture on Pinterest, just like they do on Instagram and Facebook. It cannot be concluded how active Secretplaces is on Pinterest, since there are no postings dates available. However, when looking at the number of posts, it comes across they use it quite a lot. In addition to posting individual pictures, they sometimes post a video and the company creates different boards.

Secretplaces is not very consistent with the themes of their Pinterest boards and it comes across as a bit of a mess. The actual pictures and content used in the boards is beautiful and some themes are very inspiring, such as 'Pretty cities', 'Trending destinations', 'Architecture and Design', 'Secretplaces in Portugal' and 'Romantic Escapes'. Just some inspiration to look at, to dream away, and to eventually book their listings.

2. Rusticae

Summary

Rusticae is a very strong competitor of SPH in the Spanish market due to several reasons. First, Rusticae has a strong brand awareness in the Spanish market. Second, the company mainly targets the Spanish market. Third, Rusticae has the same mission as SPH in terms of supporting the national (Spanish) economy. Fourth, the company has over 25 years of experience. Fifth, Rusticae offers similar types of listings as SPH to their Spanish customers. Sixth, both companies aim to target the same type of customers. Seventh, both companies are focused on sustainability and offer similar additional products and services. Finally, Rusticae has a strong social media presence and engagement in the Spanish market. Taking all these reasons into account, analysing Rusticae is very relevant and useful. The outcome of the social media analysis is something SPH should really consider and not just use as an inspiration, since Rusticae specifically targets the Spaniards.

Products

Types of listings that are being offered on Rusticae are: Full rental houses (farmhouses, mansions), Boutique hotels and Boutique apartments.

Services and product/service combinations offered on Rusticae its website are: (1) Gift keys, (2) Experiences, (3) Rusticae reservation system for travel agencies, (4) Rusticae for companies creating brand experiences and meetings and events (5) Rusticae its hotelier's intranet, (6) Blog, (7) 'Start up your own hotel' consulting services, (8) The Rusticae boutique hotel members club, (9) Customer sign up and 'create your own profile', (10) 'Create the best experience' for the customer based on received data and (11) Trip ideas/inspiration.

In addition to these eleven services and product/service combinations, Rusticae is working on a lot of different projects which they share on their Twitter and LinkedIn account. Some of these partnerships and projects can also be considered as ways to promote their business and create a bigger customer base. Most of these services and projects are strongly focused on the Spanish market, economy, and listings:

- Through a personal coach program, emerged in response to a new scenario generated by the covid19 crisis, Rusticae has carried out an intense work of advising and supporting its accommodations, accompanying, and guiding them in all those needs arising from the new scenario. Projects such as the Rusticae Commitment were generated and developed,

a seal that responds to companies and users where it is reported that the accommodations have reinforced their management, cleaning, and maintenance processes. Rusticae also began to work with their accommodations in intensive training in matters such as innovation, digital transformation, brand, or distribution strategy. An activity that is maintained over time and is projected with a program for 2021. All these activities have been channelled and have caused the development of the Personal Coach Program naturally. Each member accommodation will have professional support and advice on everything related to their business and product. Rusticae felt that the pandemic was the ideal time to make this qualitative leap and value a service that the company has been providing for more than 24 years to its member accommodations. The company wants to normalize and professionalize the relationship that they establish with each of their member accommodations. With this new program, Rusticae continues to strengthen its brand repositioning strategy, stressing the need to put the entrepreneur and their accommodations at the centre of all their actions.

- Together with The Institute of Advanced Entrepreneurship, Rusticae and the Spanish Confederation of Hotels and Tourist Accommodation, an express training program for the reactivation of hotel companies has been presented. The goal of this program is to make the relaunch of hotels as fast and efficient as possible. With several renowned professionals from the tourism sector, the keys to the reopening and activation of the accommodation will be taught. The program is developed under a theoretical and practical training model, 100 hours, in online format. It is structured in two areas, one of Business Entrepreneurship and one of Hotel Management, with nine modules in total where cross-cutting content as well as specialization materials are grouped, all focused on facilitating the necessary tools to support the reactivation of companies: operations, revenue management, marketing and communication, quality, innovation, and sustainability. In addition, the program has the option to present the reopening project of each establishment to one of the tutors of the course that will be assigned in a personalized way. The crisis caused by the pandemic has forced not only the closing of hotel establishments for months, but also to rethink how to reopen. It seems clear that hotel processes and operations will have to adapt to circumstances, which are moving towards a reality in which social distance will prevail in relationships. Paradoxically, the hotelier is a sector in which interpersonal relationships are fostered, and in which the guest perceives value when receiving a personalized service that often relates to contact with a professional. However, from now on, the provision of many of the services will have to be carried out under security measures, without contact, and using common facilities and services following indications other than those known.

- Rusticae and Beonprice have reached a collaboration agreement to offer training to hoteliers of Rusticae in Spain. This training focuses on Revenue Management. Beonprice delivers different webinars to Rusticae hoteliers, that will focus on digital transformation for Revenue Management and Smart Data to improve profitability through forecasting. The content of these masterclasses is very interesting for these hotels that are mostly small and independent. With tools such as forecasting the level of occupancy that a hotel will have on certain dates, strategies can be planned that will ensure greater profitability.

- In 2020, Rusticae launched an innovative line of amenities for its hotels, houses, and apartments with the signature Uvas Frescas, the first organic brand made with BIO grapes. This strategic alliance between Rusticae and Grapes Frescas, will allow the Club of selection of charming hotels to remove from the market 1,400 kilos of plastic, generated by traditional amenities packaging. It should be noted that Rusticae has long undertaken its fight against plastic waste. This new action is an important step for the company since customer sensitivity is growing towards environmental responsibility and their commitment cannot be less.

- Rusticae and A-2H, a brand specialized in responsible proximity tourism, have created an alliance focused on creating the richness and beauty of the rural world and generating opportunities through indoor tourism through joint projects at destination, the promotion of Rusticae accommodation and the mini-roads A-2h-de as a tool to approach the environment and the design of new models of proximity tourism. Under the motto of 'Tourism and Rural Development', this year's celebration comes at a critical time, when countries around the world look at tourism to drive recovery, and so do rural communities, where the sector is an important employer and an economic pillar.

- Rusticae collabs with Conde Nast Traveller regarding the Golden List Awards of 2021. People are being asked to vote for their best accommodation, aviation company etc. The winner can win one of the three prices offered by Rusticae, which include 2 nights of accommodation and breakfast with a working space for two people in the Hotel Bodega, Tio Pepe de Jerez de la Frontera in Cadiz, a stay at Hotel Can Lluc for 2 nights including breakfast for two people or a Rusticae Gift Key.

- Collabs including winning competition with Visit Alentejo Portugal

- Rusticae collabs with some of their accommodations for great offers. For example, 20% discount on Black Friday.

- Rusticae works with giveaways, for example a stay of 2 nights in one of their listings and a batch of cosmetics from a certain brand (for example Arganour).

- Rusticae participates in sessions around the table, for example about 'Strengthen the strengths of your hotel for 2021', organized by SiteMinder, or they participate in Ecotourism Club Seminar with ImEcotourist.

- The University of Deusto and Rusticae have signed a cooperation agreement. Thanks to this agreement, the students of the Dual Itinerary in Hotel Management of the Degree of Tourism of the University of Deusto will develop a project in the digital field that seeks to promote the tourism sector in unique accommodation among the youngest travellers. This dual Cooperation with Rusticae facilitates not only the acquisition of early talent that it incorporates to guide it to strategies adaptable to a changing and demanding global reality, but also to have a research and analysis relationship where different knowledge add in the challenge of continuing to innovate in the tourism sector
- Rusticae hosts webinars. For example, on Andalucía Emprende.
- The new concept WorkEnd, devised by Rusticae, aims to reconcile a new reality. Profiles of professionals and companies with the possibility of working remotely, whose workspace transcends the traditional office and in which unique spaces are sought. WorkEnd proposes two ways to enjoy its spaces; a DayPass that includes all the necessary services for day-to-day work, and that allows the use of spaces without needing to stay, and the Work & Leisure, designed to combine for one or more days the work with pleasure. Each listing offers specific rates according to availability and the services included. Rusticae, in turn, offers professionals and companies the WorkEnd Gift Key, with which to enjoy its services.

Place

Rusticae is an online company, selling and promoting their products and services online. However, Rusticae also offers a lot of webinars, trainings, consulting services, events, and marketing services, meaning that they offer offline products/services as well.

Price

The price is quite special on Rusticae since it is almost nowhere displayed. The prices are only included with the experiences and special deals. When looking for your perfect listing, the prices are not shown and you do not have the opportunity to filter on any price segment or whatsoever. You need to check availability with the company before you can find out about the prices.

Promotion

In addition to all the projects, there are more ways that Rusticae promotes its business and services. Something the company does well, is promoting not just listings on their website but experiences as well. In addition, to promote their listings and experiences, the brand strongly embraces certain themes that, most likely, will work on the Spanish market:

1. Calmness, relaxation, mindfulness, switching off, coming back to nature

2. Sustainability

3. Memorable experiences

4. Sportive/adventurous

5. Culture

6. History

7. Gastronomy

Another way of promoting their business is by giving the customer the option to share their listings/experiences on their personal social media accounts. Besides, when you are looking at a certain listing and scrolling all the way down, Rusticae works with 'You may also like…' and 'Nearby listings…'. In addition to all the promotion methods as mentioned above, Rusticae only gives you the opportunity to find your listing based on location; they are working with a map. From this, it can be concluded that Spaniards will highly value the location of their listing. There are no other filter functions available when looking for your perfect listing or experience. The company also really embraces their 'Inspiration' and 'Trip ideas' website pages, meaning that they want to promote certain destinations, listings and experiences by letting the customer dream away and get inspired. It almost feels more like an inspiration platform than a booking platform. Another important feature to mention is that every listing has its own reviews coming from Rusticae its website. When scrolling through the listings, the reviews are displayed in a very clear way. Something else they use as a way of promoting their own business, is by showing on every page and when looking at any listing or experience, the 'Want to give it away?' Gift Key promotion. However, the most important webpage dedicated to their promotion strategy is the 'Special deals' webpage (Figure E.3.11). This webpage shows in a clear way their special deals, changing from time to time. Rusticae has very different types of deals:

- 20% discount on stays during a certain period
- Have a property exclusive to you and your family
- Offering electric bike (tours) during your stay
- Hydrothermal circuit included
- Guided historical tour included
- Free massages included
- Ski passes included
- Detox therapy weekend
- 'Take care of your soul' weekend getaway
- One free night
- Other price discounts

Figure E.3.11. Special deals on Rusticae.com.

Website features

The website is offered in Spanish and English. Everything is in both languages, except the online blog and the 'Rusticae for companies' page.

The content used on the website is very clear and extensive. The content really embraces the themes as explained earlier, that will most likely be important to the Spaniards. Interesting to mention is the information Rusticae displays with their listings, as Figures E.3.12., E.3.13. and E.3.14. show.

Figure E.3.12. Information coming with the listings on Rusticae.com (part 1/3).

Use of organic products

Support for biodiversity and habitat conservation

Promotion of local commerce

Use of renewable energies

Support for Social Causes

Eficiency use of water

Energy efficiency

Waste Recycling and / or Plastic Free Policy

Property facilities

Wooden hot tub

Fireplace in room

Heating

Fireplace

Bath amenities

Barbecue

Jacuzzi

Accessible

Parking

Pets allowed

Mobile phone hedging

Baby cots

Sport area

Garden

Kitchen

Fridge / refrigerator

Microwave

WIFI

Figure E.3.13. Information coming with the listings on Rusticae.com (part 2/3).

Common services

Catering service

Bikes at hotel

Hairdryer

Allergy-friendly menu

Picnic package

Bedding, bathing and household

Luggage storage

Amenities for children

Board games

Little bathtub

Highchairs
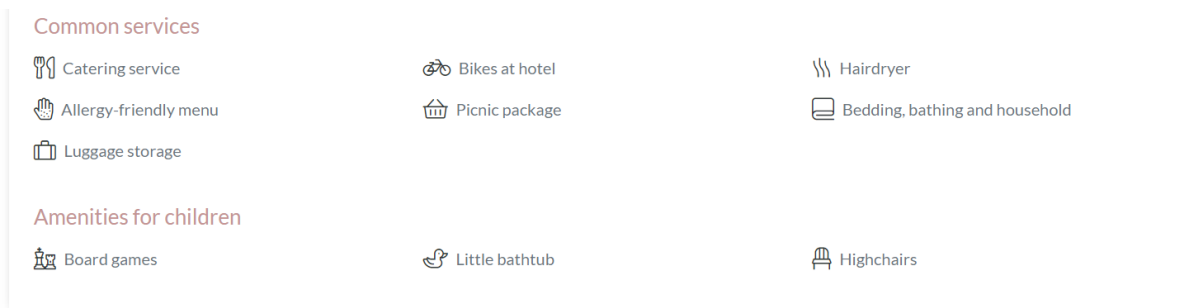
Figure E.3.14. Information coming with the listings on Rusticae (part 3/3).

Topics that are important and interesting to mention are sustainability, covid 19 commitment and amenities for children. In addition to all this, Rusticae really takes care about explaining the story behind a listing and tries to explain it as extensive as possible in a personal way (Figure E.3.15).

Caserío de Montehermoso is a rural complex of apartments in Astúlez, in the valley of **Valdegovía/Gaubea**, at the southeast of Euskadi. This familiar hamlet has been carefully rehabilitated following the sustainability criteria by its owner, Joana Molinuevo, who decided to leave the journalism carrier to address this life project with passion. Love for nature is the axis of this accommodation, where decisions aren't made without knowing how it influences the natural wealth of the area.

Caserío de Monehermoso is a resort of **3 apartments**, decorated with a charming Provençal style, designed with the purpose of generating happiness to its guests through a slow philosophy, caring and respecting the environment and its origins.

Pagoa, Gorosti and Artea are the three apartments of **Caserío de Montehermoso**, whose names are indigenous trees from Euskadi (beech, holly and holm oak, respectively). All **3 have a kitchen, a chimney and an outdoor area** for enjoying the countryside's pure air.

Pagoa is the biggest, it has a capacity for 4 people and a 50 m2 garden. Gorosti is perfect for couples, and it is also adapted for disabled people. Artea also has a capacity for 2 people, it has lofted ceilings and a very special whirlpool bath, it also has a garden with a barbecue grill and an enchanting balcony.

Caserio Montehermoso offers a unique experience of relaxation using the Ófuros, traditional Japanese bathtubs for the Artea and Pagoa studios guests. This Ófuros benefits for physical and psychological health were discovered 5,000 years ago by the Egyptians. Its wood, when mixed with hot water, gives off natural aromas that induce relaxation and deep sleep.

The connection with the well-being and nature of the Caserio is real, as are the activities that promote it: "forest baths" in a beech forest nearby, yoga, massages, Nordic walking and healthy cooking workshops taught by Joana Molinero herself, an expert in the macrobiotic diet.

In addition, the environment is perfect for biking and hiking. Very close by is the Vía Ferrata de Sobrón (18 km) and the Salto del Nervión, the largest waterfall in Spain.

In conclusion, **Caserío de Montehermoso** is a sustainable suggestion for travelling in a complete connection with the environment and oneself.

Figure E.3.15. Personal story coming with the listings on Rusticae.

When you want to book something on Rusticae, it is quite unclear what you must do. When looking at a listing, there is no booking engine available. The only information that is being displayed is the phoneline of Rusticae and the webpage of the listing itself. Probably, those are the two options

you have when you want to book a certain listing. In some cases, there is a 'Check availability' button on which you can click to check availability and to eventually book, most likely with the help of Rusticae.

The design of the website is very modern, clean, and the colours used fit each other. The pictures are of very good quality. The way the pages merge into each other is decent. The website is very much up to date and fits this period we are living in.

The website is very user friendly. All the links work in a proper way and you get redirected to the right pages. The information makes sense and the webpages are very clear. There are only a few things that are inconvenient:

- No search filter options when looking for a listing/experience
- No booking engine
- No prices displayed

Social media

The different social media channels that are available through the website of Rusticae are Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube. The company also has a LinkedIn page, which is not mentioned on their website.

On Instagram, posts: 2.367, followers: 27.6K, following: 389. The Instagram page of Rusticae is in Spanish only. In their bio, the company provides the following information:

'#descubriendohistoriasunicas

Club de alojamientos con encanto líder en España y Portugal. Estamos en EU, Marruecos y LATAM

Sostenibilidad por bandera

www.rusticae.es/tarjetas-regalo

Madrid, Spain'

Rusticae creates the community feeling by letting people use the #descubriendohistoriasunicas, meaning #discoveringuniquestories. In addition, the company sells itself as a leading charming accommodation club in Spain and Portugal, which is very interesting for SPH because they are strong competitors if they sell themselves as accommodation providers in Portugal while targeting the Spanish market. They also mention the sustainability factor in their Instagram bio, meaning this is one of their USPs which they strongly want to highlight. Lastly, Rusticae puts their website link and office location in their bio.

When scrolling through their Instagram feed, it can be concluded that Rusticae does not really have a consistent overall design in terms of filters used and types of pictures posted. When looking at the actual content, Rusticae posts a lot of pictures of the interior design of different listings, the

environment of the listings mainly involving nature/mountains/beautiful calm places, the people behind the listings/the founders of the hotels, food and drinks, winning competitions, pictures of couples/families enjoying life together/having a good time together, pictures of sportive activities that can be done at the locations of the listings, pictures of listings with swimming pools, pictures of listings that are a bit old/medieval/rustic, and pictures that embrace the relaxation vibe/yoga/switching off. When looking at the number of likes, the most popular posts are the winning competitions by far, followed by the pictures of both nature surroundings, the sportive activities, and ancient/one-of-a-kind buildings. The burst posts showing pictures of a certain location are also very popular. For example, the 'Portugal' post has a lot of likes, more than with single pictures posted. The most popular post ever was the burst post showing pictures of Pais Vasco as a region, having 1.186 likes. To get a better impression of the type of posts that were the most popular, see Figure E.3.16. To get a better impression of the type of posts that were least popular, see Figure E.3.17.
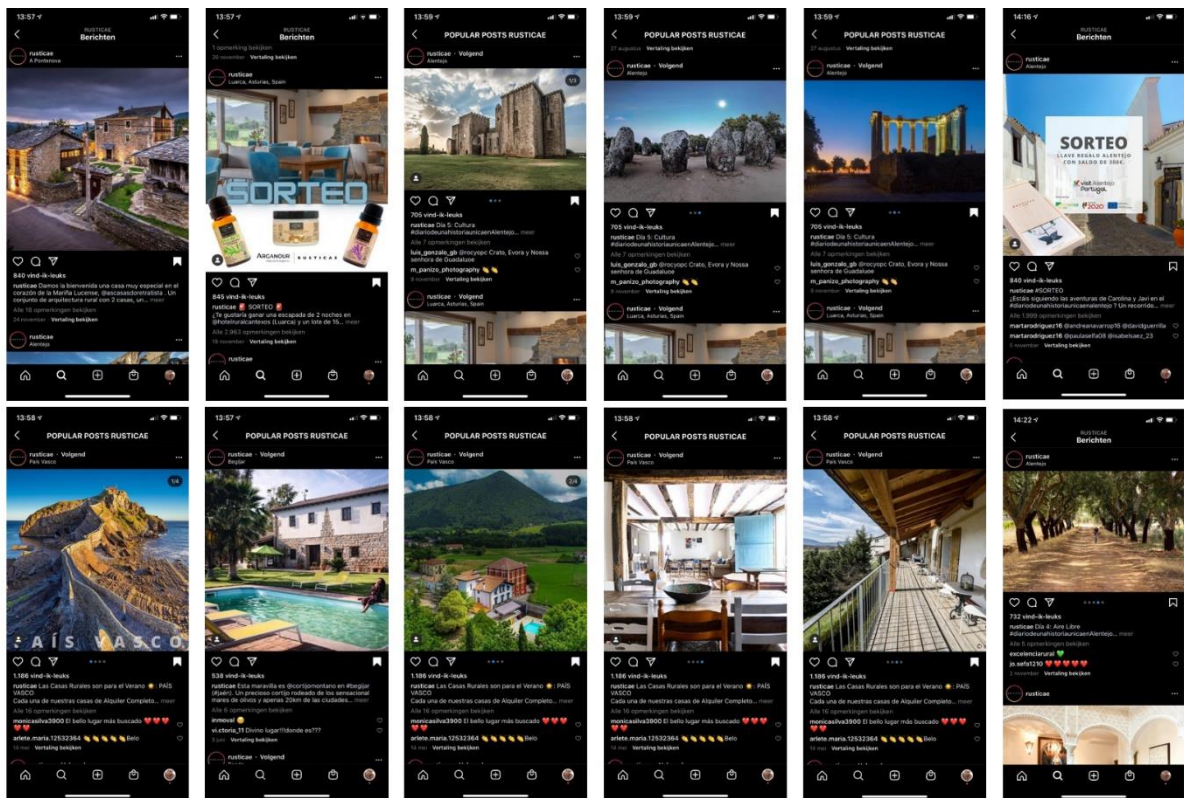
Figure E.3.16. Popular posts on the Instagram page of Rusticae.
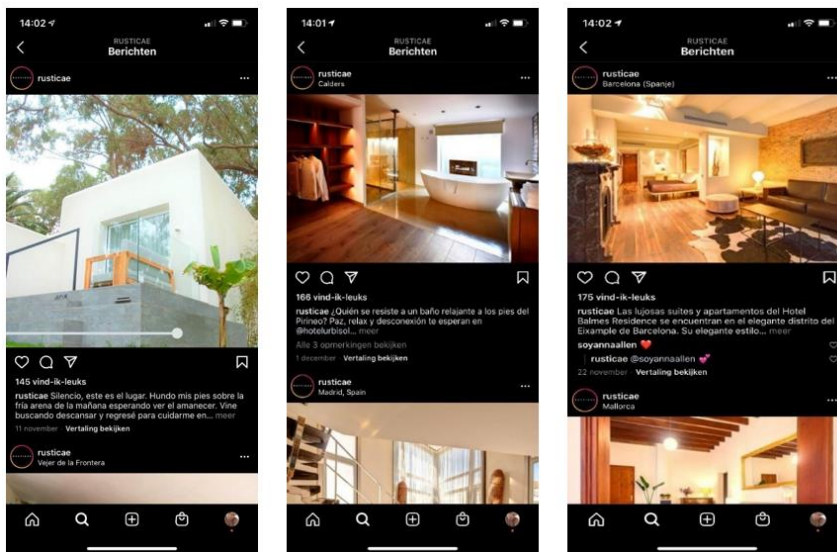
Figure E.3.17. Least popular posts on the Instagram page of Rusticae.

Based on the popularity of the posts of Rusticae, it can be concluded that among their target group, the most popular themes are:

- History
- Culture
- Nature
- Sports
- Winning competitions
- Swimming pools
- Food/wine/eating together

Less popular themes are:

- Design
- Interior
- Modernity

When looking at the descriptions below the posts, there is no real consistency. Rusticae does always tag and mention the listings' Instagram page if applicable. The company also always uses Hashtags, including #Rusticae. When looking at their Tagged pictures, you can tell that they sometimes work with Spanish influencers who stay at some of their listings, take pictures and tag Rusticae. When looking at their Instagram Highlights, the following themes are used:

- Recetas (Recipes)
- Llaves (Keys)

- Visitas (Visits)
- Arcoiris (Rainbow → referring to LGBTD)
- Compromiso (Commitment)
- En casa (At home)
- Gala 2020
- Prensa (Press)
- Sostenibles (Sustainability)

Interesting to see what kind of themes they value as important to use in their Instagram Highlights. It is very different compared to Secretplaces, who mainly focused on showing the types of listings. This shows that the Spaniards probably value other subjects more. When watching the content behind the story Highlights, the employees of Rusticae and the founders of some of their listings are strongly involved and shown a lot. It gives a feeling of friendliness, trust, commitment, family, acceptance, enjoying life and caring. Probably, things that are highly valued among Spaniards.

Rusticae has its Twitter page since September 2008. The company follows 2.274 people, has 11.1K followers and 19.2K Tweets. Their Twitter page is in Spanish and so are all their Tweets. Rusticae uses Twitter for professional content, mostly. They Retweet a lot. The engagement is very little, sometimes some likes/retweets/comments. Their Tweets are about webinars they host, strategic alliances they start, they sometimes retweet one of their listings, they retweet winning competitions or tweet about their own winning competitions on Instagram, articles talking about projects they work on, they retweet announcements of webinars/around the table talks in which Rusticae joins, they retweet big companies/organisations that Tweet or mention Rusticae and their listings and they tweet when their listings have been mentioned in big newspapers or on important blogs. Most content of Twitter is focused on Spain, partnerships in Spain, the Spanish market, and the listings in Spain. The company does not tweet on specific days, they just tweet or retweet relevant content. Overall, the Twitter page is professional and informative. The engagement is relatively small, since they do not receive many retweets or comments. Sometimes they post some of their listings and promote them. The CEO, founders, or COO of Rusticae also tweet different things and relevant information that then gets retweeted by Rusticae. They sometimes tweet about events happening in one of their listings or relevant to their business, they retweet inspiring travel stories where their listings have been involved.

20K people like Rusticae its Facebook page, 21.485 followers and 36 people checked in. The Facebook page is in Spanish as well. Their contact details are available on their Facebook page, including their phone number and email address. Their Facebook page is linked to both their Instagram and Twitter account, meaning that they post the same content on Facebook as on their Instagram and Twitter. They have great engagement on some posts on Facebook, much more than on Twitter. Again, the Facebook posts with the most engagement are the same as on Instagram and embrace the same themes. Interesting to mention is that the food/wine theme is more popular on

106

Facebook than on Instagram. The winning competitions on the other hand have much more engagement on Instagram than on Facebook.

On Pinterest, 510 followers, 173 followed, 15K monthly viewers. Rusticae uses Pinterest to post pictures of their listings and destinations. It is not linked to their Instagram page. They do not post extensive information with the pictures, just a title. The pictures always lead to their own channels (mostly the website). Rusticae pins mostly listings, surroundings and pictures of food/drinks and activities.

On YouTube, 432 subscribers. Content is in Spanish. Most popular video has 17K views from 6 years ago and is a cocktail tutorial. The oldest video is 11 years old. Other popular videos are influencers visiting the hotels. Other popular videos are mainly 'Rusticae visits…'. When looking at the videos posted in the last year, the views are very limited and the content is not that appealing. The number of views is around 100 per video.

Rusticae has a LinkedIn page with 2.357 followers and 39 employees linked to the company. On their LinkedIn page, which is again completely in Spanish, they post informative content, like on their Twitter account. The most popular topics on their LinkedIn, that receive most likes and comments, are:

- Sustainability
- New products/services launched
- Showing commitment to the rules regarding covid19
- Campaigns to promote different regions
- Videos with the theme of 'Dreaming away about your next getaway…'
- 'When empty Spain becomes desired Spain' article, showing commitment to support the national economy
- 'For lovers of medievalism, we have a unique story' article

3. Joandso

Summary

Joana and Sofia, two sisters born and raised in Porto, started Joandso in 2016 because of their passion and love for travelling and always trying to find special places to stay. Since there are a lot of great travel websites but with an overwhelming amount of information, Joana and Sofia started a brand showing a carefully selected collection of their favourite places in Portugal for like-minded travellers. The type of listings offered by Joandso are very similar to SPH its listings, based in Portugal only. Besides, the problem that Joandso wants to solve – having an overwhelming amount of information – is the same core business as SPH. Joandso is a very personal company, since they visit all the places they feature, get to know the people behind it and share their stories with their customers.

Products

 Joandso offers 20 listings on their website and 167 homes and villas through a partnership with Airbnb, all located in Portugal. All listings are small hotels: Boutique hotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Townhouses, Rural hotels, Farmhouses, Spa hotels and Palaces. In addition to the listings offered, Joandso offers travel advice as a service, a completely itinerary with a selection of recommendations of where to stay, eat and what to do, the JOSO studio where they offer their service as content makes and storytellers, hotel recommendations through a Watchlist and Journal, local experiences through Airbnb, a Lisbon and Porto TipMap for 5 euros and a newsletter.

Place

Joandso is an online platform. Besides, their travel advice and designation of an itinerary service are all via Zoom or through normal calls. The only offline services they offer are related to the JOSO studio.

Price

The prices are shown in a clear but at the same time low-key way on their website when scrolling through the listings. Joandso works with a 'From…' price, as Figure E.3.18. shows.
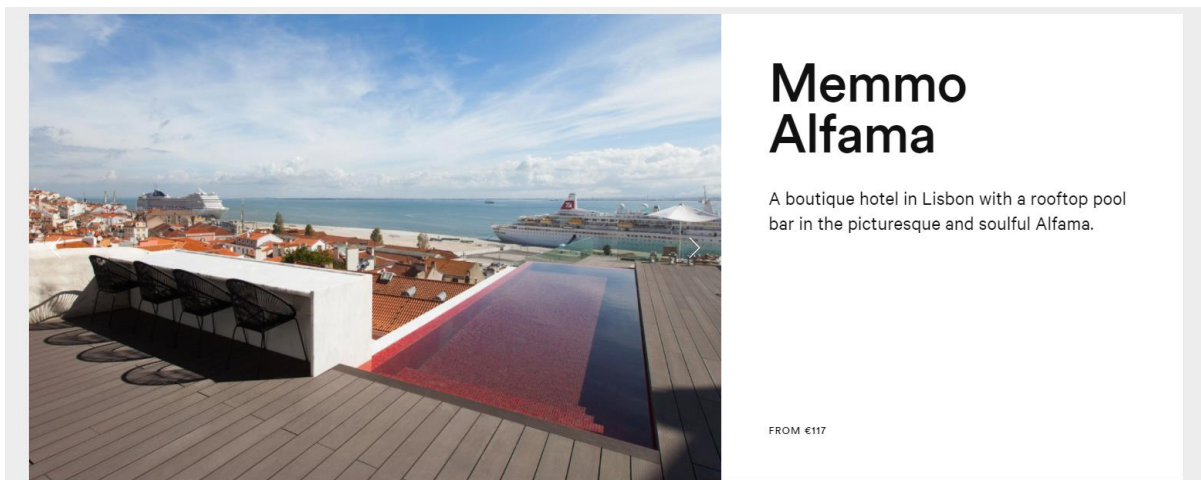
Figure E.3.18. Euro display on Joandso.com.

To see the prices for your specific dates, you are being redirected to Booking.com.

Promotion

The way Joandso promotes their own business and listings offered, is by being an Airbnb associate, working with a Watchlist and Journal and taking a lot of care when it comes to describing the listings on their website. Of course, they also have their social media channels on which will be elaborated further on. With Joandso, it is more about quality than quantity. The company is more focused on

delivering the best description possible with the listing and giving the guests the best experience, than working with price discounts, promotions, and special deals.

Website features

The website of Joandso is only offered in English. Joandso takes a lot of care about their content and as mentioned before, showcase that they care more about quality than quantity. For each listing, the description is comprehensive, personal, and interesting. Joandso clearly shows that the listings were not just chosen like that. For every listing, the same format is used to display all the information, divided as follows:

- Overview
- Local
- Interview
- Getting there

'The overview' includes general information about the listing, 'Awesomeness' and 'Bear in mind' information. 'Local' includes activities and local action. 'The interview' part includes an interview with the hotel its director. The last part shows a map and displays information on how to get there by different types of transportation. In between all four sections, the most beautiful photographs are being used, taken by the two sisters themselves. The quality is stunning.

The Journal of Joandso also includes a lot of content: insider tips about Portugal, exclusive interviews with people doing cool things and other bits & bobs. The articles are written briefly but to the point. The sisters use a lot of affiliate links to, for example, their own social media pages, other booking engines or other pages on their own website.

The Watchlist of Joandso includes a brief description of every listing that they are planning to visit. The Watchlist also includes links to the booking engine of Booking.com. For the Watchlist, again beautiful photos are being used. However, probably not personally taken by the two sisters in this case.

The booking engine used by Joandso is Booking.com to which you get redirected once you want to check the actual prices. In addition, since they are an associate partner of Airbnb, you get sometimes redirected to Airbnb.

The design of the website is unbelievable clean, modern, uncluttered, clear, and beautiful. The pictures used are stunning and you can tell that Joandso took the pictures themselves which gives it even extra flair and beauty. The pictures really take an important role on the website. The colours used are modern and fit very well. The letter type and size create a nice look and makes you want to read the pages. Besides, the two sisters do not use too much text, they are straight to the point but with a personal touch and give you all information needed. The website design itself, the way the pages merge into each other, is decent and looks cool. Overall, you can tell that the two sisters are aware of

great design and know how to build a beautiful website and take breath-taking pictures.

The website of Joandso is the most user-friendly of all websites analysed. Everything works perfectly. The sisters considered the way people search and scroll. In addition, there are zero mistakes or errors which gives the overall website a very professional look.

Social media

Via the website of Joandso, their Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest are being promoted. In addition to these three channels, the company has a LinkedIn page. However, this LinkedIn page is not very up to date or being used as the last post was three months ago and the company only has 19 followers. They also have a Twitter account, but just as with LinkedIn, this is not being used frequently at all and the two sisters probably decided not to focus on these two social media channels since they only showcase their Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest on their website.

On Instagram, posts: 571, followers: 7.884, follows: 891. Their Instagram page is in English. When looking into the Instagram posts of Joandso, you can tell that they just share what they want to share. They do not post winning competitions, just personal pictures of the listings and/or surroundings, with a story in the description. What they do well in the bottom of each description, is clearly stating that the link of their website is in their Instagram bio, mentioning that they took the pictures themselves and they use consistent hashtags. They sometimes also state the following:

"If you visit Portugal and follow some of our tips, please feel free to tag us (we would love it if you do!) and let us know how it goes. Feedback is always very welcome too!" and *"Want to support what we do? Tag a friend that you think might enjoy our tips. We will be very grateful".*

Joandso tags many relevant Instagram profiles in some of their pictures, just like Secretplaces. Something that is quite unique, is that Joandso shows themselves in the pictures a lot, which creates that personal feeling and a feeling of trust. In addition, the photographs used are very artistic, beautiful, and taken care off. As on the website, you get the feeling that these two sisters have a lot of knowledge about photography and are very creative.

Their Instagram Highlights are nice and they put a lot of stories in it. It is the personal feed of the two sisters and this is fun to watch. They show their daily life, their travels, stays in the listings, give tips about experiences and things to do, show where they do groceries etc. This creates again a personal feeling and a feeling of trust. They also work with a Q&A in their Instagram Highlights, asking their followers questions about what kind of content they would like to read on their website, what areas people would like to have them discovered and so on. This creates engagement and at the same time gives the right inspiration. Something else that Joandso does well on their Instagram, is using the so called 'Mentions' in their Instagram Highlight, where they show people their reviews of their services. Lastly, they have the 'Press and Mentions' Instagram Highlight, showing all their different (media) channels in which Joandso has been mentioned.

On Facebook, likes: 2.370, followers: 2.439, 11 people checked in. Their Facebook profile is linked to their Instagram posts. In addition, Joandso uses their Instagram (and indirectly their Facebook) to post their Journal posts. In this way, it feels like it is all connected and consistent.

On Pinterest, followers: 200, followed: 83, number of viewers per month: 12K. All posted pictures on their Pinterest are linked to their different website pages: the listings, the Journal and the Watchlist. They also post their personal taken photos on their Pinterest, which are also shown on their website. Joandso has some boards on their Pinterest and there is some consistency which looks quite cool, but there are also random themes so it feels like it is not their priority on Pinterest. What is interesting though is the fact that they have created some boards that are dedicated to a certain article. For example, 'Alentejo, 23 boutique hotels handpicked by Joandso'. This is an article posted on their Journal, and when clicking on one of the pictures posted in this board, you get redirected to this specific article which is convenient and smart. Something else that Joandso does quite well on Pinterest, is the fact that they have a very small but clear description about their brand with every posted picture:

'The best boutique hotels in the Alentejo handpicked by JO&SO, two Portuguese sisters on the hunt for understated luxury. The most insider guide. Check it out'.

Section 4. Most relevant output

Table E.4.1. Most relevant output for SPH derived from the competitor analysis.

Type of analysis	Most relevant output for SPH
Product	All three competitors offer the same combination of a product and service, which is showing different types of listings online in either Portugal only (Joandso) or around the world (Secretplaces and Rusticae) and give people the opportunity to book those listings by using their online platform. All three competitors can be considered as a representation brand for small/one-of-a-kind listings, just like SPH. However, the three competitors offer more. Rusticae, for example, offers many additional and valuable products and/or product/service combinations that can be considered as a threat for SPH when entering the Spanish market. Besides, Rusticae is working on multiple projects, for example personal coach programs for its listings, express training programs for the reactivation of hotel companies or hosting around the table seminars. All in all, Rusticae is much more than just an online booking platform; it is a meaningful brand that takes care of its member listings, tries to improve the word, and teach people something. Both Secretplaces and Joandso also offer more than just the online booking service. Secretplaces for example offers advice requests and an online blog, while Joandso offers a complete itinerary and the JOANDSO studio.
Promotion	After analysing all three competitors, it can be stated that many different promotion tools are being used. Rusticae clearly is the number one regarding this matter, mainly working with 'Special deals' on its website. More examples of the different promotion tools used by Rusticae are winning competitions, giveaways, gift key promotion, trip ideas, price discounts or destination top pick of the week/month. Joandso on the other hand mainly promotes its business and listings offered by being an Airbnb associate and

Type of analysis	Most relevant output for SPH
	working with an online Watchlist and Journal. This competitor is more about quality over quantity and strongly focuses on delivering the best description and personal story with the listing rather than working with price discounts, promotions, and special deals.
Price	In terms of price, both Secretplaces and Joandso show the 'From…prices' already while scrolling through the overview of all listings. Rusticae on the other hand does not show any prices at all, which is inconvenient and uncommon. Secretplaces sometimes publishes its prices in other currencies than Euros without giving the opportunity to change this, which is inconvenient as well.
Place	The core business of all three competitors is online, just like SPH. However, as explained in the Product analysis, the competition is doing more and sometimes offers offline products/service (combinations) as well.
Language	Both Rusticae and Secretplaces offer their website in Spanish, while Joandso only has an English version. However, it must be considered that Joandso not specifically targets the Spanish market, while Secretplaces and Rusticae do. Both Secretplaces and Rusticae do not offer all their webpages in Spanish though.
Content	The most interesting for SPH to consider are both the kind of webpages and actual content offered by the three competitors. First, all three competitors have an online blog and/or journal where they publish different types of blog posts about different themes. Second, both Rusticae and Joandso make use of personal stories in the description of the individual listings, where mainly Joandso puts a lot of time and effort in creating these stories. The company holds an interview with every owner or manager of the listing itself, asking very personal questions. Third, both Rusticae and Joandso have a separate 'Inspiration' page on their website, where you get inspired by scrolling through pictures or reading articles. Fourth, the information published with each listing differs per competitor. Rusticae for example focuses on activities, sustainability, covid19 commitment, facilities, and children's amenities, while Joandso mainly focuses on sharing the personal story behind the listing and the activities in the surrounding. Fifth, something Joandso does well is making use of affiliate links throughout their own content. With other words, when scrolling through their website, you get redirected by clicking on certain words to other web pages. This is a smart way to guide website visitors through your own website. Sixth, on the websites of all three competitors, certain themes are strongly highlighted and are reflected on their social media pages. The themes are involved in their blog posts, newsletters, listing descriptions and special deals. Seventh, regarding the search/filter options used by the competitors, Secretplaces has the most options available which is very convenient. Rusticae and Joandso on the other hand only work with the location as a filter option. Last, all three competitors are strongly focused on sharing and delivering an experience to the customer, all in their own way. Rusticae offers a whole separate experience webpage, where the entire content is focused on memorable and sustainable experiences that can be booked. Secretplaces gives you the opportunity to use activities/interests as a filter option when looking for your perfect listing and Joandso includes experiences with every listing description, using their personal photographs and a small explanation.
Booking engine	Regarding the booking engines used, there are some differences among the three competitors. Joandso redirects you to either Booking.com or Airbnb, regardless of the listing. Secretplaces either redirects you or provides its own online booking engine depending on the listing, and at the same time always clearly highlights the possibility to book each listing directly over the phone.

Type of analysis	Most relevant output for SPH
	Rusticae does not use an online booking platform but only works with booking over the phone and emphasizes the websites of the listings itself.
Design	In terms of design, it can be stated that the most relevant output for SPH is that photos and its quality matter a lot. Besides, two out of three competitors do not have the strongest website design which is beneficial for SPH when targeting the Spanish market. Joandso has the best website design, due to their personal photographs and its quality, the colours and letter type used, the design of the webpages and its flow, and the overall structure. The website is modern, up to date, and 'sexy'. SPH should consider that their website needs to be both functionable and 'sexy' at the same time, mainly focussing on the images. Due to the intangibility of the sector, having great photographs are indispensable. Something SPH can consider is taking their own photographs if the internal resources and listings allow. Something that has not been used by any of the three competitors, is video design/content as mentioned in the content analysis. This could be something SPH can consider distinguishing themselves in the Spanish market.
User friendliness	While analysing the three competitors, it was found that only the website of Joandso contains zero errors, which is a weakness of the competition but beneficial for SPH.
Instagram	First, Rusticae has its Instagram page in Spanish only, while the other two competitors have it in English. Second, the three competitors put time and effort in their bio, including the following: (1) Mentioning that people can contact the company directly over the phone, (2) Stimulating followers to use a certain hashtag and create UGC, (3) The website, (4) The location of the headquarters, (5) A personal description of the purpose of their brand. Third, regarding the overall Instagram feed, only Joandso takes care and has some consistency in their types of photographs. Fourth, both Secretplaces and Joandso tag other relevant Instagram accounts in their pictures. Fifth, only Joandso always uses the hashtag of its own company or the hashtags that are related to their company underneath each post. Sixth, the strategy of Rusticae is the best one to consider by SPH in terms of posted content. Main themes that are highlighted in their content are 'Switching-off', 'Being active/doing sports' and 'Enjoying life (in a rural environment)'. Both Rusticae and Joandso are showing commitment to its member hotels, a passion for the industry and a personal touch on their Instagram page. Only Joandso puts real time and effort in making their own photos and using them on their Instagram page. This comes across professional, personal and creates a unique Instagram feed. When looking at the pictures posted by Rusticae, the least popular were those of (modern) interior design while the most popular were those showing the history, culture, nature, sports, winning competitions, swimming pools, gastronomy and eating together. Regarding the winning competitions, which is a strategy to create engagement with your followers, Rusticae does well on their Instagram page. Seventh, all three competitors are working with Instagram Highlights. Mainly Joandso is very active in their Instagram Highlights and puts a lot of time and effort to make them as personal and up to date as possible. Themes that Joandso use in their Instagram Highlights are Q&A (to create more engagement and to find out what your followers prefer), Press & Mentions and Reviews. In addition to these themes, looking at mainly Rusticae its used subjects, themes such as recipes, visits to their listings, covid19 commitment and the national economy and sustainability are being highlighted. Mainly Rusticae and Secretplaces are not very up to date with their Instagram Highlights, showing stories that are 119 weeks old. Overall,

Type of analysis	Most relevant output for SPH
	there is a lot of room for improvement on Instagram among the competitors, which is a huge opportunity for SPH.
Twitter	From the three competitors, only Rusticae is using its Twitter account on a regular basis and has a decent number of followers. Regarding the content on Rusticae its Twitter account, mainly professional content is being posted, for example webinars, strategic alliances, or projects they work on, and is in Spanish only. The engagement is very little though.
Facebook	All three competitors are using Facebook and all three of them linked their Facebook page to their Instagram posts. Something all three competitors do well, is having their contact details published in a clear way on their Facebook page. Secretplaces gives you the opportunity to send them a message over Facebook Messenger and their response time is quite fast. The competitors only have few to no reviews while it can create a huge level of trust. Both Rusticae and Secretplaces post winning competitions on their Facebook pages.
YouTube	From all three competitors, only Rusticae has a YouTube channel. This can either be because Rusticae exists the longest or because it is a social media channel that cannot be ignored when targeting the Spanish market. When analysing the videos on Rusticae its YouTube channel, the most popular ones are those with influencers. Most of the videos are showing visits to Rusticae its listings by either influencers or employees and all videos are in Spanish. Right now, the Rusticae YouTube channel is not very up to date and there is much room improvement.
Pinterest	All three competitors are using Pinterest a lot. When looking at their Pinterest pages, every one of them posts pictures including a link to either their own website, online blog, or social media pages. This is a great way of getting more web traffic. Secretplaces is the biggest one on Pinterest with around 82.9K monthly viewers. None of the competitors is as consistent as they should be on their Pinterest pages, as there is no to little consistency in terms of hashtags/descriptions, titles, themes, boards, website links etc. Something Joandso does well, is making use of their own photographs, not just on their Instagram page but also on their Pinterest. These photos create a more personal Pinterest page and the quality of the photos is outstanding.
LinkedIn	The only competitor with an up to date LinkedIn page is Rusticae. Joandso does not use it often and has only 19 followers, while Secretplaces does not even have a LinkedIn page at all. Looking at Rusticae its LinkedIn page, professional content is being posted and it is in Spanish only. On LinkedIn, Rusticae uses a lot of video content and the company posts informative content about the same themes as they do on their Instagram. A theme that is being highlighted a lot on their LinkedIn page and which receives a lot of likes is 'Sustainability'. It can either be that Rusticae itself thinks this theme is important or the Spaniards strongly appreciate reading about those matters. Besides, showing commitment to both supporting the national economy and covid19, is something Rusticae embraces on its LinkedIn page.

Annex F. Interview participants

Table F.1. In-depth interview participant.

Name	Company	Function	Date	Contact details	Method of approach	Part of the research
Rita Alves Machado	Guest Centric/ SPH	VP Sales and Marketing Great Hotels of the World	27/11/ 2020	rmachado @ghotw .com	Zoom meeting	Sub question 3: Internal analysis

Table F.2. Personal communication participants.

Name	Company	Function	Dates	Contact details	Method of approach	Part of the research
Rita Alves Machado	Guest Centric/ SPH	VP Sales and Marketing Great Hotels of the World	Every second Wednesday of the month	rmachado @ghotw .com	Google teams	Sub question 3: Internal analysis Sub question 4: Customer analysis, competitor analysis Sub question 5: SFA table
Maria Gomes	Guest Centric/ SPH	Director of account manageme nt Great Hotels of the World	Every second Wednesday of the month	Mgomes @ghotw .com	Google Teams	Sub question 3: Internal analysis Sub question 4: Customer analysis, competitor analysis Sub question 5: SFA table
Carlota Tavora	Guest Centric/ SPH	Content developer Great Hotels of the World	Every second Wednesday of the month	ctavora @ghotw .com	Google Teams	Sub question 3: Internal analysis Sub question 4: Customer analysis, competitor analysis Sub question 5: SFA table
Catarina Conceição	Guest Centric/ SPH	Marketing assistant Great Hotels of the World	Every second Wednesday of the month	cconceica o@ghotw .com	Google Teams	Sub question 3: Internal analysis Sub question 4: Customer analysis, competitor analysis Sub question 6: Recommendations on operational level

Section1. Questions

Based on the 7S Model and the BMC as explained in the theoretical framework. The interview will be divided into six parts, to keep it as clear as possible. The first five parts are based on both the 7S model and the BMC. By discussing each topic during the interview, the researcher will be able to fill in both the 7S model and BMC as complete as possible, to fulfil a comprehensive internal analysis. The researcher will consider this interview as a semi-structured one, where questions can be asked that have not been written down in advance.

The first part will be about the value proposition of SPH, the company its strategy including future plan, competitive advantage, and key activities. The second part will involve the key resources and systems used. The third part will focus on the customers of SPH, the channels to reach them and the customer relationships. The fourth part will look at the costs, revenue streams and key partners. The final part will focus on the company its structure, its staff and management style.

In addition to the 7S model and BMC, the researcher would like to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of SPH in the sixth part of the interview, to understand the company better and to take the information into account when formulating the marketing strategy.

First part

Value proposition/Shared values

- What customer problem does Small Portuguese Hotels solve and what needs does the company meet?
- What are the products and services Small Portuguese Hotels put in place to accomplish this?
- What values or benefits does Small Portuguese Hotels create for customers?
- Does the current business model meet Small Portuguese Hotels customers' needs fully?

Strategy

- What is the strategy of Small Portuguese Hotels and what are the strategic objectives of the company?
- What is the competitive advantage of Small Portuguese Hotels? What can make a customer change its mind and go with competition or substitute solutions?

Key activities

- How are the products and services by Small Portuguese Hotels being offered?
- What competencies and key activities does Small Portuguese Hotels need?

Second part

Key resources/Systems

- What key resources are behind Small Portuguese Hotels' offerings and value proposition;
  What are the main systems that run Small Portuguese Hotels? This can be in terms of
  - IT system
  - Human Resources
  - CRM
  - Tangible equipment

Third part

Customers

- What customer segments does Small Portuguese Hotels mainly serve?
- Who are the most important customers for Small Portuguese Hotels and why?
- Does Small Portuguese Hotels target to serve the same customer segments in the
  coming years?

Channels

- Through which channels do the customer segments of Small Portuguese Hotels want to
  be reached?
- How is Small Portuguese Hotels reaching them now?
- How are the channels of Small Portuguese Hotels integrated?
- Which channels work best?
- Which ones are most cost-efficient?
- How does Small Portuguese Hotels raise awareness about the company its products and
  services?
- How does Small Portuguese Hotels allow customers to purchase specific products and
  services?
- How does Small Portuguese Hotels provide post-purchase customer support?

Customer relationships

- What kinds of relationships do Small Portuguese Hotels' customers expect and how does
  Small Portuguese Hotels maintain them?
- Who influences Small Portuguese Hotels' customers? (Opinion leaders, influencers,
  stakeholders, users etc…)

118

- What relationship do the competitors have with their customers? Is this the same relationship as Small Portuguese Hotels wants to have with their customers? Is it the best type of relationship to have?
- What type of relationships creates the most value for Small Portuguese Hotels' customers?
- How does Small Portuguese Hotels bolster the desired relationship?

Fourth part

Costs

- What generates costs for Small Portuguese Hotels?
- Can the value chain of Small Portuguese Hotels be optimized without reducing the perceived value of its customers?

Revenue streams

- What are the revenue streams for Small Portuguese Hotels?
- What are the customers willing to pay for?

Key partners

- Who are the key partners of Small Portuguese Hotels?
- What does Small Portuguese Hotels bring them and what do they bring the company?

Fifth part

Structure

- How is Small Portuguese Hotels organized?
- What is the hierarchy?
- How do the various departments coordinate activities?
- Is decision making and controlling centralized or decentralized?
- Does the structure that is being used right now execute the strategy?

Staff

- What positions or specializations are represented within the team of Small Portuguese Hotels?
- Are you missing competencies within the team or organization?

Style

- How participative is the management/leadership style?

- How effective is this leadership style so far for Small Portuguese Hotels?
- Do employees/team members tend to be competitive or cooperative?
- Does the leadership style and cultural qualities help Small Portuguese Hotels to achieve the strategic objectives?

Sixth part

Strengths

- What is the USP of Small Portuguese Hotels?
- What are Small Portuguese Hotels' strongest assets?
- Does Small Portuguese Hotels have access to unique resources?
- Does Small Portuguese Hotels have exclusive relationships with its suppliers/partners/distributors etc.?
- What things do customers say Small Portuguese Hotels does well?
- Where does the sales and marketing team excel?
- What does Small Portuguese Hotels do that no one else is?

Weaknesses

- What are the main areas Small Portuguese Hotels need to improve on (immediately)?
- What resources does Small Portuguese Hotels lack?
- What is Small Portuguese Hotels doing poorly?
- What is the competition doing much better than Small Portuguese Hotels?
- What do the customers dislike about the products and services offered?
- Are there any objections/complaints coming from partners?

Section 2. In-depth interview transcript

Interviewer: Lotte van Rijen

Interviewee: Mrs. Rita Alves Machado

Date: 27/11/2020

Lotte: Hi Rita, good evening. How are you doing?

Rita: Hi Lotte, I am doing great. I am sorry I am a bit later, but I have just finished my meeting and I will do our interview from the car if that is alright.

Lotte: That is no problem at all. Hopefully, your meeting went alright. Any plans for this weekend with the curfew?

Rita: Well, we were considering going to our second house but with all the kids inside, I think we will just take it easy here in Lisbon.

Lotte: That sounds convenient as well. Okay, so before starting with the actual interview, I want to ask for your permission to record the interview. By doing this, I will be able to relisten, transcribe and review all the given information better.

Rita: Sure, no problem at all.

Lotte: Perfect. Besides, I would like to tell you that I can always share the entire transcript afterwards so you can double check if I understood all the information in the right way.

Rita: Good to know.

Lotte: Okay, let us start with the interview. Okay, I have some question about Small Portuguese Hotels. So, through this interview, I will understand the company and the objectives of the future a bit better, which is helpful for the thesis. I have some questions but I will just go through… the answers do not have to be…

Rita: Sure, sure, let's go!

Lotte: Alright, so, the first thing I want to know is, what customer problem does Small Portuguese Hotels solve and what needs does the company meet?

Rita: Okay, customer problem, in one platform, a curated selection of several different types of accommodation. So, that all meet not only quality criteria but health and safety criteria. So, all the hotels and accommodations have at least 8.5 on Booking.com or the equivalent on TripAdvisor.com, so that's the first criteria, and then… they all have the Clean & Safe, health and safety certificate from Turismo de Portugal and on top of that, they fulfil five additional criteria that we have set for health and safety. And, when we talk about a curated selection, it is because, obviously if you go on, big, you know… big platforms like Booking.com or Expedia.com, you have all the hotels and accommodations you could possibly want. But, in our opinion, you actually have too many.

Lotte: Yes, I agree.

Rita: And, in our case, we've already reduced it to small hotels. So, our focus is on small, independent hotels, that is the first selection. Plus, the quality criteria, plus the health and safety criteria. We think we've solved that problem. And then, what was the second question?

Lotte: What needs does the company meet? So, what is the need of the customers who are using Small Portuguese Hotels?

Rita: Okay. The need of the customers at this point, and I've got an interesting case study at the moment going live as we speak… it is completely crazy. Is that, in this moment in time, people need...

flexible solutions to book last minute and long-head accommodation. So, because the landscape, the health and safety landscape, is constantly changing, people need quick decisions and, for instance, it is very difficult to know which hotels are actually open, which are closed, what their health and safety status is. If you go on a major platform… and on our platform, on our website, you can see that all in one. We only show accommodation that are open live, as a start, and you can immediately see what their health and safety standards are, what they are meeting, what they are doing. The other thing is, we have launched about two weeks ago, a helpline. A phone helpline, with real life people. Okay, and funnily enough, we have three more times, three times more bookings on the helpline than we have online. Okay, which nobody expected, least of all us. We have just launched the helpline, as a test, thinking, okay, we are just starting, we do not know whether people need a phone, so let us try it. Let us see if anyone rings. Okay?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: People are ringing and bookings are coming in for everything you can think of. And again, answering your question, we think that people in today's world and in today's certain world in terms of bookings, flexibility, and the information they need, and, you know, all these little details in people's lives that have suddenly become a bit more complicated, a helpline is actually solving their needs. It is completely unexpected. We must come up with scripts, the helpline goes to our mobiles if you want to know. So, we have three people, of which I am one, and we get these calls and we must deal with them, right?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: But I think it is a good way to understand our customers, to understand their needs, to understand what they are looking for and, what we have found. Oh, because this also came from a poll we have done on our website. Okay, so, on our website we run polls, like, clients asking, people asking their opinion on our website, right?

Lotte: Yes, I got it.

Rita: And one thing that kept coming up was that people, were not yet sure what they have wanted. Cause we have asked them why they did not book. The ones that did not book, we've asked them. And, people just said, I am not sure what I want yet but above all, I am not sure when I can go. And at the same time, they have wanted to have their homework done, so that they would be ready to go, at, you know, at the last minute. So, that got us thinking, okay… So, what can we do to help people, you know, get to the point quickly and book? And so that is how we have decided on the helpline. And we have thought it would not be used so much, just a thing that would be there, in case anyone needed it. And in fact, it has been very successful. So, you know, I think at least for the next year, as things will keep on going back and forward, it is still going to be very valuable. And, the reality is, sometimes it

is timesaving. If you don't know what you want, and you don't know exactly where you want to go, you may know the type of accommodation but you don't know exactly where… you know, all these things, all this research takes time. And, if people must book at the last minute and they want to make a quick decision, sometimes, the phone is quicker. And, I think really, that is what we have solved. And the other thing we have seen is, that, the hotels with most traction, most visitors on the website, are by far the hotels that are most remote and isolated and undiscovered. So, I think it is twofold: people are discovering their own country, not just here but everywhere, and it has been an exciting journey for a lot of people. And the other thing is that people want smaller places that feel safer. So, our website, our definition, average size is 35 rooms. And we have a lot of them with 12 or 15 rooms. And those have been more popular, at least than the larger ones. The more remote locations, if they are accessible you know, and since Portugal is so small, everything is accessible, really, have had massive traction. Compared to places and hotels, country houses, B&B's, and all well-known places.

Lotte: Alright. But, do you think, cause now of course, covid19 is influencing the needs of the customers a lot… Do you think that, when it is all back to normal more or less, in a few years, that then, people will still want to be able to… to have direct contact with you and to be able to cancel it? Because I really…personally, I think this is going to change the customer for good maybe...

Rita: Yeah…

Lotte: But do you think Small Portuguese Hotels will take this into account as well?

Rita: I think so. I do not think that, to be absolutely honest, I think normal bookings will come back as all of this goes back to normal. But I do think that some things will not change. I think, the personal aspect in everything you do, for trust, for booking a holiday, will stay and become important. I think the notion of size and small and personal for me, as a client, as a guest, will not go away. I think people will rediscover the joy of personal and small. I think that will stay. And, because the personal and the small gives you a sense of being special. Because you are special to those hotels and accommodations. And I think that that is a very welcome feeling, and in today's very impersonal world, I think that feeling is here to stay. I think people were looking for it, but they were not getting it. And so, I think that's here to stay. And, I think, it was just waiting to happen as a reaction to over tourism anyway. I think it has just been accelerated.

Lotte: Yes, makes sense. Cause today, I have had a look at the amount of accommodation on Booking.com and they have more than 20 million.

Rita: Yeah…

Lotte: That is insane. Like, you do not know where to start looking to be fair.

Rita: Exactly. It can get very confusing. Of course, when you know where you are going, and you know exactly what you want, it is super useful. Cause they have something for everyone. But I do think that there is a growing number of people who want up-close and personal, who want to feel special and special, you know. Who want to feel wanted. And, I think that the rediscovering of rural, any country, is going to get a real boost. Because, currently, we live in a world with so much technology, perhaps too much, a very fanatic lifestyle which meets the countertrend that people really need to switch off and relax. And then the sustainability factor, that you know that you are helping a small company, a small hotel. You know that you are making a difference to their life. And you know you are a part of their life while you are there. And that is a very powerful feeling. And I think that it is really going to grow. I think even big hotels will have to step up their game and try to provide something like that, even in scale. I think that it is only going to grow. And if you take in millennial travellers and Generation Z, the travel with a purpose, that is only going to grow, I think. The world becomes a smaller place, and, because you're going to have well-travelled people, both millennials and generation Z, they're going to want to travel with a reason, they're going to want to make a difference. And all that, I think, is, much more relevant for them in small forms of accommodation and for the forms of accommodation, it is a lot easier if you're small to provide that level of communal life.

Lotte: Yes, cool. So, you would say that that is also the competitive advantage of Small Portuguese Hotels actually?

Rita: Yes. The level of engagement you have with small hotels and businesses is completely different. And the difference you make to their lives as well. So, in terms of business, the value they see in us is much greater, because they are small. Because they cannot do all these things by themselves. They cannot have a phone line, professional partnerships being signed up left right and centre, they do not have their own PR, we just launched gift vouchers, 3 days ago. That is something that's difficult to do by yourself, right?

Lotte: Yes. For sure.

Rita: And we have launched gift vouchers that you can buy and use in any of the 147 hotels.

Lotte: Smart.

Rita: So, you know, it is simple. 25, 50, 75, 100-euro gift vouchers you can buy. And the feedback we have got from them, and you know, we are doing this very simply, you know. When we do something like this, we do not even have an intranet yet with them. We just send out emails, you know. And I write them, and I enclose all the needed info you know, this is the virtual voucher, this is the printed voucher, and you invoice us, we invoice you, and the commission… you know, it's all

very simple. It is simple stuff. Because, we do not have the tools and resources yet to do it any different. But it is just to show you we can do it.

Lotte: Yes, exactly… Because how is Small Portuguese Hotels earning, what is the business model?

Rita: Commission, we work on commission basis. We get a commission on the bookings, and that is it.

Lotte: So, no cost for the user?

Rita: No, no costs for the hotels now, but I do not think there will be for the near future. And we're on commission. And that is it.

Lotte: Yeah, because, I am just thinking, what generates cost for you? For Small Portuguese Hotels? Obviously, the employees working on the project, and is it then the website you need to host?

Rita: Yeah, the website, but it is hosted by us, we are a tech company. And all the listed hotels are using our booking engine anyway. So, they are GuestCentric clients. They all use our booking engine anyway. So, for them it is very easy, because they just have to connect to an external booking engine, we are part of their system if you like.

Lotte: Okay…

Rita: We just give them a kind of marketing and sales brand that they have. And what we have had, we have an average of 7 leads a week that we send to GuestCentric, hotels that have heard about Small Portuguese Hotels and want to become members. And so, we lead them to GuestCentric, because you can only become a member of Small Portuguese Hotels if you use GuestCentric booking engine.

Lotte: Okay, so they wanted to be represented on Small Portuguese Hotels? And then, they got like, lead towards GuestCentric.

Rita: Yep. Because, to become part of Small Portuguese Hotels, you must have the GuestCentric booking engine. Otherwise, it will just be too much work to do all the integrations and everything on the website. This way, if we need to do a special promotion or a partnership, we can manage their booking engine directly. See what I mean?

Lotte: Definitely. So, if you are on Small Portuguese Hotels as a customer and I want to book a hotel, will I get directed to their direct website?

Rita: Yes. No, well, you stay on our website but it is their website. But you do not know it, as a customer, you would not feel the difference. Cause it is the same booking engine, but in our own environment. You stay on our website, you get an email confirmation from us, so, everything is Small

Portuguese Hotels for the customer, the customer does not know that we have the same booking engine.

Lotte: Okay, I understand. So, the systems behind Small Portuguese Hotels, is the GuestCentric booking system?

Rita: Yes.

Lotte: And that is the only resource system, right? That you are using?

Rita: Yes.

Lotte: That is super-efficient for you, of course. Okay… And, let me just see. So, about the customers, I was wondering, what customer segments does Small Portuguese Hotels mainly serve or wants to target?

Rita: Okay, so we have, couples, families, and groups of friends. Those are our targets. And, because it is such a new project, we do not actually have demographics of whether and where we are succeeding in this, okay. We have not even looked at all the reservations to understand if this is the case. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, these are the main target groups and, all our PR and products are aimed at these three. Why? Because couples are the first to travel, okay?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: Middle aged couples are the first to travel. Then, families, highly seasonal but they are also the most sensitive to safety and looking for small, isolated places. They are the most concerned about this. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: They are the ones that really need a solution. They really need to get away, they are restrained by school holidays, they really need to find solutions. And thirdly, the groups of friends are the ones who, we are talking, Small Portuguese Hotels has everything from 3-star upwards, so it's not super exclusive luxury collection at all, really. It has something for everyone. It is not an elite brand at all. And groups of friends, we have found, independently of covid19, groups of friends are growing in terms of short break and getaways. And a lot of them used to travel to the more expensive hostels, and a lot of those hostels are closed. So, they have turned to our type of accommodation. Because, again, it's open, safe and it's possible with groups of friends, because about one third of our accommodations are self-catering.

Lotte: Smart. And, the groups of friends, what age group? More or less.

Rita: Late twenties, early thirties. But, we think, as we move to international markets, that age will come down. Now, we are communicating and targeting Portuguese. And, typically, in their early 20s and mid-20s, they really do not have enough disposable income (the Portuguese). So, we are talking, late 20s, early 30s, they are the ones we have seen most.

Lotte: Yes, okay. And then, for example in the Spanish market, do you think Small Portuguese Hotels wants to first look at these target groups for example? Or do you want me to find out whether other target groups might be interested as well?

Rita: I think it would be interesting. I think from the Spanish market, we will see, mostly, couples okay.

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: Rather than families and groups of friends. Simply because families will tend to stay local, regional in places they know well. And groups of friends for the same reason. They have the whole of Spain to go to. The only exceptions I think would be cities like Lisbon or Porto that always attract groups of friends. And I think, ones the emergency status is over, you are going to see a lot of travel again to cities.

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: Just in general. You are going to see a lot of city break getaways in general.

Lotte: Yeah. And then, because, these are the target groups, do you, as Small Portuguese Hotels, also use specific channels to reach these target groups?

Rita: Yes. What we do is, we, it is mostly through PR and partnerships. For instance, the couples, that we want to target, and some families, we have used the Portuguese automobile club, which is called Automóvel Club de Portugal, which has 270.000 members. Very loyal members. They have a lot of communication, they have an intranet where we've published our offers that you can access as a member and, for those, we're clearly targeting the couples, couples with disposable income and willing to travel. That is the key demographic. Then, for families, what we've done is, we've partnered with specific media to attract families like, websites that have a lot of stuff for children and families for school holidays and that kind of things. And also, the bloggers and influencers that we've targeted are more family oriented. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, now, we got to press trips as we speak. One is a family of four travelling, and they tell all their stories on Instagram and blablabla. So, that's how we reach the families. Groups of friends is a

bigger challenge. Groups of friends are harder to target specifically. Then, what we've done there is that we've partnered with more nice websites like, one of the main Portuguese media groups is called Impresa, and they have a newspaper called Expresso. And, Expresso has a special segment which is super targeted to foodie and travellers, a lot of people, slightly older than our target groups, are using it and it is super successful. We do… we have these competitions every week, and you can earn a voucher based on questions. And, to get the younger ones, we've partnered with a radio called Rádio Comercial, which is sort of, quite young, mid 20s, and we have again a competition every single week where we have questions and answers and we've kept that up since September. For the older ones, for the couples, we work with a radio which is older called ML Delta, which is really older, people in their 50s, 60s, and we're doing competitions again weekly with content there and adverts, because we can have adverts for free as long as we offer vouchers and that's been super successful to build the brand.

Lotte: Nice, cool!

Rita: We've done some other things, but of the top of my head, that's it. Another thing we've done, we've partnered up with a Portuguese post office system. They have an intranet for their 12.000 employees, and we load special offers on their intranet.

Lotte: Smart.

Rita: And now, this next week, we're hopefully launching a partnership with Galp, which is the biggest petrol company. And every time you check in in one of our hotels, you get 6 euros of your petrol. It's the idea to encourage travelling.

Lotte: Yes, I think this is actually super interesting that you're working or are having a lot of partnerships to reach the customers, instead of just doing marketing.

Rita: Yeah, we have a hitlist of brands where we could target end consumers. And, the other partnership we did was with Delta Coffee, because they have a platform in terms of helping the local economy. It's to get people to go back to restaurants and hotels and we got special conditions for our hotels to load special offers there. Okay?

Lotte: Yes. Cool.

Rita: So, we're kind off focused on brands and now we are working on another partnership with Europcar, which is a car rental. So, anyone with a Europcar loyalty card gets special discounts in our hotels and vice versa. So, anyone who's staying in Small Portuguese Hotels gets 20% discount on their rental car through them.

Lotte: Cool.

Rita: Yes. This is the kind of partnerships we have. I mean, there's still a long way to go, because all these things take a long time to set up.

Lotte: Are they expensive? Do they cost you money?

Rita: No.

Lotte: Because it's a partnership, it's like both ways.

Rita: Yes, it's win-win. But we have to offer something special and they have to offer us something special as well.

Lotte: Yes, smart.

Rita: We want to have partnerships with big brand partners, where we can get the word out to large audiences and brands that have their own marketing channels. Because those brands have massive communication channels. Websites, intranets, you know, they got loads of audience.

Lotte: Would you think Small Portuguese Hotels is down to do something like this in Spain as well? Or do you want to keep the partnerships with the Portuguese brands and do more marketing related things in Spain?

Rita: Well, it would be good to have partnerships in Spain as well. It's a question of resources, of time. That's really it. I don't know if we have the team available for that in Spain, to be absolutely honest. We're going to launch the website in English now, that's the next step. In England, we're not going to do any partnerships to begin with, unless something comes to us, it's, you have to have high-level contact in order to do this. And it must be relevant, you know. And a brand in Portugal, isn't as relevant to Spanish brands as a brand in Spain.

Lotte: Yeah…

Rita: You see what I mean?

Lotte: Yeah… And, because... How many people are working in Small Portuguese Hotels?

Rita: Oh, well, 3, but not fulltime. Because we're working on Great Hotels of The World as well. So… you know.

Lotte: It's more like a project?

Rita: Exactly, it's more like a project. At the moment it's a project, it's taking off actually very well, but, you know, it's just the beginning. You know, next Thursday, we have our first meeting with the hotel members.

Lotte: Nice!

Rita: Virtual meeting with the hotel members. You know, it's going to be the first time we ever speak to them all. You know.

Lotte: But, cool, I really think there's a lot of potential to be fair.

Rita: Yeah, I think there is. But it's all very, you know. We kind off go with the flow. We kind off adapt, adapt things from Great Hotels of the World. With Small Portuguese Hotels, we kind off adapt a lot of things that we already do, it's not for the first time. But it's a whole reality, you know, it's a different reality.

Lotte: Cool. And, let me see... Two things actually. And then, I will have talked about most things. Customer relationships. Cause, I've reviewed some competitors the last few days, and some of them for example offer the opportunity to become a member of their membership club. Do you think Small Portuguese Hotels is thinking about something like this, or do you have other ideas of how to maintain relationships with your customers? Or…?

Rita: We have something. It's not exactly as something that we want but we have something that is called GuestBook. That's the brand name, but we don't call it Guestbook, we call it Small Portuguese Hotels. In fact, when you checkout, if you sign up, it's not really a loyalty program, I don't want to call it a loyalty program, because it isn't yet. It is basically a cash-back program for now. And, when you checkout, you get 5% of your total bill that you can load on your PayPal account or, give to charity. Global given. That has the potential to be a loyalty program. That's why we've started it. But it's not a loyalty program yet. And that is a whole different level of engagement. But it is on the books, for the second phase. But, at the moment, we are literally not there yet. We've just sent our first newsletter to people who've signed up to the newsletter spontaneously. And, literally last week, announcing the black Friday and the vouchers. But it's the first one. We have a super high opening rate, 45%, which is 3 times what it normally is. So, we were very pleased with that. And, all these people have come to us, essentially through the PR we've been doing, websites, relevant travel websites, magazines, and the competitions. But it's very small at the moment. We have a long way to go.

Lotte: I will also subscribe to the newsletter! Didn't do it yet!

Rita: Cool.

Lotte: Actually, the last thing I would like to hear from you is, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Small Portuguese Hotels? Because I want to integrate these, or at least that I am aware of these strengths and weaknesses when I look at the Spanish market for Small Portuguese Hotels and the opportunities and threats in the Spanish market.

Rita: Okay, Strengths: it is a very personal project, it's the only hotel chain that we know off that has such a strong focus on helping the economy, 1% of our revenue goes directly to the foodbank in Portugal and people really appreciate that. Not just now, I think right now people are more sensitive to all their local economies, so, but I think again that is is here to stay. I really do. So, the personal aspect and the personal relationship we have with the hotels. And the scale of it, I think it's a point in our favour. The variety of accommodation that we offer, so it's really not just hotels, not just Airbnb's, it's a mixture of everything and it covers the whole country, including the islands. The weaknesses are the scale of the project. So, we are small, okay, which mean we don't have that many resources. We really don't have any budget to speak off, really. And that's clearly a weakness. And the weakness as well, is that, at the moment, to be a member, you have to have the GuestCentric booking engine. It makes absolute sense for GuestCentric, and that was one of the reasons, but we could get a lot more members if that weren't the case. But that would mean, integrations, interfaces, a whole different building. And the other weakness is linked to the resources, to the team, the scale of the operation, that we need international clients to make it viable. We need English language, Spanish language websites at least, to make it viable. Cause you can't live in Portugal of the local market, it's just impossible, it's too small, you need international markets. But, within international markets, you are competing against some heavyweights.

Lotte: Yeah. Did you think about creating a mobile website? Mobile-friendly?

Rita: Well, our website is mobile responsive. Okay. It is mobile responsive. It could be better, but it is mobile responsive. But successful brands on mobile basically have an App. But again, (customer) scale. We don't have the scale we need to be able to launch and maintain an App. It would be the logical step.

Lotte: Yeah. Cause, I've found out through Hootsuite that Spain is almost like, the number one country that is using the mobile phone for the internet. So, they've found out that from all the internet users, 96%, which is almost everyone, is using it via their mobile phone.

Rita: 75% of our website visitors are mobile.

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, it's very much mobile first.

Lotte: That's good. Nice. I think I've asked my most important questions. There was one part, that's part of the theoretical model and that's about the management/leadership style, but since you guys are with 3 working on Small Portuguese Hotels as a project, I don't know how relevant this part is actually.

Rita: It's very, I mean, we have other people working on the project but nowhere near fulltime. So, our CEO is the same CEO as GuestCentric. But he jumps in one week, at meetings and stuff, you know, we have all the engineers from GuestCentric, they've developed the website, right?

Lotte: Yeah.

Rita: But it's a very small project, very small. You know, it's nowhere near fulltime for everyone. And it's very much, a learn and adapt project. That's the mentality. Cause, we are essentially tech, we throw out some ideas, we see if they work and we go ahead. We have, we test, we adapt, we ask questions about the website, about people's experience on the website, and now, we're taking this down and we start doing sentiment questions, to see what people are feeling like. You see what I mean? It's very much a test-and-adapt style. The helpline is a perfect example of what we do and how we do it. I've already set up a call centre in a hotel once, so I know what to do. But we don't even have a system, for example. You know. It just, you just have to do it. The first call I took, I was in my car, pull over, get my laptop, link my laptop to my hotspot as I was in the middle of the street, and just take the booking, you know, it is what it is.

Lotte: It's just trying, but that's what I like actually, cause then you don't have so many rules.

Rita: Yeah.

Lotte: You know, just trying to find out what works, what do people use, what do they find convenient.

Rita: Yeah, I really think that small businesses nowadays, and this is a very small business, it's the only way to do things. Because, if you don't do things quickly, the moment is gone. You know. And, if you want to do things quickly, they can't be perfect. If you want to know, yesterday at 8 o'clock in the evening, we were correcting the post on LinkedIn, announcing the vouchers on Black Friday, because we've realised that the sentence we've used was misleading and so, I had to quickly go into the admin page, change it and say okay, what do you think about this? good? okay, you go correct this, that, in the booking engine, and it was done. But tech allows you to do this, you know.

Lotte: Yeah.

Rita: But, you know, I was kicking myself thinking how on earth did we get this wrong? It wasn't wrong, it was just open to doubt.

Lotte: Yeah, and that can cause problems of course.

Rita: Yes, it can. So, we changed it, we've laughed and it was done. But, you know, hey it's there, we got 145 hotels, you know. So… you know.

132

Lotte: Is there any objective you have with Small Portuguese Hotels for the future? Like, we want to achieve this… in 2021?

Rita: Yes, well, we want to grow to 200 hotels, okay. We want to, improve our voucher program, because the purchasing is online, that's fine, but the redemption is pretty manual. Just because the booking engine doesn't redeem vouchers, it's a lot more complicated than it looks, so we want this in 2021. We want to rollout services that hotels will pay for. Because we've identified that there are a couple of things that we know that our hotels would need, you know, they could benefit from but they need to pay for them. And basically, the next project is metasearch. So, we've signed up with a partner to launch metasearch for our hotels. So, you know, if you google our hotels, you will soon, not yet, have Small Portuguese coming up, you know, together with Booking.com etcetera on Metasearch. And we split the revenue with the hotels obviously. But those type of services we think we can provide them. Things they can't do by themselves, really. And then, we would love to have enough hotels to be able to have revenue from partners who want to supply these hotels. In other words, imagine you are an air conditioning supplier. You would be able to access all of our hotels through our newsletters, one to one communication, and you would pay for that. You see what I mean?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: So, it's the other way.

Lotte: Okay, so suppliers of hotels can use Small Portuguese Hotels as a communicator.

Rita: Yes. Next week we have a meeting with this thing called Hotelshop, which is a large purchasing platform for hotels, independent. And we are going to see whether we can bring our hotels on board on the purchasing platform and make some money of that. But, you know, that's the other side. But at the moment, we are looking at partnerships from the consumer perspective, because we need to get volume and then, we can look at the other partnerships.

Lotte: Yeah. Who are your key partners right now?

Rita: At the moment, media partners (so, websites and radio, really, the main) and consumer-oriented partners. So, we have the big postal office, Galp hopefully… honestly, it's crazy, off the record here... but we had to sign a physical contract in 3 copies and it had to be authorized by a lawyer…

Lotte: Oh...

Rita: We do all our contracting with DocuSign, you know, online. So, it was like… ehh… What is this. But yeah, some companies are like that. So, the automobile, CTP and Galp. Those are our big partners.

Lotte: And the hotels, right?

Rita: Yes, they are partners B2B.

Lotte: Cool. Nice. Yes, I got some much information, I really understand the company so much better now.

Rita: Yeah?

Lotte: It was super helpful, really. Thank you so much for doing it in the car.

Rita: You're welcome. I just got home. My daughter has 4 friends over to sleep so so much fun!

Lotte: You're going to relax this weekend a bit?

Rita: Sort of… A bit… But there's always something to do.

Lotte: Thank you so much for your time!

Rita: You're welcome Lotte! Bye! Ciao!

Lotte: Bye Rita!

Section 3. In-depth interview coded transcript

Table G.3.1. Used codes based on the 7S model and BMC.

Code	Colour
1. Value proposition/shared values	Yellow
2. Strategy	Green
3. Key activities	Light blue
4. Key resources/systems	Pink
5. Customers & customer relationships	Blue
6. Channels	Red
7. Costs and revenue streams	Dark blue
8. Key partners	Turquoise
9. Structure, staff & style	Dark purple
10. Strengths and weaknesses	Dark green
11. Trends	Grey

Interviewer: Lotte van Rijen

Interviewee: Mrs. Rita Alves Machado

Date: 27/11/2020

Lotte: Hi Rita, good evening. How are you doing?

Rita: Hi Lotte, I am doing great. I am sorry I am a bit later, but I have just finished my meeting and I will do our interview from the car if that is alright.

Lotte: That is no problem at all. Hopefully, your meeting went alright. Any plans for this weekend with the curfew?

Rita: Well, we were considering going to our second house but with all the kids inside, I think we will just take it easy here in Lisbon.

Lotte: That sounds convenient as well. Okay, so before starting with the actual interview, I want to ask for your permission to record the interview. By doing this, I will be able to relisten, transcribe and review all the given information better.

Rita: Sure, no problem at all.

Lotte: Perfect. Besides, I would like to tell you that I can always share the entire transcript afterwards so you can double check if I understood all the information in the right way.

Rita: Good to know.

Lotte: Okay, let us start with the interview. Okay, I have some question about Small Portuguese Hotels. So, through this interview, I will understand the company and the objectives of the future a bit better, which is helpful for the thesis. I have some questions but I will just go through… the answers do not have to be…

Rita: Sure, sure, let's go!

Lotte: Alright, so, the first thing I want to know is, what customer problem does Small Portuguese Hotels solve and what needs does the company meet?

Rita: Okay, customer problem, in one platform, a curated selection of several different types of accommodation. So, that all meet not only quality criteria but health and safety criteria. So, all the hotels and accommodations have at least 8.5 on Booking.com or the equivalent on TripAdvisor.com, so that's the first criteria, and then… they all have the Clean & Safe, health and safety certificate from Turismo de Portugal and on top of that, they fulfil five additional criteria that we have set for health and safety. And, when we talk about a curated selection, it is because, obviously if you go on, big, you know… big platforms like Booking.com or Expedia.com, you have all the hotels and accommodations you could possibly want. But, in our opinion, you actually have too many.

Lotte: Yes, I agree.

Rita: And, in our case, we've already reduced it to small hotels. So, our focus is on small, independent hotels that is the first selection. Plus, the quality criteria, plus the health and safety criteria. We think we've solved that problem. And then, what was the second question?

Lotte: What needs does the company meet? So, what is the need of the customers who are using Small Portuguese Hotels?

Rita: Okay. The need of the customers at this point, and I've got an interesting case study at the moment going live as we speak… it is completely crazy. ==Is that, in this moment in time, people need... flexible solutions to book last minute and long accommodation==. So, because the landscape, the health and safety landscape, is constantly changing, ==people need quick decisions== and, for instance, ==it is very difficult to know which hotels are actually open, which are closed, what their health and safety status is.== If you go on a major platform… and ==on our platform, on our website, you can see that all in one. We only show accommodation that are open live, as a start, and you can immediately see what their health and safety standards are, what they are meeting, what they are doing.== The other thing is, we have launched about two weeks ago, a helpline. ==A phone helpline, with real life people.== Okay, and funnily enough, we have three more times, three times more bookings on the helpline than we have online. Okay, which nobody expected, least of all of us. We have just launched the helpline, as a test, thinking, okay, we are just starting, we do not know whether people need a phone, so let us try it. Let us see if anyone rings. Okay?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: People are ringing and bookings are coming in for everything you can think of. And again, answering your question, ==we think that people in today's world and in today's certain world in terms of bookings, flexibility, and the information they need, and, you know, all these little details in people's lives that have suddenly become a bit more complicated, a helpline is actually solving their needs.== It is completely unexpected. We must come up with scripts, the helpline goes to our mobiles if you want to know. So, we have three people, of which I am one, and we get these calls and we must deal with them, right?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: But I think it is a good way to understand our customers, to understand their needs, to understand what they are looking for and, what we have found. Oh, because this also came from a poll we have done on our website. Okay, so, on our website we run polls, like, clients asking, people asking their opinion on our website, right?

Lotte: Yes, I got it.

Rita: And one thing that kept coming up was that people, were not yet sure what they have wanted. Cause we have asked them why they did not book. The ones that did not book, we've asked them. And, people just said, I am not sure what I want yet but above all, I am not sure when I can go. And at the same time, they have wanted to have their homework done, so that they would be ready to go, at, you know, at the last minute. So, that got us thinking, okay… So, what can we do to help people, you know, get to the point quickly and book? And so that is how we have decided on the helpline. And we have thought it would not be used so much, just a thing that would be there, in case anyone needed it.

And in fact, it has been very successful. So, you know, I think at least for the next year, as things will keep on going back and forward, it is still going to be very valuable. And, the reality is, sometimes it is timesaving. If you don't know what you want, and you don't know exactly where you want to go, you may know the type of accommodation but you don't know exactly where… you know, all these things, all this research takes time. And, if people must book at the last minute and they want to make a quick decision, sometimes, the phone is quicker. And, I think really, that is what we have solved. And the other thing we have seen is, that, the hotels with most traction, most visitors on the website, are by far the hotels that are most remote and isolated and undiscovered. So, I think it is twofold: people are discovering their own country, not just here but everywhere, and it has been an exciting journey for a lot of people. And the other thing is that people want smaller places that feel safer. So, our website, our definition, average size is 35 rooms. And we have a lot of them with 12 or 15 rooms. And those have been more popular, at least than the larger ones. The more remote locations, if they are accessible you know, and since Portugal is so small, everything is accessible, really, have had massive traction. Compared to places and hotels, country houses, B&B's, and all well-known places.

Lotte: Alright. But, do you think, cause now of course, covid19 is influencing the needs of the customers a lot… Do you think that, when it is all back to normal more or less, in a few years, that then, people will still want to be able to… to have direct contact with you and to be able to cancel it? Because I really…personally, I think this is going to change the customer for good maybe...

Rita: Yeah…

Lotte: But do you think Small Portuguese Hotels will take this into account as well?

Rita: I think so. I do not think that, to be absolutely honest, I think normal bookings will come back as all of this goes back to normal. But I do think that some things will not change. I think, the personal aspect in everything you do, for trust, for booking a holiday, will stay and become important. I think the notion of size and small and personal for me, as a client, as a guest, will not go away. I think people will rediscover the joy of personal and small. I think that will stay. And, because the personal and the small gives you a sense of being special. Because you are special to those hotels and accommodations. And I think that that is a very welcome feeling, and in today's very impersonal world, I think that feeling is here to stay. I think people were looking for it, but they were not getting it. And so, I think that's here to stay. And, I think, it was just waiting to happen as a reaction to over tourism anyway. I think it has just been accelerated.

Lotte: Yes, makes sense. Cause today, I have had a look at the amount of accommodation on Booking.com and they have more than 20 million.

Rita: Yeah…

Lotte: That is insane. Like, you do not know where to start looking to be fair.

Rita: Exactly. It can get very confusing. Of course, when you know where you are going, and you know exactly what you want, it is super useful. Cause they have something for everyone. But I do think that there is a growing number of people who want up-close and personal, who want to feel special and special, you know. Who want to feel wanted. And I think that the rediscovering of rural, any country, is going to get a real boost. Because, currently, we live in a world with so much technology, perhaps too much, a very fanatic lifestyle which meets the countertrend that people really need to switch off and relax. And then the sustainability factor, that you know that you are helping a small company, a small hotel. You know that you are making a difference to their life. And you know you are a part of their life while you are there. And that is a very powerful feeling. And I think that it is really going to grow. I think even big hotels will have to step up their game and try to provide something like that, even in scale. I think that it is only going to grow. And if you take in millennial travellers and Generation Z, the travel with a purpose, that is only going to grow, I think. The world becomes a smaller place, and, because you're going to have well-travelled people, both millennials and generation Z, they're going to want to travel with a reason, they're going to want to make a difference. And all that, I think, is, much more relevant for them in small forms of accommodation and for the forms of accommodation, it is a lot easier if you're small to provide that level of communal life.

Lotte: Yes, cool. So, you would say that that is also the competitive advantage of Small Portuguese Hotels actually?

Rita: Yes. The level of engagement you have with small hotels and businesses is completely different. And the difference you make to their lives as well. So, in terms of business, the value they see in us is much greater, because they are small. Because they cannot do all these things by themselves. They cannot have a phone line, professional partnerships being signed up left right and centre, they do not have their own PR, we just launched gift vouchers, 3 days ago. That is something that's difficult to do by yourself, right?

Lotte: Yes. For sure.

Rita: And we have launched gift vouchers that you can buy and use in any of the 147 hotels.

Lotte: Smart.

Rita: So, you know, it is simple. 25, 50, 75, 100-euro gift vouchers you can buy. And the feedback we have got from them, and you know, we are doing this very simply, you know. When we do something like this, we do not even have an intranet yet with them. We just send out emails, you know. And I write them, and I enclose all the needed info you know, this is the virtual voucher, this is the printed voucher, and you invoice us, we invoice you, and the commission… you know, it's all

very simple. It is simple stuff. Because, we do not have the tools and resources yet to do it any different. But it is just to show you we can do it.

Lotte: Yes, exactly… Because how is Small Portuguese Hotels earning, what is the business model?

Rita: Commission, we work on commission basis. We get a commission on the bookings, and that is it.

Lotte: So, no cost for the user?

Rita: No, no costs for the hotels now, but I do not think there will be for the near future. And we're on commission. And that is it.

Lotte: Yeah, because, I am just thinking, what generates cost for you? For Small Portuguese Hotels? Obviously, the employees working on the project, and is it then the website you need to host?

Rita: Yeah, the website, but it is hosted by us, we are a tech company. And all the listed hotels are using our booking engine anyway. So, they are GuestCentric clients. They all use our booking engine anyway. So, for them it is very easy, because they just have to connect to an external booking engine, we are part of their system if you like.

Lotte: Okay…

Rita: We just give them a kind of marketing and sales brand that they have. And what we have had, we have an average of 7 leads a week that we send to GuestCentric, hotels that have heard about Small Portuguese Hotels and want to become members. And so, we lead them to GuestCentric, because you can only become a member of Small Portuguese Hotels if you use GuestCentric booking engine.

Lotte: Okay, so they wanted to be represented on Small Portuguese Hotels? And then, they got like, lead towards GuestCentric.

Rita: Yep. Because, to become part of Small Portuguese Hotels, you must have the GuestCentric booking engine. Otherwise, it will just be too much work to do all the integrations and everything on the website. This way, if we need to do a special promotion or a partnership, we can manage their booking engine directly. See what I mean?

Lotte: Definitely. So, if you are on Small Portuguese Hotels as a customer and I want to book a hotel, will I get directed to their direct website?

Rita: Yes. No, well, you stay on our website but it is their website. But you do not know it, as a customer, you would not feel the difference. Cause it is the same booking engine, but in our own environment. You stay on our website, you get an email confirmation from us, so, everything is Small

Portuguese Hotels for the customer, the customer does not know that we have the same booking engine.

Lotte: Okay, I understand. So, the systems behind Small Portuguese Hotels, is the GuestCentric booking system?

Rita: Yes.

Lotte: And that is the only resource system, right? That you are using?

Rita: Yes.

Lotte: That is super-efficient for you, of course. Okay… And, let me just see. So, about the customers, I was wondering, what customer segments does Small Portuguese Hotels mainly serve or wants to target?

Rita: Okay, so we have, couples, families, and groups of friends. Those are our targets. And, because it is such a new project, we do not actually have demographics of whether and where we are succeeding in this, okay. We have not even looked at all the reservations to understand if this is the case. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, these are the main target groups and, all our PR and products are aimed at these three. Why? Because couples are the first to travel, okay?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: Middle aged couples are the first to travel. Then, families, highly seasonal but they are also the most sensitive to safety and looking for small, isolated places. They are the most concerned about this. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: They are the ones that really need a solution. They really need to get away, they are restrained by school holidays, they really need to find solutions. And thirdly, the groups of friends are the ones who, we are talking, Small Portuguese Hotels has everything from 3-star upwards, so it's not super exclusive luxury collection at all, really. It has something for everyone. It is not an elite brand at all. And groups of friends, we have found, independently of covid19, groups of friends are growing in terms of short break and getaways. And a lot of them used to travel to the more expensive hostels, and a lot of those hostels are closed. So, they have turned to our type of accommodation. Because, again, it's open, safe and it's possible with groups of friends, because about one third of our accommodations are self-catering.

Lotte: Smart. And, the groups of friends, what age group? More or less.

Rita: Late twenties, early thirties. But, we think, as we move to international markets, that age will come down. Now, we are communicating and targeting Portuguese. And, typically, in their early 20s and mid-20s, they really do not have enough disposable income (the Portuguese). So, we are talking, late 20s, early 30s, they are the ones we have seen most.

Lotte: Yes, okay. And then, for example in the Spanish market, do you think Small Portuguese Hotels wants to first look at these target groups for example? Or do you want me to find out whether other target groups might be interested as well?

Rita: I think it would be interesting. I think from the Spanish market, we will see, mostly, couples okay.

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: Rather than families and groups of friends. Simply because families will tend to stay local, regional in places they know well. And groups of friends for the same reason. They have the whole of Spain to go to. The only exceptions I think would be cities like Lisbon or Porto that always attract groups of friends. And I think, ones the emergency status is over, you are going to see a lot of travel again to cities.

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: Just in general. You are going to see a lot of city break getaways in general.

Lotte: Yeah. And then, because, these are the target groups, do you, as Small Portuguese Hotels, also use specific channels to reach these target groups?

Rita: Yes. What we do is, we, it is mostly through PR and partnerships. For instance, the couples, that we want to target, and some families, we have used the Portuguese automobile club, which is called Automóvel Club de Portugal, which has 270.000 members. Very loyal members. They have a lot of communication, they have an intranet where we've published our offers that you can access as a member and, for those, we're clearly targeting the couples, couples with disposable income and willing to travel. That is the key demographic. Then, for families, what we've done is, we've partnered with specific media to attract families like, websites that have a lot of stuff for children and families for school holidays and that kind of things. And also, the bloggers and influencers that we've targeted are more family oriented. Okay?

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, now, we got to press trips as we speak. One is a family of four travelling, and they tell all their stories on Instagram and blablabla. So, that's how we reach the families. Groups of friends is a

bigger challenge. Groups of friends are harder to target specifically. Then, what we've done there is that we've partnered with more nice websites like, one of the main Portuguese media groups is called Impresa, and they have a newspaper called Expresso. And, Expresso has a special segment which is super targeted to foodie and travellers, a lot of people, slightly older than our target groups, are using it and it is super successful. We do… we have these competitions every week, and you can earn a voucher based on questions. And, to get the younger ones, we've partnered with a radio called Rádio Comercial, which is sort of, quite young, mid 20s, and we have again a competition every single week where we have questions and answers and we've kept that up since September. For the older ones, for the couples, we work with a radio which is older called ML Delta, which is really older, people in their 50s, 60s, and we're doing competitions again weekly with content there and adverts, because we can have adverts for free as long as we offer vouchers and that's been super successful to build the brand.

Lotte: Nice, cool!

Rita: We've done some other things, but of the top of my head, that's it. Another thing we've done, we've partnered up with a Portuguese post office system. They have an intranet for their 12.000 employees, and we load special offers on their intranet.

Lotte: Smart.

Rita: And now, this next week, we're hopefully launching a partnership with Galp, which is the biggest petrol company. And every time you check in in one of our hotels, you get 6 euros of your petrol. It's the idea to encourage travelling.

Lotte: Yes, I think this is actually super interesting that you're working or are having a lot of partnerships to reach the customers, instead of just doing marketing.

Rita: Yeah, we have a hitlist of brands where we could target end consumers. And, the other partnership we did was with Delta Coffee, because they have a platform in terms of helping the local economy. It's to get people to go back to restaurants and hotels and we got special conditions for our hotels to load special offers there. Okay?

Lotte: Yes. Cool.

Rita: So, we're kind off focused on brands and now we are working on another partnership with Europcar, which is a car rental. So, anyone with a Europcar loyalty card gets special discounts in our hotels and vice versa. So, anyone who's staying in Small Portuguese Hotels gets 20% discount on their rental car through them.

Lotte: Cool.

Rita: Yes. This is the kind of partnerships we have. I mean, there's still a long way to go, because all these things take a long time to set up.

Lotte: Are they expensive? Do they cost you money?

Rita: No.

Lotte: Because it's a partnership, it's like both ways.

Rita: Yes, it's win-win. But we have to offer something special and they have to offer us something special as well.

Lotte: Yes, smart.

Rita: We want to have partnerships with big brand partners, where we can get the word out to large audiences and brands that have their own marketing channels. Because those brands have massive communication channels. Websites, intranets, you know, they got loads of audience.

Lotte: Would you think Small Portuguese Hotels is down to do something like this in Spain as well? Or do you want to keep the partnerships with the Portuguese brands and do more marketing related things in Spain?

Rita: Well, it would be good to have partnerships in Spain as well. It's a question of resources, of time. That's really it. I don't know if we have the team available for that in Spain, to be absolutely honest. We're going to launch the website in English now, that's the next step. In England, we're not going to do any partnerships to begin with, unless something comes to us, it's, you have to have high-level contact in order to do this. And it must be relevant, you know. And a brand in Portugal, isn't as relevant to Spanish brands as a brand in Spain.

Lotte: Yeah…

Rita: You see what I mean?

Lotte: Yeah… And, because... How many people are working in Small Portuguese Hotels?

Rita: Oh, well, 3, but not fulltime. Because we're working on Great Hotels of The World as well. So... you know.

Lotte: It's more like a project?

Rita: Exactly, it's more like a project. At the moment it's a project, it's taking off actually very well, but, you know, it's just the beginning. You know, next Thursday, we have our first meeting with the hotel members.

Lotte: Nice!

Rita: Virtual meeting with the hotel members. You know, it's going to be the first time we ever speak to them all. You know.

Lotte: But, cool, I really think there's a lot of potential to be fair.

Rita: Yeah, I think there is. But it's all very, you know. We kind off go with the flow. We kind off adapt, adapt things from Great Hotels of the World. With Small Portuguese Hotels, we kind off adapt a lot of things that we already do, it's not for the first time. But it's a whole reality, you know, it's a different reality.

Lotte: Cool. And, let me see... Two things actually. And then, I will have talked about most things. Customer relationships. Cause, I've reviewed some competitors the last few days, and some of them for example offer the opportunity to become a member of their membership club. Do you think Small Portuguese Hotels is thinking about something like this, or do you have other ideas of how to maintain relationships with your customers? Or…?

Rita: We have something. It's not exactly as something that we want but we have something that is called GuestBook. That's the brand name, but we don't call it Guestbook, we call it Small Portuguese Hotels. In fact, when you checkout, if you sign up, it's not really a loyalty program, I don't want to call it a loyalty program, because it isn't yet. It is basically a cash-back program for now. And, when you checkout, you get 5% of your total bill that you can load on your PayPal account or, give to charity. Global given. That has the potential to be a loyalty program. That's why we've started it. But it's not a loyalty program yet. And that is a whole different level of engagement. But it is on the books, for the second phase. But, at the moment, we are literally not there yet. We've just sent our first newsletter to people who've signed up to the newsletter spontaneously. And, literally last week, announcing the black Friday and the vouchers. But it's the first one. We have a super high opening rate, 45%, which is 3 times what it normally is. So, we were very pleased with that. And, all these people have come to us, essentially through the PR we've been doing, websites, relevant travel websites, magazines, and the competitions. But it's very small at the moment. We have a long way to go.

Lotte: I will also subscribe to the newsletter! Didn't do it yet!

Rita: Cool.

Lotte: Actually, the last thing I would like to hear from you is, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Small Portuguese Hotels? Because I want to integrate these, or at least that I am aware of these strengths and weaknesses when I look at the Spanish market for Small Portuguese Hotels and the opportunities and threats in the Spanish market.

Rita: Okay, Strengths: it is a very personal project, it's the only hotel chain that we know off that has such a strong focus on helping the economy, 1% of our revenue goes directly to the foodbank in Portugal and people really appreciate that. Not just now, I think right now people are more sensitive to all their local economies, so, but I think again that is is here to stay. I really do. So, the personal aspect and the personal relationship we have with the hotels. And the scale of it, I think it's a point in our favour. The variety of accommodation that we offer, so it's really not just hotels, not just Airbnb's, it's a mixture of everything and it covers the whole country, including the islands. The weaknesses are the scale of the project. So, we are small, okay, which mean we don't have that many resources. We really don't have any budget to speak off, really. And that's clearly a weakness. And the weakness as well, is that, at the moment, to be a member, you have to have the GuestCentric booking engine. It makes absolute sense for GuestCentric, and that was one of the reasons, but we could get a lot more members if that weren't the case. But that would mean, integrations, interfaces, a whole different building. And the other weakness is linked to the resources, to the team, the scale of the operation, that we need international clients to make it viable. We need English language, Spanish language websites at least, to make it viable. Cause you can't live in Portugal of the local market, it's just impossible, it's too small, you need international markets. But, within international markets, you are competing against some heavyweights.

Lotte: Yeah. Did you think about creating a mobile website? Mobile-friendly?

Rita: Well, our website is mobile responsive. Okay. It is mobile responsive. It could be better, but it is mobile responsive. But successful brands on mobile basically have an App. But again, (customer) scale. We don't have the scale we need to be able to launch and maintain an App. It would be the logical step.

Lotte: Yeah. Cause, I've found out through Hootsuite that Spain is almost like, the number one country that is using the mobile phone for the internet. So, they've found out that from all the internet users, 96%, which is almost everyone, is using it via their mobile phone.

Rita: 75% of our website visitors are mobile.

Lotte: Okay.

Rita: So, it's very much mobile first.

Lotte: That's good. Nice. I think I've asked my most important questions. There was one part, that's part of the theoretical model and that's about the management/leadership style, but since you guys are with 3 working on Small Portuguese Hotels as a project, I don't know how relevant this part is actually.

Rita: It's very, I mean, we have other people working on the project but nowhere near fulltime. So, our CEO is the same CEO as GuestCentric. But he jumps in one week, at meetings and stuff, you know, we have all the engineers from GuestCentric, they've developed the website, right?

Lotte: Yeah.

Rita: But it's a very small project, very small. You know, it's nowhere near fulltime for everyone. And it's very much, a learn and adapt project. That's the mentality. Cause, we are essentially tech, we throw out some ideas, we see if they work and we go ahead. We have, we test, we adapt, we ask questions about the website, about people's experience on the website, and now, we're taking this down and we start doing sentiment questions, to see what people are feeling like. You see what I mean? It's very much a test-and-adapt style. The helpline is a perfect example of what we do and how we do it. I've already set up a call centre in a hotel once, so I know what to do. But we don't even have a system, for example. You know. It just, you just have to do it. The first call I took, I was in my car, pull over, get my laptop, link my laptop to my hotspot as I was in the middle of the street, and just take the booking, you know, it is what it is.

Lotte: It's just trying, but that's what I like actually, cause then you don't have so many rules.

Rita: Yeah.

Lotte: You know, just trying to find out what works, what do people use, what do they find convenient.

Rita: Yeah, I really think that small businesses nowadays, and this is a very small business, it's the only way to do things. Because, if you don't do things quickly, the moment is gone. You know. And, if you want to do things quickly, they can't be perfect. If you want to know, yesterday at 8 o'clock in the evening, we were correcting the post on LinkedIn, announcing the vouchers on Black Friday, because we've realised that the sentence we've used was misleading and so, I had to quickly go into the admin page, change it and say okay, what do you think about this? good? okay, you go correct this, that, in the booking engine, and it was done. But tech allows you to do this, you know.

Lotte: Yeah.

Rita: But, you know, I was kicking myself thinking how on earth did we get this wrong? It wasn't wrong, it was just open to doubt.

Lotte: Yeah, and that can cause problems of course.

Rita: Yes, it can. So, we changed it, we've laughed and it was done. But, you know, hey it's there, we got 145 hotels, you know. So… you know.

Lotte: Is there any objective you have with Small Portuguese Hotels for the future? Like, we want to achieve this… in 2021?

Rita: Yes, well, we want to grow to 200 hotels, okay. We want to, improve our voucher program, because the purchasing is online, that's fine, but the redemption is pretty manual. Just because the booking engine doesn't redeem vouchers, it's a lot more complicated than it looks, so we want this in 2021. We want to rollout services that hotels will pay for. Because we've identified that there are a couple of things that we know that our hotels would need, you know, they could benefit from but they need to pay for them. And basically, the next project is metasearch. So, we've signed up with a partner to launch metasearch for our hotels. So, you know, if you google our hotels, you will soon, not yet, have Small Portuguese coming up, you know, together with Booking.com etcetera on Metasearch. And we split the revenue with the hotels obviously. But those type of services we think we can provide them. Things they can't do by themselves, really. And then, we would love to have enough hotels to be able to have revenue from partners who want to supply these hotels. In other words, imagine you are an air conditioning supplier. You would be able to access all of our hotels through our newsletters, one to one communication, and you would pay for that. You see what I mean?

Lotte: Yes.

Rita: So, it's the other way.

Lotte: Okay, so suppliers of hotels can use Small Portuguese Hotels as a communicator.

Rita: Yes. Next week we have a meeting with this thing called Hotelshop, which is a large purchasing platform for hotels, independent. And we are going to see whether we can bring our hotels on board on the purchasing platform and make some money of that. But, you know, that's the other side. But at the moment, we are looking at partnerships from the consumer perspective, because we need to get volume and then, we can look at the other partnerships.

Lotte: Yeah. Who are your key partners right now?

Rita: At the moment, media partners (so, websites and radio, really, the main) and consumer-oriented partners. So, we have the big postal office, Galp hopefully… honestly, it's crazy, off the record here... but we had to sign a physical contract in 3 copies and it had to be authorized by a lawyer…

Lotte: Oh...

Rita: We do all our contracting with DocuSign, you know, online. So, it was like… ehh... What is this. But yeah, some companies are like that. So, the automobile, CTP and Galp. Those are our big partners.

Lotte: And the hotels, right?

Rita: Yes, they are partners B2B.

Lotte: Cool. Nice. Yes, I got some much information, I really understand the company so much better now.

Rita: Yeah?

Lotte: It was super helpful, really. Thank you so much for doing it in the car.

Rita: You're welcome. I just got home. My daughter has 4 friends over to sleep so so much fun!

Lotte: You're going to relax this weekend a bit?

Rita: Sort of… A bit… But there's always something to do.

Lotte: Thank you so much for your time!

Rita: You're welcome Lotte! Bye! Ciao!

Lotte: Bye Rita!

Annex H. Survey 1

Section 1. Survey 1 sample size calculation

Figure H.1.1. Sample size calculation Survey 1.

Section 2. Survey 1 respondents

In total, 275 people answered the questionnaire.

Age

¿Cuál es su grupo de edad?

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
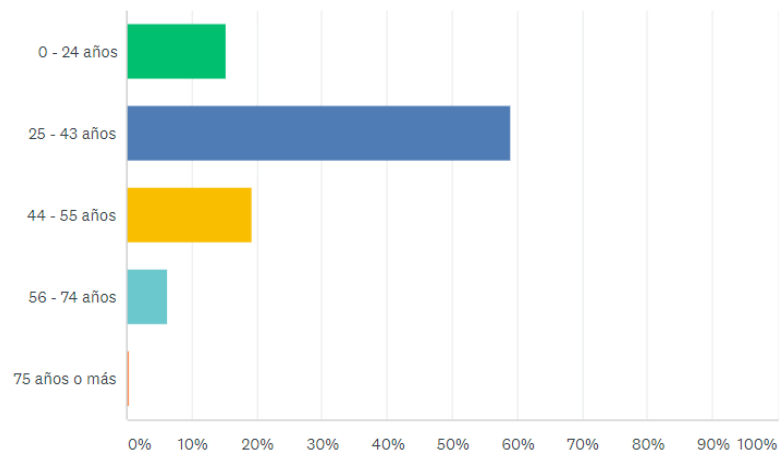
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 - 24 años	15.27%	42
25 - 43 años	58.91%	162
44 - 55 años	19.27%	53
56 - 74 años	6.18%	17
75 años o más	0.36%	1
TOTAL		275

Figure H.2.1. Age of the 275 respondents.

As Figure H.2.1. shows, most respondents were between 25 and 43 years old, while the least were 75 years or older. The respondents who were between 44 and 55 years old and those who were between 0 and 24 years old, involved almost the same number of respondents.

Gender

¿Cómo describiría su género?

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
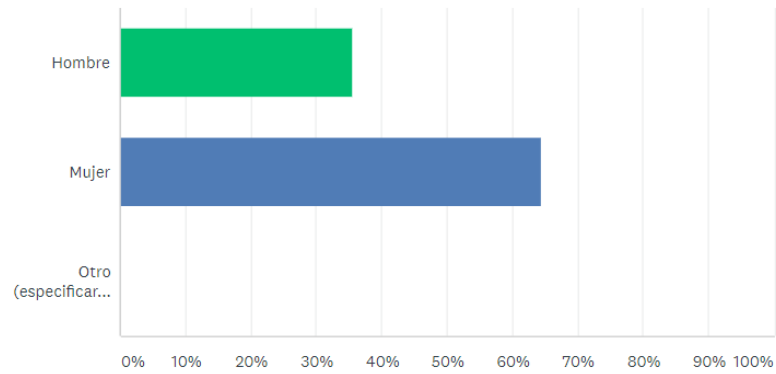
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Hombre		35.64%	98
Mujer		64.36%	177
Otro (especificar por favor)	Responses	0.00%	0
TOTAL			275

Figure H.2.2. Gender of the 275 respondents.

Most respondents were women, involving 64.4% which corresponds with 177 persons. The other 98 respondents were men.

City of residence

Por favor, indique su ciudad de residencia

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0

RESPONSES (275)   WORD CLOUD   TAGS (0)

Cloud View   List View   Search responses   🔍   ❓

Customize

Londres Córdoba Lisboa Reino Unido Amsterdam españa Oxford Bilbao Madrid Núremberg Barcelona Eindhoven de Edimburgo Nürnberg Alemania Utrecht Erlangen Praga Valencia

Number of mentions

fewer ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ more
3   37
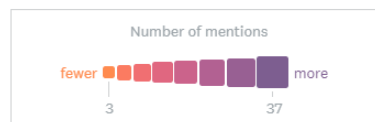
Figure H.2.3. City of residence of the 275 respondents.

Since this was an open question, a word cloud has been used to get a better understanding of the answers. As the legenda shows, the cities displayed in Figure H.2.3. were either mentioned 3 times as a minimum until 37 as a maximum. It can be stated that most respondents were based in Madrid and Barcelona, followed by Oxford, Nurnberg, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Prague, Lisbon, London, Edinburgh, Valencia, Nuremberg, and Bilbao. Some respondents put a country as an answer, for example Spain, the United Kingdom or Germany. Some respondents were located outside of Spain as online platforms were used due to covid19. For example, online platforms on Facebook such as 'Spaniards in the United Kingdom' and 'Spanish people living in Amsterdam'.

Nationality

Por favor, indique su nacionalidad

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0

RESPONSES (275)   **WORD CLOUD**   TAGS (0)

Cloud View | List View | Search responses 🔍 ❓

Customize

Español _y_ Española _Espanyola_ España

Number of mentions

fewer ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪ more

3   200
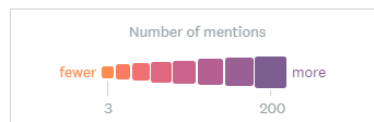
Figure H.2.4. Nationality of the 275 respondents.

As the word cloud in Figure H.2.4. shows, most likely all 275 respondents were Spanish, which is great for this research. After reviewing all individual responses, there were only a few people who answered with two nationalities. For example, Spanish/Australian. However, this does not influence the survey outcome in a negative way, as they were all having the Spanish nationality as well.

Section 3. Survey 1 format

Encuesta al consumidor Small Portuguese Hotels

1. *¿Cuál es su grupo de edad?*
   o 0-24 años
   o 25 – 43 años
   o 44 – 55 años
   o 56 – 74 años
   o 75 años o más

2. *¿Cómo describiría su género?*
   o Hombre
   o Mujer
   o Otro

3. *Por favor, indique su ciudad de residencia*: ………………………………………

153

4. Por favor, indique su nacionalidad: ………………………………………………….

Por favor, responder las preguntas 5 a 10 desde una perspectiva pre-covid19.

5. Seleccione uno motivo por la que nunca/rara vez viaje
o Negocios
o Ocio, vacaciones
o Para visitar a familiares y amigos
o Otro (por ejemplo: estudios, salud y religión)

6. Por favor, indique sus tres destinos de viaje (países) favoritos cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/vacaciones
   1. ………………………
   2. …………………..
   3. …………………..

7. Por favor, seleccione con quién viaja principalmente por motivos de ocio/vacaciones
o Solo
o Mi esposo/ esposa/novio/novia
o Mi familia inmediata
o Mi familia extendida
o Mis amigos
o Con un grupo turístico organizado
o Otros, por ejemplo: …………………………

8. Por favor, seleccione su principal medio de transporte cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/vacaciones
o Avión
o Coche
o Autobús
o Tren
o Bote
o Moto
o Otros, a saber: …………………………………………………….

9. Indique la duración de sus viajes y elija entre un fin de semana/menos que una semana/una semana/dos semanas/más de dos semanas. Comience con la duración de vacaciones más común para usted personalmente.

…. Viaje(s) de fin de semana

…. Viaje(s) de menos que una semana

…. Viaje(s) de una semana

…. Viaje(s) de dos semanas

…. Viaje(s) de más de dos semanas

154

10. *Seleccione los meses en los que realizó un viaje en 2019 por motivos de ocio/vacaciones. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.*

Enero	
Febrero	
Marzo	
Abril	
Mayo	
Junio	
Julio	
Agosto	
Septiembre	
Octubre	
Noviembre	
Diciembre	

Por favor, responder las preguntas 11 a 17 desde una perspectiva de covid19.

11. *¿Qué grupos de personas desea que se vacunen antes de volver a viajar por motivos de ocio/recreo/vacaciones? Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.*
o   Los grupos de alto riesgo
o   Mi familia inmediata
o   Mi familia extendida
o   Yo mismo
o   Todos en el mundo
o   No me importa la vacuna. Para mí, depende de las restricciones de viaje
o   No planeo viajar en absoluto, independientemente de la vacuna o no

12. *¿De dónde se inspira, eligiendo su destino y/o alojamiento para un viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones? Indique sus características más importantes. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.*
o   Páginas web de reseñas de viajes (como TripAdvisor)
o   A través de anuncios en diferentes páginas web
o   Búsquedas con Google
o   Blogs online (viajes/inspiración)
o   A través de páginas de inspiración ofrecidas por páginas web de diferentes empresas (por ejemplo, Transavia: '¿A dónde te llevará el próximo viaje?')
o   Revistas, folletos, catálogos en línea
o   Plataformas de reserva online
o   Familia / amigos / colegas (boca a boca)
o   Agencias de viajes
o   Revistas, folletos, catálogos
o   Influencers de las redes sociales
o   Instagram
o   TikTok
o   Twitter
o   Facebook
o   Pinterest
o   LinkedIn
o   YouTube

o   A través de anuncios en redes sociales
o   Netflix, programas de televisión o películas
o   Radio
o   Comerciales de televisión
o   Escuchando música

13. *Cuando navega por diferentes tipos de alojamiento para su viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones, ¿qué es lo que más le importa? Indique sus características más importantes. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.*

o   Precio
o   Ubicación
o   Número de habitaciones
o   Diseño
o   Internet/Wi-Fi
o   Piscina
o   Jardín
o   Aparcamiento
o   Amigable con mascotas
o   Amigable con los niños
o   Instalaciones de restaurante/bar
o   Presencia de un spa y wellness
o   Compatible con trabajo remoto
o   Apto para negocios (reuniones)
o   Menú para alérgicos y/o vegetariano/vegano (menús especiales)
o   Bicicletas en el hotel
o   Limpieza diaria
o   Tener excelentes amenidades de baño
o   Diseño
o   Check in/check out flexible
o   Servicio de despertador
o   Servicio de transporte desde el aeropuerto
o   Obtener atención personalizada
o   Flexibilidad para cancelar o cambiar el período de estancia
o   Actividades culturales
o   Actividades en la naturaleza
o   Actividades de relax y románticas
o   Actividades deportivas y de aventura
o   Ubicado en un área remota
o   Edificio histórico / historia
o   Posible servicio sin necesidad de contacto personal
o   Compromiso covid19
o   Limpio y seguro
o   Fuerte contribución a la sostenibilidad de cualquier manera
o   Dar una experiencia única

14. ¿Cuál es / sería su tipo de alojamiento preferido para su viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones?

o Bed and Breakfast
o Casas rurales
o Hoteles de 2 estrellas
o Hoteles de 3 estrellas
o Hoteles de 4 estrellas
o Hoteles de 5 estrellas
o Resorts
o Hoteles spa/wellness
o Casas de huéspedes
o Otro (especificar por favor): ……………………………………………….

15. ¿En qué se gasta más dinero cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/recreación/vacaciones?

o Alojamiento
o Alimentos y bebidas
o Diferentes tipos de actividades y o experiencias
o Transporte
o Compras
o No es exacto porque suelo realizar viajes de paquetes con ofertas totalmente planificados
o Otro (especificar por favor): ……………………………………………….

16. ¿Cómo prefiere reservar su alojamiento para su viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones?

o Agencia de viajes online (Rumbo)
o Agencia de viajes física
o Páginas web de comparación de precios (Trivago)
o Directamente a través de la página web del propio alojamiento
o Páginas webs colectivas (Rusticae)
o Otro (especificar por favor): ……………………………………………….

17. ¿Cómo evalúa personalmente la importancia de los siguientes aspectos de los canales de reserva?

1 = muy importante 2 = importante 3 = tan/tan 4 = menos importante 5 = no importante 6=N/A

o Que el canal de reservas esté disponible en español
o Que esté acostumbrado al canal de reservas
o Que pueda reservar actividades y/o experiencias también a través del canal de reservas. Ejemplos: recorridos en bicicleta/a pie, terapias medicinales, recorridos a pie personalizados, etc.
o Que pueda ponerme en contacto fácilmente con el canal de reservas
o Que el proceso de reserva sea rápido y fluido sin errores
o Que el canal de reservas ofrezca descuentos de precio y grandes ofertas
o Que sienta que puedo confiar al 100% en el canal de reservas. Esto cubre aspectos tales como: reseñas disponibles, calidad asegurada de los alojamientos ofrecidos, profesionalismo, página web acreditada / protegida, etc.
o Que pueda pagar de más formas que solo con tarjeta de crédito
o Que se ofrezcan suficientes servicios de cancelación y reembolso
o Que el canal de reservas contribuya a la sostenibilidad de alguna manera

Translated version in English

Small Portuguese Hotels Consumer Survey

1. *What is your group of age?*
o 0-24 years
o 25 – 43 years
o 44 – 55 years
o 56 – 74 years
o 75years or older

2. *How would you describe your gender?*
o Male
o Female
o Other

3. Please write down your city of residence: ……………………………………………

4. Please write down your nationality: ………………………………………………….

Please answer questions 5-10 from a pre-covid19 perspective.

5. *Please select the reasons why you would never/rarely go on a trip?*
o Business
o Leisure, recreation, and holiday
o To visit family and friends
o Other (for example: studies, health, and religion)

6. *Please write down your top 3 travel destinations (countries) when going on a trip for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes*
1. ……………………
2. …………………..
3. …………………..

7. *Please select who you mainly go on a trip with for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes*
o Alone
o My partner
o My immediate family
o My extended family
o My friends
o With an organized tour group
o Other, namely: ………………………….

8. *Please select your main type of transport when going on a trip for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes*
o Airplane
o Car
o Bus
o Train

158

o   Boat
o   Motorbike
o   Other, namely: ………………………………………………….

9. *Please indicate the amount of time you go on a weekend/midweek/week/two weeks/more than two weeks' trip, for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes, on a yearly basis. Start with the most common one for you personally.*

…. Weekend trip(s)

…. Midweek trip(s)

…. Week trip(s)

…. Two weeks trip(s)

…. More than two weeks' trip(s)

10. *Please select the month(s) in which you went on a trip in 2019 for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes. More than one answer may apply.*

January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	

Please answer questions 11-17 from a covid19 perspective.

11. *Which groups of people do you want to be vaccinated before you will start travelling again for leisure/recreation/holiday purposes? More than one answer may apply.*
o   The high risk groups
o   My immediate family
o   My extended family
o   Myself
o   Everyone in the world
o   I do not care about the vaccine. For me, it depends on the travel restrictions
o   I am not planning on travelling at all, regardless of the vaccine or not

12. *Where do you get inspired from, choosing your destination and/or accommodation for a leisure/recreation/holiday trip? Indicate your most important ones. More than one answer may apply.*
-   Travel review websites (websites like TripAdvisor)

- Through advertisements on different sort of websites
- Search engines like Google
- Online (travel/inspiration) blogs
- Through inspiration pages offered by different companies' website (for example Transavia: 'Where will you next trip take you?')
- Online magazines, brochures, catalogues
- Online booking platforms
- Family/friends/colleagues (word of mouth)
- Travel agencies
- Offline magazines, brochures, catalogues
- Social media influencers
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Through advertisements on social media
- Netflix, tv shows or movies
- Radio
- Tv commercials
- Listening to music

13. *When browsing through different types of accommodations for your leisure/recreation/holiday trip, what matters to you the most? Please indicate your most important features. More than one answer may apply.*
- Price
- Location
- Size of listing
- Design
- Internet/Wi-Fi
- Pool
- Garden
- Parking
- Animals welcome
- Child friendly
- Restaurant/bar facilities
- Presence of a spa and wellness
- Remote working friendly
- Suitable for business (meetings)
- Allergy-friendly and/or vegetarian/vegan menu (special menus)
- Bikes at the hotel
- Daily housekeeping
- Having great bathroom amenities
- Design
- Flexible check in/check out
- Wake up service
- Shuttle service from airport

- Getting personal attention
- Flexibility in cancelling or changing the stay
- Cultural activities
- Nature activities
- Relax and romantic activities
- Sports and adventure activities
- Surrounded in a remote location
- Historical building / history
- Possible service without personal contact needed
- Covid19 commitment
- Clean and safe
- Strong sustainability contribution in any way
- Giving a unique experience

14. *What is/would be your most preferred type of accommodation for your leisure/recreation/holiday trip?*
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Country houses
- 2-star hotels
- 3-star hotels
- 4-star hotels
- 5-star hotels
- Resorts
- Spa/wellness hotels
- Guest houses
- Other, please specify……………………………………………………

15. *What do you spend most money on when going on a trip for leisure/holiday/recreation purposes?*
- Accommodation
- Food & drinks
- Different types of activities and/or experiences
- Transport
- Shopping
- Not accurate cause I tend to go on fully planned package deals trips
- Other, namely: …………………………………………………………………………….

16. *How do you prefer to book your accommodation for your leisure/recreation/holiday trip?*
- Online travel agency
- Physical travel agency
- Price comparison websites
- Directly via the accommodations' own website
- Collective websites
- Different, namely:
  …………………………………………………………………………….

17. *How do you personally evaluate the importance of the following aspects of booking channels?*

very important – important – so/so – less important – not important

- That the booking channel is available in Spanish
- That I am familiar with the booking channel
- That I can book activities and/or experiences as well via the booking channel. Examples: bike/walking tours, medicinal therapy, personalized walking tours etc.
- That I can easily get in touch with the booking channel
- That the booking process goes fast and smoothly without any errors
- That the booking channel offers price discounts and great deals from time to time
- That I feel like I can trust the booking channel 100%. This covers things such as: available reviews, assured quality of the offered accommodations, professionalism, accredited/protected website etc.
- That I can pay in more ways than just by credit card
- That sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services are being offered
- That the booking channel contributes to sustainability in any way

Section 4. Survey 1 results

Reasons to travel

Seleccione todos los motivos por la que nunca/rara vez viaje

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
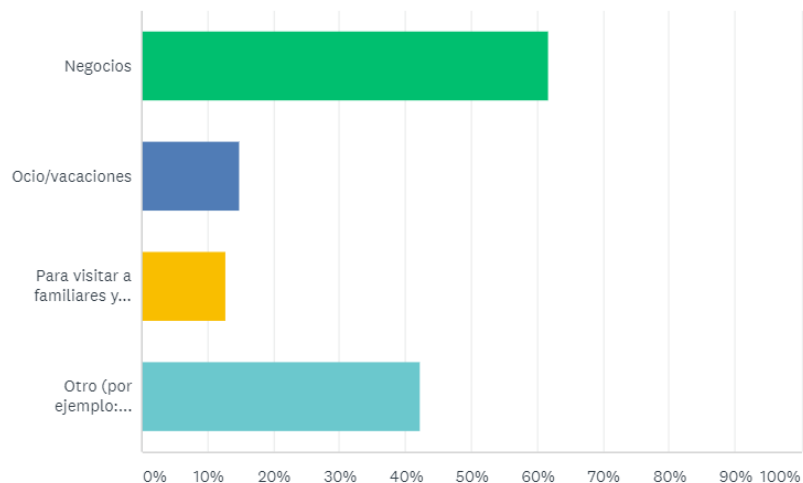
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Negocios	61.82%	170
Ocio/vacaciones	14.91%	41
Para visitar a familiares y amigos	12.73%	35
Otro (por ejemplo: estudios, salud y religión)	42.18%	116
Total Respondents: 275		

Figure H.4.1. Reasons to travel among the 275 respondents.

After the introduction questions regarding age, nationality, gender and city of residence, the actual survey started. The thought behind this negative-asked-question was that once people would answer 'Ocio/vacaiones', meaning that they would never travel for leisure/holiday purposes, they would automatically get redirected to the end of the survey, since SPH focuses on leisure/holiday travels.

162

Unfortunately, this feature failed in the online survey format and people therefore did not get redirected to the end of the survey once they would have answered that they never travel for leisure/holiday purposes. This means that this question has been asked in the wrong way and the received feedback supports this finding. This mistake has been made and could not be changed anymore once the survey went live. In addition to this error, the respondents were able to give more than one answer. Taking all of this into account, it can be stated that there are some respondents who most likely answered that the only reason why they never travel is for leisure/holiday purposes but still answered the entire survey. Despite this matter, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from this question.

Most of the 275 respondents never travel for business purposes, involving 170 responses, followed by 'Other reasons', such as travelling for studies or health and religion. The smallest group of people never travelled for visiting their family and friends. In other words, even though this question has been asked in the wrong way, it can be concluded that most Spaniards do not travel for business purposes or other occasions, and probably most of them travel to visit family and friends and for leisure/holiday purposes. The travels to family and friends will most likely take place in Spain itself. However, all the above conclusions are not entirely based on facts due to the wrongly stated question.

Favourite destinations for leisure/holiday travels

Figure H.4.2. Favourite destinations for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents (part 1/2).

Por favor, indique sus tres destinos de viaje (países) favoritos cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/vacaciones

Answered: 273   Skipped: 2

RESPONSES (273)   WORD CLOUD   TAGS (0)

Cloud View | List View

Search responses

Customize

Alemania Vietnam Grecia Filipinas y Malta Italia Brasil
España Espana Francia República Checa Portugal
Suiza Estados Unidos Perú Holanda Croacia México
Argentina Japón Caribe Inglaterra Estonia Marruecos Cuba
Reino Unido Indonesia Japon Escocia Colombia Bélgica e Italia

Number of mentions
fewer ■■■■■■ more
3   143

Figure H.4.3. Favourite destinations for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents (part 2/2).

In total, 49 words are being shown in the word cloud, meaning that in this case, these words have been mentioned with a minimum of 3 times and maximum of 143. It can be stated that Spain is the most favourite country to travel to for Spaniards, as this word has been mentioned the most (143 times, corresponding to 52.4%). Spain is followed by Italy (mentioned 73 times, corresponding to 26.8%), France (mentioned 53 times, corresponding to 19.4%), Portugal (mentioned 39 times, corresponding to 14.3%), Greece (mentioned 23 times, corresponding to 8.4%), the United States (mentioned 16 times, corresponding to 5.9%), Germany (mentioned 16 times, corresponding to 5.9%), the Netherlands (mentioned 13 times, corresponding to 4.8%) and Thailand (mentioned 10 times, corresponding to 3.7%). The word 'Europe' has been mentioned 9 times which can relate to any European country, and the word 'España' without the punctuation mark, has been mentioned 5 times in addition to the other 143. Overall, even though the Spaniards are willing to travel outside of Europe and some countries are quite popular (most of them being mentioned 9 times approximately), Europe remains the most popular travel destination, including Portugal. However, Spaniards have a strong preference for travelling in their own country, looking at the corresponding percentages of Spain and Italy (difference of approximately 30% between the number one and two).

Travel company for leisure/holiday travels

Por favor, seleccione con quién viaja principalmente por motivos de ocio/vacaciones

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
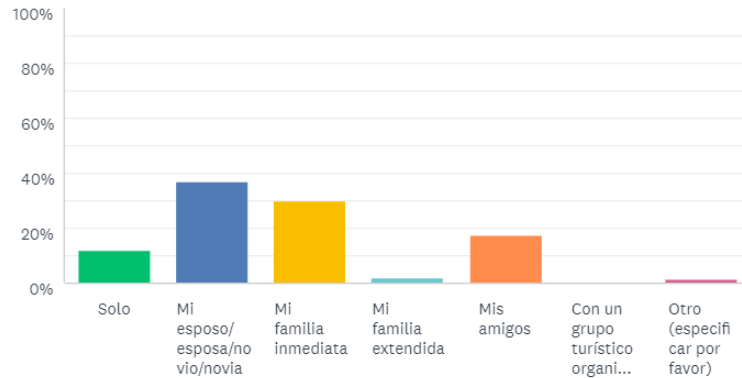
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Solo		12.00%	33
Mi esposo/ esposa/novio/novia		37.09%	102
Mi familia inmediata		29.82%	82
Mi familia extendida		2.18%	6
Mis amigos		17.45%	48
Con un grupo turístico organizado		0.00%	0
Otro (especificar por favor)	Responses	1.45%	4
TOTAL			275

Figure H.4.4. Main travel company for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

Looking at Figure H.4.4., it can be concluded that the main travel company among the 275 respondents was with their partner, meaning that it will most likely only involve 2 persons in total. After travelling with your partner, travelling with your direct family members (82 respondents) and your friends (48 respondents) were the most popular among the respondents. Travelling with an organized group did not receive one answer and travelling with your extended family neither. The 'other' answers were corresponding with the options given, as people could just simply not choose between one. Among the respondents, travelling solo is not something very rare (33 respondents).

Type of transport for leisure/holiday travels

Por favor, seleccione su principal medio de transporte cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/vacaciones

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
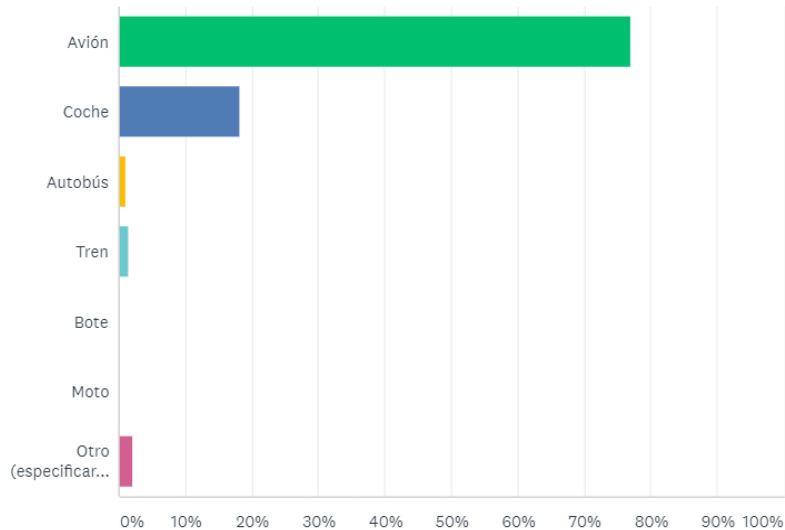
Figure H.4.5. Main type of transport for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

By far, it can be stated that the most popular type of transport for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents is by airplane (212 responses), followed by going by car (50 responses). The other options are not worth mentioning.

Duration of the leisure/holiday purpose travels

Indique la duración de sus viajes y elija entre un fin de semana / menos que una semana / una semana / dos semanas / más de dos semanas. Comience con la duración de vacaciones más común para usted personalmente.

Answered: 271   Skipped: 4

166
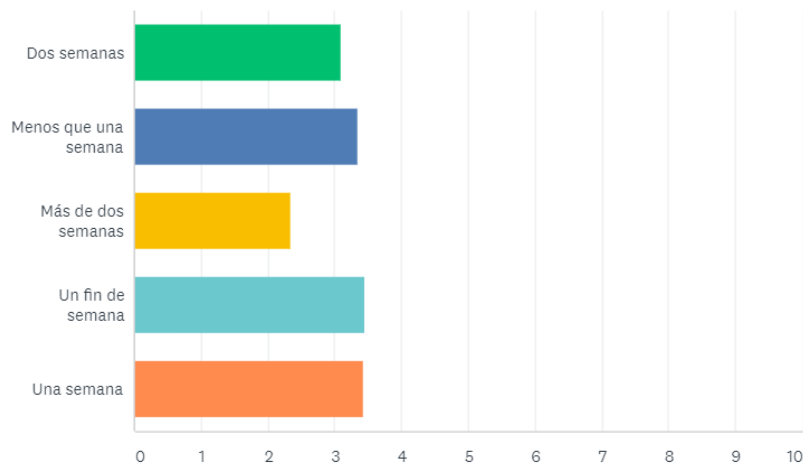
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Dos semanas	21.88% 42	22.40% 43	8.85% 17	36.98% 71	9.90% 19	192	3.09
Menos que una semana	17.24% 30	33.91% 59	23.56% 41	17.24% 30	8.05% 14	174	3.35
Más de dos semanas	21.20% 39	5.98% 11	11.41% 21	9.78% 18	51.63% 95	184	2.35
Un fin de semana	32.95% 57	23.70% 41	14.45% 25	12.72% 22	16.18% 28	173	3.45
Una semana	26.57% 55	18.36% 38	34.78% 72	13.04% 27	7.25% 15	207	3.44

Figure H.4.6. Duration of leisure/holiday purpose travels among the 275 respondents.

Figure H.4.6. shows the five different durations, ranging from a weekend to going on a leisure/holiday trip for more than two weeks. When looking at the answers, it can be stated that the most popular one among the 275 respondents is going on a leisure/holiday trip for a weekend (average score of 3.45), strongly followed by a week with almost the same score (average score of 3.44). The least popular duration among the 275 respondents is to go on a leisure/holiday trip for more than two weeks (average score of 2.35). When looking at the individual rankings, it can be concluded that a weekend is the most popular option (57 answers), followed by less than a week (59 answers), a week (72 answers), going for two weeks (71 answers) and going for more than two weeks (95 answers).

Favourite months for leisure/holiday travels

Seleccione los meses en los que realizó un viaje en 2019 por motivos de ocio/vacaciones. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.

Answered: 272   Skipped: 3
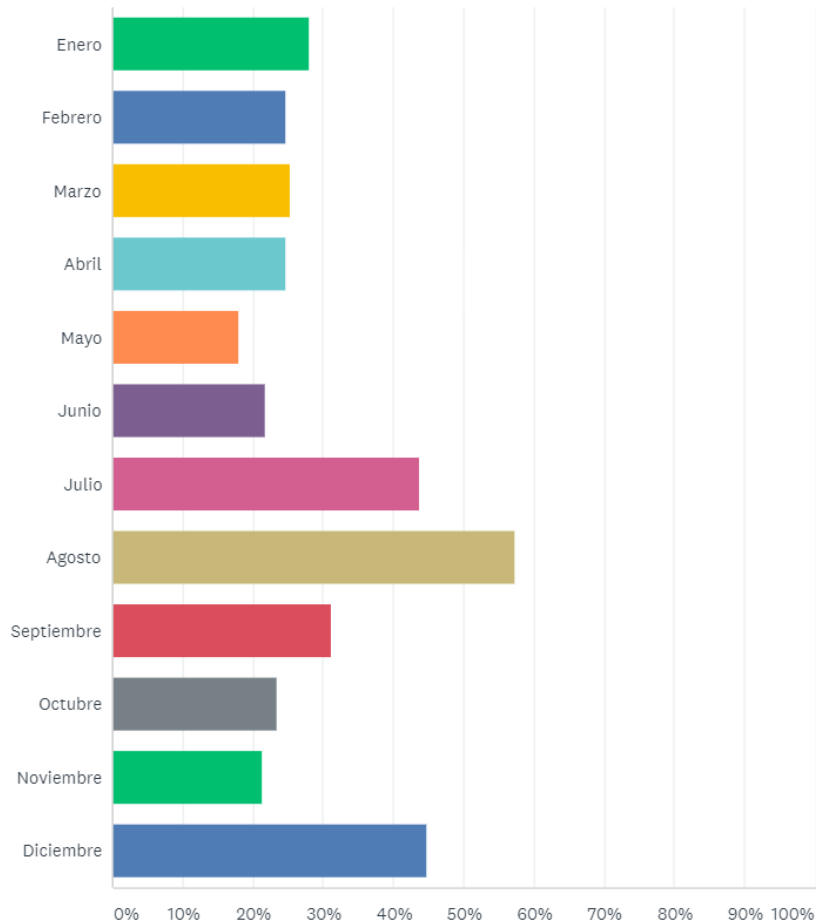
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Enero	27.94%	76
Febrero	24.63%	67
Marzo	25.37%	69
Abril	24.63%	67
Mayo	18.01%	49
Junio	21.69%	59
Julio	43.75%	119
Agosto	57.35%	156
Septiembre	31.25%	85
Octubre	23.53%	64
Noviembre	21.32%	58
Diciembre	44.85%	122
Total Respondents: 272		

Figure H.4.7. Favourite months for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

168

The most popular month to travel for leisure/holiday is August (156 answers), followed by December (122 answers) and July (119). There is not really one month that is not popular at all among the respondents, which is quite surprising. Other relatively popular months are September (85 answers) and January (76 answers). In the end, May is the least popular one (49 answers).

Preferred groups of people to be vaccinated against covid19 before starting to travel for leisure/holiday purposes

¿Qué grupos de personas desea que se vacunen antes de volver a viajar por motivos de ocio / recreo / vacaciones? Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
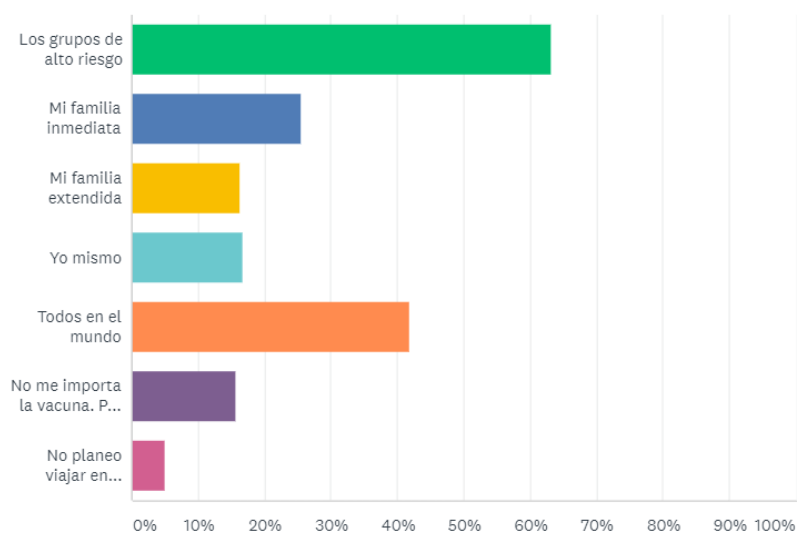
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Los grupos de alto riesgo	63.27%	174
Mi familia inmediata	25.45%	70
Mi familia extendida	16.36%	45
Yo mismo	16.73%	46
Todos en el mundo	41.82%	115
No me importa la vacuna. Para mí, depende de las restricciones de viaje	15.64%	43
No planeo viajar en absoluto, independientemente de la vacuna o no	5.09%	14
Total Respondents: 275		

Figure H.4.8. Preferred groups of people to be vaccinated against covid19 before starting to travel for leisure/holiday purposes again among the 275 respondents.

This question was not a standard question to include in a survey like this one, but due to the current situation it was interesting to add. It must be stated that the option to give more than one answer makes it difficult to exactly state when the respondents would start travelling again for leisure/holiday purposes. It would have been better to give one option. However, the answers can give a relevant impression. When looking at the answers, it can be stated that most of the respondents thought that the high-risk groups were the most important ones to be vaccinated (174 answers), strongly followed by

the whole world (115 answers) which indirectly covers all the answers possible. In case the respondents did not want the whole world to be vaccinated before travelling again for leisure/holiday purposes, their immediate family was very important (70 answers). In addition to the answer options about who should be vaccinated before starting to travel, there were 43 respondents who did not care at all about the vaccine but only cared about the travel restrictions. In the end, the least popular answer was that they were planning not to travel at all, regardless of the vaccine or not.

Different types of inspiration for leisure/holiday travels

Figure H.4.9. Different types of inspiration platforms for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents (part 1/2).

¿De dónde se inspira, eligiendo su destino y/o alojamiento para un viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones? Indique sus características más importantes. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta.

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
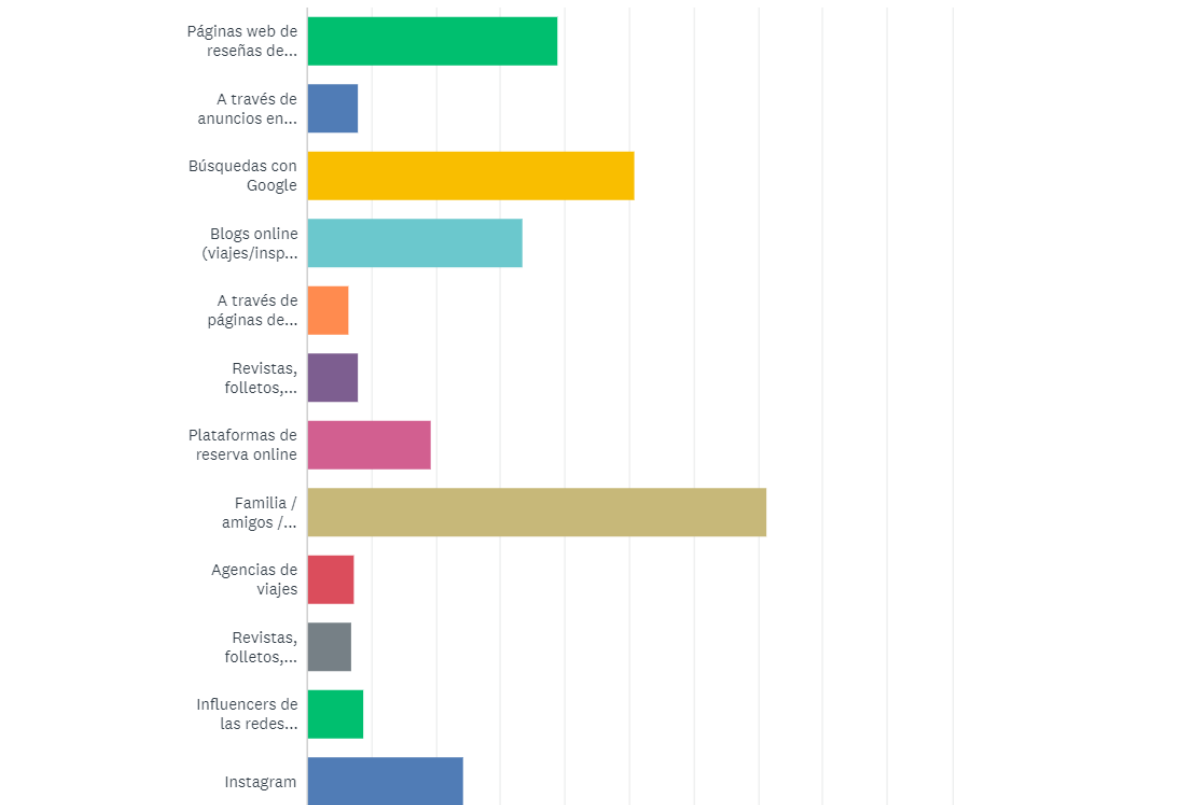
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Páginas web de reseñas de viajes (como TripAdvisor)	38.91%	107
▼ A través de anuncios en diferentes páginas web.	8.00%	22
▼ Búsquedas con Google	50.91%	140
▼ Blogs online (viajes/inspiración)	33.45%	92
▼ A través de páginas de inspiración ofrecidas por páginasweb de diferentes empresas (por ejemplo, Transavia: "¿A dónde te llevará el próximo viaje?)	6.55%	18
▼ Revistas, folletos, catálogos en línea	8.00%	22
▼ Plataformas de reserva online	19.27%	53
▼ Familia / amigos / colegas (boca a boca)	71.27%	196
▼ Agencias de viajes	7.27%	20
▼ Revistas, folletos, catálogos	6.91%	19
▼ Influencers de las redes sociales	8.73%	24
▼ Instagram	24.36%	67
▼ TikTok	1.45%	4
▼ Twitter	1.09%	3
▼ Facebook	9.45%	26
▼ Pinterest	1.82%	5
▼ LinkedIn	0.36%	1
▼ YouTube	9.45%	26
▼ A través de anuncios en redes sociales	5.82%	16
▼ Netflix, programas de televisión o películas	14.18%	39
▼ Radio	1.45%	4
▼ Comerciales de televisión	1.09%	3
▼ Escuchando música	3.64%	10
Total Respondents: 275		

Figure H.4.10. Different types of inspiration platforms for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents (part 2/2).

The way the 275 respondents get inspired the most for their leisure/holiday trips is clearly via family/friends/colleague's aka word-of-mouth (196 answers, corresponding to 71.3%). The second most popular way is via search engines like Google (140 answers, corresponding to 50.9%), followed by travel review websites like TripAdvisor (107 answers, corresponding to 38.9%) and online blogs (92 answers, corresponding to 33.5%). Looking at the number of answers, the other ways of getting inspired are less popular among the respondents. Relevant to mention however is that among the social media platforms, Instagram is the most popular one (67 answers, corresponding to 24.4%), followed by both Facebook and YouTube (26 answers, corresponding to 9.5%). The other social media platforms are not worth mentioning, referring to Pinterest, LinkedIn and TikTok. On the social media platforms, the respondents are more likely to get influenced by an influencer than via an advertisement (24 vs. 16 answers). Online booking platforms are also quite popular to get inspired for a leisure/holiday trip among the respondents, as it got 53 answers (corresponding to 19.3%).

Most important features when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes

Cuando navega por diferentes tipos de alojamiento para su viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones, ¿qué es lo que más le importa? Indique sus características más importantes. Se puede elegir más que una respuesta

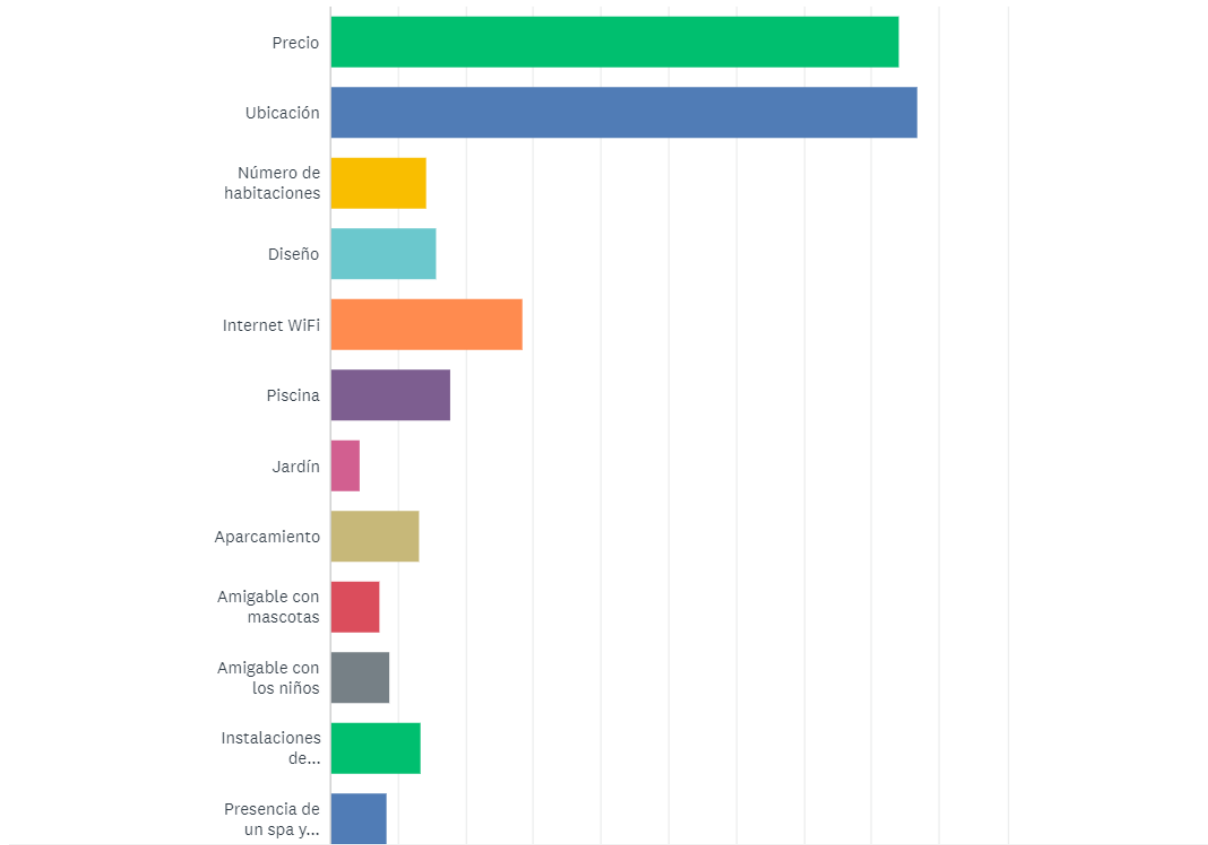Answered: 275   Skipped: 0

Figure H.4.11. Most important features among the 275 respondents when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes (part 1/4).
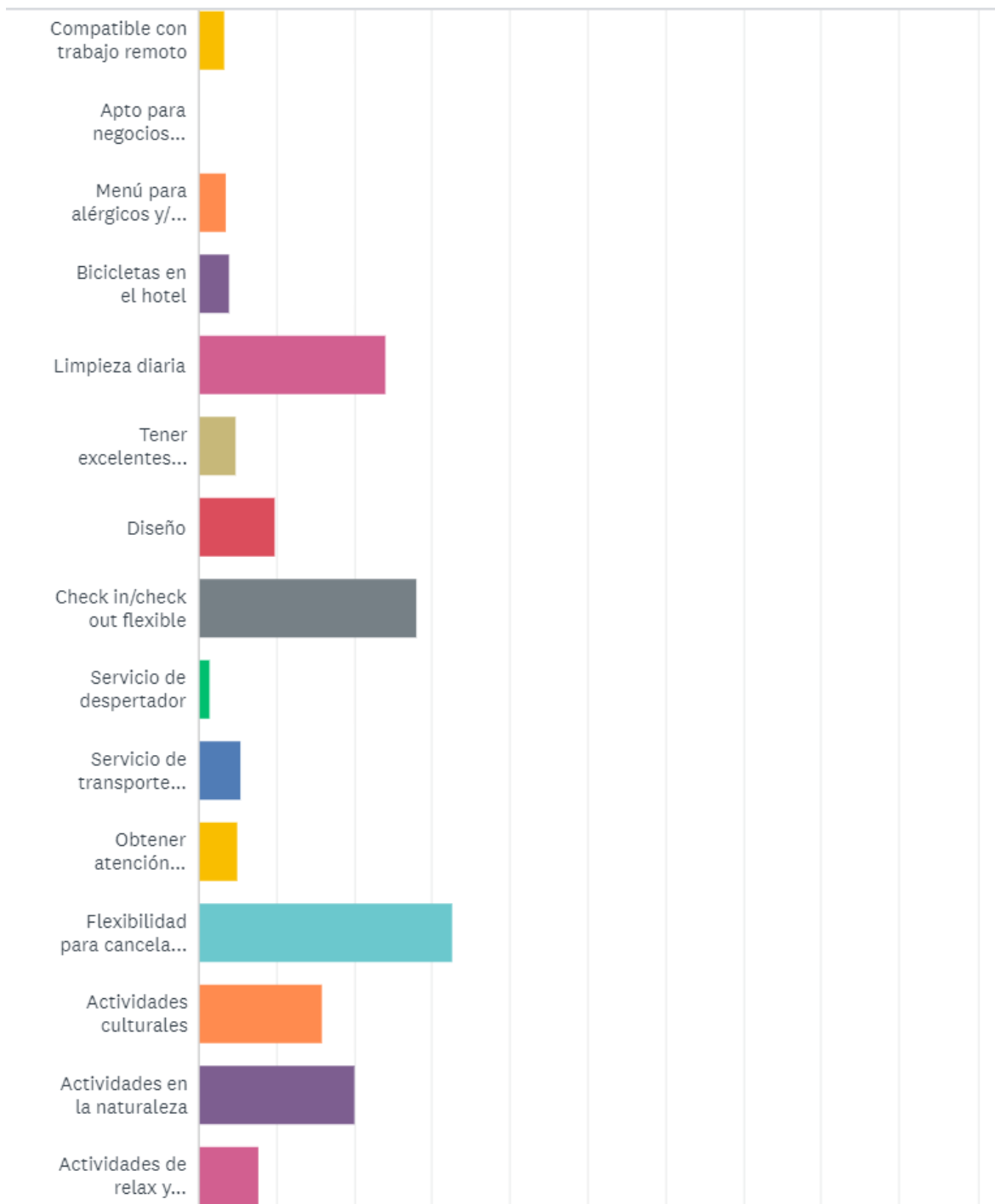
Figure H.4.12. Most important features among the 275 respondents when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes (part 2/4).
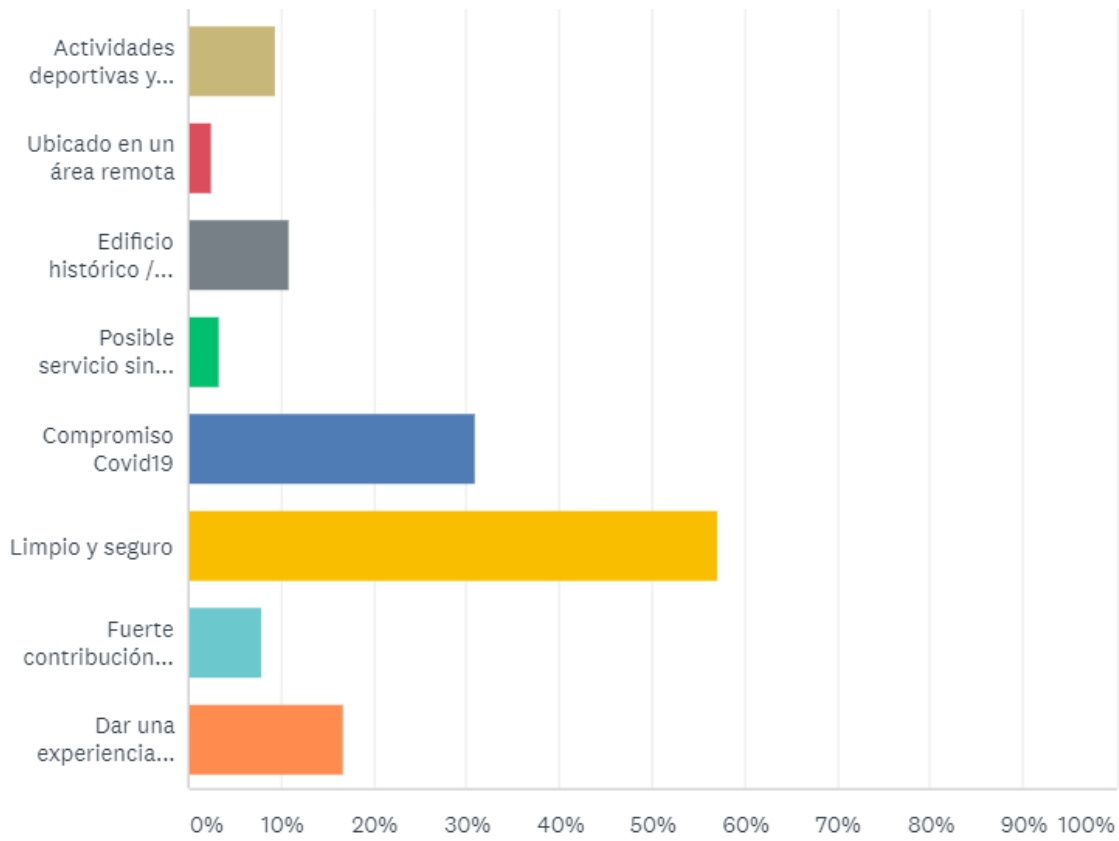
Figure H.4.13. Most important features among the 275 respondents when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes (part 3/4).

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Precio	84.00%	231
Ubicación	86.91%	239
Número de habitaciones	14.18%	39
Diseño	15.64%	43
Internet WiFi	28.36%	78
Piscina	17.82%	49
Jardín	4.36%	12
Aparcamiento	13.09%	36
Amigable con mascotas	7.27%	20
Amigable con los niños	8.73%	24
Instalaciones de restaurante/bar	13.45%	37
Presencia de un spa y wellness	8.36%	23
Compatible con trabajo remoto	3.27%	9
Apto para negocios (reuniones)	0.00%	0
Menú para alérgicos y/o vegetariano/vegano (menús especiales)	3.64%	10
Bicicletas en el hotel	4.00%	11
Limpieza diaria	24.00%	66
Tener excelentes amenidades de baño	4.73%	13
Diseño	9.82%	27
Check in/check out flexible	28.00%	77
Servicio de despertador	1.45%	4
Servicio de transporte desde el aeropuerto	5.45%	15
Obtener atención personalizada	5.09%	14
Flexibilidad para cancelar o cambiar el período de estancia	32.73%	90
Actividades culturales	16.00%	44
Actividades en la naturaleza	20.00%	55
Actividades de relax y románticas	7.64%	21
Actividades deportivas y de aventura	9.45%	26
Ubicado en un área remota	2.55%	7
Edificio histórico / historia	10.91%	30
Posible servicio sin necesidad de contacto personal	3.27%	9
Compromiso Covid19	30.91%	85
Limpio y seguro	57.09%	157
Fuerte contribución a la sostenibilidad de cualquier manera	8.00%	22
Dar una experiencia única	16.73%	46
Total Respondents: 275		

Figure H.4.14. Most important features among the 275 respondents when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes (part 4/4).

By far, the most important features among the 275 respondents when travelling for leisure/holiday, are both the location of the accommodation and the price (239 and 231 answers, corresponding to 86.9% and 84%). The feature that comes next is the fact that the respondents want the accommodation to be clean and safe (157 answers, corresponding to 57%). Other relatively important features are flexibility in cancelling or changing the stay (90 answers, corresponding to 32.7%), covid19 commitment (85 answers, corresponding to 30.9%), Internet/Wi-Fi (78 answers, corresponding to

28.3%), flexible check in/check out (77 answers, corresponding to 28%), daily housekeeping (66 answers, corresponding to 24%), nature activities (55 answers, corresponding to 20%), giving an unique experience (46 answers, corresponding to 16.7%), cultural activities (44 answers, corresponding to 16%) and design (43 answers, corresponding to 15.6%). The least important features are being suitable for business meetings (0 answers, corresponding to 0%), followed by having a wake-up service (4 answers, corresponding to 1.5%), surrounded in a remote location (7 answers, corresponding to 2.6%), possible service without personal contact needed (9 answers, corresponding to 3.3%) and having an allergy-friendly and/or vegetarian/vegan menu (special menus) (10 answers, corresponding to 3.6%).

Preferred type of accommodation for leisure/holiday travels

¿Cuál es / sería su tipo de alojamiento preferido para su viaje de ocio / recreación / vacaciones?

Answered: 274   Skipped: 1
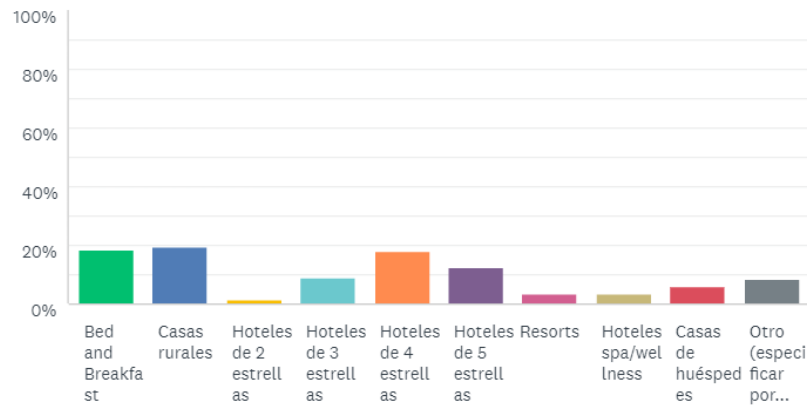
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bed and Breakfast	18.61%	51
Casas rurales	19.34%	53
Hoteles de 2 estrellas	1.46%	4
Hoteles de 3 estrellas	8.76%	24
Hoteles de 4 estrellas	17.88%	49
Hoteles de 5 estrellas	12.41%	34
Resorts	3.65%	10
Hoteles spa/wellness	3.28%	9
Casas de huéspedes	6.20%	17
Otro (especificar por favor) Responses	8.39%	23
TOTAL		274

Figure H.4.15. Preferred type of accommodation for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

Among the 275 respondents, 'casas rurales' (translation: country houses) are the most preferred type of accommodation (53 answers) when going on a trip with leisure/holiday purposes. The second and third type of accommodation that are popular, with an amount of 51 and 49 answers, are the Bed & Breakfast and 'Hoteles de 4 estrellas' (translation: 4-star hotels). After the 4-star hotels, 5-star hotels are the most preferred type of accommodation with a total amount of 34 answers. The least popular are 'Hoteles de 2 estrellas' (translation: 2-star hotels).

When zooming in on the 23 individual answers that have been given, most respondents answered 'Camping' as a type of accommodation they prefer for leisure/holiday trips, followed by 'AirBnb', 'Apartments', 'Hostels' and 'Boats/sailing boats.'

Categories where most money is being spend when travelling for leisure/holiday purposes

¿En qué se gasta más dinero cuando se va de viaje por motivos de ocio/recreación/vacaciones?

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
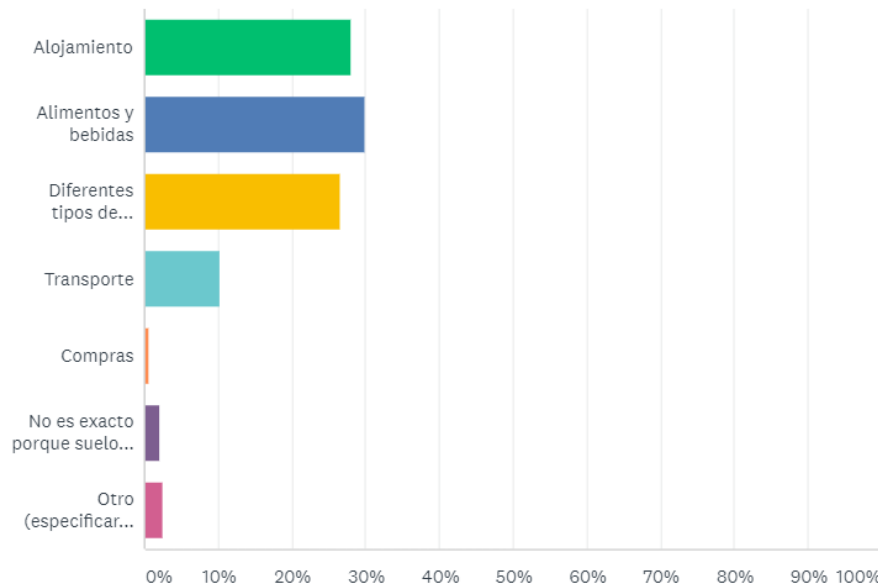
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▾ Alojamiento		28.00%	77
▾ Alimentos y bebidas		29.82%	82
▾ Diferentes tipos de actividades y o experiencias		26.55%	73
▾ Transporte		10.18%	28
▾ Compras		0.73%	2
▾ No es exacto porque suelo realizar viajes de paquetes con ofertas totalmente planificados		2.18%	6
▾ Otro (especificar por favor)	Responses	2.55%	7
TOTAL			275

Figure H.4.16. Categories where most money is being spend during leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

During a leisure/holiday trip among the respondents, most money is being spent on food and drinks (82 answers, corresponding to 29.8%), strongly followed by accommodation (77 answers, corresponding to 28%) and different types of activities and/or experiences (73 answers, corresponding to 26.6%). Least money is being spent on shopping (2 answers, corresponding to 0.7%). Among the other answers, some mentioned that they spend as much money on accommodation as they do on food and drinks for example. Some mentioned that it strongly depends on the destination. However, no new category has been mentioned in the 'other answers.'

178

Preferred booking channels for leisure/holiday travels

¿Cómo prefiere reservar su alojamiento para su viaje de ocio/recreación/vacaciones?

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
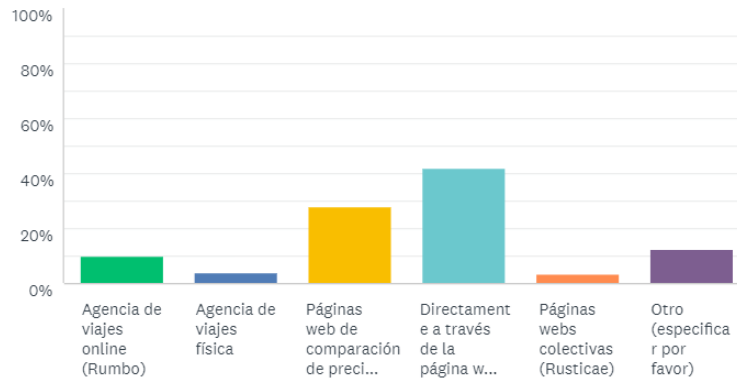
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Agencia de viajes online (Rumbo)		9.82%	27
Agencia de viajes física		4.00%	11
Páginas web de comparación de precios (Trivago)		28.00%	77
Directamente a través de la página web del propio alojamiento		42.18%	116
Páginas webs colectivas (Rusticae)		3.27%	9
Otro (especificar por favor)	Responses	12.73%	35
TOTAL			275

Figure H.4.17. Preferred booking channels for leisure/holiday travels among the 275 respondents.

It can clearly be stated that among the 275 respondents, it is being preferred to book directly via the accommodation its own website, with a total number of 116 answers (corresponding to 42.2%). The second most preferred booking channel, with 'only' 77 answers (corresponding to 28%), is via price comparison websites like Trivago. Clearly, the least important booking channel is via collective websites like Rusticae (9 answers, corresponding to 3.3%).

When zooming in on the individual answers, almost all 35 people answered 'Booking.com', followed by 'Airbnb'. Both Booking.com and Airbnb can be considered as a price comparison website but the confusion is being understood. In addition to these two answers, some people answered that they prefer to book via the phone, by just simply calling the accommodation they are interested in.

Evaluated importance of different booking channel features

¿Cómo evalúa personalmente la importancia de los siguientes aspectos de los canales de reserva?

Answered: 275   Skipped: 0
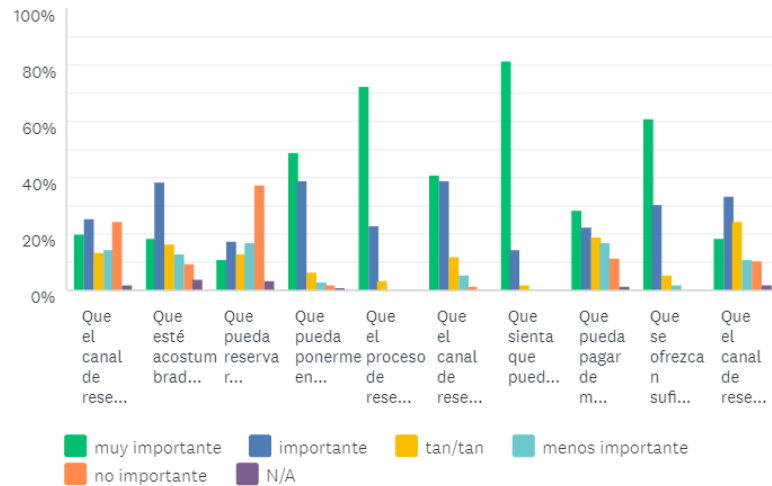
Figure H.4.18. Evaluated importance of different booking channel features by the 275 respondents (part 1/3).

	MUY IMPORTANTE	IMPORTANTE	TAN/TAN	MENOS IMPORTANTE	NO IMPORTANTE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Que el canal de reservas esté disponible en español	20.15% 55	25.64% 70	13.55% 37	14.29% 39	24.54% 67	1.83% 5	273	4.32
Que esté acostumbrado al canal de reservas	18.68% 51	38.46% 105	16.48% 45	12.82% 35	9.52% 26	4.03% 11	273	4.12
Que pueda reservar actividades y / o experiencias también a través del canal de reservas. Ejemplos: recorridos en bicicleta / a pie, terapias medicinales, recorridos a pie personalizados, etc.	11.15% 30	17.47% 47	13.01% 35	17.10% 46	37.55% 101	3.72% 10	269	4.37
Que pueda ponerme en contacto fácilmente con el canal de reservas	48.89% 132	38.89% 105	6.30% 17	2.96% 8	1.85% 5	1.11% 3	270	4.45
Que el proceso de reserva sea rápido y fluido sin errores	72.69% 197	22.88% 62	3.32% 9	0.37% 1	0.00% 0	0.74% 2	271	4.70

Figure H.4.19. Evaluated importance of different booking channel features by the 275 respondents (part 2/3).

▼ Que el canal de reservas ofrezca descuentos de precio y grandes ofertas	41.03% 112	39.19% 107	12.09% 33	5.49% 15	1.47% 4	0.73% 2	273	4.31
▼ Que sienta que puedo confiar al 100% en el canal de reservas. Esto cubre aspectos tales como: reseñas disponibles, calidad asegurada de los alojamientos ofrecidos, profesionalismo, página web acreditada / protegida, etc.	81.62% 222	14.71% 40	2.21% 6	0.74% 2	0.00% 0	0.74% 2	272	4.80
▼ Que pueda pagar de más formas que solo con tarjeta de crédito	28.68% 78	22.43% 61	19.12% 52	16.91% 46	11.40% 31	1.47% 4	272	4.21
▼ Que se ofrezcan suficientes servicios de cancelación y reembolso	60.81% 166	30.40% 83	5.49% 15	1.83% 5	0.73% 2	0.73% 2	273	4.56
▼ Que el canal de reservas contribuya a la sostenibilidad de alguna manera	18.38% 50	33.46% 91	24.26% 66	11.03% 30	10.66% 29	2.21% 6	272	4.05

Figure H.4.20. Evaluated importance of different booking channel features by the 275 respondents (part 3/3).

Based on the weighted averages only, it can be concluded that the most important aspect of booking channels among the 275 respondents is that they feel like they can trust the booking channel 100%, covering things such as available reviews, assured quality of the offered accommodations, professionalism and having an accredited/protected website. This aspect is strongly followed by the fact that the respondents highly value having a smooth and fast booking process without any errors. The third most important aspect of booking channels among the respondents is having sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services. After this top three, there are three aspects that score almost the same average weighting: (1) Activities and/or experiences are being offered via the booking channel, (2) The booking channel being available in Spanish and (3) The booking channel offering price discounts and great deals from time to time. The least important aspect of booking channels, according to the survey outcome, is that the booking channel contributes to sustainability in any way.

Sabrina Rodriguez

Meet Sabrina Rodriguez from Barcelona, 23 years old and feeling like a real Generation Z. Right now, Sabrina never travels for business as she is still in her master's but likes to go on various trips throughout the year with either her immediate Spanish family members (family is very important for the Spanish Gen Z's/millennials) or her closest friends (I mean…duh!). When going on a trip for leisure/holiday purposes with her friends, Sabrina prefers to stay in Spain or go to Italy, France, Portugal, Greece, or England. Even though most of the time she is using Skyscanner to book the cheapest flights possible for her trips, taking the car is not a problem at all and happens quite often. With her friends, Sabrina mainly goes on weekend or (mid)week trips. Short but fun and exciting, needed for her Instagram feed and to keep life exciting. Since Sabrina is still a master student and most of the time the trips with her friends are relatively short, she is not really attached to holiday seasons and prefers to save some money by avoiding high seasons. Obviously, Sabrina and her friends care about the whole covid19 pandemic, but once the high-risk groups are being vaccinated, they will start travelling again since they are super soaked up with just staying at home. Sabrina is a real Gen Z and spends more time on her phone than she does by looking around. When creating a WhatsApp group with her 'Girl squad' to go on another weekend trip, she shares all the cool spots and hot boys via different social media accounts, inspired by influencers and mainly found on either Instagram or YouTube. "Look at this amazing spot gurls! We should check it out. I mean, if she is going there, it must be good!". Since every 'Girls squad' consists of different types of Gen Z's, the girls also get inspired by just searching on Google, online blogs, word-of-mouth through friends and family or by checking out travel review websites such as TripAdvisor. Once the girls found their perfect spot and are looking for a place to stay (preferably country houses, 4-star hotels or apartments via platforms like AirBnb), there are some factors that play a huge role. The girls want it to have a decent price since they actually cannot really afford this trip but still would like to go, the location (it must be close to the cool spots, nice activities and hot boys), the design (for the Instagram pictures, I mean… no picture means you have not been there!), flexible check-in and check-out (you never know how the night goes), cultural activities in the surroundings (otherwise mom and dad are going to be mad), covid19 commitment, clean and safe (they still do not want to get covid themselves) and having a unique experience (otherwise they are bored and cannot share the best stories…I mean… a normal holiday is so 2020). Once decided on everything and having a lot of struggles in the WhatsApp group, Sabrina will book everything preferably via the accommodation its own website or by making use of an online price comparison website to get the best deal possible. Using a physical travel agency is so outdated. The booking channel itself, for Sabrina and her girl squad, needs to be easily reached because the girl squad is rather lazy than putting a lot of effort in the whole booking process online. When they have a question, they would like to give a quick call or send a WhatsApp message and

receive a quick response. Besides, Sabrina and the girls really want to feel like they can trust the booking channel 100% (they do not want to get scammed because they do not have enough money for this stuff) and sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services must be offered (you never know what happens to one of them before the trip, maybe one falls in love or something). Whether the girls can book activities and/or experiences on the booking channel itself is not important, because they will look for it on different platforms. Oh, do not forget, having more options than just paying by credit card is very important, and that the booking channel contains zero errors is a real must! Come on… 2021… errors are NOT OKAY. Finally, since Sabrina and the girls are real Gen Z's, the booking channel must contribute to sustainability… we only have one beautiful planet earth guys! During the trip itself, the girls will probably spend most money on the different types of experiences and food and drinks.

Figure I.1. Impression photographs of Sabrina Rodriquez.

Pablo Silva and Irene Silva

Meet Pablo and Irene Silva, a Spanish couple who are crazy in love with each other since they were 16 years old. Now, both 35, living in Madrid without kids and eager to explore the world. The Silva's really enjoy spending time in their own country when going on a leisure trip, but are also very down to travel to Italy, France, Portugal, Germany, Greece or the US and Thailand when travelling outside of Europe. Even though the Silva's got an amazing new Audi, the two always catch a plane. Since the Silva's are both quite busy with their jobs, once they go on a holiday, they most of the time enjoy it for a week or even two. However, going on a weekend get-a-way just to relax, forget about the work stress and enjoy quality time together, is something they enjoy doing a lot as well. Due to the working schedules, the Silva's mostly go on 'real holidays' in August and/or December, while the weekends are not really linked to a certain month. Even though the Silva's are (already) 35 years old, when it

comes to getting inspired for their next trip, they are a huge fan of Instagram. Besides using Instagram, the Silva's get a lot of inspiration from their family and friends, from Google, online blogs, online booking platforms, travel review websites or Facebook, YouTube, and Netflix. Now, imagine that Irene Silva is planning their next trip to Portugal by plane and as we speak, is looking for the perfect stay. Irene will mainly depend her decisions on the location, the price, whether it is clean and safe, flexibility in cancelling or changing the stay, having a flexible check-in and check-out, Wi-Fi (I mean… they probably must answer some emails), parking (for the rental car), daily housekeeping and covid19 commitment. Oh... regarding covid19, there are different opinions among the Silva's… While Pablo wants to start travelling as soon as the high-risk groups are being vaccinated, Irene wants the whole world to be safe before they start moving around. After doing all the research, Irene decides to book them a Bed and Breakfast in the Alentejo region. Even though Pablo prefers staying in a 4-star hotel, he is excited about the Portuguese Bed and Breakfast. Irene booked the Bed and Breakfast directly via the accommodations own website to support the industry, while Pablo kept on forcing her to check price comparison websites (independent woman! woohoo!). In terms of the booking channels used by the Silva's, the most important features are that the booking process goes fast and smoothly without any errors (they do not have the time and patience), that the Silva's feel like they can trust the booking channel 100%, and that they can easily get in touch with the booking channel. In addition to these features, Pablo really enjoys having a Spanish booking platform with which he feels familiar and where different price discounts and great deals are being offered from time to time. Irene on the other hand does not really care that much about these features but does want sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services. Both the Silva's do not really care about sustainability and the commitment of the booking channel to this matter, as long as they can travel…. (Ouch… sorry Gen Z's). During their stay in Portugal, the Silva's will most likely spend most of their money on their accommodation and going out for dinner and drinks. Let's embrace the love and enjoy some quality time! hmmm…

Figure I.2. Impression photograph of Pablo Silva and Irene Silva.

The Rosell family

Meet the Spanish family Rosell, consisting of a mom, dad, two sons of 23 and 25 years old and one daughter of 19 years old. The family Rosell is a decent family living in Sant Cugat, just outside Barcelona. The Rosell's can afford to go on holidays at least twice a year and spend some of their weekends in their house in the mountains in the North of Spain. Besides their trips within Spain to either their mountain house, family/friends' houses, or proper accommodations, the Rosell's enjoy going to Italy, France or Portugal when staying in Europe. When the Rosell's decide to go on a trip outside Europe, which they try to do every second year, the family prefers Japan or the United States. Regardless of the destination, the Rosell's prefer going by plane since it is more convenient for them. However, when moving around in Europe, going by car(s) is an option. Since mom and dad are both working fulltime and have decent jobs, the family must adhere to limited vacation days. Taking this into account, the family prefers to go for longer stays, with a minimum of one week up to more than two weeks. Going on short holidays is something the family just cannot do due to obligations related to either work or studies. The Rosell's tend to go on holidays in August most preferably, followed by July and December. When it is time to plan the trip all together, it can be concluded that the Rosell's mainly get inspired through family and friends (word-of-mouth), by searching on Google, via travel review websites like TripAdvisor or by watching shows on Netflix and TV. Once being inspired to go to a certain destination, the most important features of the accommodation are the location, price, whether the accommodation has a pool, whether it is clean and safe, whether daily cleaning service is included, if the accommodation offers flexibility in terms of changing or cancelling the stay, whether there are different nature and cultural activities in the surroundings, whether the location is child friendly and its covid19 commitment. The most preferred types of accommodation for the Rosell's are rural houses, followed by 5-star or 4-star hotels. Going camping or staying in a Bed & Breakfast is something the family can consider from time to time as well. When the Rosell's are on holidays, most money is being spend on the accommodation since the family really enjoys high quality and a certain standard of luxury, followed by food and drinks and the different activities and experiences. Once the moment is there to book the entire trip, mom Rosell prefers to book everything directly via the website of the accommodation! This brings a feeling of trust, commitment, safety and supports the local businesses. In case the accommodation does not have a proper website or booking engine, mom Rosell is keen to use a price comparison website, online travel agency or Airbnb/Booking.com. The most important features on which mom Rosell bases her decision of using a certain booking engine are the feeling of trusting the booking channel 100%, having a fast and smooth booking process without any errors, having sufficient cancellation and reimbursement services and being able to easily get in touch with the booking channel. The least important feature for mom Rosell is that she can also book activities and/or experiences via the booking channel, for example biking/walking tours or medicinal therapy.

186

Figure I.3. Impression photographs of the Rosell family

Section 1. Survey 2 respondents

Table J.1.1. Survey 2 respondents.

Name	Company	Function	Dates	Contact details	Method of approach	Part of the research
Rita Alves Machado	GuestCentric / SPH	VP Sales and Marketing Great Hotels of the World	Every second Wednesday of the month	rmachado @ghotw.com	Email	Sub question 5: SFA table
Maria Gomes	GuestCentric /SPH	Director of account management	Every second Wednesday of the month	mgomes @ghotw.com	Email	Sub question 5: SFA table
Carlota Tavora	GuestCentric /SPH	Content developer	Every second Wednesday of the month	ctavora@ ghotw.com	Email	Sub question 5: SFA table

Section 2. Survey 2 formats

First part

Please score the importance of every separate Suitability, Feasibility and Acceptability factor from the perspective of Small Portuguese Hotels when deciding the best fitting marketing strategy. Use the following scores:

0. Very unimportant
1. Unimportant
2. Neutral
3. Important
4. Very important

SFA-Factor	Score
Suitability	-
Solving the central problem	
Using strengths and opportunities	
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	
Feasibility	-
Financial	
Organizational	
Economic	
Technical	
Strategic	
Legal	
Ecological	
Acceptability	-
Relation with stakeholders	
Relation with clients	

Second part

Please score each strategic option (SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4) derived from the SWOT analysis and confrontation matrix on all the SFA factors, using the following point system:

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Acceptable
4. Good
5. Very good

The weighing factors as shown in the table are based on the previous document you have all filled in which you can ignore for now. These factors demonstrate the average importance from your point of view for Small Portuguese Hotels when deciding about a new strategy. In the end, I will calculate all scores that I have received from all of you, and one strategic option will be the 'winner'. This strategy will be the outcome of the overall thesis and will form the base of the ultimate recommendations. The different strategic options can be found on page 2 and you can find an example of how to fill in the table on page 3 in case things are unclear.

Good luck! Thank you!

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12				
Using strengths and opportunities	10				
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8				
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11				
Organizational	9				
Economic	11				
Technical	12				
Strategic	11				
Legal	9				
Ecological	7				
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10				
Relation with clients	13				

The strategic options

SO1: 'Growth strategy'.

'SPH needs to now start targeting the promising, digitalized and growing (post-covid19) online Spanish market through a test-and-adapt style. By offering different types of small accommodations in Portugal through a perfectly working online platform and by making use of both the right social media channels and Google metasearch possibilities, SPH will offer value in delivering a one-of-a-kind experience, by contributing to sustainability, and by creating a sense of trust among its users due to the different services and expertise.'

SO2: 'Improve strategy'.

'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'

SO3: 'Defence strategy'.

'SPH should slowly, gradually, and carefully start targeting the Spanish market only when the economic situation has improved in Spain, by offering a perfectly working business model and online platform promoted via different social media channels and highly focusing on the one-of-a-kind experience, sustainability, additional services, benefits and expertise, (IT) knowledge, and the unique listings from different price ranges conquering the expected Spanish customer sentiment and competition.'

SO4: 'Retreat strategy'.

'SPH should not start targeting the Spanish market considering the limited amount of internal resources available and more important tasks to be solved first, a too uncertain market due to covid19, negative existing or expected customer trends from SPH's perspective, an enduring popularity of domestic travelling among Spaniards, and a relatively competitive market force that all together creates a too high risk of a low return on investment.'

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12	2	4	5	2
Using strengths and opportunities	10	5	4	3	2
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8	2	4	4	5
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11	2	3	4	5
Organizational	9	2	4	3	5
Economic	11	4	3	4	2
Technical	12	3	1	2	1
Strategic	11	4	4	3	3
Legal	9	4	4	4	4
Ecological	7	4	4	4	4
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10	4	3	3	2
Relation with clients	13	4	5	2	1

Section 3. Results of the first part of Survey 2

Table J.3.1. Answers from employee A on the first part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Score
Suitability	-
Solving the central problem	4
Using strengths and opportunities	3
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	2
Feasibility	-
Financial	3
Organizational	2
Economic	3
Technical	4
Strategic	4
Legal	3
Ecological	2
Acceptability	-
Relation with stakeholders	3
Relation with clients	4

Table J.3.2. Answers from employee B on the first part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Score
Suitability	2
Solving the central problem	4
Using strengths and opportunities	4
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	3
Feasibility	3
Financial	3
Organizational	2
Economic	3
Technical	3
Strategic	4
Legal	3
Ecological	2
Acceptability	2
Relation with stakeholders	2

SFA-Factor	Score
Relation with clients	4

Table J.3.3. Answers from employee C on the first part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Score
Suitability	-
Solving the central problem	3 for end consumer 5 for member hotels
Using strengths and opportunities	3
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	3
Feasibility	-
Financial	5
Organizational	5
Economic	5
Technical	5
Strategic	3
Legal	3
Ecological	3
Acceptability	-
Relation with stakeholders	5
Relation with clients	5

Section 4. Concluded weighing factors for SPH its SFA table

Table J.4.1. Concluded weighing factors for SPH its SFA table.

SFA-Factor	Average score	*3 score (= eventual weighing factor)
Suitability	-	
Solving the central problem	4	12
Using strengths and opportunities	3,33	10
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	2,66	8
Feasibility	-	
Financial	3,66	11
Organizational	3	9
Economic	3,66	11
Technical	4	12
Strategic	3,66	11

SFA-Factor	Average score	*3 score (= eventual weighing factor)
Legal	3	9
Ecological	2,33	7
Acceptability	-	
Relation with stakeholders	3,33	10
Relation with clients	4,33	13

The concluded SFA scores, resulting from taking the average of all three tables, have been multiplied by 3 to get round numbers.

Section 5. Results of the second part of Survey 2

Table J.5.1. Answers from employee A on the second part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12	2	2	2	1
Using strengths and opportunities	10	4	3	2	1
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8	1	2	3	4
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11	1	3	4	5
Organizational	9	1	3	4	5
Economic	11	3	3	4	5
Technical	12	3	4	4	4
Strategic	11	3	5	1	1
Legal	9	3	4	4	4
Ecological	7	4	4	4	4
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10	4	4	2	1
Relation with clients	13	4	3	2	1

Table J.5.2. Answers from employee B on the second part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12	5	4	3	2

Using strengths and opportunities	10	4	4	3	2
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8	5	4	3	2
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11	2	3	4	5
Organizational	9	2	2	4	5
Economic	11	2	3	3	5
Technical	12	5	3	3	3
Strategic	11	4	4	3	2
Legal	9	4	4	4	4
Ecological	7	3	3	3	3
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10	4	3	3	3
Relation with clients	13	3	3	3	3

Table J.5.3. Answers from employee C on the second part of Survey 2.

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12	2	4	4	2
Using strengths and opportunities	10	2	4	4	2
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8	2	4	4	5
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11	2	4	4	4
Organizational	9	2	4	4	4
Economic	11	2	4	4	4
Technical	12	2	4	4	4
Strategic	11	2	4	4	4
Legal	9	2	2	2	2
Ecological	7	2	2	2	2
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10	5	2	2	4
Relation with clients	13	3	2	2	2

196

Section 6. Concluded SFA table for SPH

Table J.6.1. Concluded SFA table for SPH.

SFA-Factor	Weighing factor	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4
Suitability	-				
Solving the central problem	12	9	10	9	5
Using strengths and opportunities	10	10	11	9	5
Minimalize weaknesses and threats	8	8	10	10	11
Feasibility	-				
Financial	11	5	10	12	14
Organizational	9	5	9	12	14
Economic	11	7	10	11	14
Technical	12	10	11	11	11
Strategic	11	9	13	8	7
Legal	9	9	10	10	10
Ecological	7	9	9	9	9
Acceptability	-				
Relation with stakeholders	10	13	9	7	8
Relation with clients	13	10	8	7	6
Total score:	-	1072	**1233**	1173	1152

The strategic options

SO1: 'Growth strategy'.

'SPH needs to now start targeting the promising, digitalized and growing (post-covid19) online Spanish market through a test-and-adapt style. By offering different types of small accommodations in Portugal through a perfectly working online platform and by making use of both the right social media channels and Google metasearch possibilities, SPH will offer value in delivering a one-of-a-kind experience, by contributing to sustainability, and by creating a sense of trust among its users due to the different services and expertise.'

SO2: 'Improve strategy'.

'Before targeting the promising Spanish market, SPH should achieve its short-term goals and improve day-to-day business. Besides, before moving to the Spanish market, SPH needs a complete and clear

step-by-step marketing, sales and social media plan that can straight be implemented and will strongly position SPH in the Spanish market to expand its existing Portuguese customer base.'

SO3: 'Defence strategy'.

'SPH should slowly, gradually, and carefully start targeting the Spanish market only when the economic situation has improved in Spain, by offering a perfectly working business model and online platform promoted via different social media channels and highly focusing on the one-of-a-kind experience, sustainability, additional services, benefits and expertise, (IT) knowledge, and the unique listings from different price ranges conquering the expected Spanish customer sentiment and competition.'

SO4: 'Retreat strategy'.

'SPH should not start targeting the Spanish market considering the limited amount of internal resources available and more important tasks to be solved first, a too uncertain market due to covid19, negative existing or expected customer trends from SPH's perspective, an enduring popularity of domestic travelling among Spaniards, and a relatively competitive market force that all together creates a too high risk of a low return on investment.'

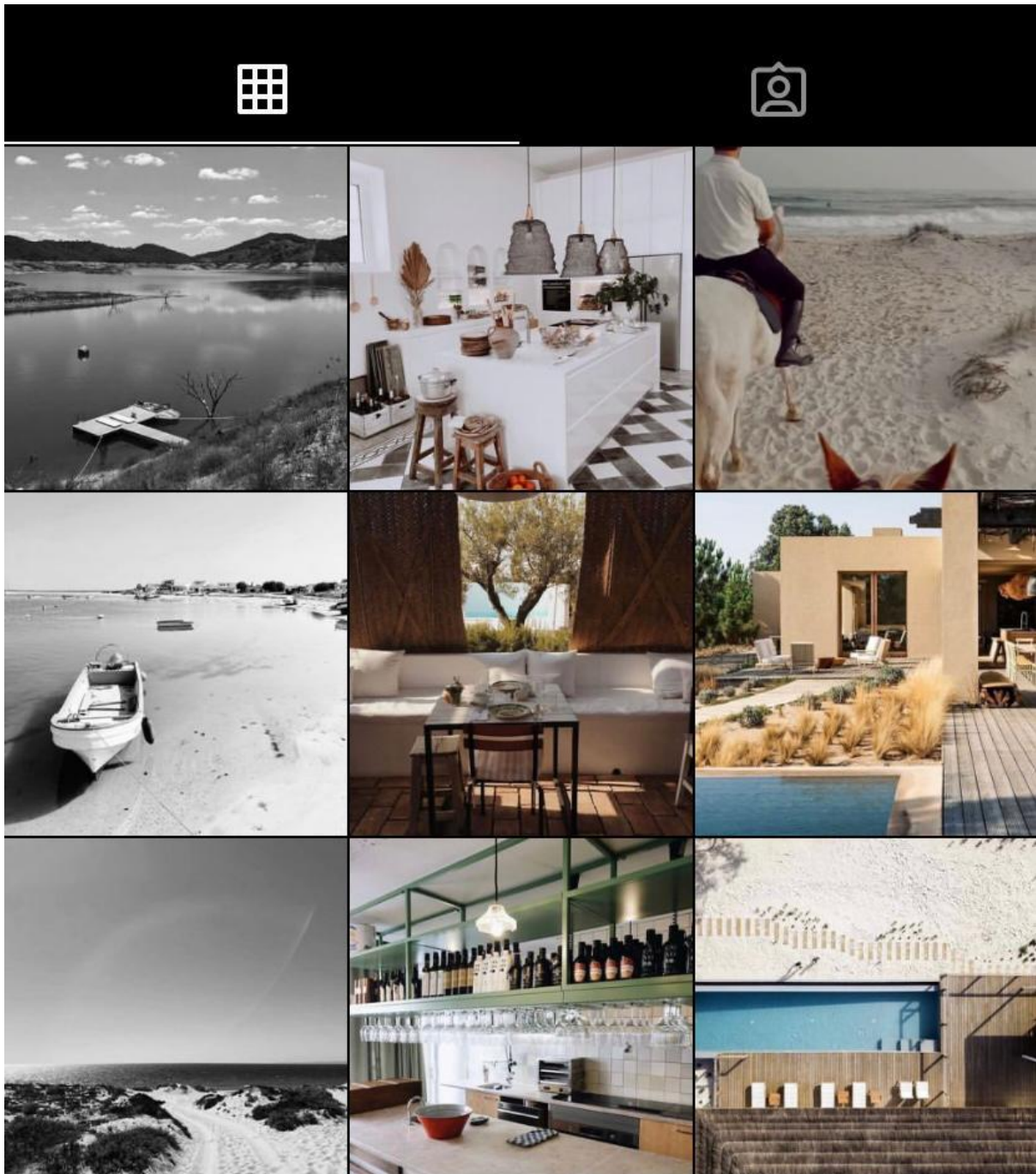**Annex K. Proposed new Instagram feed for SPH**

Figure K.1. Proposed new Instagram feed for SPH.

Annex L. Proposed social media content calendar for SPH

September 2021 SPH Social Media Marketing Calendar

Week 1	Sunday			Monday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram				Listing with great design	Regular post	8AM-9AM
Instagram				Theme "Porto" take-over: Listing with great design	Story	2PM
Facebook						
YouTube						
LinkedIn				SPH's collection - focus on design	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog						
Online Blog						

Week 1	Tuesday			Wednesday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram	Listing with great pool including focus on switching off	Regular post	8AM-9AM	Listing that focuses on sustainability	Regular post	8AM-9AM
Instagram	Theme "Algarve": Various listings with great pools	Story	2PM	Theme: "North and Douro": Sustainable listings	Story	2PM
Facebook	Theme: Switching off at SPH's listings	Blog post	1PM-4PM			
YouTube						
LinkedIn				Sustainability	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog	Theme: Switching off at SPH's listings	Own post	9AM			
Online Blog						

September 2021 SPH Social Media Marketing Calendar

Week 1	Thursday			Friday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram	Winning competition for September weekend travel	Regular post	8AM-9AM	Historical environment/listing	Regular post	8AM-9AM
Instagram	Theme: "Winning competitions"	Story	2PM	Theme: "Q & A": With SPH	Story	2PM
Facebook	Personal listing story/interview	Blog post	1PM-4PM			
YouTube						
LinkedIn				Success story listing SPH	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog	Personal listing story/interview	Own post	9AM			
Online Blog						

Week 1	Saturday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram			
Instagram			
Facebook			
YouTube			
LinkedIn			
Online Blog			
Online Blog			

Figure L.1. Proposed social media content calendar for SPH for September 2021 week 1.

September 2021 SPH Social Media Marketing Calendar

Week 2	Sunday			Monday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram				The Alentejo listing video	Video post	8AM-9AM
Instagram				Theme "Alentejo": Video and listing Alentejo take-over	Story	2PM
Facebook						
YouTube	Alentejo listing	Video	6PM			
LinkedIn				SPH supporting national economy	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog						
Online Blog						

Week 2	Tuesday			Wednesday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram	Dining/gastronomy	Regular post	8AM-9AM	The success listing (influencer)	Regular post	8AM-9AM
Instagram	Theme: "Lisbon": Listings with great dining spots/gastronomy	Story	2PM	Theme: "YOUR stories": Testimonial about the success listing (influencer)	Story	2PM
Facebook	Gastronomy	Blog post	1PM-4PM			
YouTube						
LinkedIn				Success story listing SPH	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog	Gastronomy	Own post	9AM			
Online Blog	Having an unique experience with SPH	Second blog	9AM			

September 2021 SPH Social Media Marketing Calendar

Week 2	Thursday			Friday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram	Horse riding activity	Regular post	8AM-9AM	UGC: Beautiful environments	Regular post	8AM-9AM
Instagram	Theme "Alentejo": Horse riding activity and Alentejo listing that is close by	Story	2PM	Theme: "StayWithSPH": UGC great environments and listings	Story	2PM
Facebook	Activities (include horse riding and Alentejo)	Blog post	1PM-4PM			
YouTube						
LinkedIn				COVID19 and environmental commitment by SPH (and its listings)	Own post	10AM-11AM
Online Blog	Activities (include horse riding and Alentejo)	Own post	9AM			
Online Blog						

Week 2	Saturday		
Channel	**Content**	**Type**	**Time**
Instagram			
Instagram			
Facebook			
YouTube			
LinkedIn			
Online Blog			
Online Blog			

Figure L.2. Proposed social media content calendar for SPH for September 2021 week 2.