



PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

BRAND IDENTITY PLANNING MODEL OF HOTEL MIRAMONTI

AUTHOR: Ana Pinheiro Viana

SUPERVISOR: Miriam Salomão

PORTO'S SCHOOL, JUNE 2022



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AUTHOR: Ana Pinheiro Viana

Professional Project presented to IPAM, to fulfill the requirements needed to obtain the Master's Degree in Marketing, developed under the scientific supervision of Professor Miriam Salomão, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The present project's purpose is to create a branding strategy for Hotel Miramonti, for it to transmit a clear, coherent, and cohesive identity.

The branding strategy proposition process starts by analyzing the internal and external factors within the context of the hotel (competitors, consumers, getting the director's perspective and comparing it to the staff's perspective to understand what can be actually feasible to do); then proposing a strategy.

The project proposal addresses the steps suggested by David Aaker: the three perspectives of the hotel, the identity structure, the value proposition, and the brand position.

The expected result of implementing this strategy's proposal should be providing the hotel with a clear brand positioning, thus giving the hotel the right tools to have consistent communication (internally and externally) and, consequently, generating a clear and cohesive image, allowing the development of a brand-customer relationship.

RESUMO

O presente projeto tem como objetivo criar uma estratégia de *branding* para o Hotel Miramonti, de forma a transmitir uma identidade clara, coerente e coesa.

O processo da proposta de estratégia de *branding* começa por analisar os fatores internos e externos inerentes ao contexto do hotel (concorrentes, consumidores, analisando a perspectiva do diretor e comparando com a perspectiva do *staff* para compreender o que realmente é viável ou não); de seguida, propor a estratégia.

A proposta do projeto aborda as etapas sugeridas por David Aaker: as três perspectivas do hotel, a estrutura da identidade, a proposta de valor, e o posicionamento da marca.

O resultado esperado da implementação da proposta desta estratégia é dar ao hotel um posicionamento da marca, portanto, providenciar o hotel com as ferramentas certas para obter uma comunicação consistente (interna e externamente) e, conseqüentemente, gerar uma imagem coesa e clara, permitindo o desenvolvimento de uma relação entre a marca e o cliente.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR – Average Daily Rates

CAGR – Compound Annual Growth Rate

OTA – Online Travel Agency

RevPAR – Revenue Per Available Room

SOP – Standard Operating Procedures

INTRODUCTION

In today's crowded and competitive hotel industry, where guests have a wide range of accommodation options (O'Neill & Mattila, 2010), investing in marketing becomes more relevant to attract and retain guests (Brown & Ragsdale, 2002; Keh et al., 2006) and to assure the hotel's spot in the market (Cai & Hobson, 2004) by distinguishing itself from the competition (Brown & Ragsdale, 2002; Keh et al., 2006; Wheeler, 2003).

Given the guest's concern about staying at an unknown hotel brand, hotels should reassure guests of staying with them, which usually happens if the hotel has a brand name (O'Neill & Xiao, 2006).

Hotel Miramonti is a 4-star hotel located in Vallé d'Aoste, in north-western Italy, bordering France and Switzerland. The tourism sector is the strongest line of business in the region (Pechlaner & Tschurtschenthaler, 2003). The hospitality industry reached \$6 billion in 2020 worldwide and it is expected to increase to \$58.1 billion in 2027, with a CAGR of 22,6% (Lock, 2022). In 2019, Southern Europe had an ADR of approximately \$125.25, being one of the most expensive regions of Europe in 2019. The RevPAR was the highest in Southern Europe, among all Europe, which compared to the previous year, the RevPAR increased by almost 6%. Italy is one of the countries in Europe that has the highest number of hotel brands and had over 200 hotel brands in 2019 (Lock, 2021).

In this region, there are strong competitors, regarding comfort, decoration, service portfolio, local involvement and partnerships, the concept and experience they sell, the online presence, the perceptions of consumers, and so on.

Hotel Miramonti is not keeping up with the competition in the sense that it doesn't have marketing and communication efforts, nor is it present on social media. It is lacking several aspects that would put it on the same level as the competition. In general, the hotel conveys a lack of purpose and direction, not only to the consumers but also to the staff, and the community, among others. It lacks an identity and may appear confusing to consumers, which damages its image. In 2022, the hotel was acquired by the current manager, B.M.¹, which was at the time an employee. Currently, he intends to reframe the hotel.

The present project has two distinct purposes. The first one, as an investigator, is to develop a brand identity planning model considering the context of the hotel. The second one is to provide the brand with a clear brand positioning, thus giving the hotel the right tools to have consistent communication (internally and externally) and, consequently, generating a clear, coherent, and cohesive identity.

This project starts with the present introduction, and it is divided into five chapters. The first chapter regards the literature review, which considers the crowded hospitality sector and consequently its demanding branding efforts; and mainly how to develop a brand identity planning model, which is the base of this project. The second

¹ For privacy purposes, the names of the subjects of this research won't be displayed. Their initials will be used instead.

chapter presents the methodology used for this research. The third one concerns the Project Analysis, more specifically the consumer analysis, the competition analysis, and lastly the internal analysis. The fourth chapter regards the project proposal. This chapter has into consideration the analysis and as a base, the brand identity planning model discussed and presented in the literature review (chapter 1). The Project Proposal chapter regards the proposal of a clear design of the brand identity, which goes through several steps to obtain the final brand identity. Lastly, the fifth chapter presents the current brand state, the implications of implementing the proposal, the managerial implications, limitations, and future research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Branding Context in the Hospitality Sector

Due to the changing nature and the competitive hospitality market, branding gains an even more important role in the hospitality sector in recent years (Khan et al., 2018; O'Neill & Mattila, 2010). Not only because it provides added value (O'Neill & Xiao, 2006), trust (Dev & Withiam, 2012) to the guests, and predisposition for guests to book with hotels whose brand name they recognize (Vu et al., 2018), but also, leverage in the market.

Additionally, a hotel's brand impacts the guest's experience with the hotel (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). Therefore, to create a brand relationship, it is fundamental that the hotel tries to provide a remarkable customer experience and not just accommodation (Maria et al., 2008) or selling services (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). Furthermore, customer expectations can contribute to the perceived value of guests (Chon & Mayer, 1995).

When a company is able to convey a clear image, it communicates effectively with its consumers (Brown & Ragsdale, 2002; Prasad & Dev, 2000). Effective branding generates awareness and associations of the brand with consumers, which in turn develops customer loyalty (Kim & Kim, 2005).

The guest's awareness of a brand, their perception, and satisfaction impact the brand's value (O'Neill & Mattila, 2004).

1.2.ASSET CATEGORIES

Brand equity is a set of assets linked to a brand's name that adds to the value provided by a product or service to a company and/or its customers. Brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand image are the four aspects that sustain brand equity (Christodoulides et al., 2015).

Regarding brand equity, the brand builder should consider the following: the customer perception of competitors, the important quality cues for consumers (and a better way to communicate them), the associations that the competitors are trying to create, the desired image of the brand, and finally, understanding the internal pressures that damage brand building and what could face up to those pressures, and develop a program to address it (Aaker, 1995).

Brand Awareness

Awareness is related to the strength of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind. Awareness can be measured through remembering a brand, recognition, recall, "top of mind", and dominance (Aaker, 1995).

Brand awareness is the familiarity and recognizability that a consumer has of a certain brand (Keller, 2003) and is the strength of its presence in the customer's mind (Pappu, Quester, et al., 2005).

Brand awareness positively impacts the brand perceptions that the consumers have in their minds (Lemmink et al., 2003). Brand awareness is the meaning that the consumers absorb in their minds about a brand (Keller, 2003).

The more awareness a consumer has of a brand, the more likely it is for him or her to purchase from that brand (Foroudi et al., 2014). Brand awareness

influences consumers' attitudes toward a brand by generating associations with the brand (Foroudi, 2019).

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is an organizational association (to be explained in the 1.4.2. chapter); however, it is so important that it was elevated to an asset category.

Some companies consider quality as one of their core values and even include it in the mission statement. Perceived quality measures the impact of brand identity and reflects the “goodness” of the brand (Aaker, 1995).

If a provided service matches the consumers' expectations, then the company provided service quality to the customer (Lewis and Booms, 1983). Quality service can be a factor that influences perceived value, performance, hotel competitiveness (Akbaba, 2006; Campos-Soria et al., 2005; Reynolds & Thompson, 2007), and purchase decisions (Genc, 2010).

To provide high quality to customers, a brand needs to understand what quality means to customers, it needs to create a culture where improvement is reinforced, and it needs to create perceptions as well (Aaker, 1995).

Perceived quality is the customers' judgment of a brand's superiority (Boulding & Kirmani, 1993).

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is less costly than attracting new customers since it doesn't involve identity building. In fact, brand loyalty requires efforts to avoid customers to switch to other brands (Aaker, 1995).

A brand should provide consistency in all its aspects as an organization to develop a positive reputation and to gain a competitive advantage to obtain brand loyalty (van Riel & Balmer, 1997).

Brand loyalty is strongly related to brand relationships (Vesel & Zabkar, 2010).

Brand Associations/Image

Brand associations majorly influence brand equity, as they can be a reflection of the brand identity. Accordingly, companies need to develop and implement a brand identity and effectively express it to consumers (Aaker, 1995).

Brand associations can reinforce brand relationships between brands and consumers (Chen & Hsieh, 2011).

Brand image is the way a brand generates a unique organizational identity (Brown et al., 2006).

Brand associations are the meaning of a brand in the consumers' minds (Pappu, Cooksey, et al., 2005) and everything in the consumers' minds that is related to that brand. Brand image is the set of several associations of a brand (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

The consumers' perception of a brand should reflect what is indeed the brand's identity, sharing the same and unique values of the brand (Dutton et al., 1994).

1.3. BRAND IDENTITY PLANNING MODEL

To successfully develop a brand, companies should start with developing a brand identity and idealizing the brand's purpose. However, it is also needed that the brand can reflect these to the customers (Aaker, 1995).

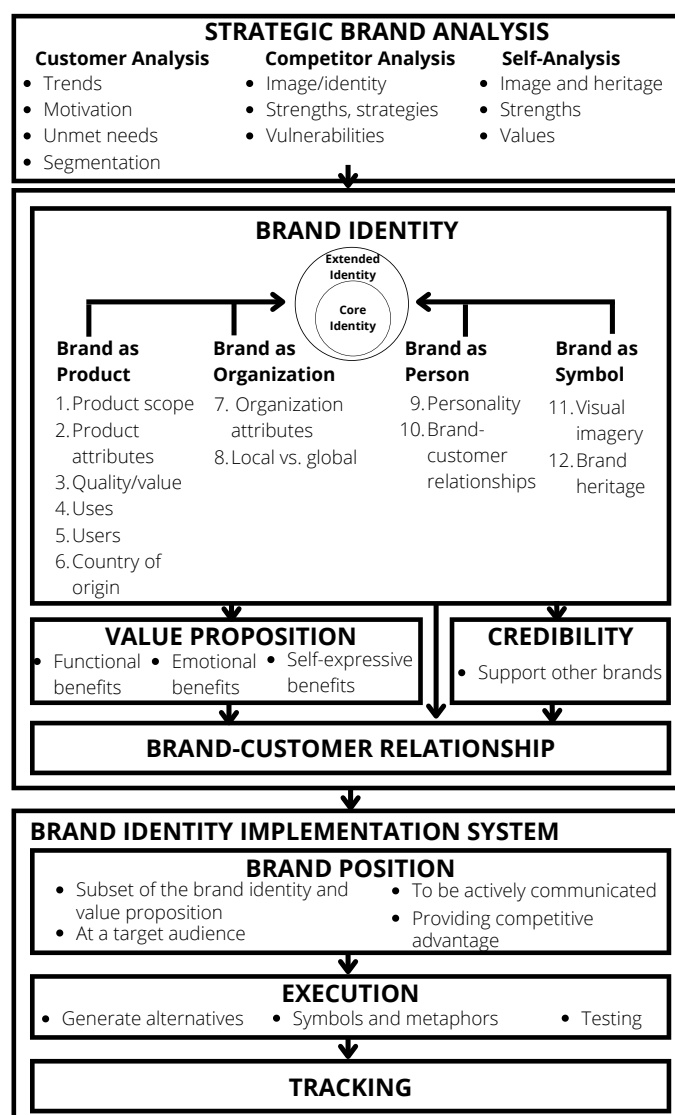
Several frameworks address brand identity, whether is it by presenting steps on building a brand identity strategy or just addressing the building elements. Some of the frameworks are the Brand Identity Prism, by Kapferer (1992); Identity Reputation Gap Model, by Chernatony (1999); Story Branding Model, by Signorelli (2014); and so on (Joshi & Huynh, 2015).

Although, the present project follows the Brand Identity Planning Model, created by David Aaker, which is a system that provides a broader perspective on brand identity building (Figure 1). The Planning Model starts by providing the necessary framework of the company and the environment that surrounds it (customers, competitors, and the company itself). Secondly, the brand must be perceived through four perspectives (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and consequently, the twelve elements around each of these perspectives, as shown in figure 1. Third, an identity structure is created, supporting the core and extended identity followed by cohesive and

consistent groupings of the identity elements. According to Figure 1, a value proposition is then created, considering the benefits attached to the company or product. The goal is to create a brand-customer relationship (Aaker, 1995).

The branding strategy is usually developed by the leadership team of a company (Wheeler, 2003).

Figure 1 Brand Identity Planning Model



Source: (Aaker, 1995)

1.4.Four Brand Identity Perspectives

To give more texture and to help simplify, refine, and differentiate an identity, a company must consider its brand from four different perspectives: brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and lastly, brand as symbol, which will help identify different brand elements and patterns of the identity. It is not necessarily mandatory to use these four perspectives to perceive the brand, however, it is helpful to consider them (Aaker, 1995).

1.4.1. The Brand as Product: Product-Related Associations

The brand as product suggests product-related associations, which are as follows: the product scope/associations with product class (this association enables the recalling of a brand when mentioning a product class and not the other way around); product-related attributes (these associations can generate functional and emotional benefits); quality/value (quality can be the core identity of a brand, and it is commonly associated with value, which can be deepened through the price statement); associations with use occasion; associations with users (positioning a brand by type of user, which in some cases can suggest a value proposition or brand personality); link to a country or region (this association suggests a higher quality within a certain product class of a region, which adds credibility to the brand) (Aaker, 1995).

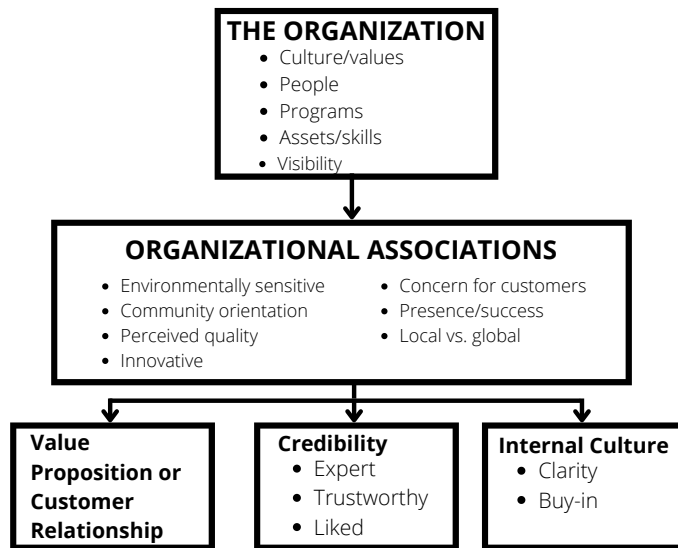
1.4.2. The Brand as Organization & Organizational Associations

Organizational attributes strongly manifest their competitive claim, unlike product-related associations. This occurs because not only are products easily copied (unlike the organizational characteristics of a company) but also because it is difficult to compete with organizational characteristics and to identify any perceived gap. Therefore, companies should ask themselves how they can differentiate from their competitors and maintain an advantage (Aaker, 1995).

The answer starts by building the brand identity of the organization that sustains the brand. According to figure 2, a company has certain organizational characteristics, such as the set of values and culture (the values and culture develop certain perceptions in the customer's mind), people (unlike some product-related associations and other associations, people add credibility to the organization), programs (programs sustain and manifest the culture and values of an organization), and assets and skills (also add credibility and reflect the brand-customer relationship) (Aaker, 1995).

Accordingly, these characteristics generate organizational associations that can be linked to the brand identity, they provide value and can be a foundation for differentiation, value proposition, and customer relationship (figure 2) (Aaker, 1995).

Figure 2 How organizational associations provide value



Source: (Aaker, 1995)

Some of the representative associations of organizational characteristics are as follows:

Society/Community Orientation

This characteristic is very valuable when developing community-oriented associations and can vary through having an environmental susceptibility or thinking “green” and immersing in the community by having sponsorship, charities, among others (Aaker, 1995).

Perceived Quality

Customers have high consideration for this characteristic and can be perceived as better than the competitors; some companies adopt this characteristic as a core value. In fact, in such a homogeneous market (hospitality sector),

delivering products and/or services with high quality, differentiate the brand from the competition (Choi & Chu, 1999).

Innovation

Having an innovativeness company-related element is an advantage since it provides credibility for the brand and is perceived as modern (Aaker, 1995).

Concern for Customers

One way to give consumers confidence in what the brand sells is by communicating as a core value the fact that the company puts the customer first (Aaker, 1995).

Local versus Global

Heightening the regional/local aspect of a company can differentiate it and can develop connections. Due to the growth of standardized hotels, local hospitality is drifting away, consequently, so is the rich experience that it provides (Khan et al., 2018).

A global company can be perceived as committed and lasting, as well as prestigious since it competes in several markets (Aaker, 1995).

The purpose of the brand identity is to deliver a value proposition and a customer relationship that is built within the organizational associations and to communicate the culture and values of the company (Aaker, 1995).

A brand that has organizational associations provides internal guidance to the company.

1.4.3. The Brand as Person

Perceiving the brand as person helps conceptualize the brand personality, which is an advantage for the brand for many reasons. First, it can generate self-expressive benefits (which will be explained further in) for consumers; second, brand personalities can build and impact relationships between the brand and the customer, similarly to human personalities that impact relationships between people; and lastly, a brand personality can be impacted by the product-related attributes, since they can convey certain personality traits, for example, a high price can convey a wealthy brand (Aaker, 1995).

Perceiving the brand as person, as well as the brand as organization help developing brand-customer relationships (Aaker, 1995).

Brand Personalities

Brand personality is the set of human traits related to a certain brand (Aaker, 1995) and can impact the consumers' decision of choosing a brand over another (Siguaw et al., 1999).

Brand personality can be expressed through demographics (age, gender, social class, and race), lifestyle (activities, interests, and opinions), or human personality characteristics (Aaker, 1995).

In the brand personality scale (Aaker, 1995), commonly known as The Big Five, there are five personality traits (“Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness”) to shape the brand personality.

The BPS study demonstrated that the same personality trait can be perceived negatively or positively depending on the brands and that the personality traits most associated with positive attitudes were Sincerity and the Competence factor. Within the Sincerity factor, there are traits such as down-to-earth (family-oriented, small town, conventional, blue-collar, all American), honest (sincere, real, ethical, thoughtful, caring), wholesome (original, genuine, ageless, classic, old fashioned) and cheerful (sentimental, friendly, warm, happy). Inside of Competence, there are other traits such as reliability (hard-working, secure, efficient, trustworthy, careful), intelligence (technical, corporate, serious), and successful (leader, confident, influential) (Aaker, 1995).

The brand personality is as much affected by everything associated with it as a person (neighborhood, friends, activities, clothes, and manners).

Some non-product-related characteristics that impact the brand personality are user imagery (which can be built on representative users of the brand or conceptualized users), sponsorship, age (younger or old-fashioned personalities), symbols (which are a representation of something that doesn’t negatively surprises nor changes over time, unlike real people) (Aaker, 1995).

The brand personality communicates the brand identity to the ones who must implement it. Brand personality is reflected not only in advertising, but also in packaging, promotions, and interactions between the brand and the customer, among others.

1.4.4.The Brand as Symbol

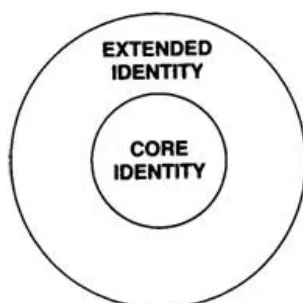
A strong symbol gives cohesion and structure to brand identity and facilitates recognition and recall achievement (Aaker, 1995).

The brand as symbol can impact customer loyalty (Huang Ning Lee et al., 2019). Companies can reinforce brand design by incorporating symbols to attract consumers (Huang Ning Lee et al., 2019). The symbols can help brands reflect their brand value (Huang Ning Lee et al., 2019). Symbols and the way they have presented impact consumer perceptions (Krippendorff & Butter, 1984) and can help build the image of a brand (Huang Ning Lee et al., 2019).

1.5.THE IDENTITY STRUCTURE

As shown in figure 3, the brand identity structure is composed of the core identity and the extended identity.

Figure 3 The identity structure



Source: (Aaker, 1995)

The core identity has the most distinctive aspects of the brand, which make it unique. It should also be strongly connected to the values of the brand. Furthermore, every aspect of the brand identity should be surrounded by a group of other elements of the brand to give richness to the brand, which makes stable and cohesive patterns of meaning. It is important to draw these grouping of identity elements through a mental network that connects the elements between them. This grouping of elements of the brand becomes evident (Aaker, 1995).

The core identity should impact the value proposition of the brand.

However, the core identity doesn't have enough strength to sustain the identity of the brand. Therefore, the extended identity should have elements to sustain the brand with richness. Another way to provide richness is to develop a brand personality (Aaker, 1995).

1.6.VALUE PROPOSITION

A value proposition is a promise of the brand to deliver functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits to the customers. It should help develop a brand-customer relationship and impact the decision-making process (Aaker, 1995).

1.6.1. Functional Benefits

Functional benefits are promises made by the brand regarding the product's attributes and functional utility. Since these last two may not present a differentiation factor from the competition the brand should include in the value

proposition other promises to the customer, such as emotional and self-expressive benefits, and also envision the brand through other brand identity perspectives like the brand as person, brand as organization and brand as symbol (Aaker, 1995).

1.6.2. Emotional Benefits

Emotional benefits are promises made by the brand that adds richness to the experience of the consumer using the brand. These benefits focus on the feeling that each functional benefit is induced in the customer. An example is how a customer feels safe when using a Volvo due to its weight and design. To obtain a strong identity, brands should adopt functional and emotional benefits to their value proposition (Aaker, 1995).

1.6.3. Self-Expressive Benefits

Consumers reflect their inner thoughts through their self-expressive behavior (H. S. Kim & Sherman, 2007). Self-expression involves controlling the way one is perceived by others (Rifkin & Etkin, 2019).

“Brands and products can become symbols of a person’s self-concept” (Aaker, 1995, p. 99). The fact that a brand is able to deliver a self-expressive benefit, allows the deepening of the connection between the brand and the customer.

1.6.4. The role of Price

The brand's price is strongly connected with the brand's benefits, as such, it needs to be considered along with the brand's benefits.

The price defines the competitive market, i.e., if the brand is upscale, middle-market, or downscale.

What needs to be considered in the value proposition creation is if the brand is driven by its price or by its benefits. Although, the identity development purpose is to focus on creating benefits instead of price. However, if the price plays an important role in the brand's identity, there is a need nevertheless, to ensure that the brand creates benefits that sustain the price of the brand (Aaker, 1995).

1.7. BRAND POSITION

After developing the identity and the value proposition, a brand positioning statement must be created. "Brand position is the part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands" (Aaker, 1995, p. 176). The focal of the brand position is as its phrases: "part", "target audience", actively communicated" and "demonstrates advantage". Some crucial identity elements don't necessarily need to be in the communication strategy.

“Part”

The “part” focuses on the core identity, the points of leverage, and the value proposition. There are points of leverage of the brand position that are not necessarily at the core identity of the brand (Aaker, 1995).

“Target Audience”

The brand position is designed for specific and different target audiences, which may belong to the same brand’s target segment i.e., there can be a primary and secondary target audience. The secondary target should be considered as much as the primary target audience (Aaker, 1995).

“Actively Communicated”

The brand position needs to be actively communicated; therefore, different, and specific communication objectives need to be planned to change the brand image or brand-customer relationship, which should be tracked with measurement. To create a brand position, the brand identity should be compared with the brand image (Aaker, 1995).

“Demonstrates Advantage”

The main goal of creating a brand position is to deliver an advantage that resonates with the consumers “because of a compelling value proposition or because of a meaningful brand-customer relationship” (Aaker, 1995, p. 82).

Another goal is to provide a differentiation aspect regarding the competition.

However, the brand must be sustained by the brand position that it claims to have, i.e., the brand must be supported by an organization with the ability to create and reflect the new identity claim (Aaker, 1995).

Message

Regardless of the channel in which the brand operates, the message should be unified, and customer-driven. The message needs to be clear, consistent, and brief. The message should be coherent with the brand (Wheeler, 2003).

Persona

A persona is a fictional representation of consumers based on dominant characteristics and its purpose is to improve the decision-making process of consumers. When designing the persona, there should be as much information about the consumers as possible, to accurately classify the consumers. Furthermore, designing the persona should be based on the possibility of future changes in the consumers, to accurately handle them (Kikuchi & Takahashi, 2021).

The purpose of having personas is to decrease the complexity of predicting consumption among consumers and therefore act accordingly (Aimé et al., 2022).

2. METHODOLOGY

The Methodology chapter emphasizes the instruments and methods used for this research. This research analysis was conducted through qualitative methods.

Qualitative data is connected to interpretivist philosophy since researchers need to do subjective and socially construct meanings from the research, therefore, it depends on social interaction. Its analysis needs to be sensitive to its characteristics (Saunders et al., 1997). Qualitative data is expected to have more richness and fullness since the researcher can explore the context in a more realistic approach (Saunders et al., 1997).

This research has a deductive approach since the codes are derived from theoretical work (Saunders et al., 1997), which in this case was the “Brand Identity Planning Model”.

The Brand Identity Planning Model will be proposed and built through the approach of the internal analysis – to understand the internal aspects and resources of the hotel’s environment that impacts its image and how those aspects can create and reflect a cohesive and consistent identity and communication – and the external analysis – to understand the competitive context in which the hotel is inserted and how the hotel can achieve a distinctive image and position within the competition (Aaker, 1995).

2.1. DATA COLLECTION

The data collection in which this research was conducted, includes the following instruments: participant observation, documentary analysis, and interviews. The purpose is to identify relevant data regarding the environment within the hotel that enables the clarification of the frame of reference.

The instruments used in the research will be addressed next.

2.1.1. Participant Observation

The participant observation was conducted in the hotel in the context of an internship during the period between November 1st, 2021, and January 31st, 2022.

Participant observation allows the observer to get highly involved and augment his or her knowledge about the informants' interaction, which is an advantage in research (Saunders et al., 1997). Accordingly, the participant observation allowed a deepened understanding of the environment in which the hotel was inserted.

The participant observation concerns all the internal aspects of the hotel. In this project, the participant observation's emphasis is portrayed throughout the Analysis Chapter (type of guests and their several interests in staying at the hotel, the duration of the guest's stay, the facilities, the partnerships, the staff, the marketing, and the several departments-related aspects, etc.).

Observation requires a systematic process, including viewing, recording, description, analysis, and interpretation (Saunders et al., 1997). This instrument involved living in the context, speaking the local language, participating in several

activities of daily life, interacting with the informants, observing, and recording them in field notes.

The data collection used in this instrument was contextual data (involves what roles were played by key informants and the organizational structure that help the observer to analyze the data (Saunders et al., 1997).

This data was recorded in field notes (Appendix 1) and was then analyzed within the context of the hotel, which is demonstrated throughout the Analysis chapter (3.0.).

The object of observation under this methodological tool was composed of the director, employees, and hotel guests.

2.1.2. Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is an effective and efficient instrument. Data derived from documents can provide details within the research context and can be a valuable supplement to a knowledge base. It is advised that researchers include document analysis in their research (Bowen, 2009).

While collecting data from the Booking.com website (the first hospitality distribution platform in the 2021 ranking (*Leisure & Tourism 10 2020 Ranking*, n.d.)) about the hotels, an analysis was also done at the same time, as well as comparing new data with data already collected. While doing this analysis and comparison of data, similar meanings were detected and classified into new codes (Saunders et al., 1997). Some of the codes generated from this analysis were the price, services,

concept, design, website, social media (Facebook, Instagram), respective content, quality photos, consistency in publishing, rating on Booking, and general information of Hotel Miramonti and its competitors, which is mostly demonstrated in the Competitors Analysis chapter.

The documentary analysis's purpose was to frame the competitive context of the hotel. The sampling is composed of several Internet sources: the official site of tourism of Vallé d'Aoste (region appeal), Booking.com (customer's reviews and ratings on Booking); website of the competitors (Hotel Paradise & Wellness, Hotel Alla Posta, Hotel de la Ville, Hotel Relais du Foyer, and Grand Hotel Billia); and the social media (Facebook and Instagram) of the hotel and its competitors (Hotel Paradise & Wellness, Hotel Alla Posta, Hotel de la Ville, Hotel Relais du Foyer, and Grand Hotel Billia).

The data is demonstrated throughout the Analysis chapter.

2.1.3. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are used to understand participants' attitudes and opinions and add substance and depth to the data since interviewees share their thoughts in their personal way and shed light on aspects that weren't previously considered by the researcher. This way, the researcher gathers substantial and thorough data. This can also promote validity to the semi-structured interview since the topic is explored from multiple angles (Saunders et al., 1997).

Three interviews were conducted. First, the semi-structured interview with the director of the hotel, to understand what the director wants the identity of the

hotel to be and his inputs for the branding strategy to help frame the proposal of this project. And then, semi-structured interviews with some of the members of the staff to have a better glimpse at the internal perspective, to understand what's feasible to do internally to solve some of the existing obstacles that are currently affecting the image of the hotel. These interviews will accomplish a validity or a refutation of what was recommended (Saunders et al., 1997).

The purpose of these interviews is to “cross” the inputs between the hotel director and the members of the staff, more specifically to compare what the director wants the identity of the hotel to be like and what actually can be done in practical terms.

This instrument is composed of three interviews: with the director – B.M. –, and two members of the staff: F.M., which works at the reception, and D.M., which works at the reception and the dinner service.

From the literature review, the following codes were generated (*a priori codes* (Saunders et al., 1997)): brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, functional benefits, emotional benefits, and target audience. According to the literature review, questions for the director's interview were created for each of the previous codes (Appendix 2). The interview with the director happened on May 17th, 2022. The interview was transcribed and the units of data referring to the different codes were highlighted with different colors (each color referring to each code) (Appendix 3). To adequately code the data, after the analysis of the transcription, there was a need to devise new codes (Saunders et al., 1997). Devised codes are based on the interpretation and similarity of meanings, the classification into categories, and the use of conceptualization (Saunders et al., 1997), i.e., units of

data from the interview with similar meanings were categorized into new codes. The same quotation from the interviewed participants may belong to more than one code. The devised codes are as follows: resting holiday, technology, location, rest and comfort, value for money, parking lot, wellness, romance, peace of mind, nature and surroundings, safety, welcoming, and pampering.

In order to organize and better visualize the data, a table was generated (Appendix 4). Since the table that was used to gather all of the data has too many lines, the present project only displays a template of the said table. The first column concerns the topics explored in the literature review, such as the brand identity planning model (only three perspectives were analyzed in this research: brand as product, brand as organization, and brand as person; the brand as symbol, as the literature review suggests, wasn't approached in this research because, given the context of the hotel, it wasn't considered relevant), brand identity structure, value proposition, and brand position.

The second column regards *a priori* codes that belong to each of the previously mentioned topics of the literature review (in the 2nd column), which are as follows: brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, functional benefits, emotional benefits, and target audience. Also in the second column, it regards some literature review terms that belong to each of the previously mentioned topics of the literature review (in 1st column), which are as follows: core identity, extended identity, "part", "actively communicated" and "demonstrates advantage".

The third column regards topics of the literature review that belong in each of the previously mentioned codes and terms (in the 2nd column), which are as follows: product scope, product-related attributes, quality-values, use occasion,

culture/values, people, programs, community, and local, environment, pursue for quality, innovative, concern for customer, brand personality, core identity and points of leverage, value proposition, interest, type of guest, demographic, first target audience, second target audience, first target audience, and second target audience. It was made a distinction between the first target and the secondary target because brands need to communicate differently to each target (Aaker, 1995). The first and secondary targets were created based on the “interest”, “type of guest” and “demographic”. The third column also concerns devised codes, which are as follows: resting holiday, technology, location, rest and comfort, value for money, parking lot, wellness, romance, peace of mind, nature and surroundings, safety, welcoming, and pampering.

The quotations from the director were gathered in the table (in the fourth column) (Appendix 4). Each unit of data refers to each code of the table.

Based on the consumer, competitor, and internal analysis and also based on the interview, some recommendations were generated and gathered (in the fifth column) concerning each code and term of the literature review. Some recommendations were created for terms of the literature review that don’t have a quotation from the interviewed participants, however, they have the same foundation as well (based on the consumer, competitors, and internal analysis and also on the analysis of the interview). This was a back-and-forth process, i.e., some recommendations were made while analyzing other code’s recommendations and so on.

After having the recommendations, the questions for the staff were created (Appendix 5). To the staff, only aspects that they have enough knowledge to give

their opinion on were approached, for example, practical aspects about the service and aspects that they were able to change. Questions about managerial aspects and things that are out of the staff's reach weren't made. The interview with the staff was made to refute or validate the recommendations. The codes for the interviews with the staff were codes generated from the recommendations (which are as follows: rooms, reception, complete service, cinema, bar, and staff) and from the literature review (which are as follows: culture/values, core identity, extended identity, relationship, competitive leverage, 1st target audience, and 2nd target audience).

The interview with the first member of the staff (D.M.) happened on July 2nd, 2022, and the interview with the second member of the staff (F.M.) happened on July 4th, 2022. The interviews were transcribed and the units of data referring to the different codes were highlighted with different colors (each color referring to each code) (Appendix 6 and Appendix 7). After the analysis of the transcription, devised codes were also generated (units of data from the interview with similar meanings were categorized into new codes). The same quotation from the interviewed participants may belong to more than one code. In the case of the first member of the staff, the following code was devised: pursue for quality. Through the similarity of meanings this devised code ("pursue for quality") was associated with the *a priori* code that was already generated from the literature review. In the case of the second member of the staff, the following codes were devised: pursue for quality, breakfast and dining room, and wellness. Through the similarity of meanings, these devised codes ("breakfast and dining room" and "wellness") were associated with the devised code of the interview with the director.

The quotations of the first and second members of the staff were displayed in the table (sixth and seventh column respectively) (Appendix 4): each unit of data refers to each code of the table.

Based on the consumer, competitor, and internal analysis and also based on the interviews, the final recommendations were generated (in the eighth column) concerning each code and terms of the literature review. Some recommendations were created for terms of the literature review that don't have a quotation from the interviewed participants, however, they have the same foundation as well (based on the consumer, competitor, and internal analysis and also on the analysis of the interview). This was a back-and-forth process, i.e., some recommendations were made while analyzing other code's recommendations and so on. The final recommendations are the foundation of the proposal chapter.

3.PROJECT ANALYSIS

In this chapter, it was followed the Brand Identity Planning Model, proposed by David Aaker. The project analysis starts with the analysis of the consumers, followed by the competitor's analysis, and lastly the internal analysis of Hotel Miramonti.

3.1. CONSUMERS

The consumers of Hotel Miramonti are composed of different groups of people and by different interests, according to table 1. There are couples, families, and/or friends and groups. The interests can vary from ski sports, wellness, the region, and lastly, the billiard contest.

Usually, the couples stay at the hotel during the weekend and sometimes next to a holiday where they spend a romantic weekend enjoying the wellness activities in the city and/or exploring the region of Vallé d'Aoste and most specifically Saint-Vincent.

There are also groups of friends and/or families that stay at Miramonti for a weekend and sometimes next to a holiday and even stay for a whole week. This group of guests seeks wellness activities while enjoying the region and gastronomy of Vallé d'Aoste and the city of Saint-Vincent.

Lastly, there are groups of guests that are organized for two specific purposes: ski week and billiard. The group of ski is organized by an individual that arranges and brings big groups of guests, from 20 to 60 people. This group stays at

the hotel for one week and has a week's plan for ski activities in Cervinia. The other group of guests stay for approximately one week and attend the Italian Billiard Championship. This group has coupons provided by FIBIS – Federazione Italiana Biliardo Sportivo – and the guests take interest in the billiard pool in the hotel.

Table 1 Interest of each type of guest

<i>Type of guests</i>	<i>Interests</i>
Couples	Wellness + Region
Families + Friends	Wellness + Region
Groups	Ski + Billiard

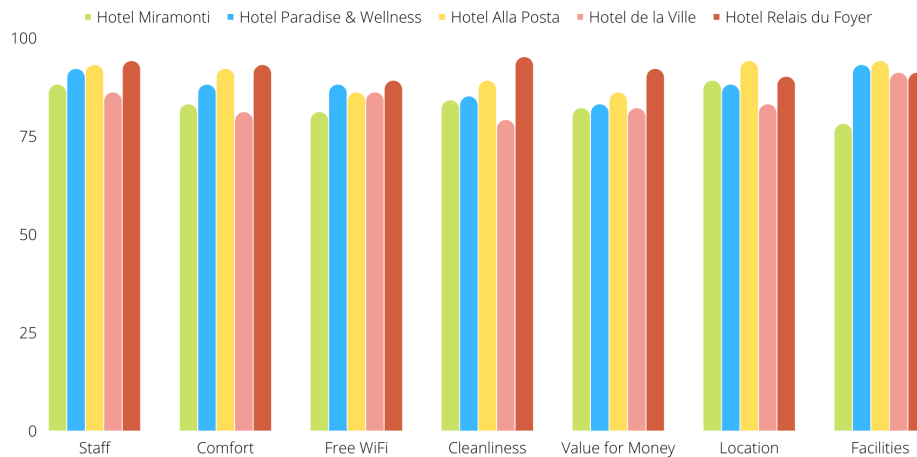
Source: Own Elaboration

3.2. COMPETITION

For the analysis of the competition, it will be considered the competitive context within the hotel, which in this case, the relevant competitors are considered according to the typology (hotel), location (in Saint-Vincent), the (similar) price range, and the (similar) star rating.

According to figure 4, Hotel Miramonti is amongst the hotels with lower classification in Booking reviews.

Figure 4 Booking ratings competitive context of Hotel Miramonti



Source: Own Elaboration

As shown in table 2, almost every competitor has a restaurant and bar service to external guests and a wellness center. Contrarily, only a few have conference rooms. Regarding the price, Hotel Miramonti position itself in the middle of its competitors.

Table 2 Service and price competitive context of Hotel Miramonti

	Restaurant/ Bar	Wellness Center	Conference Room	Price
Hotel Miramonti				86€
Hotel Paradise & Wellness				118€
Hotel Alla Posta				90€
Hotel De La Ville				69€
Hotel Relais Du Foyer				64€
Grand Hotel Billia				206€

Source: Own Elaboration

According to table 3, only three competitors have a clear promotion of concepts on their website and social media: romance and family. The design adopted by the competition varies among traditional, modern, alpine, classic, historical, and sophisticated styles. The promoted content on social media goes through facilities, food and drinks, views, region, service, guests, and termes. Between the competition, only Hotel Miramonti doesn't have a website. Only two hotels (being Hotel Miramonti one of them) have Facebook and only one competitor doesn't have Instagram. In general, the posts on social media have poor quality and don't have consistency. Hotel Miramonti is the hotel with the lowest rating on Booking.

Table 3 Communication competitive context of Hotel Miramonti

	Hotel Miramonti		Hotel Paradise & Wellness		Hotel Alla Posta		Hotel De La Ville	Hotel Relais Du Foyer	Grand Hotel Billia
Concept			Romantic					Romantic Familiar	Romantic
Design			Traditional		Modern Aplyn-Style		Classic	Traditional	Historic/Traditional X Modern Sophisticated
Content	Facilities Views	Food Region	Facilities Region	Views Service	Facilities Region	Food Guests Views	Termes	Facilities Region	Facilities Service Food+Drinks
Website									
									
									
Quality									
Consistency									
Rating	7,9		8,5		8,8		8,0	9,1	

Source: Own Elaboration

3.2.1. Hotel Paradise & Wellness

Hotel Paradise & Wellness is a 4-star hotel very known in Saint-Vincent, not only for the wellness experience it provides but also for the romantic concept it sells.

The hotel has rooms with a traditional mountain design and some of them have balconies. The hotel provides a spa center, parking, free wifi, and a bar, pets are allowed.

One of the most important services the hotel has in its portfolio is the Spa. The spa includes a swimming pool area (15€/person/day), dry sauna and steam sauna (20€/person/day), salt relax room (15€/person/day), and wellness treatments that range from 30€ to 90€, such as candle massage, lymphatic massage, decontracting massage, localized massage, aromatherapy relaxation massage, hot stone massage, among others. It also provides beauty treatments that range from 8€ to 49€, such as manicure, pedicure, nail treatments, depilation, and so on. On special dates like Valentine's Day, the hotel provides special services (Annex 1).

The hotel has a website and an Instagram account, where they publish content about the hotel services and special dates services, its facilities (rooms and common areas), the hotel views, and activities to do in the region.

Even though it is a present brand on social media and presents good quality photos, it does not publish daily nor provides original content (Hotel Paradise & Wellness, 2022).

According to Booking, guests give a rating of 8,5 ("very good") (Annex 2) and the most valued category is the location and the category with the lowest rating is

the value for money, which is still a good rating (8,3). Also, according to Booking, guests rated the hotel with a 9,4 for a two-person trip.

Hotel Paradise & Wellness is a strong competitor of Hotel Miramonti; not only provides wellness experiences, which is a very common interest for guests of this area, but also provides good content online and has a good perception from customers (according to Booking).

According to Booking, the price of staying one night is 118€ (May 8, 2022).

3.2.2. Hotel Alla Posta

Hotel Alla Posta is a 4-star hotel located in Saint-Vincent. The hotel serves homemade products at breakfast, has a restaurant open throughout the day indoors and on a terrace, and provides traditional dishes made with local products. The hotel also has a wellness facility, including a swimming pool with hydromassage jets, a sauna, a Turkish bath, a relaxation area; two conference rooms, and a reading lounge. The hotel has a modern Alpine style, it provides bathroom amenities, free internet, parking, transfer service, the minibar service is free, and pets are allowed.

The hotel has a website, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts. In the Instagram account, the hotel shares the hotel views, hotel facilities, the food they serve and typical food of the region, photos with guests, photos, and videos of the region, and reposts guests' photos, among others. The hotel does not publish daily nor provides original content (Hotel Alla Posta, 2022).

According to Booking, guests give a rating of 8,8 (“fabulous”) (Annex 2) and the most valued categories are cleanliness and the location and the categories with the lowest rating are the value for money and free wifi, which is still a good rating (8,6). Also, according to Booking, guests rated the hotel with a 9,4 for a two-person trip.

Overall, Hotel Alla Posta is a relevant competitor, since it extends the wellness experience of the city to its indoor swimming pool, which is a very valuable element for guests of this area, but also provides diversified content online and has a very good perception from customers (according to Booking).

According to Booking, the price of staying one night is 90€ (May 8, 2022).

3.2.3. Hotel De La Ville

Hotel De La Ville is a 4-star hotel located in the historic center of Saint-Vincent.

The hotel has a classic design, it has a bar and lounge area, parking, and free wifi. The hotel has only a basic website and a Facebook account, where it rarely shares content; the content isn’t about the hotel but the local terms.

According to Booking, guests give a rating of 8,0 (“very good”) (Annex 2) and the most valued category is the location and the category with the lowest rating is the facilities. Also, according to Booking, guests rated the hotel with a 9,1 for a two-person trip.

Overall, Hotel De La Ville is a relevant competitor, since it has a very good perception from customers (booking.com, 2022). Some of the vulnerabilities of the

brand can be the fact that the facilities and design can be perceived as old and old-fashioned; and the fact that the hotel barely has an online presence (Hotel de la Ville, 2022). Also, unlike its competitors, it is the only one that doesn't have wellness facilities.

According to Booking, the price of staying one night is 69€ (May 8, 2022).

3.2.4. Hotel Relais Du Foyer

Hotel Relais Du Foyer is a 4-star hotel, located in Chatillon, near Saint Vincent, surrounded by views and nature. It has a familiar environment. Rooms are spacious and have a traditional design. The hotel also has another option of accommodation, which is apartments. The hotel has a small wellness center, equipped with a sauna, steam bath, and jacuzzi. It is open every day and requires reservations (80€ per couple).

The hotel is pet friendly, has parking, and has agreements with restaurants, wellness centers, and spas in the area.

Hotel Relais Du Foyer has a website, where it communicates a romantic experience; it also has a Facebook and Instagram account. It shares content about the facilities and places to visit in the region (Hotel Relais du Foyer, 2022).

According to Booking, guests give a rating of 9,1 ("superb") (Annex 2) and the most valued category is the staff. The category with the lowest rating is the free wifi, which is still a good rating (8,9). Also, according to Booking, guests rated the hotel with a 9,0 for a two-person trip.

According to Booking, the price of staying one night is 64€ (May 8, 2022).

3.2.5. Grand Hotel Billia

Grand Hotel Billia is a very prestigious 5-star hotel next to the historic center of Saint-Vincent. Even though this hotel isn't a direct competitor to Hotel Miramonti, it should be analyzed for benchmarking purposes.

Grand Hotel Billia is known for its historic building and for being an icon of Vallé d'Aosta's hospitality.

Grand Hotel Billia combines a modern design with sophisticated architecture and belongs to a hotel complex: the bedrooms are unique and traditional, with a distinctive design; it has an outdoor swimming pool, surrounded by a garden, which is open from June to September; it has a wellness area; it has restaurants and bars; it has conference rooms.

The hotel's concern is providing a great experience to guests and having attention to detail which results in service with excellence and high hospitality standards.

The hotel has free wifi, parking, and a Tesla Destination Charging, the hotel allows pets but at an extra 50€ per day per room.

The hotel has a clear effort in communicating its values to guests and promoting and communicating romantic experiences within the complex. The hotel has an updated and quality website, a Facebook, and an Instagram account. The hotel promotes good quality photos and shares content about facilities, food and

drinks, and the service. It doesn't publish regularly/frequently (Grand Hotel Billia, 2022).

According to its website, the price of staying one night is 206€ (May 8, 2022).

3.3. INTERNAL/SELF-ANALYSIS

3.3.1. Current resources

Facilities

Regarding the facilities of the hotel, the hotel is very big and has several spacious areas. In fact, and according to the director, one of the most valuable aspects of the hotel is its advantageous size. However, there is a poor use of the facilities/areas i.e., there is potential to create and develop interesting services or spaces, but the hotel doesn't give proper use to those areas (bars, lounges, balconies of the rooms, and balconies of the lounges). There is also a gym that is being currently rented and managed by an external individual who takes his own clients; the hotel's guests cannot enjoy the gym. The architecture of the hotel's building combines modern with traditional style; however, the decoration can be perceived as old-fashioned. According to the director, the facilities are also very luminous (halls and rooms).

Location

The director considers that one of the most important advantages of the hotel is its location since it's located in the center of the Vallé d' Aoste, taking guests 30 to 40 minutes to get to other touristic towns. Additionally, it is located in a very small, safe, peaceful, and quiet urban center, near a forest, which allows guests to appreciate the same peace of mind, and relaxation, to have a break from their lives, and at the same time to be connected with the nature. The guests can have undisturbed and comfortable stays.

Partnerships

The hotel lacks partnerships, especially with travel agencies or OTA's, which in the hospitality market is so valuable and imperative. Partnerships could increase brand awareness and brand associations.

Staff

Concerning the staff, the hotel doesn't have any recruitment standards or processes, from not trained staff to not having a recruitment source. Consequently, the employees are polyvalent and take on whatever necessary functions/tasks. Currently, the hotel has only three "permanent" employees, most of them are temporary or outsourced, therefore there isn't an organizational chart. The staff also doesn't have uniforms, which can damage the hotel's perception of cleanliness, which is a fundamental aspect of the hospitality sector.

The director is a very attentive employer and puts people first, believing in the potential of each one of his employees. However, he acknowledges the lack of

professionalism of some members of the staff and that not always does he have the most suitable person for the job.

The staff recognizes that their team needs an improvement by the lack of competence; however, it's divided: one of the interviewed members of the staff believes that the staff needs to be replaced and demonstrates a lack of confidence and another interviewed member of the staff believes in the potential of the people, and believe they only need to be trained. The staff considers that there's a need to hire one more person for the reception.

The director considers that there are a few requirements when hiring new employees, which are, working well and liking to work, especially as a team. The staff adds: being competent on the job, pampering the guests, developing a relationship with the guests, speaking some languages like French and English, being kind to guests, being attentive and smart. However, the director doesn't implement a hiring standard nor trains the staff.

One member of the staff believes that when working with people one should naturally possess some behaviors, such as, trying relationships with the guest and pampering the guest.

The staff is generally unmotivated and confesses that they would be more motivated if they learned new things and if they were appreciated by the director and fellow colleagues.

The staff recognizes the priority of putting effort into elevating and making the guests' experience memorable and surprising them if a good implementation of the process happens. In fact, one member of the staff says that this is the way to

make the customers return to the hotel. The staff believes that when providing more and better services, the better will be for the guests, and consequently for the hotel.

The staff of the reception said that the reception must communicate better with the staff of the housekeeping. The staff considers that the staff from the housekeeping should be more attentive to common areas.

Marketing

Regarding the marketing efforts, there aren't any values defined. In fact, the staff agrees on having guest-oriented, personalization, reliability, and discretion as values.

The hotel lacks a marketing strategy; it only has a few actions concerning marketing, which are: they are present on Booking; there used to be a website but has recently been shut down; the photos and posts on Instagram are careless and with poor quality and consistency/frequency; often, the responses to guests' reviews/comments are not carefully made by the staff, which communicates an insensitive image; the hotel has a LinkedIn account; however, it is not a professional account.

Reception

Considering the several departments of the hotel, in the reception, the software doesn't support historical information about guests; therefore, the staff cannot be proactive and anticipate guests' needs, which can negatively impact guests' image of the hotel. The director thinks that the reception is uninviting, flawed, and disappointing to guests, and considers that it could be solved with good lighting, a new and bigger reception counter, having TVs and plants.

The staff says that it would be a good improvement for the hotel to send a follow-up email to guests after booking a room and to have software that supports information about the guests, to be proactive in the service.

Rooms

The hotel is composed of 50 rooms. The typologies of the rooms are single, twin, double, and triple and have extra beds. The hotel has connecting rooms that allow families to share rooms and facilitate the stay of families with children. However, these rooms are not totally soundproofed, which can damage the hotel's image for guests who stay in these rooms. The director intends to remodel the rooms and make them more special, appealing, and romantic for couples and surprise guests on special dates. He also intends to improve the rooms with 70-inch TVs and Dolby Surround.

The staff is aware that it's important to avoid accommodating separate guests in connecting rooms, in contrast to families or groups of friends.

The staff and the director would like to convey a romantic concept to the hotel by providing a romantic kit (decorating the rooms with a romantic style: providing flowers, chocolates, wine, champagne, and so on) and surprising the guests with little details (proving guests with little details on guests' celebrations).

The staff says that to provide these things the employees need to be competent and trained.

Kitchen

Regarding the kitchen, the meals are poorly presented, which can influence the perception of quality.

Breakfast and dining room

In the breakfast and dining room, there are no Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), regarding a list of tasks for a shift, the *mise en place*, setting tables, and so on, which can be confusing for guests, since there isn't a consistent and standardized service. The counter of the breakfast and dining room is carelessly presented and old-fashioned. In the housekeeping department, there is a lack of communication with the reception, which is, not only inefficient but may manifest a bad image to guests as well.

The staff considers that the breakfast and dinner service could be improved, and the hotel could serve homemade cakes, fruit salads, yogurt, and regional products at breakfast.

Services

Regarding the services, the organized ski groups (from 20 to 60 guests) are provided with an additional service which is dinner. The dinner is composed of salads, soup, first course, second course, and dessert. This service and its price are previously established between the group manager and the hotel. The hotel has free wifi and pets are allowed. The hotel has a parking service (10€ per day per car). In fact, the director thinks that the few parking spaces damage the image of the hotel, therefore he intends on doing works on the floor of the parking lot.

One of the director's goals is to give complete service to guests, proposing an organized trip for guests and accompanying them, so they don't have to worry while on vacation. He would also like to provide transportation from and to the airport so they will be pampered during their stay. He would also like to give an additional service with technologies: to create a cinema room with 3D movies and a game room since the facilities have enough space to handle the cinema room. The director also wants to provide a sunbathing area for guests to relax during their vacations. He believes in the potential to improve the service.

As an additional service, the director will start this winter a wellness center, so people can relax after spending a day doing snow sports. The wellness center may include a gym and a person who can do massages and nail service, to provide a wide wellness offer.

The director would like to pamper the guests from when they arrive to when they leave, by providing a complete service and surprising them. This involves trying to understand their wishes, so the staff can be proactive when serving them.

The staff would like to personalize the guests' service by providing an organized holiday route for each guest during their stay and they also recognize that that could be the reason why the hotel could get chosen because of that service.

One member of the staff suggests that the hotel has a swimming pool. The staff agrees that having a cinema could improve the guests' stay and would be a competitive advantage for the hotel since none of the competitors have that. They also agree on opening the bar. In fact, one of the members of the staff gave this recommendation to the director.

The staff defends that they need to do more things for the guest and provide more services.

Values and Culture

One member of the staff is aware that there should be friendship between the hotel and the guests since friendship is the base of relationships. Especially there should be respect between people, according to one member of the staff.

The staff recognizes that they need to pamper the guests and provide good memories for them to come back.

3.3.2. Current brand status

With the older administration, the hotel lacked coherent communication, or communication at all, whether internally and externally. However, with the recent acquisition of the hotel, the manager intends to reframe the hotel. The director believes in the improvement of the service. He wants the hotel to be associated with the casino and wellness as relaxation after skiing, taking a stroll, activities for couples, and regional activities, such as bike excursions. The staff agrees that the hotel should be associated with winter sports, romance, peaceful, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, and pampering the guests, since there are ski sports and termes in the region, the guests are in the middle of the nature and have everything they need in Vallé d'Aoste and so on. They consider that the food is also important because in Aoste there is a lot of typical food. The holiday route is considered by the staff to be an improvement to the service and that it gives the hotel a good image.

The staff considers that having the following concepts associated with the hotel it's important and will improve its image: romantic experience, a peaceful environment, a connection with nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampering the guests, relationship with the guests, safe, sports, alpine style, wellness, welcoming, guest-oriented, friendship, fun, surprising the guests, local business/communities involvement, strategic geographically location, regional (*valdostana* concept), convenience for guests, innovative experiences (cinema), personalization, experience-driven, sensitive to guests, convey trust to guests, discreet, improvement in the service, people first.

According to the staff, the following aspects could give the hotel a competitive advantage: providing a personalized holiday route for guests, having a cinema, and associating guest-oriented, personalization, reliability, and discretion with the hotel.

The director would like the hotel to convey an image of a 30 years old woman, of medium class, rather single, without kids. She would like to spend a weekend doing sports, fun, and leisure. According to him, her hobby could be sports (jogging), shopping, and relaxation. He wants the hotel to be associated with "serious, relaxed, a little introverted, traditional, conservative, conscious and careful, sensitive, discreet and comfortable".

According to Booking, guests give a rating of 7,9 ("good") (Annex 2) and the most valued category is the location and the category with the lowest rating is the facilities, which is still a good rating (7,8). Also, according to Booking, families rated the hotel with an 8,7 for a stay with kids (booking.com, 2022). Also, according to Booking, Hotel Miramonti's rates on Booking are low compared to the competition.

3.3.3. Region Appeal

The region of Vallé d'Aoste represents an appeal, and it is a point of interest for the hotel guests, for many reasons – the region, the ski sports, the billiard contest, and the wellness center.

In the winter, guests search the Vallée d'Aoste to have a ski vacation, surrounded by the mountains, snow, and major ski resorts, like Courmayeur and Cervinia. However, summer also represents a tourist season. The hotel is privileged to be surrounded by the idiosyncrasies and the several activities and attractions of the vale, from snow sports and activities, monuments and castles, and welfare-related activities, like termes. Also, the enogastronomy plays an important role in *Valdostana* city, from wine to cheese, as well as, nature and all the activities that emphasize it, such as cable cars, gliding, paragliding, balloon flight, helicopter flight, astronomical observatory, and so on. There are also typical small cities worth exploring, which is the case of Saint-Vincent. Saint-Vincent has also the biggest casino in Italy, and it is also next to the termes which are privileged with the sight of the Saint-Vincent's vale.

There is also an activity that attracts a high number of guests to the city and consequently to the hotel, which is the Italian billiards championship held in Saint-Vincent.

Another point of interest for some hotel guests is the wellness center and wellness emphasis in the city of Saint-Vincent. The city has several wellness facilities, which is the case of several hotels – competitors of Hotel Miramonti – in the historic center of the city but there are also the termes – Terme di Saint-Vincent – which are very popular in Vallé d'Aoste.

3.4. SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses, which refer to internal aspects of a company, and opportunities and threats refer to external aspects of a company (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). The table 4 summarizes chapter 3.0..

Table 4 SWOT analysis of Hotel Miramonti

Strengths The location of the hotel is very central and peaceful. The hotel is very luminous, big, and has several spacious areas (bars, lounges, balconies of the rooms, and balconies of the lounges). The staff and the director believe in the potential to improve the service.	Weaknesses Facilities: There is a poor use of the facilities/areas. The hotel's guests cannot enjoy the gym. There are areas that aren't being properly taken advantage of (bars, lounges, balconies of the rooms and balconies of the lounges). The decoration can be perceived as old-fashioned. There is bad acoustic in the connecting rooms. There is an uninviting reception. The counter of the breakfast and dining room is carelessly presented and old-fashioned. There are few parking spaces. The hotel lacks partnerships, (travel agencies, OTA's). Staff: the hotel doesn't have any recruitment standards or processes, the hotel's staff is mostly temporary or outsourced, the staff doesn't have uniforms, conflicted and unmotivated staff, lacking staff, poor communication between the staff Lacks a marketing strategy: The hotel lacks values and digital efforts. The hotel's rates on Booking are low compared to the competition. Service: There is inconsistency in the service/lack of standardized operations. It's one of the few hotels within the competition that don't have a wellness concept associated.
Opportunities The competition doesn't have these: send a follow up email to guests after booking a room, give a complete service to guests, provide transportation from and to the airport, create a cinema room provide a sunbathing area for guests. Location: There are several activities, monuments and enogastronomy to explore in Vallé d'Aoste, it's near several ski resorts, near the casino and next to Saint-Vincent termes.	Threats Most of the competition has a wellness center in the hotel. There are competitors who are promoting a romantic concept. There are competitors that serve homemade products and traditional dishes.

Source: Own Elaboration

4. PROJECT PROPOSAL

4.1. PROJECT PURPOSE

In this research, it was recognized an absence of a brand-grounded communication strategy in Hotel Miramonti that results in inconsistent and incoherent communication, which damages the image of the hotel.

Since a brand is a reflection of a company, its reflection should be consistent (Vaid, 2003). Therefore, emerged the need to provide the hotel with the tools to have a successfully consistent and coherent brand image. Accordingly, the objective is to provide the brand with a clear brand positioning, thus giving the hotel the right tools to have consistent communication (internally and externally) and, consequently, generating a clear, coherent, and cohesive identity.

As an investigator, the objective is to develop a Brand Identity Planning Model for Hotel Miramonti, which was conceived by David Aaker and is the base of the present project. Only three perspectives were used to consider the brand, which was: brand as product, brand as organization, and brand as person.

To effectively communicate the new identity, the hotel should be able to sustain it with actual changes that reflect it.

4.2. “EXECUTION”

4.2.1. Three Perspectives

Brand as Product

Rooms

The rooms of the hotel will have modern decoration. And they will also be decorated with a romantic and alpine concept and style so that guests will feel connected with the environment.

To provide a romantic experience for couples, the hotel will provide a romantic kit, by decorating the rooms with roses, and serving cupcakes, champagne, and wine, among others). This kit will be available to book on Booking.com, on the hotel's website, by phone, and at reception.

To surprise the guests with little details, the hotel will provide a welcome gift or a birthday/anniversary/celebration gift, and so on.

The kit will be included in the service on Valentine's Day, but the prices of the rooms will be increased on this date; on the other days of the year, the kit will be sold separately.

The rooms will be soundproof. There will be better quality and bigger televisions in the rooms. The staff will avoid accommodating guests in connecting rooms, so the guests won't hear each other; except families (these should be accommodated in connecting rooms if they wish so).

Reception

The reception should be an inviting, modern, and cozy space since it's where guests have the first impact of the hotel. The reception will also be a reflection of the green surroundings of the hotel: it should have plants to connect the guests with nature.

The reception staff will personalize the guest service by for example providing toys for kids, treats for dogs, and rewards for repeat guests, among others.

The reception will also be efficient. It will be implemented a CRM/SO software to support historic information about guests; the staff will send a follow-up email after guests book their room; there will be an effective way to communicate with the housekeeping staff.

Complete Service: Personalized Holiday Route

To provide a "remarkable experience" to the guests, the hotel will provide an innovative service to guests: a Personalized Holiday Route that combines a series of activities to do and places to visit at Vallé d'Aoste and proposes an organized and specific holiday route for the guests' stay according to their schedule and interests, which involves a previous contact from the hotel.

The holiday route can also be dedicated to couples, providing romantic activities, places, etc.

Cinema, bar, and candy shop

Another innovative service that will be competitive leverage for the hotel and will give a more complete experience to the guests is to have a cinema room that is

also complemented with a bar that not only serves the cinema as a candy shop (it sells candies, popcorns, sodas, etc.) but also serves drinks independently from the cinema. The cinema will be introduced as a statement since none of the competitors has this service. These three services (cinema, bar, and candy shop) are connected even though they can be independent of each other. External people from the hotel can access it.

Bar

The bar will be a complementary service to the cinema but also a place where guests can enjoy a drink. It will also serve the lounge area near the reception, to be more welcoming to guests.

Parking Lot

The parking lot will be spacious and safe for the hotel's guests to park.

The bar will also be introduced as a statement since none of the competitors has a thematic bar. External people of the hotel can also access it.

Wellness Centre

To provide a very present service at the competition, the hotel will have a wellness center that can be accessed by external people from the hotel. The center will have saunas, a gym, a swimming pool, and several services like massages, and nail services, among others. As a complementary service, the center will provide an individual and couple's plan.

The hotel image will be connected with the wellness center after practicing snow sports so guests can relax after a long day. The hotel can provide a relaxing

day at the spa to the customer without needing to look for it elsewhere. The guests can find in the hotel what they came for.

Breakfast and dining room

The breakfast and dining room will prepare regional and good quality meals with also a good presentation, to captivate the guests. It will be served homemade cakes, fruit salads, yogurt, and local products. It will be implemented a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), regarding the list of tasks for a shift, *mise en place*, and setting tables, among others.

The room will be decorated with modern elements like the counter.

Location

The location of the hotel is an advantageous aspect of the hotel since guests can go anywhere from the hotel. The hotel is also located in a very small urban center on a quiet street, which brings peace to the guests. The hotel is located in a small and historical town with several typical castles and restaurants, and activities, such as termes and casino, where guests can enjoy the culture.

Areas

The hotel should take advantage of the several spacious areas for events, parties, group dinners, and so on. The housekeeping needs to be more attentive to common spaces.

Quality-Value

The hotel will be price-quality based and there will be value for money, which communicates sincerity and honesty to guests.

The price should be a reflection of the experience between the hotel and the guests. As so, the price shouldn't be either low or high since the target audience should be medium-income people. Since the hotel should provide several innovative services and a complete experience, the hotel should position the price similarly to its strongest competitors.

Snow Sports

One of the several interests of the guests in the region of Vallée d'Aoste is snow sports. It is a very strong interest.

Casino

Another interest is the Casino of Saint-Vincent. The hotel is just a 10-minute walk from the casino of Saint-Vincent and a lot of guests visit it.

Wellness

Another very strong interest for tourists in the region is the wellness center. The region is related to the wellness concept.

Regional Activities

In the region, the guests can enjoy several typical activities, such as visiting monuments and castles, exploring the regional food and wine, riding in cable cars, gliding, paragliding, ballooning, helicopter flights, astronomical observatories, doing

an itinerary on horseback, mountain bike, farm tracks, and so on. The hotel will be a bridge to these activities with the personalized holiday route and transportation service, which will, once again, contribute to the complete experience of the guests.

Brand as Organization

Culture/values

The culture of the organization will be based on developing strong relationships like trust and friendship, not only inside of the hotel but also reflecting externally (to guests). The staff should provide a sense of well-being towards each other and believe in each other's potential.

The values of the hotel should be people first, guest-oriented, personalization, experience-driven, pursue for quality, reliability, and discretion.

People first in the sense that not only the guests but also the staff should be put first. The hospitality sector is a service from people to people; therefore, concerns for people are almost mandatory. Regarding the guest-oriented, personalization, and experience-driven, the hotel should provide services and attitudes to make the guest's stay as pleasant and complete as they can, from personalization to surprising them and so on. Regarding the improvement/pursue for quality, the staff and the director already possess a feeling of wanting to do better, for the guests and consequently for the hotel. This should always be present in the hotel's values. The hotel should be able to provide the guest's reliability and discretion. The guests should be treated with discretion since they go to the hotel to relax and to be peaceful. And the reliability value is related to guaranteeing the guests the best possible stay.

People

In the hotel, the most valuable asset should be its people; its staff, since they are the ones that are on the front line to serve the guests during their stay. They should be the ones that can enormously change the guest's stay (in a positive way). They are also the ones who reflect the hotel's values, therefore they should be invested in.

The hotel should have a Human & Resources process. The hotel should attract experienced professionals through LinkedIn. It should also have standards for recruiting. From this point on, the hotel should hire people based on some requirements, such as being competent at the job position, speaking multiple languages (like English and French), predisposed to learn, predisposed to pamper the guests, being friendly, kind, and attentive with guests, being a problem-solver not only with the guests but also with the team (being a team player), being able to develop a relationship with the guests, being able to provide some of the following to the guests: romance experience, peaceful environment, connection with the nature, rest, relaxation and comfort. The hotel should train the staff. Not only will the staff learn and therefore improve their skills, but they will also feel more motivated to work, which will improve the service. Additionally, the hotel should create incentives for employees for them to like to work in the hotel: internally, it should be communicated "people first", the hotel should appreciate them with simple things, believe in their potential, and try to get the most out of it. Uniforms should be implemented since it provides a feeling of cleanliness. The hotel should hire one more person for the reception.

Programs, community-oriented and local orientation

The hotel should partner up with local businesses and communities while providing all these activities: snow sports, monuments, and castles, food, and wine, cable cars, gliding, paragliding, ballooning, helicopter flights, astronomical observatories, casino, skiing, itinerary on horseback, mountain bike, farm tracks, etc. The hotel should sell products from local stores (like clothes for example) and create promotional tickets for local services and have affiliate marketing (restaurants, termes, the casino, and so on...). The hotel should sponsor events on the several available rooms/lounges and develop partnerships with travel agencies and OTA's, which will provide them more credibility and would also increase brand awareness.

All the above will not only be valuable for local businesses and communities but would also allow the guest to immerse themselves in the local culture, which will also provide them a feeling of completeness.

Environment

The hotel should provide the guests a comfortable and resting night, a connection with nature (hear the birds singing, ...), and with the surroundings of the hotel (nature, peace of mind, etc.). Once again, it will make the guests feel immersed in the local environment and will also make them relax.

Pursue for Quality

Like it was previously mentioned, the staff and the director already believe in the potential improvement of the hotel. This is what allows the hotel to accomplish an improved service, therefore it should always be present in the hotel.

Innovative

The hotel should have some innovative elements that not only are they new within the competition, but also bring value to guests. The hotel should have a cinema, and a candy shop and provide a service of personalized holiday route.

These new elements provide not only relaxation to the guests, in terms of not having to worry about anything during their stay since the hotel provides it for them, but they also create a sense of tranquility and guests can enjoy themselves.

Concern for Customer

The concern for the staff can be reflected in two ways: the first one is how the staff deals with the customer and it is related to the friendly personality of the staff, and the second one regards the provided service.

The way in which the staff deals with the customer regards everything that the staff does and how they appear to guests, from being friendly and proactive, surprising guests with little details, trying to understand them, and so on. The staff should be kind and attentive with guests, pampering and developing a relationship with them. The staff should provide the guest with a romantic experience, a peaceful environment, a connection with nature, rest, relaxation, and comfort.

The provided service regards everything that the hotel sells or provides as an additional service and feature to pamper the guests. The hotel should provide a complete service to guests, in the sense that the guests will be able to find almost everything in the hotel, like the wellness center, the bar, the cinema, transportation, and personalized holiday route, among others.

The staff should also send a follow-up/confirmation email after booking the room, asking the guests if there is anything the hotel can help with (to the smallest

detail) and provide a list of things with the services and with things that the hotel can do for the guest, such as the previously mentioned services.

Brand as Person

The brand personality should convey a middle-aged (30 years old) single woman, without kids of medium class. On weekends she does sport, likes to have fun and leisure. As a hobby, she does sports and likes to relax. She is serious, relaxed, a little introverted, traditional, conservative, conscious and careful, sensitive, and discreet.

The brand personality of the hotel will be affected by everything associated with the hotel. The fact that the hotel is in a small urban center should reflect a serious, traditional, and conservative personality. The fact that the hotel is surrounded by the nature should convey an environmentally friendly, peaceful, and relaxed personality. The partnerships and involvement with local businesses and the community should convey a down-to-earth, friendly, and credible.

The several regional activities involving partnerships, the community, and the guests should convey a conscious, dynamic, and proactive personality and reinforce the idea of the hotel being friendly. The classic building of the hotel combined with modern decoration and lighting conveys a modern, welcoming, sensitive, delicate, and fresh personality. The elevated customer service should convey a careful, proactive, and again friendly personality.

4.2.2. The Identity Structure

Identity Structure

Core Identity

The core identity of Hotel Miramonti's brand should be romantic, peaceful, relaxed, comforting, and pamperer.

The core identity of Hotel Miramonti's brand should be providing a romantic experience, relaxation, and peaceful and lastly being experience-driven and pamperer.

According to the literature, providing a memorable experience is what distances the hotel and the guests. Accordingly, Hotel Miramonti should provide more than just accommodation and selling services. The hotel should be experience-driven as a core value. There are several aspects intrinsically connected with the hotel. These aspects should be emphasized, for instance: exploring the regional experience (cooking with regional products, selling regional products, providing a personalized holiday route with regional activities, doing a tour of the region, refer the regional restaurants, and so on), alpine (having an alpine decoration that goes along with the environment), and the peaceful aspect (peaceful should be considered in two ways: peaceful in the sense that the hotel is quiet and located in a very green area and in a small urban center, which should calm the guests; and peaceful in the sense that the staff should provide everything the guests need, reducing their troubles while on vacation, which will also calm the guests).

There are other aspects that the hotel could explore, like the local aspect. It should be explored as well (since the hotel is located in a small urban center, the guests should feel the connection between the hotel and the local businesses and

community, so the guests will feel immersed in the locality and therefore intensify their experience), the hotel should also provide fun moments and fun activities for the guests (starting with the regional activities), the pursue for quality should also be taken seriously by the hotel (to be able to be experience-driven and therefore to provide a memorable experience to guests, the hotel should always try to look for the best way to do things and to always be better, which should also induce a feeling of trustworthiness to the guests), the hotel should also try to surprise the guests (whether is it by providing a small detail to the room or to offer a gift, or providing a romantic dinner to couples, and so on), which should elevate the guests' experience. Overall, the guests should feel welcomed, pampered, and cherished by the staff, starting with the customer service, and ending in the smallest details. The purpose is to make the guest feel like they are put first, and that the hotel is guest-oriented and will always give its best to make them happy.

There are other aspects that the hotel should foment for other reasons. For instance, most of the competitors are communicating a romantic experience, therefore the hotel should also adopt that concept. The romantic experience is very connected with the experience-driven. However, the focus is on the couples.

This aspect can be emphasized when combined with other elements, for example, the regional aspect (having a romantic dinner in a regional restaurant, doing regional activities as a romantic getaway, and so on), having discreet staff, being guest-oriented, and personalizing guests' requests will also provide a romantic experience for couples (for example, organizing a romantic dinner or providing romantic details to the bedroom).

Lastly, the other element that should be always present in the hotel is relaxation. Since the focus of the guests of that region is to have some relaxation, the hotel should promote this feeling to guests. The competition is also providing this element. Also, the hotel is located in a place with favorable conditions to foment this feeling of relaxation (from the safety of the area to the peacefulness mentioned above to being connected with the region and the locality, being next to the termes of Saint-Vincent), but the hotel should also provide its own way of providing relaxation to the guest, from providing comfort in the hotel, to having sensitive and guest-oriented staff, providing the wellness concept inside of the hotel and to provide fun experiences, which also relaxes the guests in a way.

Every contact with the hotel, whether by going through the website or talking to the staff, or even the hotel decoration and staying at the hotel, among others, should reflect all these characteristics to the customer.

Extended Identity

As mentioned above, as extended identity, the hotel should have the following characteristics: safe, local, regional, alpine, welcoming, personalization, guest-oriented and people first, fun, sensitive, trustworthy, discreet, surprising, and pursue for quality.

These characteristics should complement the core identity characteristics to provide a memorable experience to guests.

4.2.3. Value Proposition

Functional Benefits

Resting holiday

The hotel should make the guests' life easier, whether by providing several services, such as the personalized holiday route, transportation from and to the airport, the bar, the wellness center, and cinema all in the hotel; or by having a guest-oriented staff, always motivated and happy to help the guests. Therefore, guests don't have to worry about anything while on vacation. The hotel takes care of everything and provides additional details that make the holiday special.

Technology

By adding a technological component, which in this case is having a cinema and new TVs, Dolby Surround, and so on, the hotel will provide a more wide and complete experience to the guests.

Location

The location of the hotel represents a geographically strategic advantage since the guests can go anywhere from the hotel.

Furthermore, the hotel is located in a peaceful area: a small town with several typical castles and restaurants, and also activities, such as terms and casino, among others. Hotel Miramonti is in a very small urban center on a quiet street.

Rest and comfort

Being involved in the environment of the hotel gives to the customer a sense of tranquility and connection with nature, which in turn should bring the customer some rest and comfort. The hotel provides a good night's sleep and a well-rested vacation.

Value for money

The guests can have a comfortable stay with quality service, competent people, privileged location, and also luminous and big facilities with a good value for money.

Parking lot

Since the parking moment can be one of the first impacts of the hotel, it should be easier and safest, improving the guests' experience. The safe parking lot should also create in the guests a feeling of safety.

Wellness

The wellness center should complement the vacation. Therefore, the customer doesn't need to look for it elsewhere.

Thus, the guests can find in the hotel what so many of them came for, not having to recur to the competition.

Emotional Benefits

Romance

Romance should be always present during the guests' stay. Therefore, it needs to be reflected in the rooms. The rooms can be decorated with an alpine style and should be comfortable, so the guests can have a comfortable and resting night. The rooms with a balcony should have an exterior space with cozy furniture so the guests can be connected with nature (hear the birds singing, look at the vales, among others). On the balcony, guests can also enjoy an *aperitivo* or a cocktail and even have a romantic breakfast.

On some couples' occasions (for instance, anniversaries), the bedrooms should be decorated with roses and the hotel should also provide cupcakes, chocolates, champagne, or wine, to provide a romantic experience for couples. The hotel can even surprise couples with this.

The hotel should also have a more intimate dining room for couples who want to have a quiet dinner, only enjoying each other's company, to intensify the romantic experience. In this dining room, there should be an *a la carte menu* with elaborate dishes and made from regional products.

To complement the romantic experience, in the region, there are several typical activities, such as visiting monuments and castles, exploring the regional food and wine, riding in cable cars, gliding, paragliding, ballooning, helicopter flights, astronomical observatories, doing itinerary on horseback, mountain bike, farm tracks, relaxing day at the spa, among others. These activities can deliver a romantic experience to the fullest.

The romance benefit will enable the couples to concentrate on one another in a peaceful, relaxing, and refreshing environment. The romance should be combined with nature, wellness, and a pampered feeling since the hotel can provide anything they want.

Peace of mind, nature, and surroundings

According to what was mentioned earlier, nature plays a big role in the emotional benefits, since the connection with nature can be refreshing and create well-being.

The guests can enjoy a peaceful stay at the hotel, where they can appreciate the nature and surroundings of the hotel, from hearing the birds singing, to contemplating the views, experiencing the town of Saint-Vincent, visiting the lakes, castles, and so on. They can also enjoy breakfast or sunbathing, with a cocktail or an *aperitivo*, to provide some relaxation to the guest.

They can have a resting night and a break from their agitated lives while enjoying some comfort and privacy. The guests should count on being undisturbed and relaxed and being treated with discretion and seriousness by the staff.

The purpose of this emotional benefit is to allow the guests to immerse themselves in nature and have an undisturbed stay at the hotel.

Safety

The emotional benefit of safety should be reflected in walking in the streets of Saint-Vincent, the parking spaces, and in the hotel, in the sense that the guests should trust the hotel.

Welcoming

The welcoming benefit should be very present in Miramonti since it is its “job” as a hotel to welcome guests. The welcoming benefit should be reflected in two ways: in the physical conditions and facilities of the hotel and the service of the staff. The guest should feel at home in the spacious, luminous areas, and the rooms should be comforting and inviting. The staff should be very attentive and try to provide guests with a memorable experience, for them to have positive associations with the hotel.

Pampered

In addition to feeling welcomed, the guests should feel like they are the number one priority of the hotel. Therefore, they should be treated so. This benefit complements the peace of mind, nature, and surroundings, and rest and comfort benefits by providing a more complete experience of not having to worry about anything and relax.

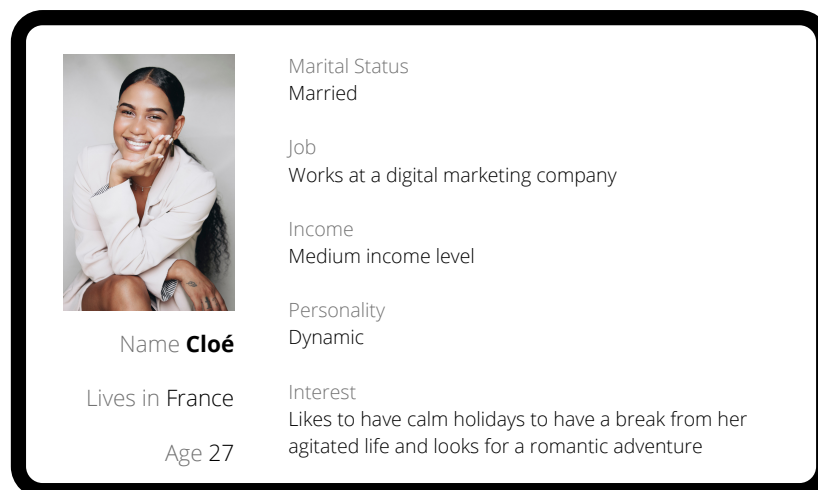
The guests should feel appreciated, welcomed, and surprised with little details. The guests should be served by the staff according to their interests. They don’t need to worry about anything; the hotel gets it for them. The purpose of this benefit is to pamper the guests from when they arrive to when they leave and make them want to come back to the hotel.

4.2.4. Brand Position

The brand position won't be proposed in separate segments: "part", "actively communicated", "target audience", and "demonstrates advantage". Instead, it will be proposed as a whole for each target. There should be two brand positions, even though they are very similar to each other; the difference is the target: one is couples and the other one is families.

The first target is as follows: middle-class couples, who come to the hotel to relax and enjoy the wellness concept offered by the region and the hotel, and to enjoy visiting the region. They can also be interested in snow sports as a possible "entertainment". Therefore, the persona that resonates with this target is demonstrated in figure 5.

Figure 5 Persona 1



Source: Own elaboration

For this target, the part of the brand identity includes the following: the romantic experience, the relaxation, and the experience-driven, the personalized

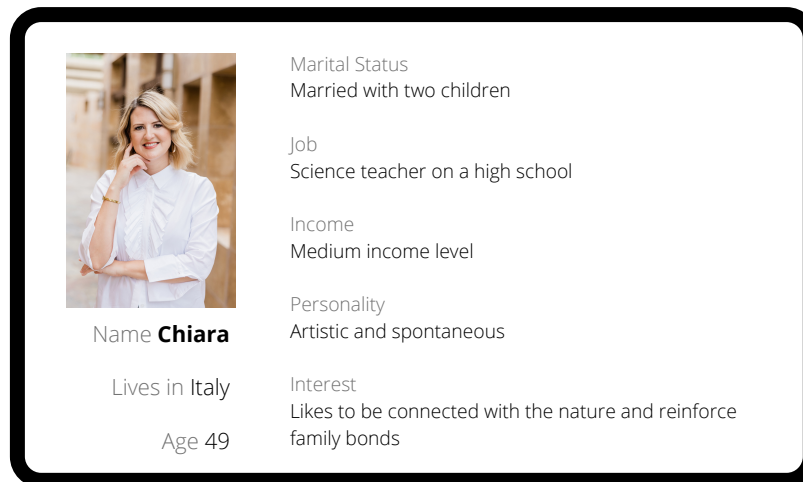
holiday route, the complete experience that the hotel provides, the fact that the staff is experience-driven and pampers the guests, the sunbathing areas allowing guests to extend their relaxation in the hotel and ultimately enjoy each other company and the fact that the hotel has a local and regional focus and tries to incorporate local and regional concepts in the hotel, from the regional products used in the meals to the regional activities the hotel recommends to the guests. For this target, the part of the value proposition of Hotel Miramonti regards the following: providing a resting and romantic holiday to guests who come to relax and to have a peaceful and undisturbed holiday for two, which should happen by giving the guests a convenient way of accessing anything they might need or want, pampering them.

To this target, what resonates with the consumer and demonstrates an advantage is having an undisturbed and quiet stay while having a complete experience provided by the hotel.

To conclude, the positioning statement for this target should be as follows: “Hotel Miramonti can provide couples with a peaceful and undisturbed romantic holiday, where they can enjoy each other company while trusting in the hotel to provide anything they might need or want, including a glimpse of the vast region”.

The second target shouldn't be disregarded. It should be taken into consideration as much as the first target and it is as follows: middle-class families and groups of friends who are interested in having fun, visiting the region, and doing snow sports. They can possibly be interested in the wellness experience as a complementary interest. Therefore, the persona that resonates with this target is demonstrated in figure 6.

Figure 6 Persona 2



Source: Own elaboration

For this target, the part of the brand identity includes the following: the relaxation concept and the experience-driven concept. To this target, the points of leverage of the hotel are the fun area (cinema, bar, and candy shop), the personalized holiday route, the complete experience that the hotel provides, the fact that the staff is experience-driven and pampers the guests, the sunbathing areas that allow guests to extend their relaxation in the hotel and enjoy spending time in family or around friends, the fact that the hotel has a local and regional focus and tries to incorporate local and regional concepts in the hotel, from the regional products used in the meals to the regional activities the hotel recommends to the guests.

For this target, the part of the value proposition is to provide fun experiences inside and outside of the hotel. Also, providing relaxing experiences, starting with the appeal and peacefulness of the region, to giving convenient ways of accessing anything the guests might need or want, pampering them.

To this target, what resonates with the consumer and demonstrates advantage is having fun experiences inside and outside of the hotel and having a complete experience provided by the hotel.

To conclude, the positioning statement for this target should be as follows: “For groups of friends and/or families, Hotel Miramonti provides them a complete experience, from delivering both fun experiences and peacefulness while trusting the hotel to reveal the region”.

Tone of Voice

The tone of voice of the hotel should be welcoming, calm, comforting, but mostly friendly. However, a certain level of conservativeness should be maintained.

The responses to guests’ reviews, on Booking, should be careful and appropriate.

Message

The message of the hotel should mostly emphasize romance, sports, and relaxation. The essence should be relaxation, peacefulness, and the fact that the hotel can provide peaceful holidays surrounded by nature and regional products to give a full experience to guests. However, there should be slightly different communication for the two different targets: for couples, it should be emphasized the romantic experience and for friends or families, it should be emphasized sports.

Channels

The channels of the hotel should focus on three different things: promoting the hotel, attracting talent, and lastly, and selling the hotel' services.

The promotion of the hotel should include consistently posting quality content on Instagram, promoting the services, the hotel views, the facilities, the regional food, photos with guests, the staff, and attractions in the region (activities, places, restaurants, ...), reposting guests' photos, among others. The hotel should also run ads, to attract more potential guests. The website of the hotel should also be activated and updated frequently.

To attract talent, the hotel should be present on some recruitment platforms and most importantly, on LinkedIn. The hotel should turn the LinkedIn account into a professional one.

Hotel Miramonti should also be linked to OTAs to attract more guests and provide more credibility to the hotel.

Lines of Action

To conclude this chapter, the hotel must follow the lines of action present in table 5, which will allow the implementation of the previously recommended topics.

Table 5 Lines of action for some of the recommendations of the proposal

Elements of the Literature Review	Code	Dimensions of Each Code	Recommendations	Lines of Action for each Recommendation
Brand Identity Planning Model (3 perspectives)	Brand as Product/price	Product Scope	Rooms	-change the decoration and modernize -the staff needs to be involved with the guests and there needs to be a software that supports information about the guests
			Reception	- the reception needs a remodeling: - put more lighting at the reception, specifically warm lights, to have a cozier environment - buy a modern counter for the reception - put plants at the reception in order to provide a connection with nature - redecorate/remodel the reception area (the hotel can contact an interior designer to do this) - put televisions at the lounge near the reception
			Complete Service: Personalized Holiday Route	-there needs to be a previous contact by the staff to understand the guests' interests/tastes/schedule
			Cinema, bar, and candy shop	- transform the laundry room into a cinema room -the hotel should contact an architect (create access to the multiple rooms) and a professional for the installation process, etc. (soundproof the rooms, paint it, put seats, ...)
			Parking Lot	- ask the city council to privatize the parking spaces in front of the hotel - do works on the floor of the parking spaces inside of the hotel
	Brand as Organization	People	Staff	-updating the LinkedIn account to a professional one to attract talent -hiring competent staff and training the current one; teaching the hotel's new culture and motivating and making them happy about working at Hotel Miramonti, so they can reflect a good image

Source: Own Elaboration

5. CONCLUSIONS

Hotel Miramonti is not currently at the level of competition. The hotel doesn't have marketing and communication efforts, nor is it present on social media. It is lacking several aspects that would put it, at least, at the same level as the competition. In general, the hotel conveys a lack of consistency and identity, not only to the consumers, but also to the staff, to the community, among others, which may appear confusing to consumers, and damaging to its image.

One of the purposes of this chapter is to present in a summarized way, the expected implications of Hotel Miramonti for implementing all the recommendations and conclude how they are indeed coherent, taking into consideration the literature review, the hotel context, and the objectives.

The following product-related attributes should generate functional and emotional benefits to the guests: the strategically, peaceful, historical, and safe location, and the luminous and spacious areas of the hotel. The quality value should communicate sincerity and honesty to guests and that the hotel is a middle-market brand (Aaker, 1995). The product-related attributes should impact the brand personality since they can convey certain personality traits (Aaker, 1995). For instance, the peaceful location should convey that the hotel personality is peaceful and relaxed as well. The safe location should convey a trustworthy and friendly personality. The luminous and spacious areas of the hotel should communicate a delicate and sensitive personality.

The recommended characteristics for Hotel Miramonti should generate organizational associations that can be linked to Miramonti's identity, they should provide value and should be a foundation for differentiation and value proposition. If the staff reflects the guests' friendly personality, the guests will sense that they like working at Miramonti and will associate organizational associations with the hotel, which makes the brand Miramonti stronger (Aaker, 1995).

An accommodation service is easy to provide, unlike the recommended organizational characteristics of Miramonti. If the hotel implements what's recommended in the proposal, it should be difficult for its competitors to compete with Miramonti's organizational characteristics since they are unique and hard to compete with (Aaker, 1995). The proposed values and culture of Miramonti should develop perceptions in the customer's mind: people first, guest-oriented, personalization, experience-driven, improvement/pursue for quality, reliability, and discretion. Putting people first will generate in the guest's mind a perception of being in a healthy environment and a belonging feeling. The guest-oriented, the personalization, and the experience-driven will make the guests feel welcomed, cherished, and unique and it will ultimately make them feel surprised. The improvement/pursue for quality will make the guests feel like they will be given the best possible service and therefore they will have confidence and reliability in the hotel. This also extends to discretion: the guests should be treated with discretion, which should develop in the guest's mind a perception of welcoming. The trust, friendship, and confidence between coworkers should give the guests perception of a good work environment which should provide the guest's well-being and a feeling of belonging, relaxation, and peacefulness.

Unlike some product-related associations and other associations, people add credibility to the organization (Aaker, 1995). As in any company, the people inside of the hotel – the staff – will provide the service, they will be one of the first contacts with the hotel and they are the ones who can influence the guests' stay.

The local focus can be a response to the standardized hospitality sector (Khan et al., 2018). The local focus will be refreshing and elevate the guests' experience, and therefore can represent competitive leverage for Miramonti.

If the hotel decides to have programs (in this case with local businesses and community), it will sustain and manifest the culture and values of the hotel (Aaker, 1995). The fact that the hotel should connect with local businesses, sells local products and sponsor events should communicate to the guests that the hotel is immersed in its environment, which provides the hotel credibility. It will also make the guests eager to experience the local aspects. The local aspects can not only differentiate the hotel, but they can also develop connections between the guests, the region, and the hotel. Providing a local experience should enrich the guests' stay, compared to the standardized hospitality experiences.

Consequently, the hotel should also provide several activities, that along with the mentioned above aspects will allow the guest to immerse themselves in the local culture, which will also provide them a feeling of completeness. Having such connections with other brands should ultimately increase the brand awareness of the hotel, and consequently turn potential customers into actual customers (Foroudi et al., 2014). The programs that connect the hotel, the guests, and the local community will be valuable for Hotel Miramonti to create community-oriented associations, which should resonate with the guests.

The resting and peaceful environment should make the guests feel immersed in the local environment and will also make them relax, which is why they stayed at Hotel Miramonti.

Having a pursue for quality characteristic present in the hotel should make the guests have higher consideration for it and should be a competitive element for the hotel (Choi & Chu, 1999). Having innovative elements in the hotel is an advantage since it should be perceived by the guests as credible and modern (Aaker, 1995). The fact that the Hotel Miramonti has customer first as a core value and everything that the hotel should do is regarding the guests' well-being, the guests start to have confidence in the hotel.

The hotel's personality should help build a relationship with the guests. According to the BPS study, the fact that the hotel's personality is conveyed as serious, traditional, conservative, conscious, careful, and sensitive, will be associated with positive attitudes in the guests (Aaker, 1995). The hotel's personality should be a factor for guests to choose Miramonti instead of its competitors. The brand personality of the hotel is indeed reflected in everything that it does and, consequently, it is coherent.

The value proposition proposed, should help develop a brand-customer relationship and generate purchase decisions (Aaker, 1995). Since the hotel has functional benefits as well as emotional ones, the hotel can be the strongest hotel within the competition (Aaker, 1995).

The hotel has several aspects that although they are not present in the communication strategy, play a significant role in the hotel's identity. The brand

position of Hotel Miramonti should be pillared and reinforced by an organization willing to produce what's reflected in the brand identity (Aaker, 1995).

The tone of voice proposed for the hotel should make the consumers feel comforted and close to the hotel. The message proposed for the hotel is coherent to the targets' needs (romance or fun and complete experience) and the brand's essence (peaceful, relaxed, and connected to nature).

The channels of the hotel should focus on three different things: promoting the hotel, attracting talent, and lastly, and selling the hotel's services. The proposed promotion on social media, website, and ads should raise brand awareness of the hotel. The interesting and quality content will provide the potential guests with a clarification of the experience they could obtain if they stayed at the hotel, and it should make them feel eager to discover it. The guest's reposting photos should deliver credibility to the hotel. Once more, recruiting from several recruitment platforms, including LinkedIn, will allow the hotel to efficiently attract new talent. Being linked to OTA's should provide more credibility to the hotel, and consequently, the potential guests would trust the hotel to stay there.

The purpose of the present project, as an investigator, was to deliver a Brand Identity Planning Model for Hotel Miramonti, which was obtained by following the steps proposed by David Aaker. The second purpose was to provide the brand with a clear brand positioning, thus giving the hotel the right tools to have consistent communication (internally and externally) and, consequently, generating a clear, coherent, and cohesive identity. Overall, the previously discussed results, should, indeed, help the hotel to convey a clear brand positioning and generate a clear, coherent, and cohesive identity with the recommended tools.

Since without a clear positioning, it is difficult for brands to maintain brand consistency, the present project may help other companies, especially, in the hospitality sector to convey a cohesive identity and a clear positioning, by addressing the steps proposed by Aaker and understanding the implications of those tools. It is also useful to follow the recommendations below.

During the research of the present project, some limitations were encountered. There was a lack of time to analyze some of the proposed elements in the brand identity planning model, such as segmentation, competitors' brand image, and so on. This would add depth to this research. There was also a lack of resources to do a quantitative study to compare the brand identity with the brand image in the creation of the brand position.

For the planning model to work, besides following the recommendations, the hotel should implement better hospitality management practices and apply one of the new values of the hotel which is the pursue for quality.

One useful study for the hotel would be to compare the image and perceptions that the customers have about the hotel with what the director wants it to be like (developing a survey of potential customers).

One useful recommendation is to give additional tools to Hotel Miramonti to successfully implement an internal brand identity since it currently represents a flaw in the hotel.

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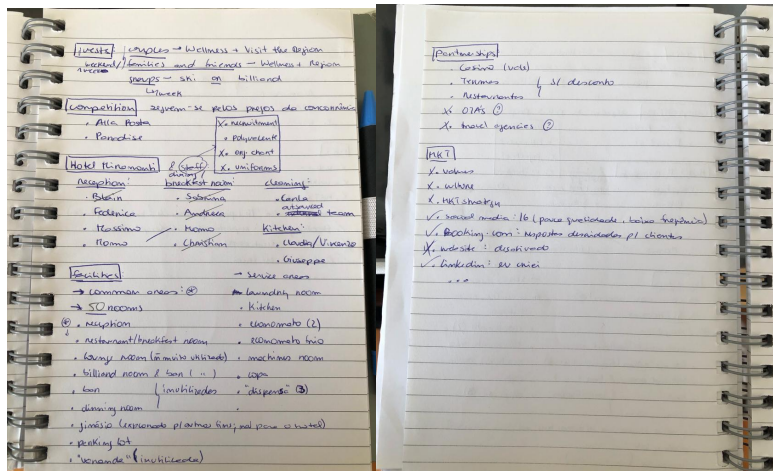
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Field notes



Source: Own Elaboration

Appendix 2 Interview guidelines to the director

The purpose of this interview is to build the brand in a coherent and feasible way while taking into account the current and possible available resources.

Brand as product:

Let's think about the hotel. I want you to focus on what you want or dream of customers to say about the hotel.

-In terms of the cost-benefit, how do you want the hotel to be recognized as?:

Economic

Price-quality based

High value

-To which use do you want the hotel to be associated with?

Ski sports

Wellness

Romantic getaway

Billiard

Region (Saint-Vincent and Vallé d'Aoste)

Other...

-Is there any type of guest that you want consumers to associate the hotel with?

-Do you want the consumers to associate the Valdostana concept or Saint-Vincent city with the hotel?

Brand as organization:

Now, let's think about the hotel, and once again, I want you to focus on what you want or dream of customers to say about it.

-What are the values of the hotel that you want consumers to recognize?

-What do you want the hotel to be associated with?

Environmentally friendly

People caring

Customer-driven

Global and/or local orientation (Vallé d'Aoste and Saint-Vincent)

Community-oriented

Pursue for quality

Innovativeness

Technology

Others...

Brand as person:

Now, let's think about your hotel as a person! Suppose that "this person" is in front of you! What would this person look like?

-If the hotel was a person, which characteristics would you want the hotel to have? (this doesn't necessarily need to be a reflection of you as the director; it can be someone imaginary that could be the face of the hotel)

Age?

Man/woman

Lower class/middle class/upper class

Married/single

Does he/she have kids?

What does he/she do on weekends?

What is his/her hobby?

-Between the following, what do you want the hotel to be associated with?
(first, consider all the characteristics and then chose them)

Old-fashioned/young

Serious/playful

Relaxed/excitement

Introvert/extrovert

Traditional/trendy

Conservative/adventurous

Conscious or careful/spontaneous

Cold or impartial/sensitive

Discrete/ostentatious

Comfortable/elegant

Benefits:

Functional benefits of the hotel:

-What benefits do you want the hotel to reflect?

Staff

Cleanliness

Location

Comfort

Value for money/price

Facilities

Food

Emotional benefits of the hotel:

What type of emotional benefits do you want to “sell” to your customers? I

mean, how would you like your customers to feel when staying at your hotel?

Appreciated/valued

Entertained

Excited

Challenged

Motivated/encouraged/inspired

Feeling home/welcomed

Safe/reassured

Surprised

Undisturbed

Committed to the hotel

Conscious about the cultural environment

Relationship:

-What do you want the nature of the personal relationship to be between the brand and the customers?

Friendship

Confident

Distant

Discrete

Other...

Target audience:

-Who do you want the customer to be like?

Young/middle-aged/old

Lower class/middle-class/upper class

Married/single

Does he/she have kids?

What does he/she do on weekends?

What are his/her hobbies?

What is his/her job?

Funny/relaxed

Introvert/extrovert

Other...

Image:

-Can you enumerate a list of "problems" that harm the image of the hotel?

-What could be done as a solution to these problems?

-Can the hotel offer some extra features or services to create value for the customer?

-What can be done in terms of quality that could improve the guests' experience?

-What do you think is valued by guests in hotels in general?

-What services or characteristics should the hotel have to keep up with the competition?

-How could we implement some of the previously mentioned solutions?

Appendix 3 Transcription of the interview of the director with codes

Coding Label:

Brand as Product/price

Brand as Organization

Brand as Person

Functional Benefits

Emotional Benefits

Target Audience

Image

Res.²-Let's think about the hotel. I want you to focus on what you want or dream of customers to say about the hotel. In terms of the cost-benefit, how do you want the hotel to be recognized as? Economic, price-quality based, or high value?

B.M.-Price-quality based

Res.-To which use do you want the hotel to be associated with? Ski sports, wellness, romantic getaway, billiard, region (Saint-Vincent and Vallé d'Aoste), or other?

B.M.-Definitely **skiing**. If we manage to do the wellness center we want, we can also **associate with wellness**, and always connected to **after skiing**. We can have associations with **romantic getaways** even if we don't have personalized rooms, but the plan is to make **rooms for couples a little more special**. Billiards no and region also no. I would also like the hotel to be associated with the **casino** because we also have customers and people who frequent the casino who do not care about the rest, but they come for a good, let's say **quality-price**. We can also link it with the night (**night life**) at the **casino**.

Res.-Is there any type of guest that you want consumers to associate the hotel with?

B.M.-Not in particular if not, let's say, in the **winter** season we will have **almost every guest related to skiing**. We are not exactly the trendiest/updated but over time we will remodel. We will start this winter with a kind of **wellness center**, a little one, to provide an adjunctive service.

² Researcher

Res.-Do you want the consumers to associate the Valdostana concept or Saint-Vincent city with the hotel?

B.M.-Let's say that unfortunately, we are unable to have an offer so strong as to make the customer come to our region if not for a little peace of mind/tranquility, compared to a big city but we do not give great offers regarding the region. The customer who comes here normally comes in winter to ski and in the summer to take a stroll. If a person is in Milan or Rome, they won't come to Saint-Vincent. Unfortunately, we do not have something that attracts people, especially families because couples can come to the spa, and they can go to the casino, but it ends there. We do not have family attractiveness. Unfortunately, I repeat, unfortunately, we do not have a regional offer and the hotel pays the consequences.

An advantage we have in our favor is the location, in the sense that we are in the center of the Vallé d'Aoste. From the hotel all the valleys are about half an hour, 30-40 minutes away. And this is a plus because staying with us, one can go to the Courmayeur valley, the Cogne valley, the Gressoney valley, and the Ayas valley. Because we are halfway through. We have a strategic point because you can go everywhere from here.

Res.-Regarding the previous questions, there are actually many things that tourists can do in Vallé d'Aoste, but they are not promoted and communicated enough or as they should be. For example, snow sports, monuments and castles, food and wine, cable cars, gliding, paragliding, ballooning, helicopter flights, astronomical observatories, little towns to explore, such as Saint-Vincent, and so on ... Having that in mind, do you think maybe we can leverage the hotel's image by promoting and connecting guests with these activities? I mean, attracting customers for the region's features and activities, and consequently providing them with a more complete experience as we offer more additional features?

B.M.-Of course yes. All these activities can complement the main activities (local/organizational + product) which are casino and skiing. Depending on the season, you can do all these activities. There are many things to see that has never been promoted because they are difficult to promote for our customers, but they can be done. You can also do an itinerary on horseback, or mountain bike, there are many farm tracks (local/organizational + product) to be explored, ...

Res.-Can you elaborate on the tranquility aspect of Saint-Vincent?

B.M.-I was saying that the difference compared to a big city like Rome, is that if you come to Saint-Vincent you have peace of mind: you can walk in the

evening without problems, walk around with a nice watch and no one attacks you or anyone. There is a level of tranquility that is appreciated.

Res.-Now, let's think about the hotel, and once again, I want you to focus on what you want or dream of customers to say about it. What are the values of the hotel that you want consumers to recognize?

B.M.-The value of the hotel, in my opinion, is the size. I mean the dining room that invites you to sit down, the rooms of a decent size, common areas available to all and in the context in which we belong, that's already a good standard. It is a bit flawed in the reception because the reception is where the first impact happens and ours is a little disappointing.

Then the rest of the hotel is ok. In my opinion, these are the strengths. The windows of the halls where a beautiful light comes in, the rooms have a nice light and have medium height ceilings (they are not very high, and they are not low either) so quite acceptable. Then, to provide a good service, surely a remodeling would be optimal, but we are talking about big investments, so I don't know when we will make them.

Res.-Can you tell me more about the impact of the reception?

B.M.-Yes, as a first impact, when you enter the hotel, you are not very stimulated, in the sense, the hall is not, let's say, inviting to people. I mean, it does not have an inviting atmosphere and there's bad lighting.

Res.-What do you want the hotel to be associated with? Environmentally friendly, people caring, customer-driven, global and/or local orientation (Vallé d'Aoste and Saint-Vincent), community-oriented, pursue for quality, innovativeness, technology, or others? You can choose as many as you want but keep in mind the current resources or the resources we can obtain in the future.

B.M.-That we care about people, yes. Respectful for the environment, no, because we have nothing related to the environment. Driven by the customer, no. Global orientation I don't know what you mean. Community-oriented either. Pursue for quality, yes in the sense that we will certainly increase the quality of the service. By doing the wellness center, even if it is small, we will increase the quality of the services. Innovation: the only innovation we have is WiFi everywhere, small and medium-sized televisions. As for technology, we have about 25 new 40-inch televisions. We will try to do much more. At the moment, we are not weak, but we are not excellent either. One can do much more if one wants and invests.

Res.-Regarding the previous question, some of the characteristics the hotel already has or should have implicitly. But what I'm asking is in what aspect do you want guests to remember you? It may be something that Miramonti is not doing currently, but it can do in the future. Think about which of these characteristics makes or could make the hotel unique compared to the competition. You said no to being customer-driven, but in reality in hospitality, hotels are implicitly customer-driven. The question is, do you want to promote it to guests? Are you interested in global aspects, or do you want to focus only on Saint-Vincent or Vallé d'Aoste?

B.M.-So one of my goals would be to give a complete service in the sense that the customer comes to us stays with us, and then we propose him to go skiing, take him skiing, stay with him all day, and then bring him home in the evening to take him to various activities (brand as product), which can be local ones or do something. Or when it is summer we could take them on excursions and follow them all day and go with them for a ride on a mountain bike, ride a horse, take them to several activities. That would be one of my dreams. So that the customer is pampered from when he arrives to when he leaves. And that would surely make him come back. Accompany 2/3 couples to the castles and do the day on the snow, do paragliding, a day on a mountain bike, do the day on horseback with lunch and dinner on the farm and it would be great. One thing I would like to do is to pick up the guests at the airport and drop them off again, so from when the guests get off the plane are pampered until they take off. Everything, not just the hotel. When I pick up the guests at the airport, I already do a kind of communication about what the valley offers. I explain to them "Look at the Castello di Sogno, that Castello di Verres, ...".

Res.-I want you to focus on what the hotel can do and not what it does currently.

B.M.-So many can be done as an innovation. I have been to the hotel where there was an audio center in the room with a 70-inch TV. It is an envious Dolby surround. It was already amazing. The room had things for a romantic evening, a romantic night. That hotel was very, very strong, very beautiful. Something that we don't have at the moment. I would definitely want to do these two things in the future.

In addition to remodeling the rooms, however, it is important to make them much more appealing for couples to captivate them since they are here on vacation so they must be pampered which at this moment is not happening. Also, if we had that, the customer would be willing to pay even more.

Res.-Regarding the innovation, do you think that we can make it better, taking into consideration the resources we have? Because if there isn't money to invest in it, only a little can be done.

B.M.-If there is money, we can make it happen, without it, we can't do anything. That is the problem. We can do more but not right now, so I don't know. I'll tell you what I would like to do: **give an additional service with these technologies**. It would feel good to make a **small cinema room where people could enjoy a nice 3D movie**, after dinner. This structure could support this kind of thing due to the **big areas** but that costs money.

Res.-Regarding the environment, do you want the guests to think that the hotel has a concern for the environment and the community or not?

B.M.-So the environment in which the hotel is located is already connected to the environment, which means that it has **woods behind it**, it is located on a **safe road** and in a very **small urban center**. It is already respectful towards the environment, it does not emit gases that are harmful to people, and it is not located near a factory. It is already respectful of the environment. That is why **guests can have a break from their lives**, they can **sleep well**, because of the **forest behind** them and the **tranquility of the night**. This is already something linked to the positive environment because even though we are geographically in the center of a small village, we are located in a **quiet street** so even in the evening when others are partying, here we can't hear anything. Especially in the festive period when the windows can be left open, many people say, "how nice did we sleep here", "how nice", "what a tranquility". It is a very good point in our favor. We are surrounded by a good, clean and healthy environment. There are few hotels where you can let the windows open and **listen to the birds singing** because we have a forest behind the hotel. In this sense, we are environmentally friendly.

What I want to tell you is that we have tranquility and services. The tranquility linked to the environment and services are linked to innovation and technology. Not everyone has this privilege. Even here in Vallé d'Aoste, not everyone has these two good aspects.

Res.-Now, let's think about your hotel as a person! Suppose that "this person" is in front of you! What would this person look like? If the hotel was a person, which characteristics would you want it to have? (this doesn't necessarily need to be a reflection of you as the director; it can be someone imaginary that could be the face of the hotel). Age, man/woman, lower class/middle class/upper

class, married/single, does he/she have kids? What does he/she do on weekends? What is his/her hobby?

B.M.-So if I could decide, I would like it to be a woman, 30 years old, of medium height, medium class, rather single, without kids, a weekend of sport, fun, and leisure. The hobby could be sports (jogging), shopping and relaxation.

Res.-Between the following, what do you want the hotel to be associated with? (first, consider all the characteristics and then choose them). Old-fashioned/young, Serious/playful, Relaxed/excitement, Introvert/extrovert, Traditional/trendy, Conservative/adventurous, Conscious or careful/spontaneous, Cold or impartial/sensitive, Discrete/ostentatious, Comfortable/elegant?

B.M.-So I want the hotel to be associated with being in the middle of old and young, serious, relaxed, a little introverted, traditional, conservative, conscious and careful, sensitive, discreet, and comfortable. These are the things I think we already have and some we might have in the future.

Res.-What benefits do you want the hotel to reflect? Staff, cleanliness, location, comfort, value for money/price, facilities, or food?

B.M.-I will say everything because I would like it to be so: excellent staff, excellent cleaning, good location, excellent comfort, excellent value for money, good facilities, excellent food. And like others, I would provide a great service. Overall, excellent services. Unfortunately, we do not always receive a 10 in all of the above, only now and then.

Res.-What type of emotional benefits do you want to “sell” to your customers? I mean, how would you like your customers to feel when staying at your hotel? Appreciated/valued, entertained, excited, challenged, motivated/encouraged/inspired, feeling home/welcome, safe/reassured, surprised, undisturbed, committed to the hotel, and conscious about the cultural environment.

B.M.-Then I would like them to feel appreciated and that they appreciated the hotel and even the calls, the customers shouldn't feel neglected but considered. Not entertained, in the sense that there must be no obligation. Excited, yes, in the sense that the surroundings are exciting given the hotel context. Challenged, no. Inspired, yes. Inspired to want to come back. Feel at home and welcome, yes. Safe in the sense that a safe environment where there is no type of danger, both of the structure and the people inside of it. Surprised, yes. I would love to surprise people on more than one occasion, for instance: a couple arrives and it's the birthday of one of them. I would always like to offer

them something, nothing exaggerated but something that would make them notice. That could be a rose for the woman, a bottle of wine that costs us little money but can generate a beautiful image of us. Undisturbed, yes in the sense of total privacy. This is something that I would always like to give but unfortunately, it is not so because the rooms are not soundproofed. There is a beautiful environment, yes, always a relaxing, peaceful bed. This is what I think.

Res.-What do you want the nature of the personal relationship to be between the brand and the customers? Friendship, confident, distant, discrete, or other?

B.M.-Definitely friendship. I must say that we have very happy customers. We have clients who text me. Beyond the fact that they can come back or not, they text me, asking me how the staff is, asking how I am, they tell me why they enjoyed staying here and this is great. We are given feedback, excellent feedback. Confidence because, in any case, it takes respect and trust. The discretion certainly. And also, seriousness in the sense I say I have and provide some characteristics and there must actually be these characteristics. I think this is the respect you offer the customer. Currently, we have this only partially, unfortunately.

Res.-Who do you want the customer to be like? Young/middle-aged/old, lower class/middle-class/upper class, married/single, does he/she have kids? What does he/she do on weekends? What are his/her hobbies? What is his/her job? Funny/relaxed, introvert/extrovert, or other...

B.M.-Being young or old is irrelevant. The class: middle class because it can't be inferior, but not too demanding. Married or single: it is indifferent. Children are welcome but it is complicated, in the sense that the structure does not provide attractions for children, so it would be a mess to have a dozen children running around the hotel. If we deal with the following guests like we've had this summer: football players, little ones,... is one thing, but having three or four families who have children, the hotel becomes a kindergarten, and this structure has no spaces and doesn't provide entertainment for kids. I don't have anything against children, but the structure is not suitable for children. Moreover, there is the danger of heights (not good for children). What does he or she do on the weekend? Here they could do many things. In winter, there is skiing, and in summer, there are bike excursions, and it is beautiful too. There are some activities for couples though. There are spas. What are your hobbies? Here you do a lot. Maybe we could have a slightly more targeted booking, in the sense that when the guest arrives we already have offers for him. What would be great, in the sense, "I want to come here, and I want to have an organized rafting day, I want to go to the billiard

championship, I want to go to the spa". This would be a great thing: organized for the 15 days already so that they don't have to worry when they get here.

What should I do? What not to do? Except for the days that the guest may keep free to see where he/she wants to go. That would be a very, very good service to give. During the booking process, make a holiday route. What is his job? It is indifferent, as I told you: the middle class is all right. Fun and relaxed both. Introvert, extrovert: it can be both.

Res.-That's a good idea to previously organize the guest's stay. Moreover, I remind you that these characteristics are not related to what the hotel currently is but to what the hotel can become (what do you dream that the hotel is).

B.M.-Yes, yes, ok, I understand it, but the type of guests, I would like it to be so because the offer I would give is linked to this type of clients: middle class, married or single, like I said, it is indifferent, few children.

Res.-The fact that you don't want to have children in the hotel is because there are no children's areas? But do you think that in the future that would be something you would like to change?

B.M.-No, I don't think so. I think that this hotel is more related to couples than to families. Because to have families we must have additional spaces. Spaces to please couples and families. We don't have a playground nearby, we have nothing. If you arrive with a child, after 4 days, he/she will be bored. And we don't even have anything nearby. The child can have fun if there is a cinema if there is something. There is nothing here. Instead, for the couple, there is the casino, the couple can go skiing, can go to the spa, the couple can go for a walk, and can ride a bike. There is entertainment for couples, but entertainment for children is somewhat lacking, both from the inside of the hotel and the outside of the hotel.

Res.-So it would be interesting to reinforce a romantic concept for the hotel, do you agree?

B.M.-Yes, I totally agree. Romantic, sports, and relaxation.

Res.-Can you enumerate a list of "problems" that harm the image of the hotel?

B.M.-So, the elements that damage the image of the hotel are the few parking spaces, the uninviting reception, and the rooms of old construction still.

Res.-And regarding the service, is there any problem?

B.M.-Yes, unfortunately, regarding the service: lack of professionalism of some members of the staff, but this can be changed quickly.

Res.-How do you think we can resolve the lack of professionalism issue?

B.M.-The lack of professionalism can be resolved in 3 minutes by hiring competent people and that's it. There are no different solutions. People who want to work, but not just to work: work well, work as a team. Some people work, work well, and want to work and some people work to be paid and that's it and don't care about working well or working badly. The only goal that they have is to get a paycheck at the end of the month. We all work to get paid but there are those who work well and work poorly. Moreover, some people do not work at all.

Res.-And what do you mean about the parking spaces?

B.M.-The parking spaces are very few compared to the 50 rooms we have. We also have 10 parking spaces in the front, but if you have a big car, it doesn't even fit because it overhangs the road. Unfortunately, some people park in front of the hotel but aren't even guests or hotel-related vehicles. This is a problem.

Res.-What could be done to solve the parking spaces issue?

B.M.-We can do works on the floor of the parking spaces (also emotional since it provides safety to guests) to protect the cars.

Res.-And what could be done to solve the reception issue?

B.M.-The problem of the reception can be solved with good lighting, a new reception counter, getting one, two or more TVs and plants, something that warms the place a little.

Res.-Related to design for example?

B.M.-Yes, surely. It needs a study from a professional that gives you an idea and then everything can be improved. Because the reception gets little exterior lighting. But we can definitely improve. I already had an idea: expanding the counter but the problem, as I told you before, is money. There is little light. With correct lighting and some plants and the problem changes, I mean, the first impact is different. Now the first impact is bad but in the future, we can improve it.

Res.-Besides the investment in the small wellness center in the hotel, can another thing be done to improve the customers' experience?

B.M.-There are a lot of things that can be done. The first thing is the wellness center because people can relax after practicing sports. Besides the sauna in the wellness center, we can also include a gym. And after we can create a tv room, a game room, ... And after, a lot of things can be improved. We can also have a space where you can enjoy sunbathing, with a cocktail, and an aperitivo, to provide some relaxation to the guest.

Moreover, if we have kids walking in and out, this can't be done, it is not relaxing, that's why I tell you that the structure of the hotel is not prepared for families. Now I can't remember anything in particular.

Res-What can be done in terms of quality that could improve the guests' experience?

B.M.-Provide more services, more services. The more services you provide, the more guests return.

Res-Do you mean providing additional services?

B.M.-Yes, for example, having a person who can do massages or make your nails (always connected to the wellness aspect). People come here on vacations, so we need to provide relaxation to guests. If clients like staying with us they will return so it is needed that we have all of this. Because when you pay, you want things. So, we have to provide a service with quality.

Res.-What do you think is valued by guests in hotels in general?

B.M.-I think as a client, so the first thing that I like when staying in a hotel is the friendliness of the people at the reception, the second is the cleanliness of the place and after the food, a good food. This is what I look for when I stay at a hotel. If a hotel doesn't have a perfect bedroom or a perfect reception, the important thing is that the hotel has these three things: friendly people, good food, and cleanliness of the place. This is what I think.

Res.-What services or characteristics should the hotel have to keep up with the competition?

B.M.-Value for money, this is the main characteristic. Providing more services at a reasonable price. Surely, this puts us above the competition. More service, more availability, more friendliness, and the competition goes below us.

Res.-How could we implement some of the solutions to the hotel cleanliness?

B.M.-The first thing is having a competent person in charge of the cleanliness of the hotel.

Res.-Do you think that this does not happen in the hotel?

B.M.-Not always do I have the most suitable person to be in charge of the cleanliness department.

Res.-I see you value people, you always put the person first, isn't that right?

B.M.-Sure, for me, in hotels, in the first place there are the people. In a hotel, 80% are the people and the rest is the structure. I would never stay at a hotel where it isn't like this. I prefer to stay at a place where the bedroom and the food are ok, but I have a relationship with the people and there is cleanliness. This is my opinion.

Res.-How could we implement a solution for the hotel's food?

B.M.-Look at the client and understand what he wants. For example, the polach guests: they don't like the croissants but they like the eggs, so if you put the croissants they won't like it. So, you need to look at the client. If you have a guest that likes salty food for breakfast you can't give him sweet food and vice versa. If you don't pay attention to this, the guest won't return. This is the most important thing.

Res.-What do you want to say to conclude this interview?

B.M.-You know, pampering the guests from when they arrive to when they take off. Doing activities and serving them according to the guests interests. That is, if one does not care about something, it is useless to do it. Try to understand what the guests care about. Get what he wants: this is my goal.

Appendix 4 Table of codes, units of data , and respective recommendations

Elements of the Literature Review	Codes	Dimensions of Each Code	Director Quotes/"unit of data"	Recommendations	1st Member of the Staff Quotes/"unit of data"	2nd Member of the Staff Quotes/"unit of data"	Final Recommendations
Brand Identity Planning Model (3 perspectives)	Brand as Product/price	Product Scope					
		Product Related Attributes					
		Quality-Value					
		Use Occasion					
	Brand as Organization	Culture/values					
		People					
		Programs, community - oriented and local					
		Environment					
		Pursue for quality					

		Innovative					
		Concern for Customer					
	Brand as Person	Brand Personality					
Brand Identity Structure	Core Identity						
	Extended Identity						
Value Proposition	Functional Benefits	Resting holiday					
		Technology					
		Location					
		Rest and comfort					
		Value for money					
		Parking lot					
		Wellness					
	Emotional Benefits	Romance					
		Peace of mind & Nature & Surroundings					
		Safety					
		Welcoming					
		Pampered					
Brand Position	Part	Core identity					
		Points of leverage					
		Value proposition					
	Target Audience	Interest					
		Type of guest					
		Demographic					
	Actively Communicated	First Target Audience					
		Second Target Audience					
	Demonstrates Advantage	First Target Audience					
		Second Target Audience					

Source: Own Elaboration

Appendix 5 Interview guidelines to the staff

-In this interview, I'm going to ask you your opinion on things that I or B.M. propose for the hotel to understand what can actually be done to improve the hotel's image.

Feel free to suggest anything that you feel could be an improvement.

Rooms:

- Would you say that it is important to avoid accommodating guests in connecting rooms?
- Considering that we would like to have a more romantic concept present in Miramonti and make the stays more romantic for couples, do you think it would suit the hotel to provide/sell a romantic kit (for example, flowers, chocolates, cupcakes, champagne, wine, etc.)?
- Do you think that that would be feasible and well managed by the staff?
- To put the customer first and to be more welcoming, do you think that it would suit the hotel to surprise guests with little details, as a welcome gift or on their birthdays/anniversaries/celebrations, etc.?
- Would that be difficult to do and manage every day?
- Do you think that B.M. and the staff would be able to recognize that all of the above are a priority for Miramonti?

Reception:

- To know more about the guests and consequently surprise them, do you think that a software that supports information about the guests would help the staff to be more proactive towards them?
- Do you think it is feasible to send a follow-up email after guests book a room?
- Do you think that communication with the housekeeping department needs improvement?

Complete service:

- If the hotel had enough employees, could the staff manage a personalized holiday route for guests (places, activities, restaurants, timings, places, guests' interests, etc.)?

Cinema:

- Do you think that having a cinema room in Miramonti would improve the guest's stay?

- Do you think that the cinema room would fit the hotel's new image, considering the context of Miramonti?

Bar:

- Do you think it would be feasible to open the bar upstairs or provide a bar service in the lounge area near the reception?

Culture/values:

- What do you think about having the following values associated with Miramonti?

- guest-oriented
- personalization
- reliability
- discretion

Core identity:

- Do you think that the following concepts would suit well Miramonti's new image?

- romance experience
- peaceful environment
- connection with nature
- rest
- relaxation
- comfort
- pampering the guests (*coccolare gli ospiti*)
- relationship with the guests

Extended identity:

- What about these concepts? Do you think they can also be associated with the hotel?

- safe area (Saint-Vincent)
- local business/communities' involvement
- strategic geographically location
- regional (*valdostana* concept)
- snow sports

- alpine style
- wellness
- convenience for guests (in the sense that we take care of everything)
- innovative experiences (cinema)
- welcoming
- personalization
- guest-oriented
- experience-driven (we provide all sorts of experience)
- friendship between the hotel and the guest
- fun
- sensitive to guests
- convey trust to guests
- discreet
- surprising guests
- improvement in the service
- people first (employees)

Target 1:

- Consider the following characteristics as the main target:

- middle class
- relaxed
- couples
- wellness
- visit the region
- snow sports as a possibility of "entertainment"

Core identity:

- Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target?

- romance
- peaceful
- nature
- rest
- relaxation
- comfort
- pampered (*coccolato*)
- relationship with guests

Value proposition:

- So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target?

- resting holiday
- geographically strategic and peaceful location
- rest and comfort
- wellness
- romance
- peace of mind and nature
- pampering (*coccolato*)

Target 2:

- Now, let's talk about the secondary target. Consider the following:

- middle class
- fun
- families
- snow sports
- visit the region
- wellness as a complement

Core identity:

- Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target?

- peaceful
- nature
- rest
- relaxation
- comfort
- pampered (*coccolato*)
- relationship

Value proposition:

- So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target?

- resting holiday

- convenient use/utility (the guests can relax and have fun at the same time and have their stay carefully planned according to their interests and schedules)
- the wellness concept in the hotel
- peace of mind, nature, and surroundings
- pampered

STAFF:

- What would make you feel more motivated to work at Miramonti or in general?

Now that we've finished this interview, do you want to add anything related to what we've been talking about?

Appendix 6 Transcription of the interview to D.M. with codes

Coding Label:

Rooms

Reception

Complete Service

Cinema

Bar

Culture/values

Core Identity

Extended Identity

Relationship

Competitive Leverage

STAFF

TARGET

TARGET 2

Res-In this interview I'm going to ask you your opinion on things that whether I or B.M. propose for the hotel to understand what can actually be done to improve the hotel's image.

Feel free to suggest anything that you feel could be an improvement.

Rooms:

Res.- Would you say that it is important to avoid accommodating guests in connecting rooms?

D.M.- It's important if you don't have to give the room to four people. so that's important because the room can communicate and then you can give two double rooms and the people can stay together. But we also have a bad point of view because sometimes the people in the communicating rooms can hear the other people in the other room. So, we have positive and negative aspects. That's my opinion.

Res.- Yes, guests can hear everything from one bedroom to another. If you travel with your girlfriend you want some privacy. Maybe with family, it works right?

D.M.- Yes, that's what I want to say. If you have a family and they want to stay together, and we don't have room for four/five people, but we have two communicating rooms (one triple and one double). That is great but at the same time, we have negative aspects.

Res.- Considering that we would like to have a more romantic concept present in Miramonti and make the stays more romantic for couples, do you think it would suit the hotel to provide/sell a romantic kit (for example, flowers, chocolates, cupcakes, champagne, wine, etc.)?

D.M.- Yes, it would be a great idea and I think that on Valentine's Day, the kit should be free to all the couples that stay in the hotel and if couples want it, they have to book it on booking.com or another site. You will put it on your reservation. But on Valentine's Day, we need to have it for free.

Res.- Why give it for free at such a time when couples are willing to pay more since it's Valentine's Day?

D.M.- Because of course on Valentine's Day the rooms are more expensive than the other days of the year and then you'll be given better service, so we'll give it for free, it's included, no? I think it would be great.

Res.- Do you think that that would be feasible and well managed by the staff (to give/sell the kit)?

D.M.- Of course because they want you to be providing this when they arrive. You can ask and then the staff has to provide you with the kit. The kit is inside every room. And every day of the year, the guests that want to have it, need to pay for it.

Res.- But do you think the staff will handle it? Because if a couple wants to buy it, the reception needs to communicate with the guests to understand what they want, and then the reception needs to communicate with the staff of the housekeeping to put the kit in the room.

D.M.- Of course, we need an improvement in all of the staff. The reception has to communicate to the staff of the housekeeping (in this room we have to put the kit) and I think it would be okay because on the reservation we see what the guests want in their room. If they want the kits, if they want the parking space. So, the reception will know what we have to do in this room and the reception has to communicate to the staff what they have to do.

Res.- So you think there won't be a problem with the kit?

D.M.- I think it won't be a problem. If you improve a good system... You know the reservation of the guests who want the kit, then you put in the document of the ladies of the housekeeping, and they have to put the kit inside of the room, so I think it would be easy.

Res.- To put the customer first and to be more welcoming, do you think that it would suit the hotel to surprise guests with little details, as a welcome gift or on their birthdays/anniversaries/celebrations, etc.?

D.M.- Yes, of course, I think it could be a great improvement because when they book the room, you can see if it is the birthday of the guests or not and then if you do something for the guest, it would be a surprise and the guest will have a nice memory of the hotel. So, yes, of course. Of course, of course. That would be a good improvement. It would be a nice, nice improvement and with this, I think you will also get the fidelity of the client, and then they will be back, and they will be back and back and back and back again.

Res.- Yes, I agree with you. Would that be difficult to do and manage every day?

D.M.- No, I think it wouldn't be difficult or hard to manage because if you work with people that know what they are doing, are competent, and are a little confident in what they do on the job, I think it will not be a problem, an issue. But if you don't have competent people inside your team of course you will have a problem. But I think it's too simple.

Res.- Do you think that B.M. and the staff would be able to recognize that all of the above are a priority for Miramonti?

D.M.- I think B.M. can because he gives all his time to the hotel, to the work, so with him, we don't have a problem but the staff no. I'm so sorry to say that but I have to tell the truth.

Res.- How do you think we could solve it?

D.M.- We could solve it by teaching the staff before improving the service of course.

Reception:

Res.- To know more about the guests and consequently surprise them, do you think that a software that supports information about the guests would help the staff to be more proactive towards them?

D.M.- Of course, it would be better to have a software with all the information because we can know what we can offer to do them.

Res.- Do you think it is feasible to send a follow-up email after guests book a room?

D.M.- Of course, it's feasible, because the more things you do for the guest, the better it will be, I think. That's what I think.

Res.- So, do you think the staff can handle it during the service?

D.M.- Yes, I think the staff can handle it but of course, the staff has to be competent, you know?

Res.- Do you think that communication with the housekeeping department needs improvement?

D.M.- Yes, a little bit, yes. Because I think the communication with the housekeeping needs to be clearer for the housekeeping because they need to know how to make the rooms, and also if they need to put some kit or not. That's it, I think, yes.

Complete service:

Res.- If the hotel had enough employees, could the staff manage a personalized holiday route for guests (places, activities, restaurants, timings, places, guests' interests, etc.)?

D.M.- Yes it would be possible. We need more employment at the reception because the reception works on these things and then yes, why not? Yes, it would be a good, good service and also we can be chosen on Booking because we also give service. It would be a nice thing.

Res.- So, do you think we should put another employee at the reception?

D.M.- Yes, why not? Yes, hire another employee for the reception. We have 50 rooms so we need another employee, and the new employee can learn about this thing you told me about. The new software you want to put, the kit,

the program for the holidays. They can give them a program of things to do here. Yes, of course, yes.

Res.- And you think that having this service would make the guests book with us?

D.M.- I think yes because if you give more service than other hotels, of course, they want to choose you because you give them more choices. I think.

Cinema:

Res.- Do you think that having a cinema room in Miramonti would improve the guest's stay?

D.M.- Yes, **it will be an improvement for the guests' stay** but we have to see the cost of it because you have to pay for the rights to the movie, you know? You can't put the movie on without paying. You have to pay for this, so I don't know.

Res.- Forget about the costs, what do you think?

D.M.- Yes, yes, **the more services you give, the better the guests will be.**

Res.- Do you think that the cinema room would fit the hotel's new image, considering the context of Miramonti?

D.M.- **Yes, of course, it would give a new image because it would be an announcement, something new that we had never seen in Saint-Vincent.**

Bar:

Res.- Do you think it would be feasible to open the bar upstairs or provide a bar service in the lounge area near the reception?

D.M.- Yes, **yes, it would be feasible to open the bar. We can open the bar and put the cinema on the other side and then guests can go to the bar to have a drink and watch the movie.** Yes, of course, this is the way to work, to give the guest whatever and whenever they want it, everything.

Culture/values:

Res.- What do you think about having the following values associated with Miramonti? Guest-oriented, personalization, reliability, and discretion.

D.M.- **I think it would be better** as I told you before. **All the new things we can improve inside the hotel. We will be better for the guests and for us because we would give a new service and a better service** I think because if you give more choice we'll give better service because the client will have more

choice. And all the things we can improve inside the hotel and can give to the guest, pleasure or all they want, and they need, it would be better for the hotel. Yes, of course.

Core Identity:

Res.- Do you think that the following concepts would suit well Miramonti's new image? Romance experience, peaceful environment, connection with nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampering the guests, relationship with the guests.

D.M.- Of course, these concepts have to be inside of the staff, relationship with the guest, and pampering the guest. We need to do this because we work with people. Miramonti has a bar... We work with people, we have to pamper them, of course, of course. And also, the romantic experience, the peaceful environment, and the connection with nature. All the things you are telling me about, a program to give to the guests, where they can go, what they can see, where they can eat and the romantic kit you told me about. All these things are of course to be improved because they will give the hotel a beautiful image, a beautiful impact. We give beautiful memories to the guest and fidelize the guests and they will be back and back and back again. Of course, yes, yes.

Extended identity:

Res.- What about these concepts? Do you think they can also be associated with the hotel? Safe area (Saint-Vincent), local business/communities involvement, strategic geographically location, regional (valdostana concept), snow sports, alpine style, wellness, convenience for guests (in the sense that we take care of everything), innovative experiences (cinema), welcoming, personalization, guest-oriented, experience-driven (we provide all sorts of experience), the friendship between the hotel and the guest, fun, sensitive to guests, convey trust to guests, discreet, surprising guests, improvement in the service, people first (employees).

D.M.- Safe area, Saint-Vincent of course, we can associate with sports, alpine style, also Wellness, welcoming. We need to improve this, I think. Guest-oriented, of course, also I think it's very important to do. The friendship between the hotel and the guest is also this because friendship is the base of relationships. And fun, where they can go to have a little bit of fun, you can go to the pub... Surprising the guests would be a big, big improvement because it's hard to surprise someone. But I don't know if we could do it because it's hard to do and I think that's all.

Res.- What about these? Local business/communities' involvement, strategic geographically location, regional (valdostana concept), convenience for guests

(in the sense that we take care of everything), innovative experiences (cinema), personalization, experience-driven (we provide all sorts of experience), sensitive to guests, convey trust to guests, discreet, improvement in the service, people first (employees putting each other first, treating each other well, B.M. putting you first, for example).

D.M.- Of course, all these things you are telling me about, if we improve inside of the hotel, the service will be better for us, for the team who work inside of the hotel and also for the guests who come or for the community if we can work together and all the other things. All these things you told me about are really, really important and really suggestive things.

Target 1:

Res.- Consider the following characteristics as the main target: middle class, relaxed, couples, wellness, visit the region, snow sports as a possibility of "entertainment". Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target? Romance, peaceful, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampered, and relationship with guests.

D.M.- I think yes, of course, it's reasonable to have these concepts associated with the target. The winter sport... because a lot of people who come here to Saint-Vincent in the winter come here to ski, to snowboard, to visit the mountain. It's the principal attraction in the winter in Vallé d'Aoste. Yes, of course. It would be reasonable to associate these concepts. Also, romance, peaceful, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, and pampering of the guests. It's fine to do it and I think we need to do it because this is the way to fidelize the guests and to make them back again to our hotel.

Value proposition:

Res.- So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target?
RESTING HOLIDAY, GEOGRAPHICALLY STRATEGIC AND PEACEFUL
LOCATION, REST AND COMFORT, WELLNESS, ROMANCE, PEACE OF MIND &
NATURE, PAMPERED.

D.M.- Of course, it makes sense because it's the truth. If you're here in Vallé d'Aoste you can have a peaceful mind because it's a peaceful location. You are in the middle of nature, with mountains, with rivers. With a lot of things, we can do and see. And the rest and the comfort, we have two big thermal centers

here where we can send the guests. Yes, yes, it makes sense and I think it has to be done because it's the truth, so why not?

Target 2:

Res.- Now, let's talk about the secondary target. Consider the following: middle class, fun, families, snow sports, visit the region, and wellness as a complement. Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target? Peaceful, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampered, relationship.

D.M.- Yes, of course, I think it's necessary to have these because here is a place where we can rest, we can stay in the middle of nature, we can be peaceful, we have comfort because of all the things you need, we have here. And the pampering needs to be done by the staff.

Value proposition:

Res.- So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target? Resting holiday, convenient use/utility (the guests can relax and have fun at the same time and have their stay carefully planned according to their interests and schedules), the wellness concept in the hotel, peace of mind, nature, and surroundings and pampered.

D.M.- Yes, it makes a lot of sense, because those are the attractions that we have here. That's the way to make the guests come here to us and I tell you more: also, the food is important because we have a lot of typical food that is so, so, so good. And wellness.

Res.- Do you think that is going to work well with the staff?

D.M.- Yes it will work well with the staff. But we need staff that can speak some languages like French, English, you know. Not like our staff. Yes, it will work fine with people.

Staff:

Res.- What would make you feel more motivated to work at Miramonti or in general?

D.M.- What would make me feel more motivated? Of course, I would be more motivated if I had something to learn, you know? When you work and you learn something new that's a big, big motivation because all the things you learn, they rest to you, do you understand me? When you can learn more than you know, that's a big, big motivation.

Res.- Now that we've finished this interview, do you want to add anything?

D.M.- Yes, the only thing I want to add is about the inside of the hotel. I think respect is the first thing and the most important thing because people have to respect each other.

Appendix 7 Transcription of the interview to F.M. with codes

Coding Label:

Rooms

Reception

Complete Service

Cinema

Bar

Culture/values

Core Identity

Extended Identity

Relationship

Competitive Leverage

STAFF

1st TARGET audience

2nd TARGET audience

pursue for quality

breakfast and dining room

wellness

Res.-In this interview I'm going to ask you your opinion on things that whether I or B.M. propose for the hotel to understand what can actually be done to improve the hotel's image.

Feel free to suggest anything that you feel could be an improvement.

Would you say that it is important to avoid accommodating guests in connecting rooms?

F.M.-I think it's important to avoid it when guests aren't in the same family.

Res.-Considering that we would like to have a more romantic concept present in Miramonti and make the stays more romantic for couples, do you think it would suit the hotel to provide/sell a romantic kit (for example, flowers, chocolates, cupcakes, champagne, wine, etc.)?

F.M.-I think it would be very nice.

Res.-Do you think that that would be feasible and well managed by the staff?

F.M.-I'm not sure of this. Not particularly.

Res.-Why not?

F.M.-You know our staff.

Res.-Can you elaborate?

F.M.-I think that our staff can't do this.

Res.-Why not?

F.M.-It's too difficult for them.

Res.-How could it be solved?

F.M.-With new staff.

Res.-Which requirements should be mandatory to hire other people? What type of characteristics should they have?

F.M.-They should be kind to guests, attentive, precise, and smart.

Res.-Good.

Res.-In order to put the customer first and to be more welcoming, do you think that it would suit the hotel to surprise guests with little details, as a welcome gift or on their birthdays/anniversaries/celebrations, etc.?

F.M.-I think that's very nice. Guests could appreciate it.

Res.-Would that be difficult to do and manage every day?

F.M.-Maybe yes, like I told you before.

Res.-So, if we had a better staff, would it work?

F.M.-Yes

Res.-Do you think that B.M. and the staff would be able to recognize that all of the above are a priority for Miramonti? Recognize that we need to surprise guests and provide a romantic concept. But to do this, would he recognize the need to hire more competent people?

F.M.-Yes, I think so....Surprise guests with a romantic concept is a very good idea.

Res.-In order to know more about the guests and consequently surprise them, do you think that software that supports information about the guests would help the staff to be more proactive towards them?

F.M.-Yes sure, that kind of software is very important.

Res.-Do you think it is feasible to send a follow-up email after guests book a room?

F.M.-Yes, I think that is feasible to do this.

Res.-Do you think that the communication with the housekeeping department needs improvement?

F.M.-I think we can improve in many ways.

Res.-Can you tell me what we need to improve?

F.M.-For housekeeping, they could be more attentive to common spaces.

Res.-Okay.

Res.-Were you just referring to something else or just the housekeeping?

F.M.-I think we should improve the breakfast and dinner service, be more attentive to customer needs, serve homemade cakes, fruit salads, yogurt, and local products

Res.-This is a good idea

Res.-If the hotel had enough employees, could the staff manage a personalized holiday route for guests (places, activities, restaurants, timings, places, guests' interests, etc.)?

F.M.-Yes, very nice.

Res.-So, there wouldn't be any problem?

F.M.-Maybe yes, maybe not. But that's very nice.

Res.-Do you think that having a cinema room in Miramonti would improve the guests' stay?

F.M.-Wow yes, that would be fine. Also, with a swimming pool.

Res.-Oh nice!

Res.-Do you think that the cinema room would fit the hotel's new image, considering the context of Miramonti?

F.M.-Yes.

Res.-Do you think it would be feasible to open the bar upstairs or provide a bar service in the lounge area near the reception?

F.M.-Yes, I think so, I actually told B.M. about this yesterday... We can open the bar to guests and have parties...

Res.-Yes. That would be great.

Res.-What do you think about having the following values associated with Miramonti? Guest-oriented, personalization, reliability, and discretion.

F.M.-We should have more of these in the future.

Res.-Do you think it fits the hotel's future image?

F.M.-Yes

Res.-Do you think that the following concepts would suit well Miramonti's new image? Romance experience, peaceful environment, connection with nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampering the guests, and relationship with the guests.

F.M.-Very well.

Res.-What about these concepts? Do you think they can also be associated with the hotel? Safe area (Saint-Vincent), local business/communities involvement, strategic geographically location, regional (valdostana concept), snow sports, alpine style, wellness, convenience for guests (in the sense that we take care of everything), innovative experiences (cinema), welcoming, personalization, guest-oriented, experience-driven (we provide all sorts of experience), the friendship between the hotel and the guest, fun, sensitive to guests, convey trust to guests, discreet, surprising guests, improvement in the service and people first (employees).

F.M.-For sure strategic location, friendship, fun, and welcoming

Res.-And the other ones?

F.M.-Yes also.

Res.-Consider the following characteristics as the main target. Middle class, relaxed, couples, wellness, visit the region and snow sports as a possibility of "entertainment". Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target? Romance, peacefulness, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampered, and relationship with guests.

F.M.-Yes.

Res.-So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target? Resting holiday, geographically strategic and peaceful location, rest and comfort, wellness, romance, peace of mind, nature and pampered.

F.M.-Yes it makes sense.

Res.- Now, let's talk about the secondary target. Consider the following: middle class, fun, families, snow sports, visiting the region, and wellness as a complement.

Res.- Do you think it's reasonable to have the following concepts associated with this target? Peaceful, nature, rest, relaxation, comfort, pampered, and relationship.

F.M.-Yes, I think so.

Res.-So, does it make sense that we communicate the following to this target? Resting holiday, convenient use/utility (the guests can relax and have fun at the same time and have their stay carefully planned according to their interests and schedules), the wellness concept in the hotel, peace of mind, nature, and surroundings and pampered.

F.M.-Yes.

Res.-What would make you feel more motivated to work at Miramonti or in general?

F.M.-I would like to be appreciated more.

Res.-By the staff, by B.M., or by clients?

F.M.-By B.M. and the staff. Not all of the staff

Res.-Feeling appreciated is very important to create a good relationship at work.

F.M.-Yes right.

Res.-Now that we've finished this interview, do you want to add anything related to what we've been talking about?

F.M.-I think that's fine.

Res.-Would you add anything else to what we've talked about?

F.M.-No it's ok.

Res.-So from what I understood you agree with everything that I suggested?

F.M.-Yes

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Hotel Paradise & Wellness's Valentine's special services



L'amore

Le nostre proposte per il weekend di San Valentino

Aggiungi alla tua prenotazione un tocco di amore per stupire la tua dolce metà

LUSSO PER DUE

Regalati una vera esperienza di coppia da vivere in totale relax, lontano da tutti e da tutto. Un momento solo voi due dove tutto sarà magico. Un momento che ricorderete per sempre.



FUGA D'AMORE

Un piccolo tocco di romanticismo: due cigni sul letto con petali di fiori, bottiglia di vino e cioccolatini

€ 35,00



TENERE COCCOLE

Per veri innamorati: due cigni sul letto con petali di fiori, rosa fresca, bottiglia di vino e cioccolatini

€ 45,00



SERVIZI INCLUSI

- Check-in nel primo pomeriggio;
- Pernottamento in suite;
- Aperitivo in SPA privata con massaggio di coppia;
- Allestimento super romantico con rose, petali di fiori, bottiglia, cioccolatini e candele;
- Mazza da 15 rose rosse in camera;
- Colazione in camera;



VERO AMORE

Perchè l'amore non si comanda: due cigni sul letto con petali di fiori, mazzo di rose fresche, bottiglia di vino e cioccolatini

Quest'esperienza è esclusiva e soggetta alla disponibilità. Richiedi subito informazioni telefonando o inviando una mail, e sorprendi la tua dolce metà

+39 0166 510051 - info@hparadise.com

Annex 2 Categories' rating of Hotel Miramonti and its competitors

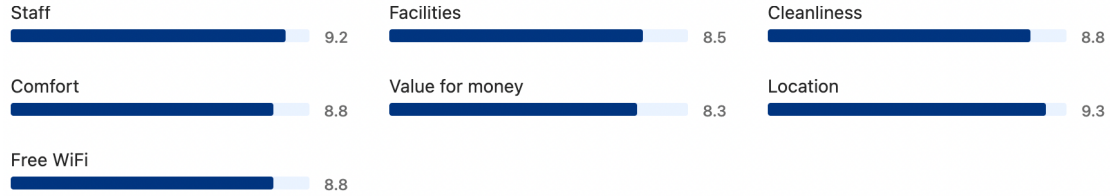
Hotel Miramonti

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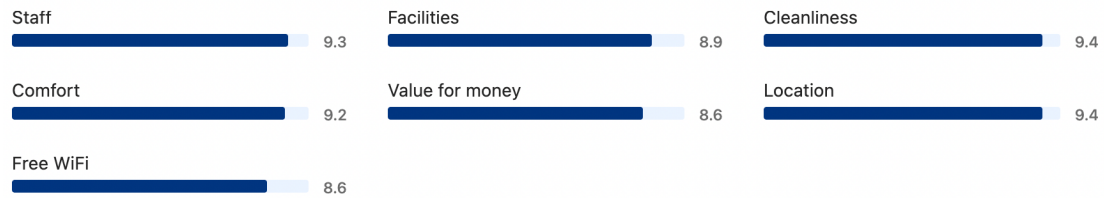
Hotel Paradise & Wellness

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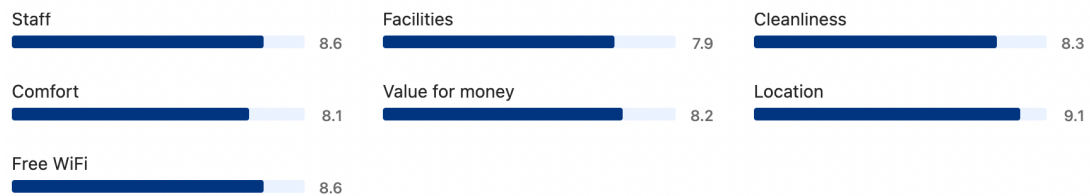
Hotel Alla Posta

Categories:



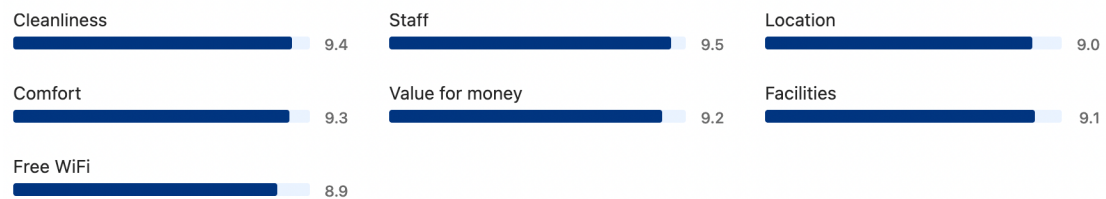
Hotel De La Ville

Categories:



Hotel Relais Du Foyer

Categories:



Source: (booking.com, 2022)