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Environmental Sustainability Portfolio:

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Environmental experience: Hotel Industry.
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1. Executive summary: The aim of this report is to analyse the environmental experience of hotel industry, as well as offer suggestions on how hotels can become environmentally friendly. The need for greener solutions in everyday life and business industry is nowadays one main trend based on people awareness of the importance to build a greener future and for human being to cooperate with nature. In fact, climate change marches are more frequent as more and more people adopt the cause, and many are adopting greener solutions within everyday life. Since the topic is one of the most discussed even from governments, every industry is taking in consideration to adopt greener solutions or products, including the hotel industry.
2. Environmental approach within the hotel industry: The need for greener and eco-friendly solutions is incredibly increasing during the last years as a result of continuous climate change marches and environmental-related battles from activists that have affected public opinion and most importantly have touched people's conscience about the urgent need to respect the planet. There has been a significant change in people's perspective of life, based on finding and encouraging greener

solutions within everyday life, opting for electric cars for example, or simply doing waste sorting are small actions that will help the overall planet environment. Not only the “greener awareness” has affected everyday life solutions, but also the business industry, without any distinction of industry nature. In fact, the hospitality industry is probably one of the main affected industries. According to an online journal on hotels and sustainability: “environmental impacts have become a significant concern for both governments and organizations in recent decades. Increasing environmental pressures from consumers themselves and from the tourism market, have heightened the concern of companies, including hoteliers and the wider hospitality sector”(Soria Leyva and Parra Parra,n.d). The main challenge is to mitigate the negative impacts of the industry as the sector is currently responsible for 21% of the overall ecological footprint: in fact, poor waste management and food waste, as well as the excessive use of plastics have been, and still are, the main issues within the hotel industry. Hoteliers should be focused on promoting the relationship between tourism and nature, by offering guests the opportunity to stay in touch with nature as a strategy based on the spirit of green tourism.

3. Environmentally friendly hotels: One common feature of environmentally friendly hotels is their location: most of them are in fact enclosed by nature landscapes, depending on the site, enhancing the natural features of the place. The Svart Hotel based in Norway is the first energy-positive hotel, opened in 2021: the main trait of the hotel is the panorama that it offers, as it is surrounded by the cristal water of the fjord, resulting in an astonishing atmosphere of calm and peace. The hotel structure is circular and is only using green energy thanks to solar panels, in order to reduce its yearly consumption by 85% compared to those hotels that have not adopted greener solutions. Another example of the same strategy is the El Nido Resorts, Philippines: the resort “live by a green ethos”,(Wanderlust,2022) and the structure is coherent with the nature of the place, as it is built as stilt houses, offering guests the chance to experience the beauty of the place while respecting the ecosystem. In fact, apart from the green design and architecture the hotel offers sustainable menus and nature-based activities to make guests engaged with nature. One last example is the Garonga Safari Camp in South Africa: this luxury camp offers the chance to stay in close contact with nature, and is a great example of successful greener policies as it does everything it can in order to reduce carbon footprints by using solar panels for the 30% of its energy consumption as well as using a heater pump system in order to reduce electrical power by 80% and bio-gas system in order to produce a natural gas to cook with.

These are just a few examples of modern environmentally friendly hotels that offer a unique green experience to guests, by opting for renewable energy and supporting recycling, sharing an important message in terms of brand awareness: luxury comforts can be offered even while respecting and cooperating with nature.

4. How can hotels be environmentally friendly? The above cited hotels are examples of how the lodging industry can choose to be greener while offering unique experience. The first thought that comes to mind when speaking about an environmental hotel is about the materials used while fabricating its structure and facilities. In fact, this might be the easiest step when implementing a green hotel, as the nature itself offers everything that is needed in order to build a construction: the Jetwing Surf Hotel, in Sri Lanka is one example of environmentally friendly design and architecture as

structures are made from wood, palm leaves and dried iluk grass. Whether hoteliers want to make a small change addressing greener offers or completely renew a hotel in order to be eco-friendly, suggestions are offered based on needs:

Reduce plastics waste: an example might be to avoid the use of plastic keycards by replacing them with technological entry systems or avoiding an excessive use of utensils such as straws or cups by providing them only when absolutely necessary and even in this case switching for reusable utensils might be a smarter move.

Automate energy control: the hotel industry is the main source of CO2 emissions.

Once again, this step can be easily implemented within the industry, especially nowadays thanks to modern green energy technologies such as: solar panels, LEDs, and an extended choice of renewable energy suppliers. One last tip might be to take advantage of the land, whether it is possible, by planting trees or a vegetable garden.

Avoid food waste: this is one of the main issues within the hospitality sector.

Suggestions in order to avoid food waste might be to base a menu around locally and seasonal products, promote vegan options, and restrict meat based products. Last but not least, separate and dispose of food waste correctly and consider supporting local food charity organizations.

Save water: water is a precious source and finding solutions in order to save its waste is a moral duty. There are a lot of actions that can be taken in consideration in order to avoid water waste, such as smart water-saving showers which means utilize recirculated purified water, as well as use rainwater collection systems or buy water-efficient appliances.

Transports: travel-related carbon emissions need to be considered as well, and once again this issue can be easily fixed. In fact, opting for electric vehicles is one of the most common green actions in everyday life, and this can be applied to guest transport services by providing hybrid or electric group shuttles that will result in lower emissions and optimized occupancy.

Support local community: supporting local farmers and producers in terms of products but also recommending guests any authentic local attraction, maybe by promoting natural or cultural heritage sites excursions. (Operto,2021.)

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Title: Guest experience.

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1. The aim of this report is to offer a reasonable explanation of what sustainable tourism is, and explain what changes have been seen in modern travelers. In fact, environmental sustainability is nowadays one of the main discussed trends even in hospitality. The result of people's awareness of the importance of offering eco-friendly solutions within the hotel industry has led to a new type of travelers: green travelers. They aim to experience greener accommodations, whether they are looking for luxury or not, in order to experience the unique chance to stay in close contact with nature while enjoying a vacation.

2. Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (Global Sustainable Tourism Council,2021). The trend of being eco-friendly and supporting environmental sustainability is incredibly increasing in the last years, as many people have developed the acknowledgement of the importance of adopting greener solutions, not only in everyday life, but also when planning a vacation. In fact, the number of “green travelers” has increased, becoming a real trend in the lodging industry, forcing hoteliers to take in consideration the possibility of changing to environmentally friendly hotels. Green travelers are moved by a worthy purpose: choose sustainable accommodations in order to reduce the negative impact on the environment and have the chance to stay close to nature. Most of the common features of environmentally friendly hotels in fact are:

- Mainly located close to nature.
- Care of the heritage of the site.
- Promote a non-waste policy, most of the time based on recycling.
- Provide services/experiences aimed to not to harm the environment.

(Paolinelli,2021.)

According to a Booking.com report of 2019, 70% of global travelers affirm that they would be more likely to book an accommodation that is eco-friendly.

3. Modern travelers are looking for a unique experience that has a core value of respecting nature as well as offering comprehensive comforts and benefits, especially if they are opting for a luxury environmentally friendly hotel. The hotel industry is proving that luxury and comforts can be offered while respecting the planet, and are brilliantly succeeding. Guests expect a green experience applied to every operation, whether it is for transports or food menu offerings. In fact, common features of the most famous luxury eco hotels included:

- Vegan options.
- Nature experience.
- No food waste policy.
- No water waste policy.
- Sustainable energy.
- Sustainable transport.

In fact, most eco hotels are located in a venue surrounded by nature, emphasizing the unique landscape of the place: the Whitepod luxury camp based in Switzerland provides “once-in-a-lifetime escapes in the Swiss Alps” is a great example of the all above cited features as it offers an unique experience for guest to stay in contact with nature while protecting the surrounded flora and fauna since the hotel is strongly commitment to sustainability.

4. A more in-depth research based on what eco hotels are currently offering to guests, researches showed that all of them are offering implemented green solutions in every detail: their core value is completely based on environmentally friendly experience. The Soneva Kiri resort in Thailand is located in the tropical rainforest and surrounded

by breathtaking beaches, and offers guest every comforters they might be looking for while reducing the environmental impact thanks to a Carbon Calculator that monitors the full footprint: interesting aspect that adds more value to the final guests experience is that the resort has its own organic garden in order to reduce additional impacts of importing products. Similarly does the Borgo Pignano Hotel in Tuscany, that produly promotes its on-site organic farm, thanks to its extended ground.

5. Research on what guests expect from environmentally friendly can be simply summarized in this statement: "explore in-depth sustainability values applied while traveling" (Paolinelli,2021). Recycled and raw materials, solar panels, experience of nature, organic food, green policies, green transports. The hotel industry is embracing environmental sustainability as result of a new generation of travelers: green travelers.

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Brand Image.

Brand image can be defined as "the perception of the brand in the mind of the customers" (Pahwa,2016.) and it is the result of customers' experiences and interactions with a brand.

Every company aims to have a strong brand image, as it is vital for succeeding in competition and customer retention. In fact, according to Pahwa's online article, a strong brand image will result into advantages as:

- more profits, as new customers are attracted to your brand.
- enables companies to introduce new products.
- boots the confidence of existing customers.
- enhance the relationship between the business and customers.

Even and especially within the hotel industry the concept of brand image is important in order to ensure the overall success of the company, and since nowadays more and more hotel brands are opting for a green ethos, it is important for them to develop a strong strategy.

In fact, as a result of contemporary green travelers trend, hoteliers are reshaping their strategies in order to be sustainable, and attract more guests: in fact, "In the hospitality market, "green hotel" is used as a brand label by many hotels to attract their customers and achieve sustain-able competitive advantage"(M. Brown, 1996; Martínez,2015; Pizam, 2009), in addition, "It is believed that a hotel's perceived green brand image influences consumers' expectations related to green hotels" (Chen, 2010; J. Lin et al., 2017). Thus a strong green brand image is what motivates guests to visit green hotels and has an impact on the promotion of environmentally friendly accommodations and practices. Research based on what is the impact of green marketing on a sustainable corporate image within the hotel industry showed that a green brand image positively influences the sustainable corporate image as a result many companies try themselves in environmentally friendly solutions to expand a green image. Nowadays there are a lot of hotels companies, especially in luxury, that are leading the environmental sustainability at high levels, and are incredibly succeeding in terms of customer retention and have created a strong green brand image.

These hotels are succeeding because they are offering guests the best greener experience possible, as According to Keller (1993), consumers' perception of a brand is based on their associated memories, and that perception will eventually generate their overall image of the brand. As a consequence, a green brand image is a set of brand perceptions of consumers that are associated with environmental concerns and commitments (Chen, 2010). In fact, when a guest choose to stay in a green accommodations, whether these are luxury or not, they expect to receive and perceive sustainability experiences and practices: offer vegan food for example, especially if the ingredients come directly from an in-site vegetables garden, is one environmentally action that will add more value to the brand image, as well as use raw materials for the structure of the hotel itself, including rooms facilities. As a consequence, "A green brand image is present when customers are actively aware of a brand's eco-friendly products and actions, which are usually stronger than their competitors' environmental measures" (ANS Global,n.d.).

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Staff Awareness.

The hotel industry is facing a change in strategy aimed to improve sustainable practices within the sector, as the demand for environmentally friendly accommodations has increased significantly during the last years. The process of reshaping a strategy around environmental sustainability is not easy for hoteliers, as this requires a lot of changes within internal and external operations. Funny enough, when it comes to providing staff awareness this might result in harder work than implementing solar panels or rainwater systems, as managers have the responsibility to make staff aware of the topic and related actions. In fact, it is important for hoteliers to create a strong green brand image message for guests, as well as make sure that staff is well-trained and has the correct knowledge of the topic, as they are the company's face to customers as well, and failure to provide them the right knowledge and involvement in environmental practices might result in poor reputation. The chosen sustainability practices for the hotel need to be shared with staff in order to be implemented by them, so that every department will be environmentally friendly. Suggestions on how to train staff might be to promote internal training to every department: housekeeping for example might be trained with limited-waste practices, while kitchen staff might be trained on no food waste policies, by organizing cooking sections with green chefs that might offer helpful tips on how to avoid food waste. Implementing environmental programmes is the key to empower sustainability, but the overall process should have a strong justification on the chosen green products and why sustainability has been put as the core value of the organization. In fact, benefits of sustainable training for staff are plenty, the most frequently highlighted are:

- stronger company culture: a strong commitment to sustainability is a savvy way to enhance staff awareness about the positive impact that their work is creating. Empowering staff up-skills in sustainability will reinforce a more engaged team of employees.
- improve staff retention: making staff feel empowered about their ability to make a difference will result in more satisfied staff, resulting in staff retention.
- reinforce sustainability communication: if staff is provided with the right knowledge and is equipped with the right skills about sustainability, it would result in easier and more efficient communication with external stakeholders.

In addition, effective sustainability trainings might be implemented following three steps:

1. Start by giving an explanation on why investing in sustainability skills is needed.
2. Make training relevant and fun: it is vital to attract employees' attention and curiosity about the topic, otherwise these trainings might result in being annoying and boring, and without a true will to participate, it will be in the introduction of training.
3. Accessible and flexible training: consider the technological development in order to implement training, taking in consideration hybrid events, or remote meetings.

In addition, companies can strengthen staff performance by offering the chance to exchange ideas and potential concerns with each other, by internal mentoring programs for example, which can connect those with advanced sustainability skills with new employees.

On the other hand, when choosing to implement staff awareness, companies should consider that this will result into higher cost for trainings: this can be defined as the main negative, and temporarily, impact, as it is already proved that strong staff awareness will strengtheners company culture and image, resulting in increasing revenue.

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Environmental trend in the hotel industry.

In order to support the theory of green accommodations I decided to produce a reflective paper based on the topic of the environmental trend in the hotel industry. As sustainable tourism is a trend that is going to stay in the future, as well as the influence of new types of travelers, named green travelers, is affecting the hotel industry. I wanted to produce a reflective paper to discuss the influence of environmental trends. Eco-consciousness has quickly become a priority for the hospitality industry, as unfortunately the sector is blamed as one of the main responsible for environmental impact. Environmental sustainability in the hotel industry is a reaction to the green travelers trend, which is based on people's awareness of the importance of promoting sustainable accommodations, as environmental

related topics have become urgent topics in contemporary days. More and more people decided to join the cause of climate change, and on a global level the demand for electric cars and green energy solutions has increased, as well as the food trend of veganism. Hospitality sector is therefore taking in consideration to implement greener solutions such as promoting no food waste and water policies, as well as opting for green energy suppliers in order to reduce the impact and retain customers. My point of view of the current situation is that environmental sustainability has become the most discussed topic, and is having a relevant impact on people's integrity, as we finally realized how important it is to save our planet: the way i see it, we could be able to reshape a world in which nature will provide us everything we need, as our planet is already doing it providing us two simple elements that can be used to produce clear energy: water and wind. Coming back to the main topic of this paper, by doing online research on why is the sector currently improving sustainability, I've found out that: "last year's COP26 climate conference in Scotland was the launch of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action Tourism with the now familiar mantra of halving emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050" (Hilldsdon,2022). This is evidence of why the hospitality and tourism sectors are considering the topic, and explains what is currently ongoing within the sectors as more than 500 travel-related businesses have signed up to the World Tourism Organisation initiative that aims to accelerate climate change actions at every level of the industry. I personally think that these are small significant steps toward a greener world: it is significant that environmental sustainability is affecting every industry, and that as a result industries are finally implementing and promoting eco-sustainable solutions. In fact, data showed that on a global level, the hospitality sector is responsible for 2% of the 5% CO2 emission. The overall impact of the environmental sustainability trend in hospitality, focusing on the hotel industry, can be defined as positive, since many hoteliers adopted the cause and recognised the importance of promoting green solutions and had put a lot of effort into offering a great green experience to guests. Must be said though that this reshaping process requires time and incentives, as building up a eco-hotel is not a easy process, since you have to think about lot of aspects, but, on the other hand, nowadays businesses can have all the support needed in order to succeed, plus being greener will increase revenue at the end. I've done a few research on what are environmental hotels currently doing in terms of offering and by doing a comparison between other non-eco hotels, I feel up to affirm that i would rather go for a sustainable hotel without any doubts, as nowadays there are lot of luxury eco-hotels that will satisfy any potential needs and comfort while respecting the nature. I think that we are slowly making significant changes in terms of consciousness campaigns, and the result is given by the fact that on a global scale, governments and industries are implementing sustainability.

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Benefits of choosing an environmentally friendly hotel.

I wanted to produce a reflective paper based on what are the benefits for guests to choose an environmentally friendly hotel. Hoteliers are putting in a lot of effort in order to offer a green experience to guests, and being sustainable costs them a lot, so I wanted to discuss what are the benefits for guests to choose an eco-friendly accommodation. Speaking personally, I would love to experience a green hotel, as I strongly support the ethos of being greener, and by doing research I discovered an environmentally sustainable world behind the hotel industry that I was not aware of before. In fact, there are plenty of benefits of choosing an eco-friendly accommodation, and some of them are health-related. In fact, apart from consuming less, using green energy, producing less waste, while staying in a sustainable accommodation, it is estimated that these accommodations are much healthier than traditional. The research showed that traditional materials used in constructions as well as furnishings are elements that pollute and can in some cases release harmful toxins, while raw materials used for eco accommodations make the air cleaner, improving the quality of life. As a consequence, the first benefits of staying in sustainable accommodations are: cleaner air, better sleep and focus ability. In addition, since one common feature of these accommodations is the support of local communities, guests can have the chance to get to know the products of local farms and admire local artisans discovering cultural and local traditions. The request for guests to stay in contact with nature and experience local traditions has become a key leader in hospitality, and from my point of view I would rather opt for a eco vacation than traditional as it can give me the chance to enjoy a stay while not harming the planet, and will enrich my cultural knowledge by experiencing traditional products and cultures. In conclusion, further benefits can be addressed as:

- support a global movement.
- participate in earth-friendly projects.
- explore creative eco-friendly facilities.
- get personalised experience.
- stay away from technology while enjoying nature.
- stay closer to Mother Nature.
- delve yourself into fresh and organic foods.
- actively reduce carbon footprint.
- co-exist with local wildlife.
- contribute to local community.
- a chance to learn an eco-friendly lesson for life.
- healthier options compared to traditional.

- encourage a sustainable effort. (Marras,2021).

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Regulatory affairs and economic incentives: sustainable hotels.

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1. Executive summary: The aim of this report is to analyze current regulatory affairs in sustainability applied for the hotel industry, as well as any economic incentives that businesses might be entitled for in order to promote sustainability. Data showed that governments have released many incentives to support businesses, and that the topic of sustainability is nowadays more important than ever. In fact, failure to declare false sustainable statements or practices within a business will result in legal actions against the business.

2. In the modern era sustainability is a well established business trend, even in hospitality. There has been a significant shift in the hotel industry, based on the spread of the environmental sustainability trend. Many travelers are in fact looking for greener accommodations, as people's awareness of climate change and co-related issues has increased. Many hotels have adopted the cause of environmental sustainability and reshaped the industry in order to be greener. This process is time consuming and requires many regulations and significant costs. This report will

analyze current regulatory affairs as well as economic incentives that are offered to support environmental sustainability within the industry.

3. Regulatory affairs: ESG stands for Environmental, Social and Governance that relates to all the aspects of how the world in which we live is protected. In fact, ESG involves an analysis of business across environmental, social and governance pillars. Current regulatory affairs are under the UK SDR: sustainable disclosure requirements. Government's ambitions in order to face climate change and green finance were announced in July 2021 and resulted in an elaborate Roadmap to Sustainable Investing. Companies are in fact asked to report their sustainable risks, opportunities and impacts, furthermore SDR include disclosure requirements relating to UK Green Taxonomy (PRP and Advanced UK, n.d.).

In addition, false or misleading environmental claims will result in actions by ASA, FCA, and even CMA. As a consequence, sustainable policies should be applied fairly and must be supported by documented evidence, as these statements merit particular attention (SDR and Investment labels, 2021). Furthermore, ESG measures can play a different role at any stage even in hospitality, especially in risk mitigation.

4. Economic incentives: It is estimated that the hospitality sector is committed to reach net zero by 2040: hospitality is playing a leading role in providing guidance on sustainability thanks to the launch of Environmental Sustainability Guide. The sector is strongly committed to reduce carbon footprint and emissions, by reshaping the hotel industry around sustainable practices, but this will require additional costs and financial incentives. These financial required incentives can be addressed as:
 - introducing targeted measures to incentives the investment in sustainability through loans, grants or tax credits.
 - tax relief for businesses replacing major equipment.
 - government support to upskills businesses with practical guidance on how they can reduce carbon footprint. (Russell, 2022).

Further research on Gov.uk website showed that there are environmental taxes available for businesses to encourage them to operate in a more environmentally friendly way, in addition Climate Change Agreements Scheme has been extended until 2025: these are voluntary agreements between UK industry and the Environmental Agency that aim to reduce energy use and carbon dioxide emissions and in return operators will receive a discount on the CCL. In addition, businesses can get a reduced rate of CCL if they have entered the Climate Change Agreements for a total of:

- 92% reduction for electricity.
- 86% reduction for gas.
- 77% reduction of LPG.
- 86% reduction for coal and other solid fossil fuels. (Gov.uk)

Furthermore, capital allowances on energy-efficient are available to be claimed when you buy zero-carbon technology for your business, reducing the amount of taxes paid.

5. Based on findings, even if the overall process of reshaping a hotel into a sustainable accommodation is time-consuming and requires a lot of knowledge and skills, companies can rely on economic incentives that the government is offering in order

to ensure a change in emissions. In fact, institutions and governments are seriously taking into consideration the topic of environmental sustainability of businesses, and as a consequence businesses have no excuses for at least trying to implement some environmental features.

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