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Assignment Title: Understanding the Importance of Stakeholder Engagement in the Successful Commencement and Completion of Project "StaySmart+" at Marriott International.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Project Overview	3
3. Appraisal (SWOT/PESTLE)	4
4. Stakeholders ID & Categorization	5
5. Roles & Responsibilities	7
6. Framework RACI	8
7. Communication plan.....	12
8. Engagement (4C's)	14
9. Evaluation (Impact/Ethics)	15
10. Ethical considerations	17
11. Conclusion & Recommendations	18
12. Reference List.....	20

1. Introduction

Marriott International is one of the biggest hotel companies in the world. It operates thousands of hotels in more than 130 countries and manages over 30 different brands, from luxury to budget. Because of its size and long experience in hospitality, Marriott is known for using new technologies and improving guest services. This makes it the kind of company that can successfully introduce an advanced service like “*StaySmart+*”, which combines digital tools with sustainability to improve the guest experience.

In the United Kingdom, Marriott has a strong presence, especially in major cities such as London and Birmingham. These cities attract many business and leisure travellers, which creates high expectations for comfort, technology, and environmental responsibility. As the Project Manager for the “*StaySmart+*” rollout, it is essential to align project objectives with organizational strategy to ensure high performance (Kloppenborg, 2019). The UK is also a good place to test new ideas because the government encourages sustainability, and customers are increasingly interested in eco-friendly services. This means the UK market provides the right environment for Marriott to try out new digital and sustainable solutions. With its existing hotels, experienced staff, and strong brand reputation, Marriott is well positioned to introduce “*StaySmart+*” in the UK.

Although Marriott operates globally, this report focuses only on how the company can introduce the “*StaySmart+*” service in the UK. The aim is to explore the project management steps, the key stakeholders involved, and the challenges Marriott may face during the rollout. The report also considers how Marriott’s previous experience with technology partners—such as its work with Winnow AI to reduce food waste—shows that the organisation is ready for another innovation project. By looking at the UK environment and Marriott’s internal capabilities, the report explains why “*StaySmart+*” is a realistic and valuable project for the company.

2. Project Overview

The UK environment creates several important conditions that influence how Marriott can introduce the *StaySmart+* service. Politically, the UK government strongly supports sustainability and digital innovation, which encourages hotels to adopt new technologies.

This creates a positive setting for a project like “StaySmart+”. Economically, the UK hospitality sector is affected by inflation and rising costs, but major cities such as London and Birmingham continue to attract large numbers of travellers. This means there is still strong demand for modern and efficient hotel services.

Social factors also support the project. Guests in the UK increasingly expect digital convenience, such as mobile check-ins and smart room features, and many prefer hotels that show clear commitment to sustainability. Technological development in the UK is advanced, with many hotels already using automation and AI tools. This makes it easier for Marriott to introduce a new digital service like “StaySmart+”.

Legal requirements, especially GDPR, mean that Marriott must handle guest data carefully when using AI systems. Employment laws also affect how staff are trained and how their roles may change. Environmental expectations are high, as the UK has strict carbon-reduction targets and strong pressure to reduce waste and energy use. This aligns well with the sustainability goals of StaySmart+.

Overall, the UK environment supports the introduction of “StaySmart+”. The country’s focus on sustainability and technology creates good opportunities, but Marriott must manage legal responsibilities and staff training to ensure a smooth rollout.

3. Appraisal (SWOT/PESTLE)

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, Marriott has several strengths that support the “StaySmart+” project. It is a well-known global brand with strong experience in digital innovation, including previous work with AI tools such as Winnow. Marriott also has a large presence in the UK, which gives it the resources and staff needed to introduce new services. However, the company also has weaknesses. Some staff may resist new technology, and older hotels may require upgrades before “StaySmart+” can be fully implemented. Training staff may take time and increase costs.

There are also clear opportunities. UK guests are increasingly interested in sustainable and digital hotel services, which means “StaySmart+” can attract new customers and strengthen Marriott’s competitive position. The project also allows Marriott to build new partnerships with technology and sustainability companies. At the same time, there are threats that Marriott must consider. Competitors may introduce similar technologies, and data-privacy

risks must be managed carefully. Economic uncertainty could also affect hotel budgets, and technical problems could lead to negative guest experiences.



Figure 1: SWOT Visual Chart for Marriott.

While Marriott’s previous success with Winnow AI demonstrates technical readiness the “StaySmart+” rollout faces unique challenges in the UK’s aging hotel infrastructure, which may require significant capital expenditure to support high-speed AI processing.

In summary, Marriott is in a strong position to introduce “StaySmart+” in the UK. The project fits well with market trends and Marriott’s capabilities, but success will depend on careful planning, strong staff engagement, and effective risk management.

4. Stakeholder ID & Categorisation

According to Stakeholder Theory, any group that can affect or is affected by Marriott’s AI rollout must be considered (Freeman, 1984). To prioritize these groups, Mendelow’s (1981) matrix was applied to categorize Marriott’s tech partners and local regulators based on their power and interest. For the “StaySmart+” project, the stakeholders can be grouped into three main categories based on how closely they are connected to Marriott and how directly they

are affected by the new service. The internal stakeholders are those who work inside Marriott and are part of the daily operations are detailed in **Table 1**. This includes hotel managers, front desk staff, housekeeping teams, and the IT department. They are essential because they will be responsible for using, supporting, and maintaining the “StaySmart+” system. Their influence comes from their ability to make the project work smoothly in practice. If they understand the system and support it, the rollout will be successful. If they resist the change, the project may face delays or operational problems. Their main role is to help guests use the new tools, ensure the technology functions correctly, and maintain the sustainability features included in the service.

Table 1: Marriott Internal Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities.

Stakeholders	Role	Responsibilities
IT Department	Technical Integration	Make sure “StaySmart+” system works with hotel systems.
Hotel Staff	Implementation	Help guests use the service.
Senior Management	Strategy	Approve budget and timeline.

Primary stakeholders are those who interact directly with “StaySmart+” and are most affected by its success. Guests are the most important group in this category because they are the end users. Their acceptance or rejection of the service will determine whether the project succeeds. If guests find the AI tools helpful and easy to use, the service will gain popularity. If they find it confusing or intrusive, the project may fail. Suppliers, such as AI technology partners, also belong to this group because they provide the software and technical expertise needed to build and maintain the system. Investors are another primary stakeholder because they provide the financial resources required for the rollout. Their influence comes from their ability to approve or withhold funding depending on the project’s progress and expected return. The stakeholder categories are visualized in **Figure 2**.

Secondary stakeholders are those who do not interact with the service directly but are still affected by it. Local communities in London or Birmingham may benefit from increased

tourism and sustainable hotel practices. Media outlets and travel bloggers can shape public opinion about the project by reviewing or reporting on the new service. Hospitality industry associations also play a role by setting standards and influencing best practices.

Stakeholders of Marriott “StaySmart+” Project

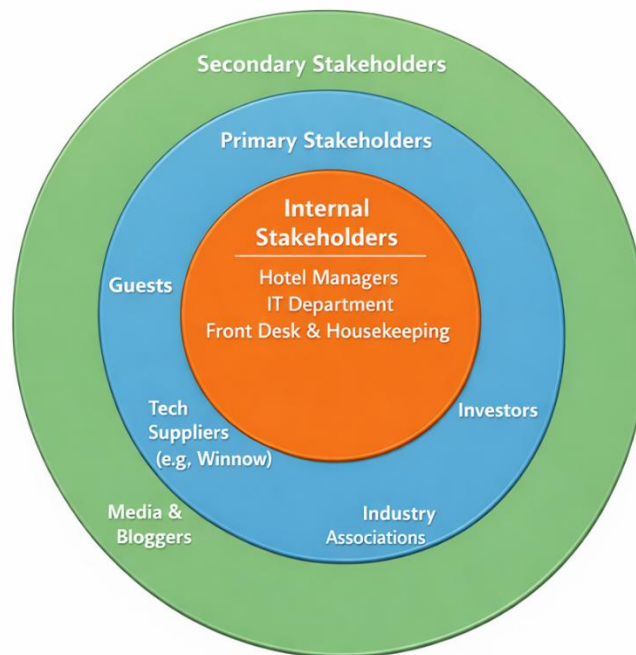


Figure 2: Stakeholder Circle Diagram for Marriott.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

These groups have less direct power but can still affect Marriott’s reputation and the public perception of “StaySmart+”. To eliminate role ambiguity within “StaySmart+” team, a RACI matrix was developed in accordance with the *PMBOK Guide* (Project Management Institute, 2021).

In terms of influence, different stakeholders hold different types of power. Regulators, such as GDPR authorities, have legal authority and can stop the project if data protection rules are not followed. Investors influence the project through financial control, while IT experts

influence it through their technical knowledge. Guests hold power through numbers: if they do not like the service, Marriott cannot justify continuing it. Each stakeholder also has specific responsibilities. Internal staff must support guests and adapt to new processes. Technology partners must ensure the system is secure and reliable. Regulators must ensure the project follows legal and ethical standards. Guests provide feedback that helps Marriott improve the service.

Overall, the “StaySmart+” project depends on cooperation between all these groups. Internal staff make the system work, primary stakeholders determine its success, and secondary stakeholders shape the wider environment in which the project operates. Understanding who they are, what influence they have, and what they do helps Marriott plan the rollout more effectively and manage potential challenges.

6. Framework RACI

As shown in **Table 2**, the RACI matrix helps clarify who is responsible for each activity during the six-month rollout of the StaySmart+ project. It prevents confusion and ensures that every team member understands their role.

Table 2: RACI Matrix for “StaySmart+” Implementation

Project Activity	Project Manager	IT Department	Hotel Staff	Senior Management	Tech Partners
Software Integration	A	R	I	I	C
Staff Training	A	C	R	I	I
Budget Approval	R	C	I	A	I
Guest Data Privacy	A	R	I	C	C

Key:

R = Responsible (does the work)

A = Accountable (owns or approves the task)

C = Consulted (gives input)

I = Informed (receives updates)

For example (see **Figure 5**), the IT Department is Responsible for integrating the software, while the Project Manager remains Accountable for the overall success. This clear division of duties reduces communication gaps, which are common in large hospitality projects. Hotel staff are Responsible for training and guest support, while senior management is Accountable for approving budgets and strategic decisions. Tech partners such as Winnow are Consulted on technical matters and data security, ensuring that the system meets both operational and legal standards. By using the RACI matrix, Marriott can manage the StaySmart+ rollout more efficiently, maintain accountability, and ensure smooth collaboration between internal and external stakeholders.

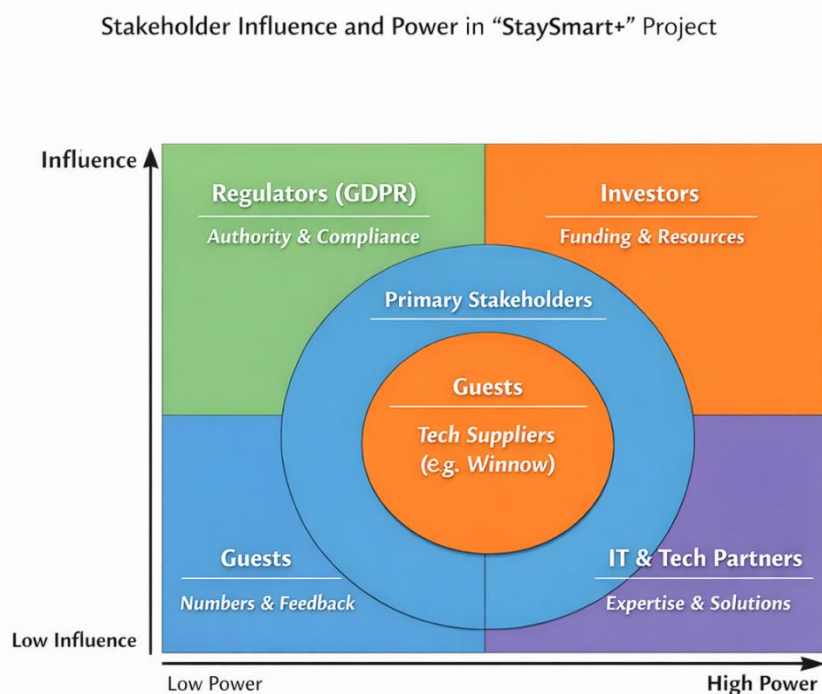


Figure 3: Influence and Power Map for Marriott.

In the StaySmart+ project, stakeholders differ in both their level of power and their degree of interest. Those with high power and high interest are considered key players because they can directly influence the success or failure of the project.

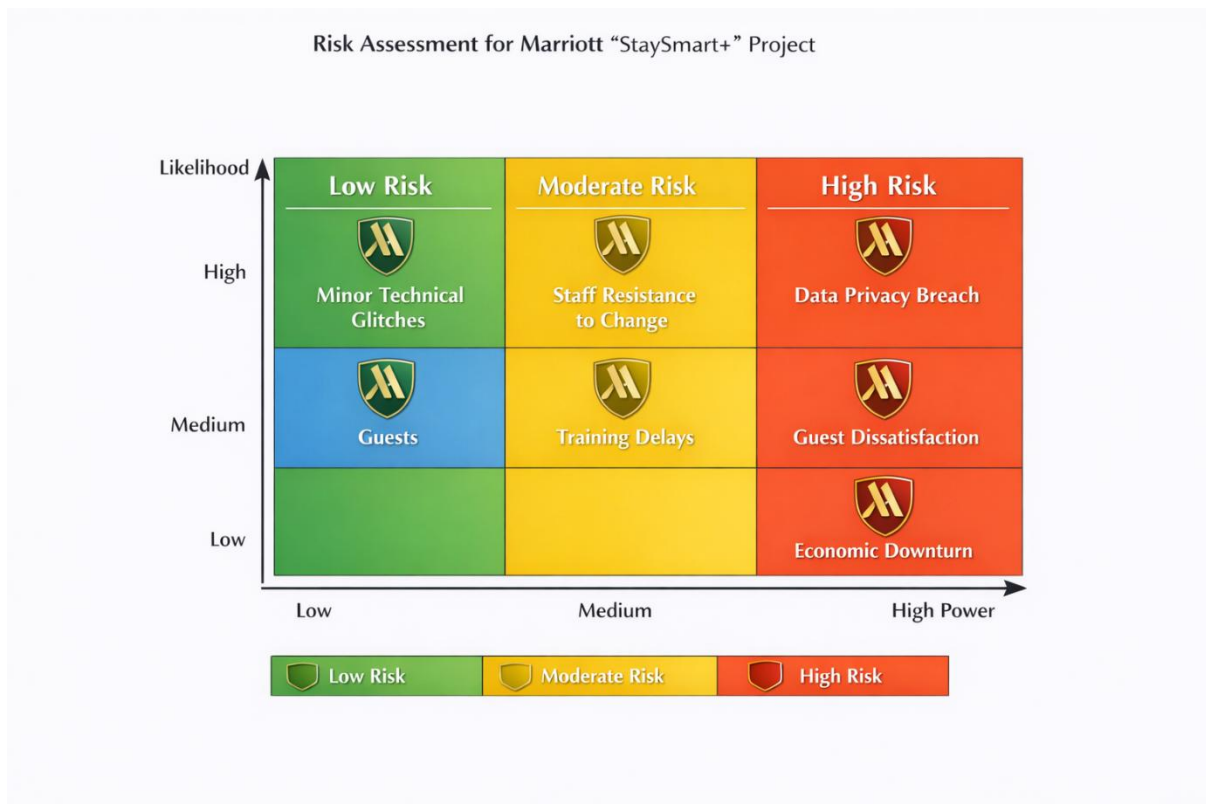


Figure 4: Risk Assessment for Marriott.

As illustrated in **Figure 4**, this group includes the regulators responsible for data protection under GDPR and the IT and technology partners who provide the software and technical expertise. They must be closely managed and regularly consulted to ensure compliance and smooth implementation. Their involvement is critical because they hold both the authority and the technical capability to affect project outcomes. Stakeholders with high power but low interest, such as investors, should be kept satisfied. They provide the financial resources that make the project possible, but they do not need to be involved in daily operations. Regular updates and progress reports are enough to maintain their confidence and support. If their expectations are not managed properly, they could withdraw funding or delay approvals, which would negatively impact the rollout. This is further detailed in the matrix below (see **Figure 5**).

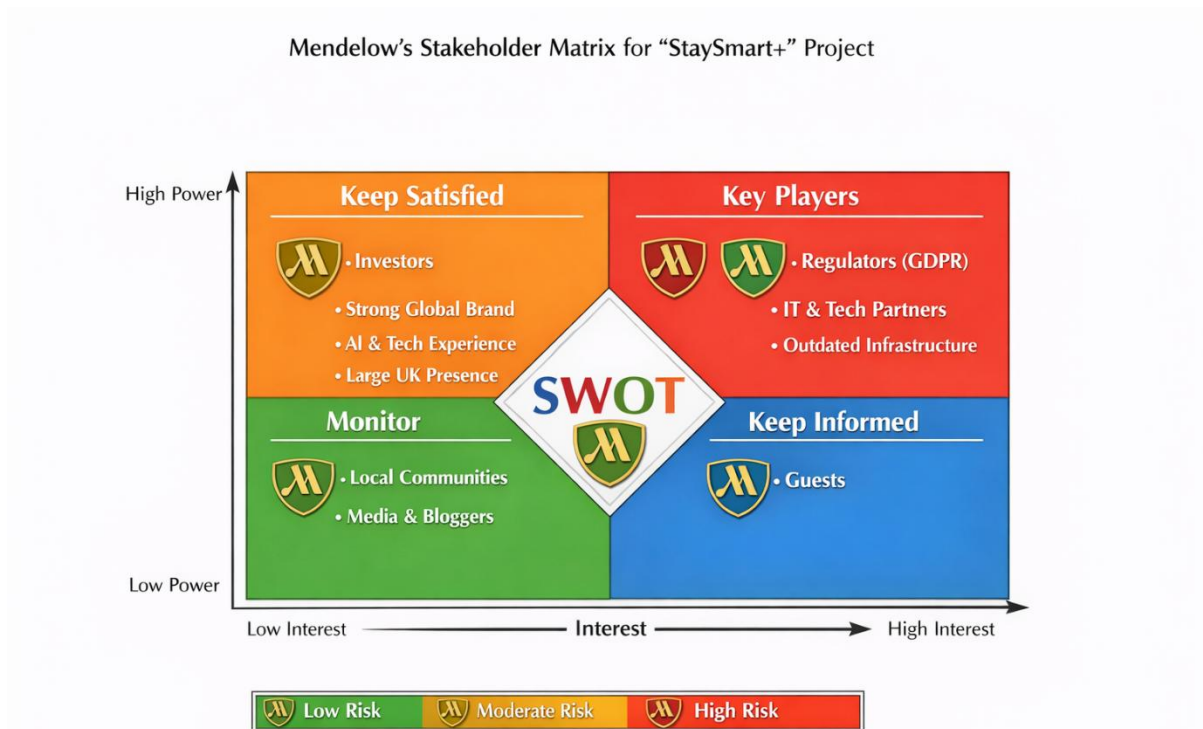


Figure 5: Mendelow's Matrix for Marriott.

Those with low power but high interest, such as hotel guests, should be kept informed. Guests are the end users of the StaySmart+ system, and their feedback determines whether the project meets its goals. Although they cannot directly change project decisions, their opinions and experiences influence Marriott's reputation and long-term success. Clear communication and user-friendly design help maintain their engagement and satisfaction.

Finally, stakeholders with low power and low interest, such as local communities and media or travel bloggers, should be monitored. They do not play an active role in the project, but their perception of Marriott's sustainability and innovation can affect public image. Occasional updates or press releases are sufficient to keep them aware of the project's progress.

Overall, understanding stakeholder power and interest helps Marriott prioritise communication and allocate resources effectively. By managing key players closely, keeping investors satisfied, informing guests, and monitoring external observers, the StaySmart+ project can achieve balanced stakeholder engagement and reduce potential conflicts.

7. Communication plan

Effective communication is essential for the successful implementation of the “StaySmart+” project. As illustrated in Figure 6, the communication follows a tiered approach based on the Salience Model. High-power stakeholders like Senior Management receive strategic monthly reports whereas frontline associates receive tactical daily briefings to ensure the 6-month rollout remains on schedule.

The communication follows a tired approach, and each stakeholder group requires a different level of information and frequency of contact based on their power and interest. The Project Manager coordinates all communication to ensure that updates are timely, accurate, and relevant to each audience.

Communication Plan for “StaySmart+” Project			
Stakeholder	Frequency	Method	Purpose
 Senior Management	Monthly	Progress Reports	Status Updates & Budget Decisions
 IT & Tech Partners	Weekly	Meetings & Dashboards	Technical Coordination
 Hotel Staff	Daily	Briefings & Training	Operational Updates
 Guests	Ongoing	Digital Alerts & Surveys	Guest Engagement
 External Stakeholders	As Needed	Press Releases & Reports	Compliance & Public Relations

Figure 6: Communication Plan diagram for Marriott.

Senior management receives formal progress reports every month, focusing on budget, timelines, and strategic outcomes (see **Table 3**). These reports allow them to make informed decisions and maintain oversight without being involved in daily operations. The IT department and technology partners, such as Winnow, communicate through weekly technical meetings and shared project dashboards. This ensures that software integration and data-security issues are addressed quickly and collaboratively.

Hotel staff are briefed daily during the rollout phase to maintain consistency in guest service and operational procedures. Short training sessions and feedback meetings help them adapt to the new system and report any technical or service issues. Guests, as end users, are informed through digital channels such as mobile notifications, in-room guides, and feedback surveys. This approach keeps them engaged and encourages participation in improving the service.

External stakeholders, including regulators and local communities, are contacted less frequently but through formal channels. Regulators receive compliance documentation and data-protection reports at key milestones, while local communities and media are updated through press releases and sustainability reports. This maintains transparency and supports Marriott's reputation for ethical and responsible business practices.

Overall, the communication plan ensures that every stakeholder receives the right information at the right time. It supports coordination, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens trust between Marriott and its partners. By maintaining structured communication, the "StaySmart+" project can achieve smooth implementation and long-term success.

Table 3: Communication Plan for Project "StaySmart+"

Stakeholder	Frequency	Channel/Method	Purpose of Communication
Senior Management	Monthly	Formal Report / Presentation	Strategic updates and budget approval.
IT & Tech Partners	Weekly	Zoom / MS Teams Meetings	Technical troubleshooting and integration status.
Hotel Staff	Daily	Morning Briefings / Internal App	Operational instructions and feedback gathering.
Guests	Real-time	In-app notifications / Digital Signage	Personalizing their stay promoting sustainability.
Investors	Quarterly	Digital Newsletter / PDF Report	ROI updates and project milestone achievements.

8. Communication Matrix

The Communication Matrix for the StaySmart+ project provides a structured framework for managing stakeholder engagement throughout the six-month rollout. It ensures that every group receives the right information, at the right time, through the most appropriate channel. This approach supports transparency, coordination, and accountability, which are essential for a complex hospitality project involving multiple internal and external partners. By defining the frequency, method, and purpose of communication, Marriott can maintain alignment between strategic goals and operational actions.

Senior management occupies the highest level of authority and decision-making power. They receive monthly formal reports and presentations that summarise progress, budget status, and strategic outcomes. This frequency allows them to remain informed without being overwhelmed by daily details. Their communication channel is formal because it reflects their role in approving resources and guiding long-term direction. The purpose of these updates is to enable informed decision-making and ensure that the “StaySmart+” project continues to align with Marriott’s global sustainability and digital transformation objectives.

The IT and technology partners, including Winnow, are engaged weekly through Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings. These sessions focus on technical troubleshooting, data-security compliance, and integration progress. The frequency of communication is higher because technology issues require immediate attention and collaboration. The channel is interactive and digital, allowing real-time problem-solving and documentation. The purpose is to maintain system reliability and ensure that the AI tools function smoothly across all hotel sites.

Hotel staff are the operational backbone of the project. They receive daily briefings and updates through internal communication apps and morning meetings. This ensures that they understand new procedures, guest interactions, and sustainability practices. The communication is two-way, allowing staff to provide feedback and report challenges. The purpose is to maintain service quality and encourage staff participation, which helps reduce resistance to change—a weakness identified in the SWOT analysis.

Guests are communicated with in real time through in-app notifications, digital signage, and personalised messages. Their communication is continuous because they interact directly

with the StaySmart+ system during their stay. The purpose is to enhance their experience, promote sustainable behaviour, and collect feedback for improvement. This approach transforms guests from passive users into active participants in Marriott's sustainability goals.

Investors are updated quarterly through digital newsletters and PDF reports. Their communication is formal and periodic, focusing on financial performance, return on investment, and milestone achievements. The purpose is to maintain confidence and demonstrate that the project is delivering measurable results. Clear communication with investors ensures continued funding and long-term support.

Overall, the Communication Matrix helps move stakeholders from being unaware or neutral to becoming supportive and engaged. It reflects the principles of effective change management by ensuring that information flows consistently and meaningfully. By linking communication frequency and channel to stakeholder power and interest, Marriott can build trust, reduce uncertainty, and strengthen collaboration. This structured approach demonstrates professional project management and supports the successful implementation of "StaySmart+" across the UK hospitality market.

9. Engagement Process for the StaySmart+ Project

(Using the 4C's Model)

The engagement process for the StaySmart+ project is designed to ensure that all stakeholders remain informed, involved, and motivated throughout the six-month rollout. Marriott's success depends on how effectively it communicates, collaborates, consults, and builds commitment among its internal teams, technology partners, and external stakeholders. The 4C's model provides a structured approach that transforms passive participants into active contributors, ensuring that the project achieves both operational efficiency and strategic alignment. Effective engagement at Marriott relies on relationship marketing, where the focus shifts from one-off transaction to long-term value creation for guests (Chrostopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 2013).

The "StaySmart+" service aligns with the *2025 Serve 360 Report*, specifically supporting Marriott's goals to reduce environmental impact (Marriott International, 2025). This is further evidence by partnership with tech firms like Winnow Solutions (2026), which utilize AI to mitigate operational waste.

The 4C's Engagement Model for "StaySmart+" Project



Figure 7: 4C's Model diagram for Marriott.

Together, the four elements of the 4C's model create (**Figure 7**) a balanced and effective engagement process. Communication ensures clarity, collaboration builds synergy, consultation encourages participation, and commitment sustains momentum. Marriott's structured approach aligns with best practices in project management and stakeholder theory, particularly Freeman's (1984) emphasis on stakeholder relationships as a source of organisational success. By applying the 4C's model, Marriott transforms potential challenges—such as staff resistance, technical complexity, and data-privacy concerns—into opportunities for learning and improvement. The model also supports continuous engagement beyond the initial rollout, ensuring that StaySmart+ remains adaptable and responsive to future technological and market changes.

In conclusion, the engagement process for the StaySmart+ project demonstrates how Marriott integrates communication, collaboration, consultation, and commitment to achieve sustainable innovation. Each component reinforces the others, creating a cycle of engagement that drives performance and trust. This structured approach not only supports the immediate success of the rollout but also strengthens Marriott's long-term reputation as a leader in digital hospitality and sustainability. By maintaining open communication, encouraging

collaboration, valuing consultation, and fostering commitment, Marriott ensures that the StaySmart+ project delivers measurable benefits for both the organisation and its stakeholders.

10. Ethical Consideration

Introducing AI at Marriott brings clear benefits, but it also creates important ethical responsibilities that must be managed carefully. One of the biggest concerns is data privacy. StaySmart+ must follow GDPR rules and use a clear Opt-In approach, so guests understand how their information is collected and used. Personalisation should feel helpful, not intrusive, and Marriott must always protect guest trust. The implementation of AI at Marriott brings significant ethical responsibilities, particularly regarding data transparency and the impact on human hospitality (Sharma, 2024).

Another key consideration is the human side of hospitality. Marriott's culture is built on warm, personal service, so AI should support staff rather than replace them. By taking over routine administrative tasks, StaySmart+ can free employees to focus on meaningful guest interactions, ensuring that the human touch remains central to the Marriott experience.

Fairness is also essential. The AI system must treat all guests equally and avoid any form of bias. This means regularly checking the system to ensure it does not favour certain groups or make decisions based on sensitive characteristics such as nationality or background.

Finally, the project must support Marriott's sustainability commitments. StaySmart+ can help reduce energy use and food waste, contributing to the company's Serve 360 strategy and its 2025 Sustainability Goals. Using AI responsibly allows Marriott to innovate while still protecting the environment.

The success of StaySmart+ depends not only on technology but also on how well Marriott manages its people, culture, and ethical responsibilities. By applying the 4C's Model and a strong Communication Plan, the project can gain stakeholder support and reduce resistance. When innovation is balanced with fairness, transparency, and Marriott's core values, StaySmart+ can enhance the guest experience and strengthen Marriott's position as a global leader in premium hospitality.

StaySmart+ Implementation Timeline



Figure 8: Implementation Timeline visual for Marriott.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

The StaySmart+ project represents Marriott’s strategic commitment to digital transformation and sustainable hospitality. Through the structured application of frameworks such as the RACI Matrix, Mendelow’s Stakeholder Model, and the 4C’s Engagement Process, the project demonstrates how effective communication and stakeholder management can drive innovation across a global organisation. Each model contributes to clarity, accountability, and collaboration, ensuring that the six-month rollout is both efficient and inclusive. The integration of technology partners, staff training, and guest engagement reflects Marriott’s ability to balance operational excellence with customer-centric design.

The analysis shows that the project’s success depends on maintaining strong alignment between technical implementation and human engagement. Communication ensures transparency, collaboration builds synergy, consultation encourages participation, and commitment sustains motivation. These elements collectively reduce resistance to change and

strengthen organisational culture. The visual frameworks—RACI, Mendelow, and the Communication Matrix—illustrate that Marriott’s approach is systematic and adaptable, capable of managing complex stakeholder relationships while meeting compliance and sustainability standards.

To enhance long-term impact, several recommendations are proposed. First, Marriott should continue to invest in **staff development and digital literacy**, ensuring that employees remain confident in using AI-driven systems. Second, the company should establish a **continuous feedback loop** with guests and partners to monitor satisfaction and identify emerging trends. Third, Marriott should expand the StaySmart+ model to other regions, using lessons learned from the UK rollout to refine global implementation. Finally, periodic **stakeholder reviews** should be conducted to evaluate communication effectiveness and maintain engagement across all levels.

In conclusion, the StaySmart+ project exemplifies how structured frameworks and stakeholder engagement can transform hospitality operations. By combining technology with human insight, Marriott strengthens its position as a leader in sustainable innovation. The project not only delivers operational efficiency but also reinforces Marriott’s brand values of trust, excellence, and forward-thinking service—ensuring continued success in an evolving global market.

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