

Organisational Report - Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc.

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Executive Summary:

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of Hilton Worldwide, a leading global hospitality company, focusing on its organisational structure, culture, goals, recent change initiatives, and strategic direction. At the corporate level, Hilton Worldwide demonstrates a robust organisational structure characterised by clear lines of authority and strategic oversight. Meanwhile, at the unit level, exemplified by Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead, localised initiatives and adaptation to regional market dynamics underscore Hilton's agility and responsiveness to customer needs.

Hilton's strong organisational culture, rooted in values of hospitality, integrity, and teamwork, permeates all levels of the organisation, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment among employees. Recent change initiatives, such as digital transformation and sustainability efforts, highlight Hilton's proactive approach to meeting evolving guest expectations and addressing global challenges.

Furthermore, Hilton's strategic direction, epitomised by initiatives like the 'Travel with Purpose 2030 Goals', underscores its commitment to sustainable growth and social responsibility. By aligning with global sustainability objectives and leveraging its scale and influence, Hilton aims to make a positive impact on both the environment and society while delivering exceptional guest experiences.

In navigating change, Hilton Worldwide has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, leveraging effective change management strategies to overcome resistance and drive successful outcomes.

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Introduction:

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc., a prominent player in the global hospitality sector, encompassing its corporate-level operations and the unit-level dynamics at Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead. Focusing on organisational structure, culture, and goals, alongside recent change initiatives, and then delving into Hilton Worldwide's strategic direction. The report aims to provide insights into how Hilton Worldwide navigates change and aligns its strategic objectives across diverse operational levels. The report provides a nuanced understanding of Hilton Worldwide's performance and strategic vision, from its overarching corporate strategy to its localised operations at Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead.

1.Organisation structure, culture and goals

1.1 Organisational Structure

Hilton Worldwide operates as a divisionalised form due to its global presence and diverse brands (Mintzberg, 1992). At the corporate level, Hilton utilises a hierarchical structure with departments such as finance, marketing, operations, and HR. The centralised headquarters oversees semi-autonomous divisions responsible for different brands and regions, ensuring efficient management and consistent brand standards across locations (Indeed, 2024).

Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead, as part of this divisional structure, adapts to local market dynamics with greater flexibility. Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967) contingency theory suggests that effective structures depend on managing environmental uncertainties. Hilton Worldwide's structure balances autonomy and control, allowing local units to tailor services to local preferences while benefiting from corporate strategies and support systems. This facilitates rapid expansion and adaptation to market dynamics. Effective communication and flexible management practices harmonise local and corporate objectives.

In spite of the advantages, this structure can lead to challenges such as misalignment between corporate and local goals, communication barriers, and complexity in managing diverse operations. Hilton must ensure that divisions operate synergistically to avoid these issues. Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead must balance local flexibility with adherence to corporate standards to optimise performance and guest satisfaction.

1.2 Organisational Culture

Hilton Worldwide is renowned for its strong service culture, which is deeply ingrained in its organisational DNA, set by its founder, Conrad Hilton. Across the company, this manifests through comprehensive training programmes, employee recognition initiatives, and a focus on delivering personalised service (Hilton, 2024). Hilton consistently ranks as top employers in prestigious lists such as 'Fortune's Best Companies to Work for' and the 'World's Most Admired Companies' (Singal and Rhou, 2017).

Hiltons organisational culture correlates with Schein's model (2023). Artefacts include recognisable branding, customer service protocols, and luxurious hotel environments. Espoused values focus on hospitality, integrity, leadership, teamwork, and ownership. Basic underlying assumptions are seen in the consistent delivery of exceptional guest experiences. This strong culture fosters a sense of belonging and motivation among staff, translating into superior guest service. According to O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991), cultural congruence, where employees' values align with the organisational culture, enhances commitment and efficiency.

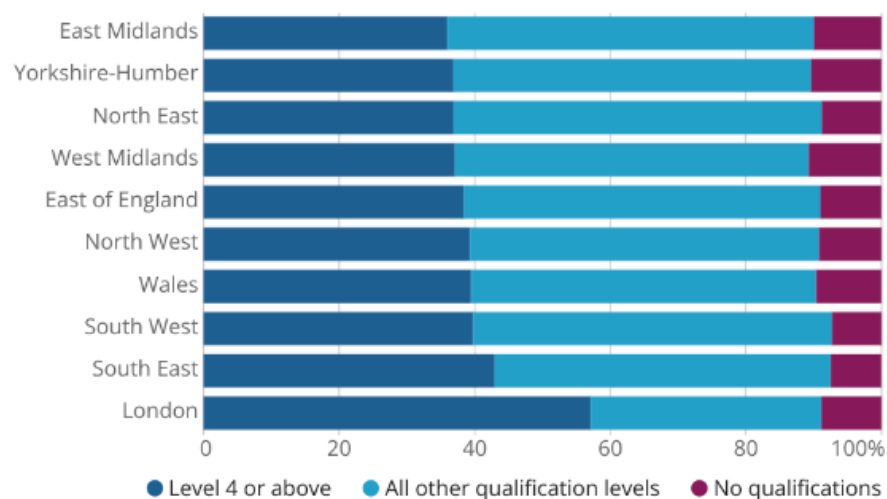
On the hand, Jansen, Van-Den-Bosch, and Volberda, (2006) remind us cultural adaptability is crucial for flexibility and innovation as excessive focus on cultural fit can stifle diversity and innovation, limiting fresh perspectives and progress.

Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead, while reflecting the broader Hilton culture, incorporates local elements to resonate with its regional clientele. Applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (The Culture Club, 2024), particularly the dimension of individualism vs. collectivism, helps understand the local cultural context and its impact on the hotel's operations. The hotel's culture emphasises personalised service and community involvement, aligning with the collectivist aspects of the local culture. Local hiring practices, community engagement, and culturally relevant services and amenities are crucial to its operations.

Newcastle is known for its universities, nightlife at the Quayside, and rich sporting culture, including St James' Park, home to Newcastle United (Newcastle.gov.uk, 2023; Britannica, 2023).

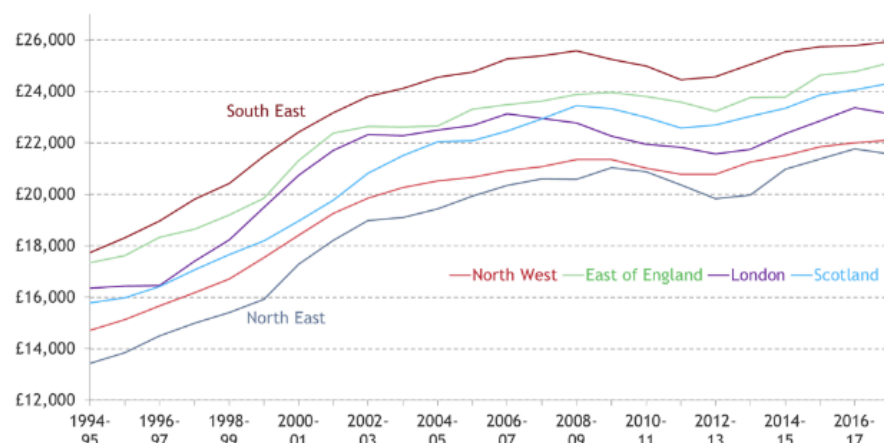
Despite its vibrant community, the below infographics underscores the significant North-South divide in education and household income.

Percentage of economically active population, by highest qualification level, Wales and English regions, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Three-year average of real (CPI-adjusted, 2018-19 terms) median equivalised disposable household income (after housing costs), by region



(Source: McCurdy, 2019)

1.3 Organisational Goals

Hilton Worldwide's overarching goal is "to be the most hospitable company in the world" (Hilton, 2024). This entails providing exceptional guest experiences, driving revenue growth, and maximising stakeholders value.

For short term goals, Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (Tutor 2u, 2018) approach provides a holistic framework for setting and evaluating organisational goals across financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives. Similarly, Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory (2006) posits that specific and challenging goals lead to higher performance. Both frameworks help Hilton Worldwide integrate goals into its strategic planning, including financial performance, market expansion, customer satisfaction, and sustainability.

Balancing short-term financial goals with long-term strategic objectives can be challenging. Hilton Worldwide must ensure that focusing on financial performance does not undermine investments in innovation, employee development, and sustainability. Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead must ensure its goals are realistic and achievable to avoid employee burnout, with adequate resources and training.

3. Recent Change Initiatives and their Impact:

3.1 Digital Transformation

Hilton Worldwide was named “Best Hotel App” by Global Traveler in 2022 as well as receiving the “Hotel Visionary Award from Hospitality Technology” in the same year (Hilton,2023). Hilton has embraced digital transformation, leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and mobile applications to enhance operational efficiency, guest experiences, and competitive positioning. For instance, Hilton’s digital key feature streamlines the check-in process and enhances convenience by allowing guests to access their rooms via smartphone, reducing wait times and enhancing convenience. Data analytics are employed to personalise guest experiences, tailoring services and recommendations based on individual preferences.

Additionally, the implementation of Winnow AI in the kitchens reduces food waste through real-time monitoring and data analytics. By optimising food production and minimising overstocking, Hilton not only demonstrates its dedication to sustainability but also achieves significant cost savings and operational efficiencies.

Hilton's latest first of its kind innovations leverages the star power of the founder's great-granddaughter, Paris Hilton, to launch a Metaverse initiative, aimed at engaging younger generations (Escobar, 2024). In this immersive digital space, users can explore virtual recreations of Hilton properties, participate in exclusive events, and interact with avatars of celebrities, including Paris herself. By tapping into her widespread influence and appeal among millennials and Gen Z, Hilton Worldwide blends hospitality with cutting-edge technology, creating a unique, modern experience for the digital-savvy traveller.

Kemp (2023) demonstrates in 2023, the nation's digital behaviours have had the most profound changes seen in years, even compared with “the pandemic years”.



(Source: Kemp, 2023)

3.2 Sustainability Initiatives

Hilton Worldwide has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability through various initiatives under its "Travel with Purpose" programme (Hilton, 2024), which aims to cut the company's environmental footprint in half and double its social impact investment by 2030. These initiatives are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2024), reflecting its commitment to addressing global challenges while advancing its business objectives. By integrating sustainability into its core business operations, Hilton not only enhances its environmental stewardship but also fosters social responsibility, economic development and enhanced branding.

Environmental Impact

Hilton is dedicated to reducing its environmental impact through advanced technology and innovative practices. The company has implemented smart energy management systems that use data analytics to optimise energy consumption across its properties, resulting in significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (Hilton, 2024). Water conservation efforts include the installation of low-flow fixtures and the implementation of advanced water recycling systems, which together have substantially decreased water usage. Additionally, comprehensive waste management practices ensure minimal environmental impact.

Social Impact

Hilton's social impact initiatives focus on creating opportunities for all, strengthening communities, and promoting human rights. The company has launched numerous initiatives to support local communities, including volunteer programmes and partnerships with non-profit organisations. One notable project is Hilton's

collaboration with Clean the World (2024), an organisation that recycles soap and hygiene products to distribute to communities in need. This partnership not only helps reduce waste but also supports global health initiatives by providing essential hygiene supplies to vulnerable populations.

Responsible Sourcing

Hilton prioritises responsible sourcing by partnering with suppliers who adhere to sustainable practices. The company sources sustainable seafood, uses cage-free eggs, and supports local and organic produce whenever possible. These efforts ensure that Hilton's supply chain aligns with its sustainability goals and promotes environmental stewardship. Furthermore, Hilton is committed to reducing plastic use by eliminating plastic straws and transitioning to reusable or compostable alternatives.

While Hilton's digital and CSR initiatives have produced positive outcomes, continuous investment in advanced technologies and staff training presents financial and operational challenges. There is also a risk that Hilton's digital transformation could alienate less tech-savvy customers, highlighting the need for balanced solutions that accommodate diverse preferences.

Furthermore, achieving the ambitious targets set by the 'Travel with Purpose' programme requires ongoing effort and innovation. While these initiatives enhance Hilton's brand image and stakeholder relations, the company must ensure that its sustainability efforts lead to measurable environmental and social benefits, avoiding the pitfalls of 'greenwashing' (Jones, 2017).

Johansson, CEO of Demand Calendar (2024) emphasises the importance of stability and tradition in hospitality. He believes, “guests’ core needs for cleanliness, comfort, personal service, and the fundamental aspects of a stay have stayed constant for centuries.” However, Sajwani (2023) reminds us of Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, who said, “there is nothing permanent except change.” In the constantly evolving hospitality industry, this timeless truth remains relevant today and will continue to be so for centuries. Organisational change expert Hemerling (2016) asserts that adapting to change can be ‘invigorating’ if people are prioritised. Similarly, Sinek (2021) adds incremental change is preferable, as it is the sudden change which evokes fear.

While stability and tradition are important, market competition and triggers necessitates continuous innovation and differentiation to maintain a competitive edge. Rapid technological advancements require adaptation to new technologies. Additionally, shifts in consumer preferences towards personalised and sustainable travel experiences compel strategic adjustments to align offerings with market demands.

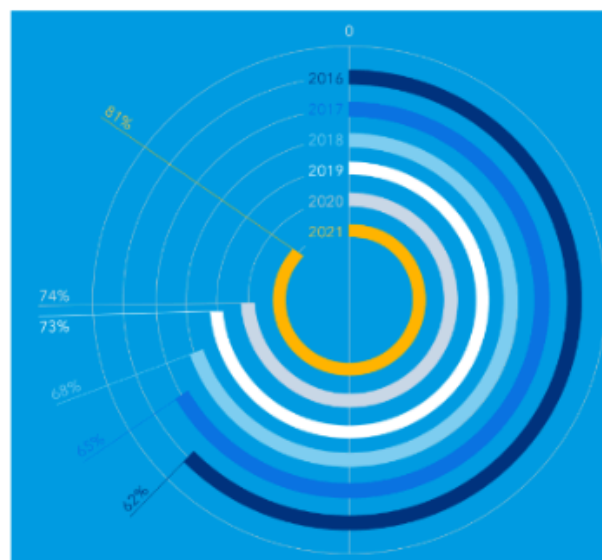
Despite recognising the necessity for change, resistance remains a pervasive challenge with employees worldwide (Moritz, 2023: Bateh, Castaneda, and Farah, 2013). Utilising Kotter's (2018) 8-Step Change Model helps navigate change effectively by providing a structured approach. Beginning with creating a sense of urgency to motivate stakeholders, followed by forming a powerful coalition to guide the change. Developing a clear vision and strategy ensures everyone understands the direction. Communicating this vision helps to engage and empower employees. Removing obstacles and enabling action allows for swift progress, while generating short-term wins helps to build momentum. Consolidating gains and producing more change solidifies improvements, and finally, anchoring new approaches in the company culture ensures lasting transformation.

Hilton Worldwide's Strategic Direction:

Hilton Worldwide's strategic direction is focused on driving innovation, achieving sustainable growth, enhancing stakeholder value, and expanding its global footprint to be the most hospitable company in the world. This strategy is guided by the vision articulated by Christopher J. Nassetta, President & CEO of Hilton (2023), who stated, "Hilton was founded on the noble premise that travel can make the world a better place and that premise still guides us today."

Booking.com (2021) revealed, since the initial release of their yearly sustainable travel report in 2016, there has been a noticeable rise in travellers' desire to opt for eco-friendly accommodation. This trend gained momentum in 2021, particularly during a period when travel was largely restricted in many regions across the globe.

According to the latest figures in their 2024 report, this preference has surged to 83%.



(Source: Booking.com, 2021)

By using Boston Matrix Hilton can assess how well each of its individual accommodations such as the Newcastle-Gateshead is currently doing. Such as Waldorf Astoria and Hilton Hotels & Resorts, are Stars driving significant growth, while brands like Hilton Garden Inn and Homewood Suites serve as Cash Cows providing steady revenue. Canopy by Hilton may represent a Question Mark with high growth potential requiring strategic investment, while underperforming locations (Dogs) need re-evaluation.

Using Porter's Generic Strategies, (Islami, Mustafa, and Latkovikj, 2020), Hilton can balance growth pathways, brand performance, and competitive positioning, ensuring a robust strategy, positioning itself against key competitors which include Marriott International, Hyatt Hotels, and Caesars Entertainment (Satista, 2023).

For instance, the need to turn Question Marks into Stars, aligns with the ongoing need for market development and product innovation highlighted in the Ansoff Matrix. Similarly, maintaining cost leadership and differentiation, as per Porter's strategies, ensures Hilton remains competitive across various market segments.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Hilton Worldwide's commitment to excellence and adaptability in the hospitality landscape is evident through its organisational structure, culture, goals, recent change initiatives, and strategic direction. At the corporate level, its robust structure fosters innovation and operational efficiency, while localised initiatives at units like Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead showcase agility and responsiveness to market dynamics. Rooted in values of hospitality, integrity, and teamwork, Hilton's organisational culture fosters employee commitment. Recent initiatives like digital transformation and sustainability efforts demonstrate proactive adaptation to guest expectations and global challenges, exemplified by the 'Travel with Purpose 2030 Goals'. Looking forward, Hilton's focus on innovation, sustainability, and guest-centricity positions it competitively. By remaining true to its values while adapting to market shifts, Hilton Worldwide is poised for continued leadership and positive impact globally.

Recommendations:

Based on the research conducted for this report, it is evident that Hilton Worldwide is performing well in the dynamic hospitality industry. However, to maintain its competitive edge and sustain its success, Hilton should remain vigilant of its competitors and new entrants into the market.

Hilton should continue to closely monitor its competitors, namely Marriott, Hyatt, and IHG, as well as new entrants, to identify emerging trends, innovations, and strategies that may impact its market position. By conducting regular competitive analyses and benchmarking exercises, Hilton can stay informed about industry developments and proactively adjust its own strategies to stay ahead of the competition.

In conclusion, while Hilton is currently performing well, staying vigilant of competitors and new entrants is crucial to maintaining its competitive advantage and ensuring long-term success. By continuously monitoring the competitive landscape and investing in innovation and sustainability, Hilton can remain at the forefront of the hospitality industry and continue to deliver exceptional value to its guests and stakeholders.

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Appendices:

Hilton's 2030 Goal Tracking

Social: Creating an Engine of Opportunity	
CAREERS: ● Create 5 million cumulative learning and career growth opportunities ● Created 1.5M+ opportunities since 2022 ● Status: On Track ● Achieve global gender parity and 25% U.S. ethnic representation at corporate leadership levels by end of 2027 ● Status: Ongoing	
COMMUNITIES: ● Meaningfully impact 20 million community members ● Impacted 5.48M+ members since 2022 ● Status: On Track ● Contribute 10 million volunteer hours ● Achieved 2.5M+ hours since 2017 ● Status: Making Progress ● Award 300+ Action Grants for hotel-led impact projects ● Awarded 117 grants since 2022 ● Status: On Track ● Participate in food donation programs ● Required all NA hotels to have a food donation program ● Status: Ongoing ● Activate a disaster relief program ● Revised Disaster Response Playbook ● Distributed nearly \$4M in support to Team Members ● Status: Ongoing ● Expand local sourcing and business with diverse suppliers ● Sourced from 2,200+ women-, minority-, veteran-, and disabled-owned businesses ● Status: Ongoing	
CONDUCT: ● Embed ESG due diligence across supply chain ● Launched Human Rights Questionnaire within supplier risk management ● Achieved EcoVadis ESG ratings for 30% of key suppliers ● Status: On Track ● Promote responsible sourcing of beef, poultry, pork, eggs, seafood, and produce ● Status: Ongoing	

Environmental: Building A More Sustainable Future

WATTS:

- Reduce Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions intensity from managed hotels by 75% (MT CO₂e/m², 2008 baseline)
 - Achieved 45.1% reduction as of EOY 2023
 - Status: Making Progress
- Reduce Scope 3 carbon emissions intensity from franchised hotels by 56% (MT CO₂e/m², 2008 baseline)
 - Achieved 25.1% reduction as of EOY 2023
 - Status: Making Progress
- Align with global environmental certifications (e.g., ISO 14001, 50001, 9001; US EPA ENERGY STAR)
 - Status: On Track

WATER:

- Reduce water use intensity in managed operations by 50% (Litres/m², 2008 baseline)
 - Achieved 26.5% reduction as of EOY 2023
 - Status: Making Progress
- Activate 20 community water projects to increase access and resilience
 - Completed 12 projects since 2019
 - Status: On Track

WASTE:

- Reduce landfill waste intensity in managed operations by 50% (MT/m², 2008 baseline)
 - Achieved 63.7% reduction as of EOY 2023
 - Status: Complete
- Reduce food waste across global operations
 - Utilised resources for food waste reduction guidance
 - Status: Ongoing
- Send zero soap to landfill by recycling all used guest soap bars
 - 82% of hotels partnered with soap recycling organisations
 - Status: Ongoing

Hilton's sustainability initiatives include:

The Green Ramadan initiative (2023): A collaboration between Hilton, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and Winnow, is focused on reducing food waste in six key hotels as part of the UNEP Recipe of Change. UNEP reports show that food waste increases by 25 to 50 percent in the West Asia region during religious and social festivities like Ramadan, highlighting the urgency of initiatives like Green Ramadan. By implementing specific strategies to combat food waste, Hilton aims not only to address the surge during Ramadan but also to establish sustainable practices that can serve as a model for the hospitality industry.

Reducing Carbon Emissions: Hilton has set ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions intensity from its managed and franchised hotels. Through energy efficiency measures, renewable energy adoption, and collaboration with franchisees, Hilton aims to significantly decrease its carbon footprint.

Water Conservation: Hilton is committed to reducing water use intensity in its managed operations and supporting community water projects to increase access to clean water. By implementing water-saving technologies and practices, Hilton aims to conserve water resources and enhance water resilience in the communities where it operates.

Waste Management: Hilton focuses on reducing landfill waste intensity in its managed operations through waste reduction, recycling, and partnerships with organisations for soap recycling. Additionally, Hilton implements food waste reduction programs in its kitchens and participates in food donation programs to minimise food waste.

Community Engagement: Hilton's sustainability efforts extend to creating opportunities for its team members and supporting communities. Through initiatives such as career growth opportunities, gender parity goals, volunteer programs, and disaster relief efforts, Hilton aims to make a meaningful impact on communities worldwide.

Supply Chain Sustainability: Hilton embeds environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations across its supply chain by conducting due diligence and promoting responsible sourcing practices. By working with suppliers to advance positive impact and promote responsible sourcing of key products, Hilton aims to drive sustainability throughout its operations.

